



Special Olympics
South Dakota
Soccer Handbook
January 1, 2026



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Contents.....	2
Link to Quick Start Coaching Guides and resources.....	2
SOSD Soccer Events.....	3
Soccer Governing Rules for Competition.....	3
5-Aside Rules for Competition.....	3
Field of Play	
The Ball	
Number of Players/Roster	
Divisioning Guidelines	
Players Equipment	
Duration of Game	
Start of Play	
Ball In and Out of Play	
Goal Clearance	
Method of Scoring	
Fouls and Misconduct	
Restart Exception	
Free Kick	
Penalty Kick	
Kick In	
Infringement Penalties	
Corner Kick	
Overtime/Penalty Kicks	
Soccer Individual Skills Contest	8
MATP (Motor Activity Training Program) Individual Soccer Skills.....	8
Events for both Individual Soccer Skills and MATP Soccer Skills.....	10
Event #1-Dribbling	
Event #2-Shooting	
Event #3-Run and Kick	
Individual Soccer Skills Scoresheet	
Awards Criteria.....	14
Sportsmanship.....	14

Practice ideas, skill assessment and development, and rules can be found in the SOI Quick Start Guides and SOI rules for each sport at <https://www.specialolympics.org/what-we-do/sports/sports-offered?locale=en>

SPECIAL OLYMPICS SOUTH DAKOTA SOCCER HANDBOOK

SOSD EVENTS OFFERED

5-Aside Team Competition-Traditional
5-Aside Team Competition-Unified
Individual Soccer Skills Contest
MATP Individual Soccer Skills

SOCCER GOVERNING RULES FOR COMPETITION

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 Internationale de 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 1. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Football (soccer) shall apply.

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

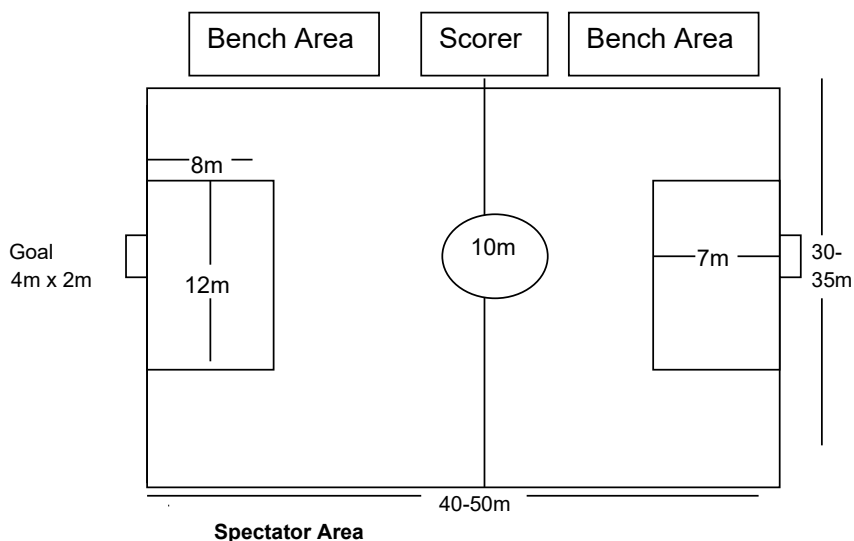
Refer to Article 1, <https://www.specialolympics.org/what-we-do/sports/football?locale=en>, for more information pertaining to Codes of Conduct, Training Standards, Medical and Safety Requirements, Divisioning, Awards, Criteria for Advancement to Higher Levels of Competition and Unified Sports.

5-ASIDE - RULES FOR COMPETITION

Field of Play

- A 5-aside field shall be a rectangle: maximum dimensions are 50m x 35m and minimum dimensions are 40m x 30m.
- The smaller field is recommended for teams with lower ability.
- The goal size should be approximately 4m x 2m maximum.
- The goal area shall be 8m x 12m. The penalty mark must be at 7m for goal size of 4m x 2m.
- The recommended playing surface is grass.
- The field shall be marked out as shown in diagram.

