

ARTICLE VIII – FOOTBALL (SOCCER)

The Official Special Olympics Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Football (Soccer) competitions. As an International sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) rules for Football (Soccer). FIFA rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply.

An athlete with Down syndrome who has been diagnosed with Atlanto-axial instability may not participate in football (soccer) events.

SECTION A – OFFICIAL EVENTS

1. Eleven-a-side Team Competition according to FIFA rules.
2. Five-a-side Team (outdoor).
3. Futsal Competition according to FIFA rules.
4. Seven-a-side Team (outdoor)
5. Unified Sports 11-A-Side Team Competition
6. Unified Sports 5-A-Side Team Competition
7. Unified Sports 7-A-Side Team Competition

The following event provides meaningful competition for athletes with lower ability levels.

8. Individual Skills Competition (ISC)

SECTION B – DIVISIONING

1. Teams may be divisioned according to a Team Skills Assessment submitted prior to the competition and by an on-site classification round.
2. In the classification rounds, teams will play a minimum of two evaluation games of at least eight minutes (Five-a-side) or fifteen minutes (Eleven-a-side).
3. The Divisioning committee shall ensure that all goalkeepers are adequately assessed.

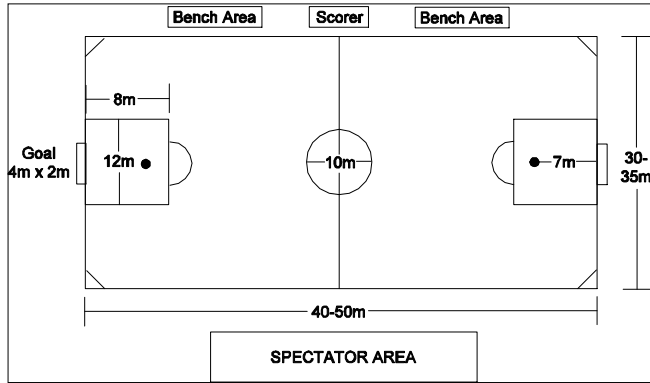
SECTION C – RULES OF COMPETITION

1. Eleven-a-side
Eleven-a-side play is based on the current rules published by FIFA with the following modifications.
 - a. Roster Size: allowable roster size is to be determined by the Competition Committee. At the Special Olympics World Games, the roster size may not exceed 16 players.
 - b. Substitutions: teams are allowed to use all substitutions named on the playing roster. Once substituted, a player cannot return to the field. Exceptions to this rule can be made by the Competition Committee (e.g. with lower ability divisions) if they consider that the quality of the game will be significantly and adversely affected. In these cases “unlimited” substitution can be allowed where players can return to the field after being substituted. A decision as to which rule is being used must be communicated to participating teams well in advance of the event.
 - c. Duration of games
 - 1) The Competition Committee may adjust the length of the game (from the standard 2 x 45 minute halves) depending on the ability levels and overall physical condition of the teams playing.
 - 2) The minimum allowable game duration shall be 2 x 20 minutes.
 - d. 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 half way through each half.
 - e. Overtime/Penalty Kick
 - 1) In regular league play, ties are considered final.
 - 2) In tournament play, if overtime is used to break a tie, two “golden goal” periods shall be played (first goal scored wins).
 - 3) For 11-a-side, these periods shall be seven and one half minutes each.
 - 4) If the game is still tied after the overtime periods, penalty-kicks shall be used to decide the game.
 - a) Five players are selected from each team.

