

Special Olympics Northern California

Soccer



2026 Rules & Guidelines

Team Competition and Individual Skills Contest

(There are no rule changes for Soccer)



TABLE OF CONTENTS

SPECIAL OLYMPICS MISSION

SONORCAL PLAYS BY THE RULES

SONORCAL COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT

SONORCAL ATHLETES' CODE OF CONDUCT

PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

DIVISIONING CRITERIA

SONORCAL SOCCER RULES AND REGULATIONS

Section A:	General Rules
Section B:	Official Events
Section C:	Divisions
Section D:	Game Roster
Section E:	Coaches and Their Responsibilities
Section F:	Officials and Their Duties
Section G:	Uniforms
Section H:	Pre-Game Protocol
Section I:	Rules of Competition
Section J:	Tie Breakers
Section K:	Individual Skills Contest
Section L:	2026 Rule Changes

SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

MISSION STATEMENT

To provide athletic opportunities to children and adults with intellectual disabilities which instill the confidence needed to succeed in life.

Preparing for life through sports

SONORCAL PLAYS BY THE RULES.....

All Special Olympics competitions will be conducted in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules and the National Governing Body of rules for each sport offered in our program. These rules are designed to protect the Athletes, provide equitable conditions of competition and promote uniformity so that no competitor shall obtain an unfair advantage over another.

Special Olympics Northern California

COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SONorCal) volunteer coaches are models whose behavior should serve as a positive example for their athletes. Their behavior should reflect a concern that the fairest and most positive competitive experience is equally available to every Special Olympics athlete in each training or competition. The coach has the unique opportunity to influence the development and personal growth of many individuals. For this reason, it is important that the coach adhere to the standards of ethical decision making and teaching. In addition, it is the position of SONorCal that each volunteer coach shall agree to:

HAVE RESPECT FOR OTHERS

- I will respect the rights, dignity and worth of athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SONorCal staff members, and friends and spectators in Special Olympics.
- I will treat everyone equally regardless of sex, ethnic origin, religion or ability.
- I will be a positive role model for the athletes I coach.

ENSURE A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

- I will ensure that for each athlete I coach, the time spent with Special Olympics is a positive experience.
- I will respect the talent, developmental stage and goals of each athlete.
- I will ensure each athlete competes in events that challenge that athlete's potential and are appropriate to that athlete's ability.
- I will be fair, considerate and honest with athletes and communicate with athletes using simple, clear language.
- I will ensure that accurate scores are provided for entry of an athlete into any event.
- I will instruct each athlete to perform to the best of the athlete's ability at all preliminaries/heats and finals in accordance with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules.

ACT PROFESSIONALLY AND TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR HIS/HER ACTIONS

- My language, manner, punctuality, preparation and presentation will demonstrate high standards.
- I will dress and act in an appropriate manner at all times.
- I will display control, respect, dignity and professionalism to all involved in Special Olympics, including to the athletes, other coaches and volunteers, opponents, officials, administrators, SONorCal staff members, parents, spectators and the media.
- I will encourage athletes to demonstrate the same qualities.
- I will not use any alcohol or tobacco products, vaping products, or cannabis products while representing Special Olympics at training sessions or during competitions.
- I will not engage in any form of personal abuse towards, or inappropriate contact or relationship with, athletes, other coaches and volunteers, SONorCal staff members, family members, or spectators in Special Olympics, including verbal, physical or emotional abuse.
- I will be alert to any form of abuse from other sources directed toward athletes or others in my care.
- I will abide by the Special Olympics policy that prohibits coaches/volunteers from dating athletes.

PROVIDE QUALITY SERVICE TO THE ATHLETES

- I will seek continued improvement through performance evaluation and ongoing coach education.
- I will be knowledgeable about the Sports Rules and skills of the sport(s) I coach.
- I will provide a planned training program.
- I will keep copies of the registration, training, and competition records for each athlete I coach.
- I will follow the Special Olympics and National Governing Body rules for my sport(s) coached, as well as all SONorCal policies and procedures as amended.