Five-A-Side Field Setup



The Ball

- Size 4 ball for 8-12 year olds
- Size 5 ball for all other players

Number of Players

- The roster size may not exceed 10 players.
- **Athletes/partners using a wheelchair or other assistive device are not eligible for team soccer and should be encouraged to participate in individual soccer skills.**
- The game is played between two teams each consisting of five players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper.
- Roster requirements:
 - Traditional 5-aside soccer
 - ✓ All players are athletes.
 - ✓ A minimum of 3 players shall be on the field at any one time.
 - Unified 5-aside soccer
 - ✓ The roster shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and unified partners.
 - ✓ During play, a team is allowed to play with a maximum of five and a minimum of three players during competition. Only the following lineups are allowed:
 - 3 athletes and 2 partners
 - 2 athletes and 2 partners
 - 2 athletes and 1 partner
 - ✓ Each team shall have an adult non-playing coach responsible for the lineup and conduct of the team during competition.
- 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.

Divisioning Guidelines

- Your division will be determined by the oldest person on your team. This applies to traditional as well as unified teams.
- Age divisions: Junior: 8-15 years old. Schooler: 16-21 years old. Senior: 22+ years old.

Players' Equipment

- A player's uniform consists of a jersey (shirt), shorts, stockings (socks), shin guards and appropriate footwear for the sport. The shin guards must be worn and covered by socks.
- No advertisement or sponsor names can appear on the uniforms.
- Crest/logo guidelines for uniforms can be found at the following link: <https://sosd.org/storage/2025/10/Sub-Program-Guideline-Refresher.pdf>
- Each player should have a uniform with a number. The color of the numbers must contrast clearly with the outfits (light on dark or vice versa) and be legible from a distance. The numbers shall be between 25cm and 35cm in height in the center of the back of the jersey/shirt, between 10cm and 15cm in height on the front of the jersey/shirt in any position at chest level, and between 10cm and 15cm in height in any position on the front of either leg of the shorts.
- The numbers 1-25 shall be used.
- Soccer cleats must not have metal cleats/studs. Softball, football or other sports cleats with single toe cleat are not allowed because they are dangerous for soccer. All footwear should be close-toed shoes.
- The goalkeepers shall wear colors contrasting with those of two teams and referee.
- A captain's armband should also be included as a clothing requirement to clearly identify the team's captain.

Duration of Game

- The duration of the game shall be two equal periods of fifteen minutes with a halftime interval of five minutes.
- If overtime is used to break a tie, two 5-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.

Start of Play

- All players, except the player taking the kick-off, must be on their own half of the field of play.
- The ball must be stationary on the center mark.
- The referee gives a signal.
- A ball must be kicked at least one full revolution forward from the center-spot before being touched by another player.
- A goal can be scored directly against the opponent from the kick-off; if the ball directly enters the kicker's goal, a corner kick is awarded to the opposing team.

Ball in and Out of Play

- Ball over the sideline results in a kick in.
- Ball over the end line results in a goal clearance or a corner kick.
- The ball must be completely over the line to be considered out of play.

Goal Clearance

- 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.
- The above rules of goal clearance also apply when a goalkeeper gains possession, with his hands, of a ball that is still in play.
- Infringement penalties:
 - ✓ 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 been touched by the ground, the referee shall award an indirect free kick for the opposing team from any point on the halfway line.
 - ✓ From the goalkeeper's throw, if the ball is touched by any player inside the penalty area, the throw shall be retaken.

Method of Scoring

- The whole of the ball must have completely crossed the line inside the goal to count as a goal.

Fouls and Misconduct

- There is no offside.
- All fouls result in an indirect free kick (except penalty kick=direct free kick).

Restart 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.

Free kick

- Opposing players must retire at least five meters from the ball for 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 referee must place the ball at five meters from the goal line.

Penalty Kick

- A penalty kick is taken from the 7-meter mark.
- 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.

Kick In (equivalent to the throw in)

- 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.
- A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-in.
- A goalkeeper may not touch the ball with hands receiving it directly from a kick-in by a teammate.
- A goalkeeper may not touch the ball with hands after it has been deliberately kicked to him/her by a teammate.

Infringement Penalties

- 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.

Corner-Kick

- Awarded to the attacking team when a player from the defending team kicks the ball over his/her own end line.
- Opposing players must retire at least 5 meters from the ball.

