

SOCCER



MODIFIED EVENTS

- 5-on-5 Team
- 7-on-7 Team
- Individual Skills Competition

UNIFIED EVENTS

- Unified Team Competition

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Soccer shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based on Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) rules, which shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Soccer or Article I. In such cases the [Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Soccer](#) shall apply.

An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-axial Instability may not participate in soccer events.

COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

1. Levels

- Each team shall be placed in one (1) of three (3) levels for play, based on the attributes that best characterize their team. The level is subject to change by the Soccer Sport Management Team prior to the tournament. A Team's level will serve as the basis for the division placement.
- Teams must play at least two (2) games against two (2) different teams listed in the team directory. These teams can be at different levels.
- Level 1 – High: plays by regulation rules; high to excellent skills and athleticism; implements strategies, runs specific plays; can control the ball and able to dribble the ball with pressure by defense, has the ability to make close and mid-range shots to 12 yards and beyond, has an understanding of the games and understands how to defend and play offense,
- Level 2 – Average: plays by regulation rules; average skills and athleticism; some strategies, runs general plays; a couple of players control the ball and can dribble with pressure by defense, players are able to make close and some mid-range shots that are within 8-12 yards, limited understanding of the games and understands how to defend and play offense, goes after loose balls within 3 to 4 steps
- Level 3 – Low: following rules is a challenge; low skills and athleticism; little strategies, no organized plays; players are not control the ball and limited abilities to dribble with defense, most players can only make close shots, limited understanding of the games and understands how to defend and play offense, often beaten by a defender on the dribble or to loose balls.

DIVISIONING

- A divisioning process will be used for soccer, like all other team sports. The Soccer Management Team along with SOIN staff will work together to create these divisions by using a combination of age, gender, and ability levels. Game Records and Player Evaluations will be used to gauge the team's ability level.
- The primary goal with the divisioning process is to create divisions of equal ability for quality competition.
- Program location and travel time will be considered when scheduling.
- team will be grouped in divisions based on a classification round game or minimum game requirement and submitted game records.
- Individual Skills
 - Skills will be divisioned by age, gender, and ability.
 - Age groups will be: 8-11; 12-21; 22 & older.
 - There will be 3 - 8 athletes per division.
 - Divisioning by ability is based on the athlete's entry scores.
 - There will be no more than a 20% difference between the highest average and the lowest average in the division.
 - Age groups or genders groups may be combined if space is limited or there are not a minimum of 3 athletes to make up a division.
 - Athletes will not be disqualified due to Maximum Effort.

SPORT RULES

UNIFORM SPECIFICATIONS

- All competitors must have a playing uniform consisting of jersey, shorts, socks, athletic shoes.
- The jersey shall be numbered on the front and back.
- Shin guards are required for all competitors and must be completely covered by the socks.
- Metal studs, baseball cleats, and football cleats are not allowed for athletes that choose to wear cleats.
- Jewelry is prohibited. Religious and medical-alert medals are not considered jewelry. A religious medal must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical-alert medal must be taped and may be visible.



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EQUIPMENT

1. A size 5 ball will be used for all competition.
2. Field width shall be a minimum of 15 yards and a maximum of 25 yards.
3. Field length shall be a minimum of 25 yards and a maximum of 35 yards.
4. Goal size shall be a maximum of four (4) feet high and six (6) feet wide.