- b) Each player takes a penalty kick, alternating teams with each shot.
 - c) The highest score after five penalty kicks is declared the winner.
 - d) If the game is still tied after five kicks, the penalty kicks continue on a “golden goal” basis using the remainder of the team’s players (including goalkeepers) until a winner is decided.
- f. Coaching from the bench area
- 1) A team bench area will be provided for each team.
 - 2) Each bench area will be defined by a marked off rectangle, 15m in length, located on the sideline at least 5m away from the side-line and within 10m of the half-way line.
 - 3) A team bench should be provided within each area.
 - 4) Substitute players and coaches are expected to remain seated within the bench area at all times except when making a substitution.
 - 5) Coaches are expected to restrict their coaching to simple verbal encouragement.
- g. Verbal abuse of players or officials, or excessive and explicit coaching from the side-lines 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.
2. Five-a-side (Outdoor)
- a. Field of play
- 1) The Five-a-side field shall be a rectangle, maximum dimensions 50m x 35m, minimum dimensions 40m x 30m The smaller field is recommended for lower ability teams.
 - 2) The field shall be marked out as shown below. (See five-a-side field diagram)
 - 3) The goal size shall be approximately 4m x 2m.
 - 4) The recommended playing surface is grass.
- b. The ball (As for 11-a-side: Size four for eight to twelve year olds/ Size five for all other players.)
- c. Number of players
- 1) Allowable roster size is to be determined by the Competition Committee. At the Special Olympics World Games, the roster size may not exceed ten players.
 - 2) 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.
 - 3) Substitutions are unlimited in number (players may return to the field after being substituted). Substitutions can be made anytime the ball is out-of-bounds, between periods, after a goal is scored, or during a time-out 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.
- d. Players equipment as for 11-a-side:
- 1) Shirts must be numbered.
 - 2) Shin-pads are required.
- e. Referee as for 11-a-side; one referee
- f. Linesman as for 11-a-side; two linesman
- g. Duration of the game
- 1) The duration of the game shall be two equal periods of fifteen minutes with a half-time interval of five minutes. The referee should be responsible for keeping the playing time.
 - 2) If overtime is used to break a tie, two five minute, “golden goal” overtime periods are used (first goal scored wins). If the game is still tied, penalty kicks will be used to break the tie. (See 11-a-side tie-break protocol.)
- h. Start of play: as for 11-a-side
- 1) A ball must be kicked at least one full revolution forward from the center-spot before being touched by another player.
- i. Ball in and out of play
- 1) Ball over the side-line results in a kick-in.
 - 2) Ball over the end-line results in a goal-clearance or a corner kick.
 - 3) The ball must be completely over the line to be considered out of play.

- j. Goal Clearance
 - 1) 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 half-way line (i.e. the ball must touch the ground or another player before crossing the half-way line.) The ball shall be deemed in play as soon as it passed outside the penalty area.
 - 2) The above rules of goal clearance also apply when a goalkeeper gains possession, with his hands, of a ball that is still in play.
 - 3) Infringement penalties:
 - a) 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 half-way line.
 - b) From the goalkeeper's throw, if the ball is touched by an opposing player inside the penalty area, the throw shall be retaken.
- k. Method of scoring: as for 11-a-side, the whole of the ball must have completely crossed the line inside the goal to count as a goal.
- l. Fouls and misconducts: as for 11-a-side except there is no off-side: tripping, pushing, handball, or charging result in a direct free-kick. Obstruction or dangerous play results in an indirect.
 - 1) 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 unless a goal is scored before the two minutes have elapsed. In this case the following shall apply:
 - a. If there are five players against four players and the team with the larger number scores a goal, the team with four players may be completed;
 - b. If both teams are playing with four players and a goal is scored, both teams may be completed.
 - c. If there are five players playing against three or four against three and the team with the larger number scores a goal, the team with three players may be increased by one more player only.
 - d. If both teams are playing with three players and a goal is scored, both teams may add one more player.
 - e. If the team scoring the goal is the one with fewer players, the game shall continue without changing the number of players.
 - Keeping check of the two minutes shall be the task of the Time or fourth Official.
 - 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.
- m. Re-start exception
 - Any free-kick that is awarded to the defending team inside their own penalty area will be restarted with a throw from the goalkeeper.
- n. Free-kick
 - 1) Opposing players must retire at least 5m from the ball for all free-kicks.
- o. Penalty Kick
 - 1) Is taken from the 7m line. All players except the kicker and the goalkeeper must retire outside the penalty area and arc. The goalkeeper must stand on his/her goal-line until the penalty kick is taken.)
- p. Kick In (Equivalent to the throw-in in 11-a-side)
 - 1) When the whole of the ball passes over a side-line, it shall be kicked back into the game, from the place where it crossed the line (on the side-line), 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 immediately after it has traveled the distance of its own circumference. 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 5m from the spot where the kick is being taken.
 - 2) A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-in.

