



Special Olympics Minnesota Soccer Handbook

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COACH CERTIFICATION RATIO TABLE

The updated coach certification ratio tables can be found in the Special Olympics Minnesota Coaches Portal under policies and fact sheets, or here: [Coach Ratio Table](#)

MORE INFORMATION

Practice ideas, skill assessment/development, and rules can be found in the SOI Quick Start Guides and SOI Rules for each respective sport can be found at www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx

RULES OF COMPETITION

Gameplay and Timing

Games will consist of two 15-minute halves and a 5-minute break during halftime. If the game is still tied after the second 15-minute half, penalty kicks will be used to decide the winner. There will be no overtime periods.

During penalty kicks, the official will choose which goal to use, and a coin toss will decide which team shoots first. Five players are selected from each team, and kicks are taken alternately. The highest score after five penalty kicks is declared the winner. If the game is still tied after five kicks, the penalty kicks continue as sudden death using the remainder of the team's players until a winner is decided.

Kicks are made from the penalty mark. For Unified, penalty kicks will alternate between athletes and Unified partners. An athlete must take the first penalty kick for each team.

General Rules

When the ball passes over the end line (not in the goal), having last been played by an attacking player, the goalkeeper will throw the ball back into play. The throw will happen while standing in their own penalty area, and must be thrown beyond the penalty area, but not further than the midline. The ball will be deemed in play as soon as it passes outside the penalty area.

When throwing the ball back into play, the goalie must throw the ball so that it either bounces before the midline or touches another player before the midline. The penalty for a violation of this rule is that the opponent's goalie will be given the ball to throw into play on their end. This rule also applies when a goalkeeper gains possession, with their hands, of a ball that is still in play. No punts allowed.

When the ball passes over a sideline, a throw-in will occur. The player must throw the ball according to the rules. If there is a physical impairment that does not allow a player to throw the ball in described by the rules, then the coach must inform the official of that prior to the game starting. Otherwise, throw-in rules will be enforced.

Any ball over the end line off a defensive player, including the goalkeeper, will result in an offensive corner kick. Any ball over the end line last touched by the offense will result in a goalie throw-in.

Headers are not allowed in any gameplay.

Unified Rules

Unified partners should not be involved in coaching. Unified partners will count as Level 1 coaches for coach ratio purposes. However, Unified partners are required to follow all rules established for athletes. There is more information on the role of Unified partners in the Sportsmanship section of this handbook.

Fouls and Free Kicks

There is no offside in 5-on-5 competition. All fouls will result in an indirect free kick. If an athlete is kicked out of the game, the team with the expelled player must play a player down for two minutes. This two-minute period will be clocked by the official. The player who enters the game as a substitute after two minutes must wait for consent from the official and when the ball is out of bounds.

Any free kick that is awarded to the defending team inside their own penalty area will be restarted with a throw from the goalkeeper. Opposing players must give at least five meters of space from the ball for all free kicks. When an indirect free kick is awarded to the attacking team inside the penalty area, within five meters from the goal line, the official must place the ball at five meters from the goal line.

A penalty kick is taken from the 6-meter mark, which will be walked off by the official.

Uniforms

The soccer uniform will consist of a jersey or shirt, shorts or sweatpants, matching stockings, shin guards, and shoes. The Special Olympics logo must be on the jersey.

Jerseys or shirts are required to have numbers on the back. Numbers on the front or the shorts are allowed, but not required. Numbers should be centered on the jersey, and each player must have a different number. These numbers should be contrasting colors when compared to the jersey color. The goalkeeper will wear colors that distinguish them from the other players on the team.

Shin guards must be completely covered by the stockings, made of a suitable material (rubber, plastic, polyurethane, or similar substance), and afford a reasonable degree of protection. Soccer shoes must have rubber sole cleats. No metal cleats are allowed.

Hats, bandanas, du-rags, jewelry, and denim may not be worn during games or practices. Headbands, wristbands, and arm sleeves are allowed. Headwear for religious or medical reasons are allowed but must be brought to the attention of event management prior to competition.

Field and Equipment

The field size will be a maximum of 50 meters by 35 meters. The goal must be between 3 meters and 4 meters wide, and 2 meters tall. The goal box area will be 8 meters by 12 meters. The penalty kick marking will be 6 meters away from the goal line.

The recommended playing surface is grass or turf. Size 5 soccer balls will be used at all competitions. The only time this may change is if both teams are better suited to compete with a size 4 ball.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Team Size

For traditional 5-on-5 soccer, the roster minimum is 6 athletes, with a maximum of 10 athletes. For Unified 5-on-5 soccer, the roster minimum is 7 participants, with a maximum of 10 participants. For Unified, the number of Unified partners cannot be greater than the number of athletes on a roster, and each roster must have at least 2 Unified partners registered.

Games must start with five players. Games may continue with four players if an injury occurs during the game. If this happens in Unified, there must still be two athletes and two Unified partners on the field. Failure to comply will result in a forfeit for the game.