ENSURE THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF THE ATHLETES

- I will ensure that the equipment and facilities for my sport(s) coached are safe to use.
- I will ensure that the equipment, rules, training and the environment are appropriate for the age and ability of the athletes.
- I will review each athlete's registration form and be aware of any limitations on that athlete's participation noted on that form.
- I will encourage athletes, coaches and volunteers to seek medical advice when needed.
- I will report any emergencies to the appropriate authorities after first taking immediate action to ensure the safety and well-being of those involved.
- I will maintain the same interest and support towards sick and injured athletes.
- I will allow further participation in training and competition only when appropriate.

Should the behaviors and/or abilities of any volunteer coach or other faction of a school/organization violate either the principles stated above (including the SONorCal policies and procedures as amended) or the philosophy of the Special Olympics movement, then any of the following actions may be taken by SONorCal in its sole discretion:

1. The coach may be notified by official warning of the undesirable behavior and be requested to remedy the situation immediately in order to continue his or her participation in Special Olympics;
2. The coach may be requested to withdraw personally or with his/her team from the remainder of any Special Olympics event or competition;
3. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be suspended from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events for a specified period of time; and/or
4. The coach or sponsoring school/organization may be permanently prohibited from participating in any or all Special Olympics activities or events.

Special Olympics Northern California

ATHLETES CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SONorCal) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics. All SONorCal Athletes and Unified Partners agree to the following code:

SPORTSMANSHIP

- I will practice good sportsmanship.
- I will act in ways that bring respect to me, my coaches, my team, and Special Olympics.
- I will not use bad language.
- I will not swear or insult other persons.
- I will not fight with other athletes, coaches, volunteers, or staff.

TRAINING AND COMPETITION

- I will train regularly.
- I will learn and follow the rules of my sport.
- I will listen to my coaches and the official and ask questions when I do not understand
- I will always try my best during training, divisioning, and competitions.
- I will not “hold back” in preliminary competition just to get into an easier finals competition division.
- I will follow the International Federation and the National Federation/Governing Body rules for my sport(s).

RESPONSIBILITY FOR MY ACTIONS

- I will not make inappropriate or unwanted physical, verbal, or sexual advances on others.
- I will not use any alcohol or tobacco products, vaping products, or cannabis products while representing Special Olympics at training sessions, competition, or during Games.
- I will not take drugs for the purpose of improving my performance.
- I will obey all laws and Special Olympics rules.
- If I exhibit behavior that violates the code of conduct, I may face disciplinary actions, which could include a warning letter, a suspension, or an expulsion.

Special Olympics Northern California

PARENT AND SPECTATOR CODE OF CONDUCT

Special Olympics Northern California (SONorCal) is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all parents and spectators to honor sport and Special Olympics. All Special Olympics parents and spectators should observe the following code:

- Remember athletes are participating for their enjoyment. Encourage participation, but do not force it.
- Applaud good performances and efforts from all individuals and teams. Congratulate all participants on their performance, regardless of the event's or game's outcome.
- Focus on the athletes' effort and performance, rather than whether they win or lose.
- Encourage athletes to play according to the rules and to settle disagreements without resorting to hostility or violence.
- Never ridicule or yell at participants for making a mistake or losing the competition.
- Remember that athletes learn best by example. Appreciate good performance and skillful plays by all participants.
- Respect the decisions of officials, Games Management Team and Staff, and teach athletes to do the same.
- Show appreciation for event volunteers, coaches, and officials and staff. (Remember, without them there would be no opportunities for athletes).
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, whether it is by spectators, coaches, officials or players.
- Show respect for your team's or individual's opponents. Without them, there would be no event or game.
- Encourage athletes and coaches to follow the rules and the officials' decisions.
- Swearing and/or inappropriate language will not be tolerated at SONorCal events
- Respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person regardless of their gender, ability, cultural background or religion.
- Abide by all posted and written policies, including SONorCal's Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events.

By attending an event, parents and spectators have agreed to abide by this Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct. SONorCal reserves the right to dismiss parents and/or spectators from any SONorCal event for violation of this Parent and Spectator Code of Conduct.

DIVISIONING CRITERIA

Soccer is a team sport and teams will be divisioned based on total team composition.