- 3) A goalkeeper may not pick up a ball passed back to him from a kick-in.
- q. Infringement penalties
- 1) 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.
- r. Corner-Kick: as in 11-a-side, is awarded to the attacking team when a player from the defending team kicks the ball over his/her own end-line.
- 1) Opposing players must retire at least 5m from the ball.



3. Indoor Football (Futsal)

At present, Special Olympics does not offer indoor football (Futsal) at the World Games level. However, Special Olympics encourages this playing format in countries where it is popular. The Special Olympics rules for this format follow the current rules for Futsal printed by FIFA.

4. Seven a side football.

- a. size of the field: 50-70m in length and 35 - 50m in width
The size of the football pitch is the same as a 5 a side pitch. This means that on a regular 11 a side pitch you can make 2 pitches. You do not need more space or adjustments for the 7 a side field.
- b. size of the goal: minimum 2mx4m, maximum 2mx5m
- c. exception: Athletes may either kick or throw the ball in from the side line
- d. number of players: 7
- e. rules: all the rules are the same as 5 a side rules

5. Unified Sports Team Competition (Eleven-a-side, Seven-a-side, & Five-a-side)

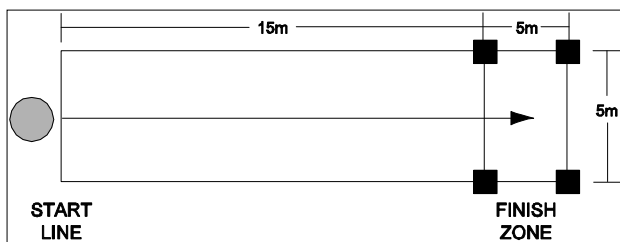
- a. The roster shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and partners.
- b. During competition, the line up shall never exceed six athletes and five partners at any time (three athletes and two partners for a five-a-side). Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit.
- c. Each team shall have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the line-up and conduct of the team during competition.

6. Individual Skills Competition

- The ISC is designed specifically for lower ability athletes who have not yet developed the skills necessary to participate meaningfully in team soccer, and for players who cannot participate in team soccer because of their need to use a walking device.
- The ISC consists of three events: dribbling; shooting; and run & kick. Competitors should first go through a divisioning round where each athlete performs each event once. The total score from the three events is then used to place players in divisions with others of similar abilities for the competition (medal) round.

- In the medal round, each player should perform each event twice. The total score from the two rounds is added together to give the final score.

A. Individual Skills Competition- Event #1: Dribbling



1) Equipment

#5/#4 ball, tape or chalk, four large cones to mark the finish zone.

2) Description

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. The clock is stopped when both the player and the ball are stopped inside the finish zone. If the player overshoots the finish zone, he/she must dribble it back in to finish.

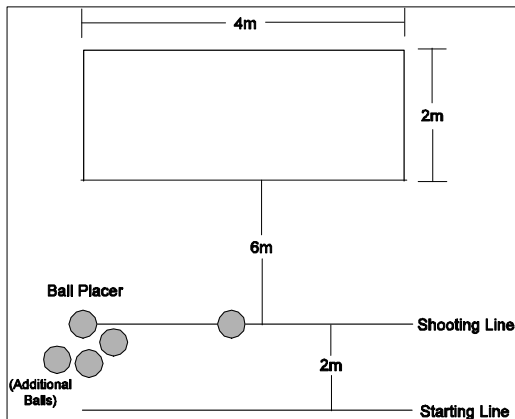
3) Scoring

The time (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 side-lines of the lane or if a player touches the ball with his/her hands (note: If the ball runs over the side-line, the referee will immediately place another ball in the center of the lane opposite the point at which the ball went out).