5 ON 5 GENERAL RULES

1. Number of Players
 - a. The game is played between two teams, each consisting of five (5) players.
 - b. No goalkeeper will be used.
 - c. A maximum of 12 players may be carried on a team's roster.
 - d. A minimum of three (3) players from each team shall be on the field at any time.
 - e. The following lineup ratios are allowed for Unified teams:
 - i. 3 athletes, 2 partners
 - ii. 2 athletes, 2 partners
 - iii. 2 athletes, 1 partner
 - iv. Failure to adhere to the required ratio at any time results in a forfeit.
2. Substitutions
 - a. Each team may make an unlimited number of substitutions.
 - b. Substitutions may be made any time the ball is out of bounds, between halves, after a goal is scored, or during an injury stoppage.
 - c. The coach must signal the referee to make a substitution, and the player may only come onto the field when signaled by the referee.
3. Duration of Match
 - a. The match shall consist of two (2) halves, each 15 minutes long.
 - b. A halftime lasting five (5) minutes shall separate each half of play.
4. Overtime
 - a. In regular season play, ties are considered final.
 - b. In tournament play, two (2) halves each lasting five (5) minutes are used.
 - c. If the match is still tied after the overtime periods, penalty kicks will decide the winner.
 - i. The referee will decide which goal to use.
 - ii. The referee will conduct a coin toss with the winning team choosing whether to take the first or second kick.
 - iii. Penalty kicks will be taken from the kickoff spot at midfield.
 - iv. The coach of each team will choose five (5) players to take penalty kicks in an order of the coach's choosing.
 - v. In Unified competition, the lineup ratio applies to the players selected to take penalties.
 - vi. Kicks are taken alternatively by the teams.
 - vii. The team with the most goals after five (5) penalty kicks is the winner.
 - viii. If, before both teams have taken all kicks, one team has scored more goals than the other could score, the leading team is declared the winner and no more kicks are taken.
 - ix. If, after all penalty kicks are taken, the score is still tied, teams will alternate taking one (1) penalty kick at a time (in their original order) in a sudden death format until one team is declared the winner.
5. Start of Play
 - a. A coin toss will be conducted. The winner shall choose which goal to attack. The loser shall take the opening kickoff.
 - b. All players, except the player taking the kickoff, must be in their own half of the field of play.
 - c. The ball must be stationary on the center mark and becomes in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
 - d. No goals may be scored from the kickoff. If the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.
6. The ball must completely cross the goal line (inside of the goal) to count as a goal.
7. Ball Out of Play
 - a. The ball must be completely over the sideline or goal line (outside of the goal) to be considered out of play.
 - b. Kick-Ins
 - i. When the ball completely passes over the sideline, a kick-in is awarded to the team who did not touch it last.
 - ii. The kick-in will be taken where the ball crossed out of play.
 - iii. No goals may be scored directly from a kick-in.

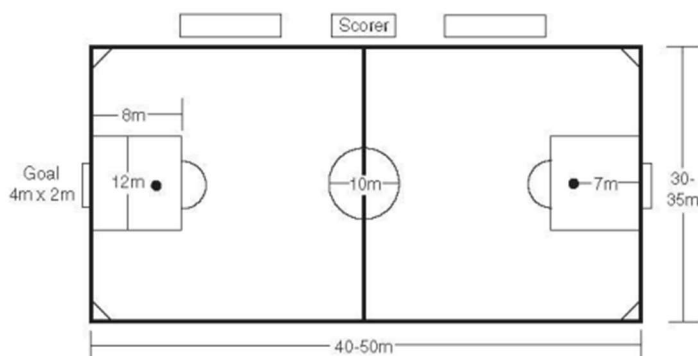


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- c. Goal Kicks
 - i. When the ball is last touched by an attacking player and completely passes over the goal line (outside of the goal), a goal kick is awarded to the defending team.
 - ii. The goal kick will be taken in the general vicinity of the goal.
 - d. Corner Kicks
 - i. When a defending player touches the ball over their own goal line (outside of the goal), a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team.
 - ii. The corner kick will be taken at the point where the sideline and goal line meet.
 - e. On all restarts, the ball must be stationary before being kicked. A moving ball results in a re-kick.
 - f. On all restarts, the player who kicks the ball may not touch the ball a second time before another player touches the ball.
 - g. On all restarts, the opposing players must retire at least five (5) yards from the ball.
8. Fouls and Misconduct
- a. Tripping, pushing, obstruction, dangerous play, or handling of the ball will result in a free kick.
 - b. Yellow or red cards may be given by the referee for repetitive or egregious fouls.
 - c. Two (2) yellow cards will result in a red card.
 - d. If a player receives two (2) yellow cards or a red card, they are expelled from the match and the team must play down a player for two (2) minutes. The referee will be responsible for keeping track of the time and will signal when the replacement player may enter the match.
9. Free Kicks
- a. Awarded to the opposing team when a player commits a foul or misconduct.
 - b. Free kicks will be taken at the spot of the foul.
 - c. No goals may be scored directly from a free kick.
 - d. The player who kicks the ball may not touch the ball a second time before another player touches the ball.
 - e. Opposing player must retire at least five (5) yards from the ball.
10. In the case of extreme heat, the referee may introduce a water break at a natural break in play, approximately midway through each half, lasting no more than three (3) minutes.
11. Coaching
- a. Coaches are restricted to coaching from their bench area on the sideline.
 - b. Only one (1) coach from each team may stand.