Each team will have a non-playing Level 2 coach responsible for the lineup and conduct of the team during competition. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that every registered participant of the team enters the game at least once. Playing time does not need to be equal, but every participant, barring injury, is required to enter each game.

Each participant is allowed to register for only one event. This means that you cannot play on a team and participate in individual skills or play on two different teams.

Special Olympics Minnesota will not use an alternate system within registration. Please register anyone on your roster that could participate on the day of competition. If they are not able to compete, then they will be scratched on that day.

Divisioning

Coaches complete individual assessment scores for each athlete and add scores to determine team assessment score, which is the average score of the team. Assessment scores are submitted during the online registration process.

Divisioning is based on assessment scores and the results from previous competitions. When divisioning for state, much more emphasis is put on common opponents, coach notes, previous game results, and competitions. Divisioning is done by Special Olympics Minnesota staff before every competition.

Divisioning Team Sports Disclaimer

The divisioning process for team sports is much different than individual sports. Unlike most individual sports, team sports do not have concrete distances or times that can be used. Once a game starts, the information contained in the assessments often takes a back seat to the dynamics at play on the court or field.

The challenge with divisioning team sports is that there are many factors that affect how a team performs on any given day. Those, along with divisioning committees, allow for more coach involvement, better team evaluation, and improved divisioning. We recognize there may be some games during a competition that are not competitive but hope that the team sports divisioning process creates the most equal divisions possible.

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS RULES

The Individual Skills competition is designed for wheelchair athletes, or lower ability or new athletes who have not yet developed the skills necessary to participate meaningfully in team competition. Athletes may not be assisted by coaches. Modifications will be made for athletes who have visual or hearing impairments.

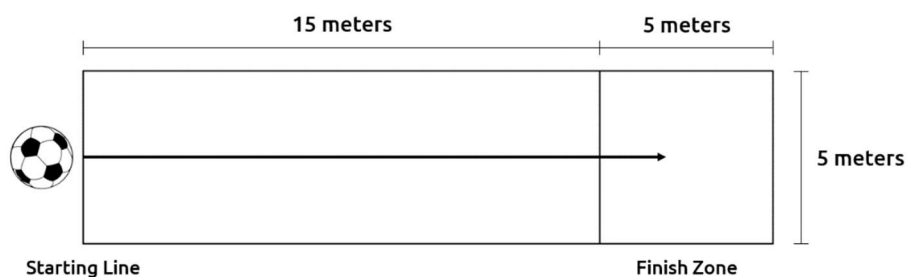
The competition itself is comprised of three skills stations: Dribbling, Shooting, and Run and Kick. The athlete's final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the three events.

Dribbling

The equipment needed is a regulation size ball (size 5), tape or chalk, and four large cones to mark the finish zone.

The player will dribble from the starting line to the finish zone, staying inside the marked line. The finish zone should be marked off with cones as well as chalk, if applicable. The clock is stopped when both the player and the ball are stopped inside the finish zone. If the player overshoots the finish zone, they must dribble it back into the finish zone for the time to stop.

The time, in seconds, elapsed while the player is dribbling is converted into points using the scale on this page. A deduction of 5 points is made for each time the ball runs over the sidelines of the lane or if a player touches the ball with their hands. Note that 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.

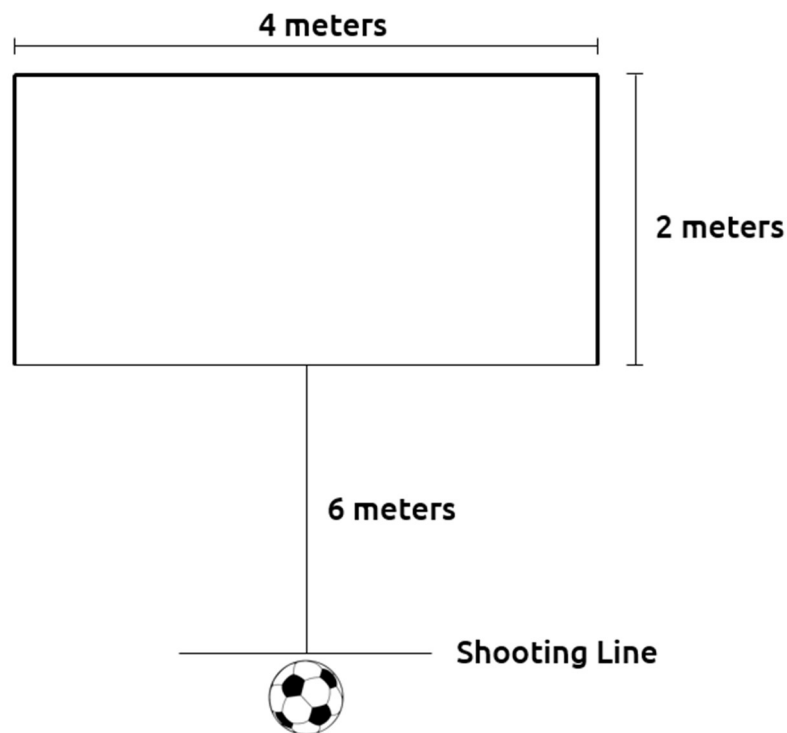


Time (seconds)	Points
0-10.0	60
10.1-15.0	55
15.1-20.0	50
20.1-25.0	45
25.1-30.0	40
30.1-35.0	35
35.1-40.1	30
40.1-45.0	25
45.1-50.0	20
50.1-55.0	15
55.1+	10

