



FOOTBALL (SOCCER)**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. 11-a-side Team Competition according to FIFA rules
2. 5-a-side Team (outdoor)
3. Futsal Competition according to FIFA rules
4. 7-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 (5-a-side) or fifteen minutes (11-a-side).
3. The Divisioning Committee shall ensure that all goalkeepers are adequately assessed.

SECTION C — RULES OF COMPETITION**1. 11-a-side Football**

11-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 two, 45-minute halves) depending on the ability levels and overall physical condition of the teams playing.
 - 2) The minimum allowable game duration shall be two, 20-minute halves.



FOOTBALL (SOCCER)

- 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 halfway 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, 15 meters in length, located on the sideline at least 5 meters away from the sideline and within 10 meters of the halfway 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 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.

2. 5-a-side (outdoor) Football

- a. Field of play
 - 1) 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.
 - 2) The field shall be marked out as shown below. (See 5-a-side field diagram)
 - 3) The goal size shall be approximately 4 meters by 2 meters.
 - 4) The recommended playing surface is grass.
- b. The ball (same as for 11-a-side) Size four for 8-12 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 10 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.

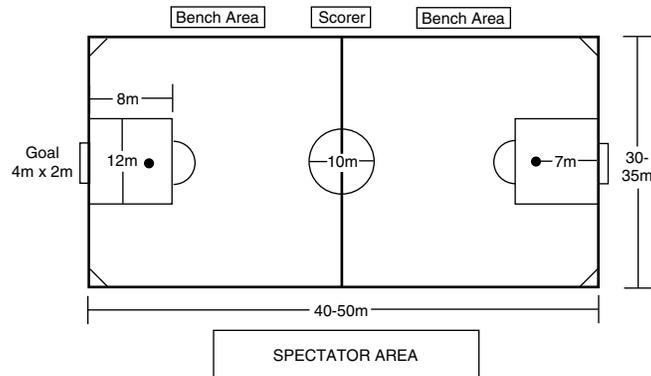
**FOOTBALL (SOCCER)**

- 3) 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.
- d. Players' equipment (same as for 11-a-side):
- 1) Shirts must be numbered.
 - 2) Shin pads are required.
- e. One referee (same as for 11-a-side)
- f. Two linesman (same as for 11-a-side)
- g. Duration of the game
- 1) 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.
 - 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 (same 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 sideline 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 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.
 - 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 halfway 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 (same 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 misconduct (same as for 11-a-side except there is no offside): 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:



FOOTBALL (SOCCER)

- 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.
 - i. Keeping check of the two minutes shall be the task of the Time or Fourth Official.
 - 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.
- m. Restart exception
 - 1) 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 5 meters from the ball for all free kicks.
- o. Penalty Kick
 - 1) A penalty kick is taken from the 7-meter 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 for 11-a-side)
 - 1) 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 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 5 meters 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 (same as in 11-a-side): 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 5 meters from the ball.

**FOOTBALL (SOCCER)****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. 7-a-side Footballa. Size of the field:

- 1) 50–70 meters in length and 35–50 meters in width.
- 2) 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 two pitches. You do not need more space or adjustments for the 7-a-side field.

b. Size of the goal:

- 1) Minimum of 2 meters by 4 meters, maximum of 2 meters by 5 meters

c. Exception:

- 1) Athletes may either kick or throw the ball in from the sideline

d. Number of players:

- 1) Seven

e. Rules:

- 1) All the rules are the same as 5-a-side rules

5. Unified Sports Team Competition (11-a-side, 7-a-side and 5-a-side)

- a. The roster shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and partners.
- b. During competition, the lineup shall never exceed six athletes and five partners at any time (three athletes and two partners for 5-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 lineup and conduct of the team during competition.

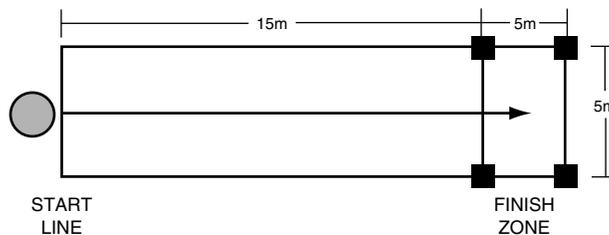


FOOTBALL (SOCCER)

6. Individual Skills Competition (ISC)

The ISC is designed specifically for lower ability athletes who have not yet developed the skills necessary to participate meaningfully in team football, and for players who cannot participate in team football because of their need to use a walking device. The ISC consists of three events: dribbling; shooting; and run and 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 Number 1: Dribbling



1) Equipment

Size four or size five balls, 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

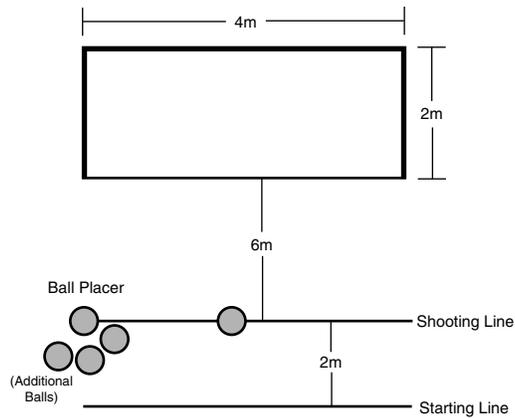
The time (in seconds) elapsed while the player is dribbling is converted into points using the scale below. A deduction of five points is made for each time the ball runs over the sidelines of the lane or if a player touches the ball with his/her hands (note: If the ball runs over the sideline, the referee will immediately place another ball in the center of the lane opposite the point at which the ball went out).