Scoring conversion chart:

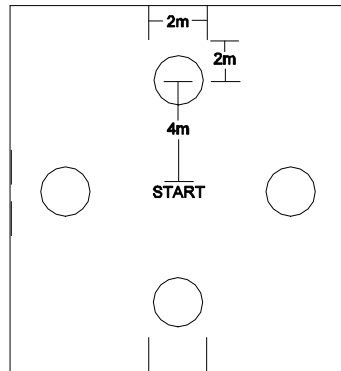
| Dribble Time (Seconds) | Point Score |
|---------------------------|-------------|
| 5-10 | 60 points |
| 11-15 | 55 points |
| 16-20 | 50 points |
| 21-25 | 45 points |
| 26-30 | 40 points |
| 31-35 | 35 points |
| 36-40 | 30 points |
| 41-45 | 25 points |
| 46-50 | 20 points |
| 51-55 | 15 points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

B. Individual Skills Competition- Event #2: Shooting



- 1) Equipment
Five #5 or #4 balls, tape or chalk, 4m x 2m five-a-side goal with net.
- 2) Description
Player begins at the starting marker. Athlete runs to any ball and kicks it through a target gate.
Athlete is only allowed to kick the ball once. The player then runs and kicks another ball through a target gate. When the player kicks the last ball, the clock is stopped at a maximum of 2 minutes.
- 3) Scoring
Each successful goal scores 10 points.

C. Individual Skills Competition- Event #3: Run and Kick



- 1) Equipment
Four #5 or #4 balls. A central starting point should be marked. A 2m wide target gate (cones or flags) set up 2m ahead of each ball.
- 2) Description
Player begins at the starting marker. Athlete runs to any ball and kicks it through a target gate.
Athlete is only allowed to kick the ball once. The player then runs and kicks another ball through a target gate. When the player kicks the last ball, the clock is stopped.
- 3) Scoring
The total time (in seconds) elapsed from when the player starts to when he/she kicks the ball is recorded and converted into points using the conversion chart below. A bonus of five points is added for each ball kicked successfully through a target gate.

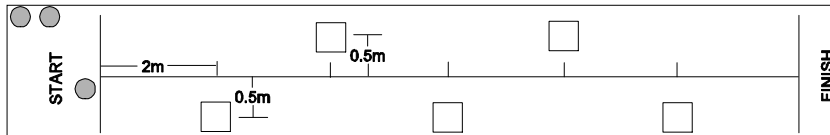
Scoring conversion chart:

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| 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 | 15 points |
| 51-55 | 10 points |
| 55 or more | 5 points |

SECTION D – FOOTBALL (SOCCER) TEAM SKILLS ASSESSMENT TEST

Individual player scores from each of the following skills assessment tests must be submitted to the Competition Organizing Committee by all teams entering Special Olympics Football (Soccer) competition. These tests are designed to help the Competition Committee gain a preliminary idea as to the ability level of the teams entered in the tournament. This allows the Committee to place teams in preliminary divisions for on-site evaluation. These tests can be critical to the success of the tournament. These tests are to be used as an enhancement to, not a replacement for, on-site observation and evaluation.

1. Football (Soccer) Team Skills Assessment Test- Dribbling



SET-UP

- 12m dribbling slalom: five cones (minimum 18" high), 2m apart, staggered 0.5m from central line. Three to five balls at the start line.