Overtime/Penalty Kick

- Two 5-minute overtime periods are used.
- "Golden goal" applies during overtime periods (first goal scored wins).
- If the game is still tied after the overtime periods, penalty kicks shall be used to decide the game using the following procedure:
 - ✓ The referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken.
 - ✓ The referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or the second kick.
 - ✓ The 5 players on the field of play at the end of the match will be eligible to do penalty kicks and the order in which they will take the kicks is decided by the team/coach.

- ✓ The highest score after five penalty kicks is declared the winner. The referee keeps score.
- ✓ Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take five kicks.
- ✓ The kicks are taken alternately by the teams.
- ✓ If, before both teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete its five kicks, no more kicks are taken.
- ✓ If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, or have not scored any goals, kicks continue to be taken in the same order until one team has scored one goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.
- ✓ A goalkeeper who is injured while kicks are being taken from the penalty mark and is unable to continue as goalkeeper may be replaced by a named substitute.
- ✓ With the exception of injury, only players who are on the field of play at the end of the match, which includes extra time where appropriate are eligible to take penalty kicks.
- ✓ An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper at any time when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.
- ✓ In Unified Sports penalty kicks, alternate kicks by athletes and unified partners must be taken, with the athlete taking the first penalty kick for each team.

SOCCER INDIVIDUAL SKILLS CONTEST

- This contest is designed specifically for lower ability athletes who have not developed the skills necessary to meaningfully participate in team soccer.
- **Also, players who cannot participate in team soccer because of their need to use a walking device can participate in soccer individual skills.**

Individual Soccer Skills Contest General Rules

- Individual Soccer Skills consists of 3 events
 - ✓ Dribbling
 - ✓ Shooting
 - ✓ Run and Kick
- Athletes should perform each event twice.
- The scores from the two rounds are added together to get each event score.
- The three event scores are added together to get the total score.
- See event diagrams and scoresheet on pages 10-13.

MATP (Motor Activity Training Program) SOCCER SKILLS

- MATP Definition: Soccer skills events offered for those athletes who do not possess the necessary skills to participate in Official SOSD Soccer Skills or Team Soccer or whose disability or mobility challenges prevent them from participating.
- Athletes participating in MATP events are not allowed to enter any other soccer events.
- Athletes are allowed to have a coach assist them as needed to fully participate in MATP soccer events.
- Athletes are allowed to use adapted equipment to fully participate in MATP Soccer Skills events. **Adaptive equipment is only allowed in MATP Soccer Skills** and no other Official SOSD Soccer Skills OR Team Soccer.
- No athlete will be disqualified.
- All athletes entered in MATP events will receive a 1st place ribbon or medal in each event they participate in.
- SOSD MATP Soccer Events offered: Dribbling, Shooting, Run and Kick.
- MATP Soccer Skills Stations will be set up the same as Individual Soccer Skills.
- MATP scoring will be the same as Individual Soccer Skills.
- Adaptive equipment may include (but not limited to):

Soccer ball modifications:

- Standard soccer balls may be fine with no modifications.
- Bigger soccer balls to make it easier to see or hit them.
- Lighter ball if athlete lacks power to kick the ball far.
- Ball that makes noise for athletes with visual impairments

Kicking Aides: due to lack of mobility, athletes using wheelchairs or those with limited use of legs/feet.

