



SOCCER RULES: HIGHLIGHTS

To clear up some commonly misunderstood Special Olympics soccer rules, please especially familiarize yourself with the following rules in addition to the full Official Special Olympics Inc. Soccer Rules (accessible via www.specialolympicsma.org) and FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association), the Special Olympics Inc. Soccer National Governing Body:

DURATION OF GAME

- 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.

ROSTER SIZE

- Allowable roster size for SOMA is 12 players
- 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.

UNIFIED SPORTS® TEAM COMPETITION

- **During competition, the line up shall never exceed three athletes and two partners for five-a-side**. Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit. All players on the field are allowed to score.

UNIFIED MENTORING TEAM COMPETITION

- Special Olympics Unified Sports® and SOMA Soccer rules apply except:
 - Partners must be identified to the official prior to the start of each game as well as during substitutions
 - Partners cannot shoot or score
 - Partners can play any position on the field with the exception of goalie
 - Partners cannot steal the ball from an athlete
 - Partners may challenge the athlete but not steal the ball directly off their feet
 - The judgment about stealing the ball is left to the officials discretion
- If any of the above rules are broken an in-direct free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team
 - Officials will use their discretion in giving yellow and red cards for a player who is breaking the rules excessively

SUBSTITUTIONS

- 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.

EQUIPMENT

- Shin-pads are required. Please make sure that all shin guards are covered.
- Numbered Uniforms are required.
- Soccer cleats must be worn. No metal cleats are allowed. Football or baseball cleats may be substituted as long as the front toe cleat is cut off.

ROUND ROBIN

- Each team will play all other teams in their division once.
- Medals will be awarded based on points
 - 3 points will be awarded to a team for a win
 - 1 point will be awarded to a team for a tie
 - 0 points will be awarded to a team for a loss
- The team with the most points receives the gold medal and so on.
- If two teams end up with the same amount of points (same record), the team that won in the head to head match up wins the tiebreaker.
- In the case of a three or more team tie, the differential between points scored and points scored against will determine the winner. A cap of 5 points per game played will be used toward a team's total points to determine a winner to eliminate the incentive to run up the score during competition. Ex. Team A beats Team B 9-2 goal difference is a +5 for the victor and -5 for the loser.
 - If teams are still tied, the team with the fewest goals allowed will win the tiebreaker.
- All forfeits count, as a loss and the winning team will record a winning score of 2-0. If a team that has a forfeit in their record is tied with another team(s) that team with the forfeit will automatically lose the tiebreaker.

BALL IN AND OUT OF PLAY

- A) Ball over the side-line results in a **kick-in**.
- B) Ball over the end-line results in a **goal-clearance** or a **corner kick**.

A) KICK IN (Equivalent to the throw-in in 11-a-side)

- 1 Ball is kicked in 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.
- 4 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.

B) 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.

C) CORNER-KICK

- 1 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.
- 2 Opposing players must retire at least 5m from the ball.

FOULS AND MISCONDUCTS

- Tripping, pushing, handball or charging results in a direct free kick. Obstruction or dangerous play results in an indirect kick.

FREE KICK

- Opposing players must retire at least 5m from the ball for all free kicks.

PENALTY KICK

- 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.