7 on 7 GENERAL RULES



SPECTATOR AREA

1. The Field of Play
 - a. The 5-a-side field shall be a rectangle: maximum dimensions of 50 meters by 35 meters, minimum dimensions of 40 meters by 30 meters. The smaller field is recommended for lower ability teams.
 - b. The field shall be marked out as shown below. (See 5-a-side field diagram)
 - c. The goal size must be between a minimum of three meters by two meters and a maximum of four meters by two meters.
 - d. The goal area shall be eight meters by 12 meters. The penalty mark must be at seven meters for goal size of four meters by two meters. The penalty mark must be at six meters for goal size of three meters by two meters.
 - e. The recommended playing surface is grass.
2. The Ball



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- a. Ages 8-12: Size 4 ball, not more than 66 centimeters (26 in) and not less than 63.5 centimeters (25 in).
- b. All other players: Size 5 ball, not more than 70 centimeters (28 in) and not less than 68 centimeters (27 in).
3. The Number of Players
 - a. Allowable roster size is to be determined by the Competition Committee. At the Special Olympics World Games, the roster size may not exceed 10 players.
 - b. The game is played between two teams, each consisting of five players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper. A minimum of three players shall be on the field at any one time.
 - c. Substitutions are unlimited in number (players may return to the field after being substituted). Substitutions can be made any time the ball is out of bounds, between periods, after a goal is scored or during a timeout for an injury. The coach must signal the referee or linesman in order to make a substitution. A substituted player can only come on to the field when given a signal by the referee.
1. Players' Equipment
 - a. Shirts must be numbered.
 - b. Shin pads are required.
 - c. No metal studs are allowed.
2. The Referee
 - a. Each match is controlled by one referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which he has been appointed.
3. The Assistant Referee
 - a. Two assistant referees are appointed to each match for Regional and International Competitions. For Local, Program and National Competitions it is recommended to have two referees if there are not enough assistant referees.
4. Duration of the game
 - a. The duration of the game shall be two equal periods of fifteen minutes with a halftime interval of five minutes. The referee should be responsible for keeping the playing time.
 - b. If overtime is used to break a tie, two five-minute overtime periods are used. If the game is still tied, penalty kicks will be used to break the tie. (See 11-a-side tie-break protocol).
5. Start of play
 - a. All players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be in their own half of the field of play.
 - b. The ball must be stationary on the center mark.
 - c. The referee gives a signal.
 - d. The ball is in play when it is kicked and clearly moves.
 - e. A goal can be scored directly against the opponent from the kick-off; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.
6. Ball in and out of play
 - a. Ball over the sideline results in a kick in.
 - b. Ball over the end line results in a goal clearance or a corner kick.
 - c. The ball must be completely over the line to be considered out of play.
7. Goal Clearance
 - a. When the ball passes over the goal line (not in the goal), having last been played by an attacking player, the goalkeeper, standing within his own penalty area, shall throw the ball back into play beyond his own penalty area, but not further than the halfway line (i.e., the ball must touch the ground or another player before crossing the halfway line). The ball shall be deemed in play as soon as it passes outside the penalty area.
 - b. The above rules of goal clearance also apply when a goalkeeper gains possession, with his hands, of a ball that is still in play.
 - c. Infringement penalties:
 - i. If the ball thrown by the goalkeeper passes beyond the goalkeeper's half of the field without first having been touched by a player or without having touched the ground, the referee shall award an indirect free kick for the opposing team from any point on the halfway line.
 - ii. From the goalkeeper's throw, if the ball is touched by any player inside the penalty area, the throw shall be retaken.
8. Method of scoring
 - a. The whole of the ball must have completely crossed the line inside the goal to count as a goal.