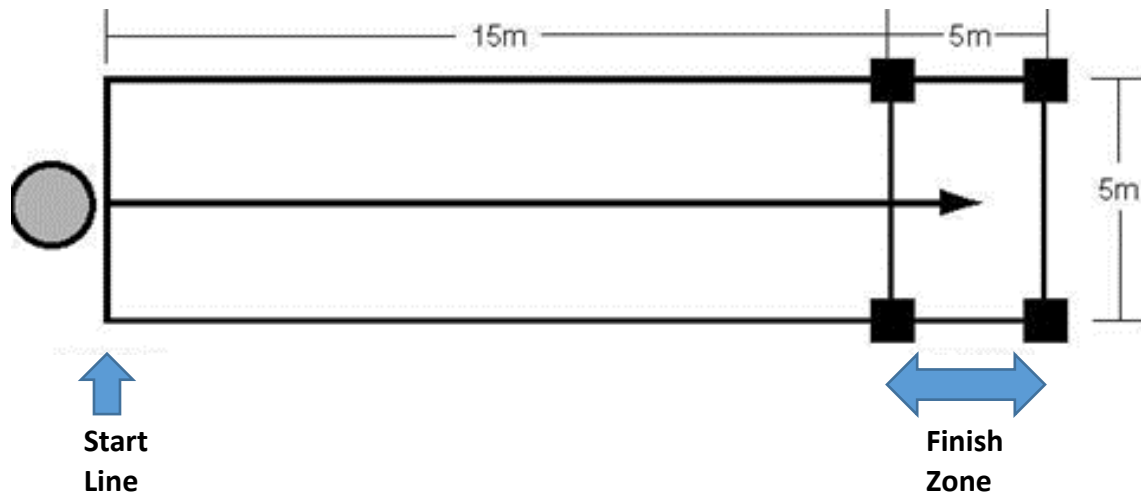
- Lightweight hockey stick for those athletes with good arm control and strength
- Shortened pool noodle or something similar for those athletes with less arm strength
NOTE: Athletes can strike the soccer ball rather than kicking it with these two adaptations.
- Ramp: for those athletes who may still struggle with the above adaptations.
- Barrier in front of a wheelchair. Example: a footrest may help with dribbling and trapping.

Goals and Markers: Adapt visual aids/markers as needed to accommodate MATP athletes.

- Visual markers can be cones, pictures, signs or colorful tape on floor or wall (if indoors).
- NOTE: When using visual or tactile markers, less is more.
- Make goals bright and stand out to draw athlete's attention, if needed.
- Coach may provide auditory cues when needed.

NOTE when selecting adaptive equipment/modifications: Equipment should enable the athlete to perform. Goals or outcome should help determine which equipment is used (easier to kick vs a ball easier to push down ramp)

Individual Soccer Skills Contest – Event #1: Dribbling



EQUIPMENT

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

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/tape. 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.

SCORING

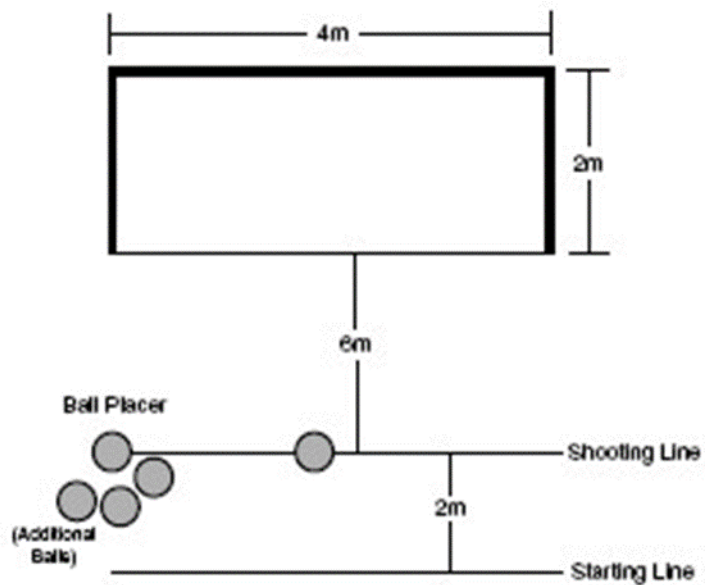
The time (in seconds) elapsed while the player is dribbling is converted into points using the scale below. A deduction of 5 points is made for each time the ball runs over the sidelines of the lane or if a player touches the ball with his/her hands. (note: if the ball runs over the sideline, the referee will immediately place another ball in the center of the lane opposite the point at which the ball went out).

Scoring Conversion Chart:

Dribbling Time-Point Score (time in seconds)

05-10 sec.....60 pts	36-40 sec.....30 pts
11-15 sec.....55 pts	41-45 sec.....25 pts
16-20 sec.....50 pts	46-50 sec.....20 pts
21-25 sec.....45 pts	51-55 sec.....15 pts
26-30 sec.....40 pts	55 or more.....10 pts
31-35 sec.....35 pts	

Individual Soccer Skills Contest - Event #2: Shooting



EQUIPMENT

Five #4 or #5 balls, tape or chalk, 4m x 2m 5-aside goal with net.

