

# CORNHOLE



## MODIFIED EVENTS

Unified CHAMPS (8' & 27' distance)  
Unified CHAMPS (12' & 27' distance)

## TRADITIONAL EVENTS

Traditional Doubles (21' distance)  
Traditional Doubles (27' distance)

## UNIFIED EVENTS

Unified Doubles (27' distance)

**An athlete or Unified partner may be in only one (1) event.**

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics competition. Special Olympics has created these rules based on the American Cornhole Association (ACA) rules, which shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

## COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

SOIN reserves the right to implement a team quota if the number of teams exceeds tournament capacity.

## EVENT LIMITS

1. Athletes may compete in one (1) event only (Traditional 21 foot, Traditional or Unified 27-foot distance; Unified CHAMPS 8 foot or 12 foot).

## TEAM COMPETITION

1. Modified
  - a. This is for athletes whose needs and abilities are not adequately served in traditional or Unified cornhole competition.
  - b. Unified CHAMPS doubles team shall consist of one (1) CHAMPS athlete and (1) Unified partner
  - c. Unified CHAMPS doubles athletes will pitch either at eight (8) feet or twelve (12) feet and Unified partners will pitch at 27 feet.
2. Traditional
  - a. Traditional doubles teams shall consist of two (2) athletes per team.
  - b. Traditional doubles teams can pitch at 21 feet or 27 feet.
3. Unified Sports<sup>®</sup>
  - a. Unified doubles teams shall consist of one (1) athlete and one (1) Unified partner.
  - b. Unified doubles teams can pitch at 27 feet only.

## QUALIFICATION SCORES

1. A qualification score is required for each competitor entered.
2. A team's qualification score is the total of the two teammates qualification score.
3. The qualification score shall be the basis for division placement.
4. Athletes with qualifying scores of zero (0) should NOT be entered in 27-foot competition.

## DIVISIONING

1. Teams score will be compiled of all individual's entry scores submitted during the entry process.
2. Sectionals: Counties will be divided into sectional tournament based on location and capacity.
3. Counties will be divided into either Session A or Session B based on county team event numbers.
4. After being placed into a session, teams will be placed into divisions by qualification scores of the team.
5. Teams from the same county may be placed into the same division.
6. Teams are not disqualified based on Maximum Effort for Cornhole.

## RULES OF COMPETITION

### UNIFORM SPECIFICATIONS

1. Players will dress in a manner which will bring credit to them and the sport of cornhole.
2. Players must wear closed-toed shoes that will not damage or disrupt the court surface.
3. Shirts that identify the Special Olympics program are preferred.
4. Prohibited apparel.
  - a. Shoes with a heel, flip flops, sandals and croc style shoes, cutoffs, tank tops, sleeveless t-shirts, jeans, or clothing with advertisements or inappropriate subject matter.
5. The Cornhole Sport Management Team or sport official shall have the authority to bar offenders from competition until they comply with the rule.

## COURT LAYOUT

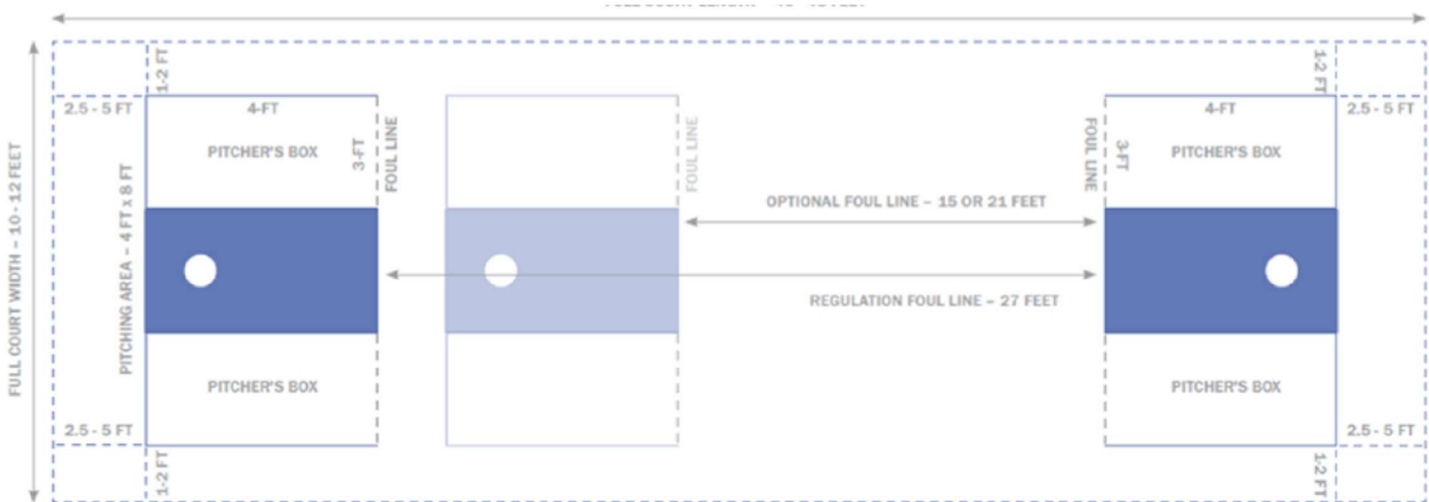
1. Dimensions
  - a. A cornhole court shall be a level rectangular area 10-feet wide and a minimum of 45-feet long.