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

**FOOTBALL (SOCCER)**

b. Individual Skills Competition — Event Number 2: Shooting



1) Equipment

Size four or size five balls, tape or chalk, 4 meter by 2 meter five-a-side goal with net.

2) Description

Athlete begins at the start line and walks or runs forward to shoot the ball into the goal from a distance of six meters. Athlete is only allowed to kick the ball once. The athlete returns to the line. Ball placer (official) places the next ball to be shot. Athlete repeats. Total of five shots. When the player kicks the last ball, the clock is stopped at a maximum of two minutes.

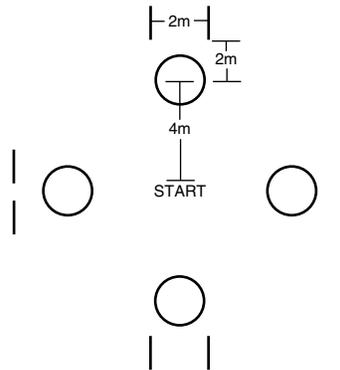
3) Scoring

Each successful goal scores 10 points.



FOOTBALL (SOCCER)

c. Individual Skills Competition — Event Number 3: Run and Kick



1) Equipment

Four, size four or size five, balls. A central starting point should be marked. A 2-meter wide target gate (cones or flags) set up 2 meters 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:

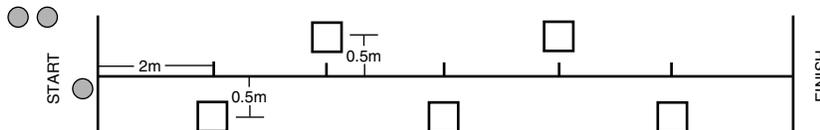
11–15	50 points
16–20	45 points
21–25	40 points
26–30	35 points
31–35	30 points
36–40	25 points
41–45	20 points
46–50	15 points
51–55	10 points
55 or more	5 points

**FOOTBALL (SOCCER)****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 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**SETUP**

12-meter dribbling slalom: five cones (minimum 18 inches high), 2 meters apart, staggered 0.5 meters 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 has elapsed.

A whistle will be blown when one minute has elapsed to signify the end of the test.

SCORING

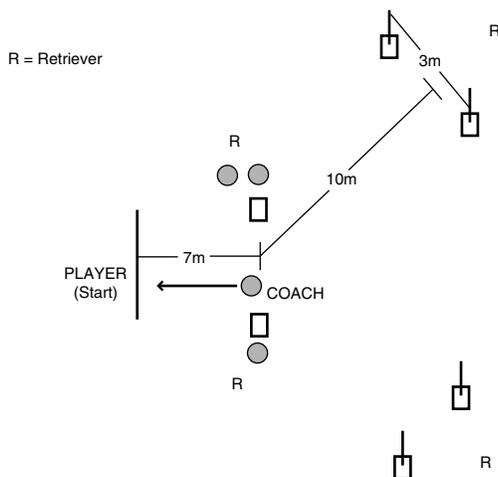
Player scores five points for each cone passed (to the outside) (i.e., 25 points per successful run).

Cones that are knocked down do not count.



FOOTBALL (SOCCER)

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



SETUP

Two cones to form a “passing gate” 5 meters wide, 7 meters from the starting line.

Two passing “target gates” (cones and 1-meter 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 toward 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.

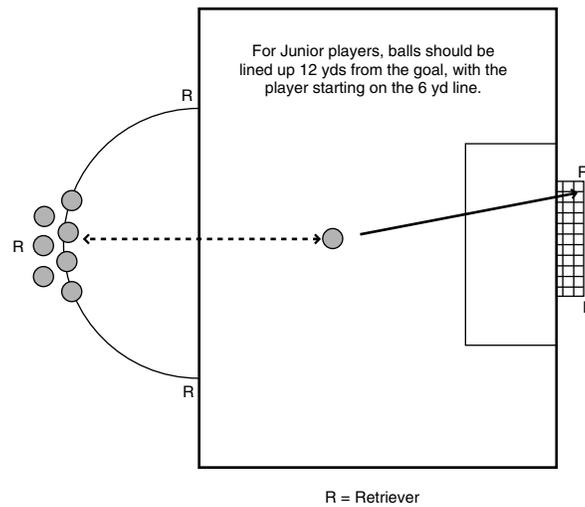
The coach will roll the next ball as soon as the player returns to the starting line.

After 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.

**FOOTBALL (SOCCER)****3. Football (Soccer) Team Skills Assessment Test — Shooting****SETUP**

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.