



Soccer

Highlighted & Modified Rules

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Football (Soccer) shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon Federation International Football Association (FIFA) rules for football (soccer) found at <http://www.fifa.com/worldfootball/lawsofthegame.html> FIFA or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed **except when they conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Football (Soccer) or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Football (Soccer) apply:**

1. Teams:

All matches 5 a-side, either traditional (all athletes) or unified. Unified has 3 athletes and 2 partners. The ratio of athletes to partners must be 1 to 1 or higher.

2. Equipment:

Every player is required to wear shin guards covered by long socks, with shoes, a shirt and shorts. No jewelry except medical alert or religious items. Other protective gear must be padded with no hard surfaces or protrusions (includes billed hats). The referee approves all equipment to ensure the safety of all players.

3. Time of Game:

Unless modified by the competition director, a **game is two equal periods of 15 minutes with a five-minute half-time**. The referee is responsible for keeping the official playing time. There are **NO time outs** in soccer.

4. Overtime:

Except in a Round Robin format, every match must have a winner! If the **match is tied at the end of regulation time**, one five-minute, "Golden Goal Overtime" period is played. **If the game is still tied after overtime, penalty kicks will be used.** Only players on the field can kick. If unified, the order kicks is Athlete-Partner-A-P-A.

5. Substitutions:

Teams are allowed unlimited substitutions. Substitutions are only made during stoppages in play. The coach must signal, and the referee acknowledges the signal, to make a substitution. A substituted player can only come onto the field only when a signal is given by the referee.

6. Fouls:

Fouls follow international standards, with **direct (DFK) and indirect free kicks (IDFK)**. A goal can be scored from a DFK and on an IDFK the ball must touch someone else (opponent or teammate) before a goal can be scored. Fouls with contact result in a DFK. Fouls without contact or technical violations of the rules result in IDFK.

7. Kick-ins:

If a ball crosses the sideline, it is kicked back into play from the point it crossed the line. The **ball is stationary and the opposing player's team must be at least five meters (5m) the ball**. The kicker cannot play the ball again until another player has touched it. A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-in. A goalkeeper may not pick up a ball passed directly to him/her by a teammate from a kick-in.

8. Goalkeeper:

When the ball passes over the goal-line (not in the goal), last touched by an attacking player, the goalkeeper, standing within his/her own penalty area, must throw the ball back into play beyond his own penalty area, but not further than the mid-field.

If the ball goes over mid-field line without touching another player or the ground, it is an IDFK for the opponent. The ball is in play only after it leaves the Penalty Area. The **above rule also applies when the goalkeeper gains possession with his/her hands**. If the goalkeeper touches the ball with their hands, they must throw the ball back into play. No punting or drop-kicks allowed!

9. Off-Side:

There is no offside.

10. No Slide tackling - Headers are allowed.

Unified Teams: There are no restrictions on who plays in a position or who can score, however, Meaningful Involvement rules apply.