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- b. The court should consist of two (2) cornhole boards, designated pitcher's boxes and foul lines.
      - c. A north-south setting is recommended for outdoor courts to minimize the effects of the sun.
    2. Pitcher's Box
      - a. The pitcher's box is the rectangle 4-feet x 3-feet at each end of the court, parallel and on both sides of cornhole boards.
    3. Multiple Courts
      - a. To eliminate distraction and safely separate activity, cornhole courts adjacent to each other shall be a minimum of 10 (ten) feet apart.
      - b. A greater distance (at least 12 feet) is preferable.
    4. Foul Lines
      - a. There are two (2) sets of foul lines:
      - b. Traditional doubles play foul lines shall be defined as an imaginary line 21 or 27 feet from the front of the board to the front of the opposing board.
      - c. Unified doubles play foul lines shall be defined as an imaginary line 27 feet from the front of the board to the front of the opposing board.
    5. Covered or Indoor Courts
      - a. The regulations for covered and indoor cornhole courts are exactly the same with the additional stipulation that they shall have a minimum 12-foot vertical clearance to the lowest possible obstruction.



## PLAYING EQUIPMENT

1. Standard cornhole boards are 2-ft. x 4-ft. The hole is positioned 9 inches from the top of the board with a 6 inch diameter, and is 12 inches from each side of the cornhole platform edges.
2. The back of the cornhole board shall be 12 inches from ground to the highest point of the deck at a 90-degree angle to the deck face.
3. Cornhole boards should have sufficient weight so as to prevent bounce from thrown bags with a smooth top/throwing surface. Boards can be made from different forms of wood and should have a minimum of a half (1/2) inch playing surface.
4. Each team has four cornhole bags of contrasting colors. Cornhole bags should be 6-in. x 6-in. and weigh approximately one (1) pound.
5. The Synergy Touring Professional Bags will be the official bag used during sectional, state, and competitions above SOIN State Competition (i.e. USA Games) unless stated otherwise.
6. Bags made from duck cloth canvas filled with plastic resin will not be used at a sectional, state, or national level; these bags are still acceptable at the local level.

## PLAY OF THE GAME

1. In doubles play, two teams consisting of two competitors each compete against one another until a winning team is determined. Athletes line up directly across from their teammate in the same lane.
2. In Unified play, Unified partners and athletes should be aligned at opposite boards. In this setup, Unified partners pitch against Unified partners and athletes pitch against athletes. Each team stays in their designated lane for the whole game.



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## PREGAME COIN TOSS

1. Prior to beginning the game, a coin toss determines playing lanes and sequence of play. An official present assigns heads and tails to each team. In lieu of a coin flip, the official may use a bag flip to determine playing lanes and sequence of play.
2. The team that wins the coin toss chooses either their throwing lane or the throwing order in the first inning of play.
3. The team that did not win the coin toss chooses the remaining option.

## VALUE OF THE BAG

1. Bag In-The-Hole: A bag in-the-hole (or Hole-In) is any bag which is thrown through the hole or knocked through the hole, either by another bag or an act of God. A bag in-the-hole has a value of three (3) points.
2. Bag In-The-Count: A bag which comes to rest anywhere on top of the board. A bag in-the-count has a value of one (1) point.
  - a. For a bag to be in-the-count, it must not touch the ground or any other portion of the court prior to coming to rest on the cornhole board.
3. A foul bag refers to any bag that was designated a foul bag as the result of a rules violation. Each is worth zero (0) points.
4. A dead bag refers to any bag that contacted the court or the ground before coming to rest on the board, or any bag that struck a previously defined object such as a tree limb, wire, indoor court ceiling, etc. Each is worth zero (0) points.