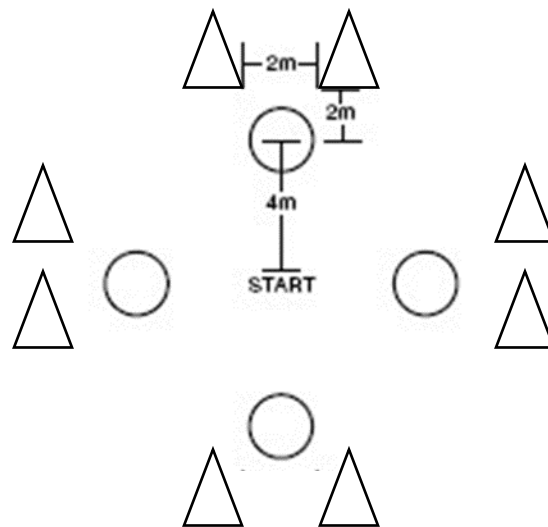
DESCRIPTION

The player begins at the start line and walks or runs forward to shoot the ball into the goal from a distance of 6m. The player is only allowed to kick the ball once. The player returns to the line. Ball placer (Official) places the next ball to be shot. Player repeats. Total of 5 shots. When the player kicks the last ball, the clock is stopped at a maximum of two minutes.

SCORING

Each successful goal scores 10 points.

Individual Soccer Skills Contest – Event #3: Run and Kick



EQUIPMENT

Four #4 or #5 balls, placed as shown in diagram. A central starting point should be marked. A 2m wide target gate (cones or flags) set up two 2m ahead of each ball.

DESCRIPTION

The player begins at the starting marker. He/she runs to any ball and kicks it through a target gate. He/she is only allowed to kick the ball once. The player then runs and kicks another ball through a target gate. When he/she kicks the last ball, the clock is stopped.

SCORING

The total time (in seconds) elapsed from when the player starts to when he/she kicks the last ball is recorded and converted into points using the conversion chart below. A bonus of 5 points is added for each ball kicked successfully through the target gate.

Scoring Conversion Chart

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

INDIVIDUAL SOCCER SKILLS CONTEST

Name: _____ School/Agency: _____

EVENT #1 DRIBBLING:

1st Run: Time _____ Points _____
 Subtract Deduction Points _____ Total _____

2nd Run: Time _____ Points _____
 Subtract Deduction Points _____ Total _____

Event Total

SCORING CONVERSION CHART	
Dribble Time (Seconds)	Point Score
5-10	60points
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

EVENT #2 SHOOTING: (10 points per successful goal)

	1 st Round	2 nd Round
Shot 1	_____	_____
Shot 2	_____	_____
Shot 3	_____	_____
Shot 4	_____	_____
Shot 5	_____	_____

Total: _____ + Total: _____ = **Event Total**

EVENT #3 RUN & KICK:

1st Run: Time _____ = Points #1
 Circle shots made: #1 #2 #3 #4 X 5pts = #2
 2nd Run: Time _____ = Points #3
 Circle shots made: #1 #2 #3 #4 X 5pts = #4

Add totals from box #1 - #4 for **Event Total**

SCORING CONVERSION CHART	
Time	Points
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

Total Score

AWARDS CRITERIA

- Individual medals will be awarded to teams the first three places in each division. Teams placing 4th to 8th will receive place ribbons.
- Individual skills athletes will receive medals for the first three places in each division. Individuals placing 4th-8th will receive ribbons.
- Tie Breaker Criteria in Team Soccer (in the event of a tie)
 - Win loss record
 - Head-to-head competition
 - Point Differential (goals scored minus goals allowed)
 - Coin flip

SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is both the coaches' and athletes' commitment to fair play, ethical behavior and integrity. In theory and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight a few focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes. Lead 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/event. Never quit.

Fair play at all times

- Always comply with the rules.
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play at all times.
- Respect the decision of the officials at all times.