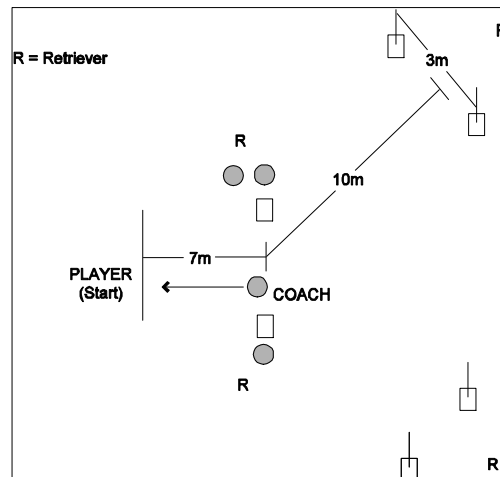
TEST

- Time: one minute.
- Player dribbles through slalom as quickly as possible, rounding all cones.
- Player leaves ball over the finish line (ball must be stopped) and sprints back to the start.
- If there is time remaining, player starts with the second ball and repeats.
- Player continues to repeat until one minute time has elapsed.
- A whistle will be blown when one minute has elapsed to signify the end of the test.

SCORING

- Player scores 5 points for each cone passed (to the outside) (i.e. 25 points per successful run).
- Cones that are knocked down do not count.

2. Football (Soccer) Team Skills Assessment Test- Control and Pass



SET-UP

- Two cones to form a "passing gate" 5m wide, 7m from the starting line.
- Two passing "target gates" (cones & 1m flags if possible) as shown.
- Four to eight soccer balls. (If balls are in short supply, use four balls but have an efficient retrieval system for returning balls to the coach).

TEST

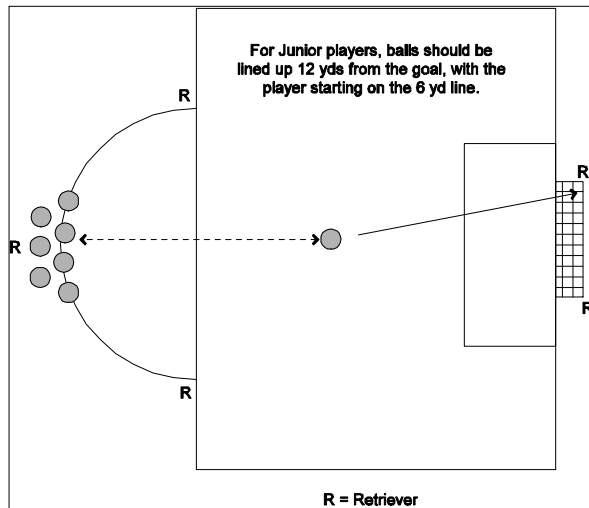
- Time: One minute.
- Coach rolls the ball at moderate pace to the waiting player.
- The player may wait on the line or move towards the ball once it has been rolled.
- Player controls the ball and dribbles through the passing gate.

- Coach alternately calls and physically indicates “left” or “right” to designate target..
- Ball one: Right /Ball two: Left /Ball three Right, etc.
- Players can dribble as close as they like before passing the ball through the target.
- The coach will roll the next ball as soon as the player returns to the starting line.
- At one minute, a whistle will be blown to signify the end of the test.

SCORING

- Player scores 10 points for each successful pass through a target gate.
- A ball that hits the cone and goes through will count.

3. Football (Soccer) Team Skills Assessment Test- Shooting



SET-UP

- Penalty area and full-size goal with nets, on a regulation field.
- Four to eight balls at the top of the penalty arc. (If balls are in short supply, the test can be run with -four to five balls with a good retrieval and return system.)

TEST

- Player starts at the penalty spot. Runs to the first ball. Collects the ball. Dribbles into the penalty area and shoots. Attempting to shoot the ball **IN THE AIR** into the goal.
- Players can shoot from whatever distance they choose once they are inside the penalty area.
- As soon as the player has shot, he/she returns and repeats with another ball.
- A whistle will be blown after one minute to signify the end of the test.

SCORING

Player scores ten points for each shot traveling from foot to goal **IN THE AIR**. Five points for each shot that touches the ground before entering the goal