## VIOLATIONS AND PENALTIES

Foul bags and rules violations are divided into impacting fouls and non-impacting fouls. A court official is responsible for spotting and calling penalties. The court official must determine if a foul bag was impacting or non-impacting.

1. Non-Impacting Bag
  - a. If a foul bag does not impact game play or any other bag in play, the bag is considered dead and is removed from play at the time of the infraction. This bag scores zero (0) points for the inning. All other bags remain in play.
  - b. No other movement of bags is permitted at this time.
  - c. The only person allowed to remove a bag from play is a court official.
2. Impacting Bag
  - a. If the bag in question impacts the position of one or more bags in play, it is an impacting bag foul.
    - i. Leave the bag in question and all affected bags in play.
    - ii. Continue to play until the end of the inning without touching or removing any bags.
    - iii. At the end of the inning, the team that threw the offending bag removes the highest value bag in play.
    - iv. The only person allowed to move bags is a court official.
3. Example
  - a. Team A steps over the line during their 3rd toss of the inning. The offending bag knocks a bag from Team B off the board. Bags are not replaced or affected at this time. At the end of the inning, subtract the highest value bag from Team A from the scoring calculation.
  - b. If zero (0) points were scored for Team A in the inning, no scoring updates are made.

## DEAD BAGS

1. Dead bags will be removed during innings to prohibit opportunity of dead bags impacting play. During circumstances where an event does not have enough volunteer resources to removed bags ruling should proceed as follows:
  - a. Any playing bag that contacted the court or the ground before coming to rest on the board shall be ruled a dead bag.
  - b. Any playing bag that struck a previously defined object, such as a tree limb, wire, indoor court ceiling, etc., shall be ruled a dead bag.
  - c. Dead bag should not be considered in scoring but may assist a legal bag that is considered in scoring.
2. Example
  - a. Team A throws a bag, and it lands on the ground in front of board A. This bag is considered a dead bag. Team B throws a bag, and it lands on top of Team A's bag on the ground. This bag is also considered a



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dead bag. Team A throws their second bag, and it lands on the board, but is also touching part of Team B's previous thrown bag. This bag is still considered legal, even though it is touching a dead bag.



## PITCHING THE BAG

1. The team who scored in the preceding inning has the honor of pitching first in the next inning. If neither team scores, the team who pitched first in the preceding inning shall retain first pitch in the next inning.
2. A competitor must pitch all four bags from their designated pitcher's box.
3. Competitors must pitch the bag with an underhand release.
4. A competitor may not step over or contact the foul line during their pitching or release of a cornhole bag.
5. A competitor must wait until the previous bag has come to a complete stop for at least two (2) seconds before pitching the next bag.
6. Players may not jump, blow, kick, or otherwise do anything that may affect the cornhole board or the position of bags during an inning.
7. Touching, adjusting, or aligning a cornhole board during an inning is prohibited. Court officials may align the cornhole board between innings at the request of an athlete.

## POSITION OF CONTESTANTS DURING DELIVERY

1. While one (1) contestant is throwing, the other contestant must remain behind the foot fault line as well.

## FOUL BAGS

1. A foul bag is a bag which was delivered in non-compliance with one (1) of the rules of the game.
2. For guidelines regarding what to do in the event of a foul bag, refer to "Violations and Penalties" under "Play of the Game" for the distinctions between impacting and non-impacting bags.

## LISTS OF FOULS

1. Any bag pitched when the player has made contact with or crossed over the foul line.
2. Any bag pitched when the player has started or stepped completely outside the pitcher's box before the bag is released.
3. Any bag not delivered within the 20-second time limit.
4. Any bag pitched from a different pitcher's box than the first bag.
5. Any bag that is not pitched with an underhand release.
6. Any competitor pitching out of turn.

## INTERUPTING GAME PLAY

1. A player shall not touch, alter, move, or affect the board or any bags on the board or in the hole before scoring has been agreed upon for the inning.
2. If this foul occurs during play, please refer to the "Impacting Bag" section above.
3. If this foul occurs at the conclusion of an inning, and before a court official has taken score, the non-offending team receives three (3) points for each bag removed prior to scoring confirmation.



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## FOULING OUT

1. Any team that commits three (3) or more fouls in a match automatically loses the match. The match ends immediately.
2. The non-offending team is awarded up to 21 points and wins the match.
3. The offending team ends the game with the score they have when the 3rd foul occurs.

## ADDITIONAL FOUL RULES

1. A bag that leaves an athlete's hand once the final forward swing of the delivery process has started shall count as a pitched bag.
2. A bag that is accidentally dropped by an athlete before the final forward swing has started shall not be considered foul and may be picked up and pitched.
3. If athletes believe they have thrown all bags, clear the board for the next inning, but then realize they missed one bag, the inning ends. Points are scored as if the inning ended, and the missed bag is forfeited.
4. Any action or intentional use of a penalty that undermines the integrity of the game.