Shooting

The equipment needed is five regulation size balls (size 5), tape or chalk, and a goal that should not be larger than 4 meters by 2 meters. This is the same sized net that is used in 5-on-5 competition.

The athlete begins at the starting line and walks or runs forward to shoot the ball into the goal from 6 meters. The athlete will return to the line while the ball placer, or official, places the next ball to be shot. The athlete will take a total of 5 shots and must be completed within two minutes. Each goal is worth 10 points.

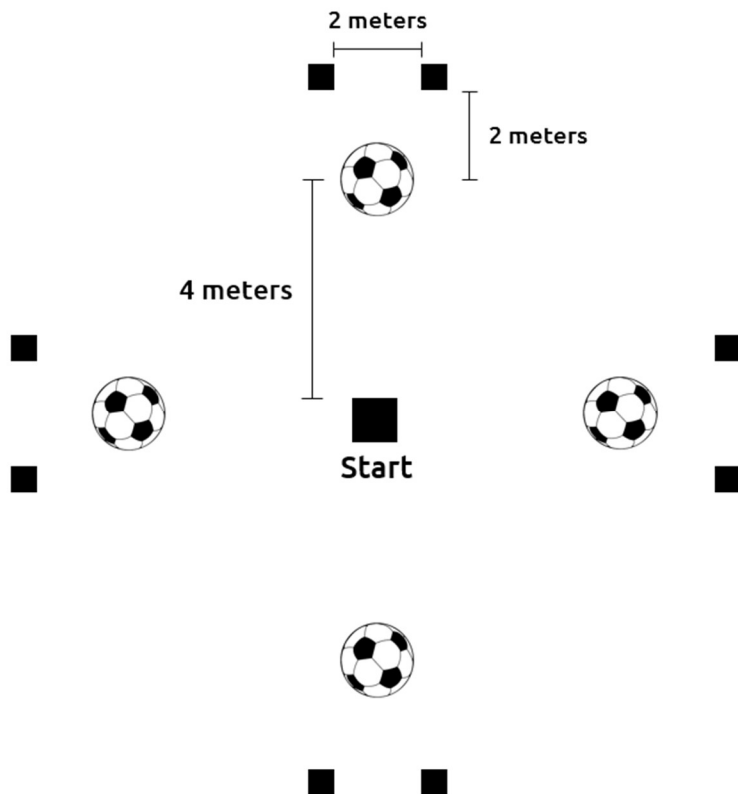


Run and Kick

The equipment needed is four regulation size balls (size 5) and 8 cones or flags. For setup, a centralized starting point should be marked, with four 2-meter gates set up 2 meters ahead of each ball.

The athlete will begin at the starting marker. They will run to any ball and kick it through a target gate. Each athlete is only allowed to kick each ball one time. They will then run to another ball and attempt to kick it through the next gate. When the athlete kicks the last ball, the clock is stopped.

The total time, in seconds, elapsed from when the athlete starts to when they kick the last ball is recorded and converted into points using the conversion chart below. A 5-point bonus is added for each ball kicked successfully through a target gate.



Time (seconds)	Points
0.0-15.0	50
15.1-20.0	45
20.1-25.0	40
25.1-30.0	35
30.1-35.0	30
35.1-40.1	25
40.1-45.0	20
45.1-50.0	15
50.1-55.0	10
55.1+	5

SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is both the coach's and athlete's commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes by leading by example.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition
- Always finish a game; Never quit

Fair Play Always

- Comply with the rules
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play
- Respect the decision of the officials
- Strategy discussions with any athlete and/or partner are prohibited once the game begins
 - If an official determines that a coach, partner, or spectator is violating this rule, the official may sanction the offending individual. Sanctions may include verbal warning, citing the coach/partner with unsportsmanlike conduct, or expulsion from the games.

Unified Competition

- If a Unified Partner is not allowing the entire team to be a part of the game, it is the coach's responsibility to remove that player.
- If an opposing coach feels that a partner is dominating a game, they should notify event management while the incident is occurring.
 - If it is deemed that they are dominating, event management will request the coach discuss the philosophy of Unified Sports with the partner.
 - If the player continues to dominate after this discussion with the coach, event management will remove the player from the game.
 - If the player that was removed is placed back in the game, the game will result in a forfeit.