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9. Fouls and misconduct (except there is no offside):
 - a. All fouls result in an indirect free kick (except penalty kick= direct free kick).
 - b. If a player is expelled from the game (receives two yellow cards or a red card), this player may not re-enter the game. His team must play a player down for two minutes.
 - i. Keeping check of the two minutes shall be the task of the referee.
 - ii. The player who enters the game as a substitute after two minutes may only do so with the consent of the referee and when the ball is out of bounds.
10. Restart exception
 - a. Any free kick that is awarded to the defending team inside their own penalty area will be restarted with a throw from the goalkeeper.
11. Free Kick
 - a. Opposing players must retire at least five meters from the ball for all free kicks.
 - b. When an indirect free kick is awarded to the attacking team inside the penalty area, within five meters from the goal line, the referee must place the ball at five meters from the goal line.
12. Penalty Kick
 - a. A penalty kick is taken from the seven-meter mark or six-meter mark depending on size of goal (see rule 4.1.2.4 above).
13. Kick In (Equivalent to the throw in for 11-a-side)
 - a. When the whole of the ball passes over a sideline, it shall be kicked back into the game, from the place where it crossed the line (on the sideline), by a player from the opposing team to that of the player who last touched it. The ball must be stationary before being kicked. It shall be deemed in play when the ball is kicked and clearly moves. The ball cannot be played again by the kicker until it has been touched by another player. The players from the opposing team must retire at least five meters from the spot where the kick is being taken.
 - b. A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick in.
 - c. A goalkeeper may not touch the ball with hands receiving it directly from a kick in by a teammate.
 - d. A goalkeeper may not touch the ball with hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him/her by a teammate.
14. Infringement penalties
 - a. If the player taking the kick in plays the ball for a second time before it has been touched by another player, an indirect free kick is awarded to the opposing team from the point where the infringement occurred.
15. Corner-Kick
 - a. Awarded to the attacking team when a player from the defending team kicks the ball over his/her own end line.
 - b. Opposing players must retire at least five meters from the ball.
16. Water Break
 - a. In the case of extreme heat, the official representative from the Competition Committee (e.g., Field Manager) may signal to the referee to introduce a water break (maximum of three minutes) at a natural break in play, approximately halfway through each half.
17. Overtime/Penalty Kick
 - a. In regular league play, ties are considered final.
 - b. In tournament play, two five-minute overtime periods are used.
 - c. If the game is still tied after the overtime periods, penalty kicks shall be used to decide the game using the following procedure:
 - i. The referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken.
 - ii. The referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or the second kick.
 - iii. Each team is responsible for selecting five players from those on the field of play at the end of the match and the order in which they will take the kicks.
 - iv. The highest score after five penalty kicks is declared the winner. The referee keeps a record of the kicks being taken.
 - v. Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take five kicks.
 - vi. The kicks are taken alternately by the teams.
 - vii. If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken.



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- viii. If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, or have not scored any goals, kicks continue to be taken in the same order until one team has scored a goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.
- ix. A goal keeper who is injured while kicks are being taken from the penalty mark and is unable to continue as goalkeeper may be replaced by a named substitute.
- x. With the exception of the foregoing case, only players who are on the field of play at the end of the match, which includes extra time where appropriate, are eligible to take penalty kicks.
- xi. If at the end of the match one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its numbers to equate with that of its opponents. The team captain must inform the referee of the name and number of the excluded player. The referee must ensure that an equal number of players from each team remains within the center circle and they shall take the kicks.
- xii. Each kick is taken by a different player and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick.
- xiii. Once all eligible players have taken a penalty kick, the same sequence does not have to be followed as in the first round of kicks.
- xiv. An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper at any time when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken,
- xv. In Unified Sports penalty kicks, alternate kicks by athletes and partners must be taken, with the athlete taking the first penalty kick for each team.