## SCORING

1. Bag Values - refer to "Play of the Game" for bag values.
2. Total Cancellation Scoring
  - a. In cancellation scoring, the points of one player cancel out the points of their opponent. Cancellation scoring will only take place at the end of each inning. Using this method, only one team can score in each inning.
  - b. Example - Team A throws four (4) bags, one (1) lands in the hole and one (1) lands on the board. The total point value for Team A is four (4). Team B throws four (4) bags and one (1) lands in the hole. The total point value for Team B is three (3). Since Team A has more points in this half inning, subtract three (3) from four (4). Team A is awarded one (1) point for this half inning.

## LENGTH OF THE GAME

1. Point Limits
  - a. The cornhole game shall be played until the first team of contestants reaches (or exceeds) 21 points at the completion of a half-inning. The winning team does not need to win by two (2) or more points.
  - b. The inning must be finished with both players having thrown all four (4) bags.
  - c. Skunks: The game shall be played to 21 unless a team scores 11 or more points at the end of four (4) inning before their opponents score any points. Each teammate throws all four bags twice. In this case the game is a skunk and the team that scores 11 or more points wins the match.
2. Game Clock
  - a. The time limit per game is 30 minutes. The team leading once the time limit is reached shall be declared the winner.
  - b. If a tie exists at the time limit, then the game will go into overtime.
3. Overtime
  - a. In the event that the score is tied after time expires, one more inning is played.
  - b. If no competitor scores after one tiebreaker inning, a Sudden Death bag is played.
    - i. In this inning, following the natural flow of the game, the last-frame winner tosses a single bag.
    - ii. The opponent then tosses one bag, attempting to match or beat the first player's throw.
    - iii. Whichever player scored more points from the Sudden Death Bag is considered the winner of the game.
    - iv. Additional Sudden Death Bags may be played until a winner is declared.
    - v. All Sudden Death Bags should follow the natural flow of the game.

## COACHING

1. Coaches or spectators shall be prohibited from engaging in discussions with any athlete and/or partner once the athlete and/or partner steps onto the field-of-play area as designated by the program coordinator.
2. If a court official determines a coach is strategically communicating with a player, the official may provide a verbal warning or a citation for unsportsmanlike conduct according to the discretion of the court official.
3. Discussions or disputes related to scoring or rules should be directed toward the court official.



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## APPROPRIATE CONDUCT

1. Unsportsmanlike Conduct
  - a. Players shall act in a sportsmanlike manner at all times.
  - b. Any behavior deemed unsportsmanlike, such as using insulting language, attempting to distract an opponent, or displaying inappropriate gestures, actions, or words, may result in disqualification at the discretion of the court official.
  - c. Purposely interfering with an opponent's pitching motion will disqualify a player and result in forfeiture of the match.
  - d. Any action or intentional use of a penalty that undermines the integrity of the game, as determined by the court official, will result in the player's disqualification and forfeiture of the match.
2. Delay of Games
  - a. If the official believes that the game is intentionally delayed without sufficient or valid reason, the official must issue a warning.
  - b. If the delaying team does not immediately resume play, they will forfeit the match.
  - c. For delays caused by weather, an act of God, civil disorder, or other unforeseen circumstances, the ruling of the competition manager is decisive and final.
3. Modifications/Adaptive Devices
  - a. Any assisting device being used for adaptive purposes must not give the athlete a competitive advantage and must be approved by the Competition Director prior to competition.

## PROTESTS

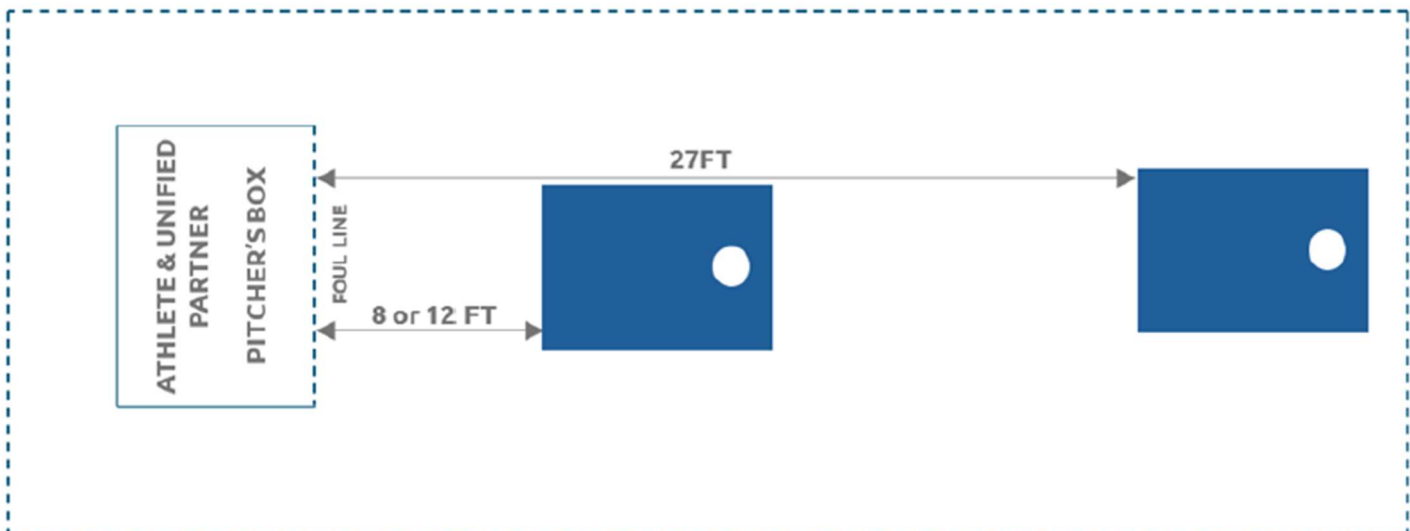
1. Any protest to an official's or competition manager's decision must be made by the head cornhole coach that attended the mandatory coaches meeting and within 30 minutes of the completion of any game or the decision made by the official or competition manager will be considered as accepted.
2. Protests will be acknowledged and judged on the basis of merit in circumstances not specifically provided for herein.

## MODIFIED COMPETITION (CHAMPS)

Unless otherwise stated, the Cornhole Rules (Uniform Specifications, General Rules, Equipment, and General Rules etc.) will govern CHAMPS competition.

## COURT LAYOUT

1. Pitcher's Box
  - a. The pitcher's box is the rectangle 4-feet x 8-feet at one end of the court, directly across from the athlete competition board (8 or 12 feet away) and the Unified partner competition board (27 feet away). Players may enter and leave the pitcher's box to allow space for pitching athletes/partners. The athlete/partner must pitch from inside the pitcher's box.
2. Foul Lines
  - a. The foul line is the front line of the pitcher's box. The foul line distance for modified gameplay is 8 or 12 feet and 27 feet from the cornhole boards for athletes and Unified partners.





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## PLAY OF THE GAME

1. Partners pitch against partners, and athletes pitch against athletes. Both competitors in the pitcher's box (1 from each team) alternate pitching bags until each competitor has pitched all four of their bags. After completion of the inning, the next two competitors (1 from each team) will enter the pitcher's box and will alternate pitching their bags until each player has pitched all four of their bags. In Modified Play, the Unified partner may enter the pitcher's box to assist the athlete with holding the bags.
2. An inning is complete when a set of competitors (i.e both athletes or Unified partners) pitch to their respective boards, all eight bags (four bags each). Athletes pitch the distance of the 8 or 12 foot board and Unified partners pitch the distance to the 27-foot board.

## PITCHING OF THE BAG

1. If using a walker or wheelchair, a player may line their front wheels up just behind the foul line. A player in walker or wheelchair may not have their mobility equipment contact the foul line during their pitch, release, or follow through.
2. A player may wait until the previous bag has come to a complete stop for at least two (2) seconds before pitching the next bag.
3. Athletes may pitch underhand, overhand, or side-hand. Unified partners must pitch underhand.

## GENERAL RULES FOR DETERMINING QUALIFICATION SCORES

1. Purpose
  - a. To measure the participant's ability for placement in an appropriate division for competition.
2. Description
  - a. Each competitor tosses 4 bags at each of the 4 pitching boxes totaling 16 bags thrown.
  - b. 4 bags are thrown and then removed as the athlete or Unified Partner moves to the next pitching box to complete the next cycle of 4 throws.
3. Scoring
  - a. One (1) point is scored for each corn bag that lands and stays on the platform (and does not bounce prior to contact).
  - b. Three (3) points are scored for each corn bag that goes through the hole.
  - c. Half a point (0.5) points are scored for a corn bag that hits the platform/board but does not stay on the platform or bounces before contacting the platform.
  - d. Cancellation scoring is NOT used for this round of the match. Each bag in the hole or on the board is counted as its own match point. After every throw, the board and hole are cleared or previously thrown bags.