18. Coaching from the bench area

- a. A team bench area will be provided for each team.
- b. Each bench area will be defined by a marked off rectangle, 15 meters in length, located on the sideline at least 5 meters away from the sideline and within 10 meters of the halfway line.
- c. A team bench should be provided within each area.
- d. Coaches and substitutes must remain within the bench area at all times. Only one coach can stand. Failure to adhere to this may lead to the coach being sent from the field of play.
- e. Coaches are expected to restrict their coaching to simple verbal encouragement.
- f. Verbal abuse of players or officials, or excessive and explicit coaching from the sidelines, will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and may result in a warning from the Referee. If such behavior persists, the Referee may eject the offending coach from the field.

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS COMPETITION

1. The purpose of Individual Skill Competition is to allow athletes to train and compete in basic soccer skills . Individual Skills Competition is designed for lower ability athletes who do not have the skills to participate in team soccer.
2. Each player shall be entered by submitting the scores of each of the three (3) individual skills – Dribbling, Shooting, and Run and Kick.
3. The athlete’s final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the three (3) events.
4. The total score on the entry form or GMS is used to division individuals by age and ability in groups of at least three (3) and no more than eight (8).
5. Dribbling
 - a. Equipment
 - i. Size five (5) balls, tape or chalk, four large cones to mark the finish zone
 - c. Description
 - i. The player dribbles from the starting line to the finish zone, staying inside the marked lane. The finish zone should be marked off with cones as well as chalk.
 - ii. The clock is stopped when both the player and the ball area stopped inside the finish zone. If the player overshoots the finish zone, he/she must dribble it back into the finish.
 - d. Scoring
 - h. The (in seconds) elapsed while the player is dribbling is converted into points using the scale below. A deduction of five points is made for each time the ball runs over the sidelines of the lane or if a player



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touches the ball with his/ her hands (note: if the ball runs over the sideline, the referee will immediately place another ball in the center of the lane opposite the point at which the ball went out).

6. Shooting

- a. Equipment
 - i. Size five (5) balls, tape or chalk, 4ft x 6ft goal with net
- b. Description
 - i. Athlete begins at the start line and walks or runs forward to shoot the ball into the goal from a distance of 6 meters
 - ii. Athlete is only allowed to kick the ball once
 - iii. The athlete returns to the line and the ball placer places the next ball to be shot. The athlete repeats for a total of 5 shots.
- c. Scoring
 - i. Each successful goal = 10 points
 - ii. 0 points will be given for each failed attempt

Dribble Time	Point Score
11-15	50 Points
16-20	45 Points
21-25	40 Points
26-30	35 Points
31-35	30 Points
36-40	25 Points
41-45	20 Points
46-50	25 Points
51-55	10 Points
56 or more	5 points

7. Run and Kick

- a. Equipment
 - i. size five (5) balls
 - ii. A central starting point should be marked
 - iii. A two-meter wide target gate (cones or flags) set up two meters ahead of each ball
- b. Description
 - i. Player begins at the starting marker. Athlete runs to any ball and kicks it through a target gate
 - ii. Athlete is only allowed to kick the ball once
 - iii. The player then runs and kicks another ball through a target gate
 - iv. When the player kicks the last ball the clock stops



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c. Scoring

- i. The total time (in seconds) elapsed from when the player starts to when he/she kicks the last ball is recorded and converted into points using the conversion chart below
- ii. A bonus of five points is added for each ball kicked successfully through a target gate.

Dribble Time	Point Score
5-10	60 Points
11-15	55 Points
16-20	50 Points
21-25	45 Points
26-30	40 Points
31-35	35 Points
36-40	30 Points
41-45	25 Points
46-50	20 Points
51-55	15 Points
56 or more	10 points