USE THE CRITERIA BELOW KEEPING YOUR FIVE (SEVEN FOR UNIFIED 7-A-SIDE) BEST PLAYERS IN MIND.

	Understanding of Rules and Concepts	Offensive Ability	Defensive Ability	Physical Ability	Ball Handling
Level 2	High understanding of most rules, fouls and concepts. Understand match score at all times.	Most players are capable of scoring. Players move without the ball. Can take shots while moving.	Understand more than one defensive position.	High Physical Ability. Ability to run up and down full field with few stops in action. Quick reaction time.	Can trap the ball. Can dribble around defenders. Lead teammates with passes. Receive passes on the run.
Level 3	Basic understanding of most rules and violations. Understand positions on field for offense and defense.	2-3 players score majority of goals from various spots on the field. Can shoot from outside the goal box with success.	Most players understand more than one defensive position.	Moderate to High Physical Ability. Ability to run up and down field with some regularity. 2-3 players have quick reaction time.	Most players can trap the ball. Most players can dribble around defenders. 2-3 players can lead teammates with passes and receive passes on the run.
Level 4	Limited understanding of most rules and violations. Limited understanding of offensive and defensive positioning.	1-2 players score majority of goals. Limited ability to shoot while guarded. Very few shot attempts from outside the goal box with limited success.	1-2 players understand more than one defensive position.	Low to Moderate Physical Ability. Few players can run up and down field with some regularity. 1-2 players have quick reaction time.	Few athletes are able to dribble when guarded. 1-2 players can trap the ball. Passes to teammates, even if not open.
Level 5	Low understanding of rules and concepts. Need assistance with kick-ins and throw-ins, and direction of play. Need significant amount of verbal coaching.	All players shoot without discretion. Very few goals scored. Take time to decide to pass to open teammate. Very few shots from outside of the goal box.	Plays a spot on the field rather than a position. Doesn't go after ball unless it comes near.	Low Physical Ability, but have mastered Individual Skills Contest events and are ready to transition to team play. Most balls are kicked without direction. Slow reaction time.	1-2 players are able to dribble the ball. Stops dribble when closely guarded. Passes are made infrequently and with limited success.

SONORCAL SOCCER RULES AND REGULATIONS

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.

SECTION A - GENERAL RULES

1. Each Special Olympics athlete is required to have a current Application for Participation on file in order to participate. This is in accordance with Special Olympics General Rules.
2. Each team is required to play all team members in every match played.
3. SONorCal has a strict Animal Policy for Practices, Competitions and Events, which must be followed by all athletes, volunteers, parents and spectators at all times. Please visit sonc.org/resources/coach-athletes-resources for the full policy.

SECTION B - OFFICIAL EVENTS

The following are Official Soccer Events offered by SONorCal:

1. Five-A-Side Traditional Team (outdoor)
2. Individual Skills Competition (ISC)
3. Seven-A-Side Unified® Team (outdoor)

SECTION C - DIVISIONS

1. Competitors in Soccer will compete in an Open Age & Open Gender Group.
2. Within this group, there will be four Levels:
 - Level 2 – Regulation Rules
 - Level 3 – Regulation Rules
 - Level 4 – Regulation Rules
 - Level 5 - Regulation Rules
3. Teams will be divisioned according to:
 - a. Previous year's tournament results
 - b. Mandatory submission of leveling videos (one per 5-A-Side or 7-A-Side team being registered)
 - c. Local invitational and scrimmage results
 - d. Other requirements, as determined by Competition Director and Games Rules Committee

SECTION D - GAME ROSTER

1. Regional Entry Form (Registration Information due prior to tournament)
 - a. Five-A-Side Traditional – A Regional Entry Form must contain at least six players and a maximum of 12 players.
 - b. Seven-A-Side Unified – A Regional Entry Form must contain at least eight players and a maximum of 14 players. Teams must have a minimum of five (5) Athletes and three (3) Unified Partners.
 - c. All coaches must also be listed on the Regional Entry Form, with a maximum of three (3) per roster. All coaches will be required to pick up a match coach pass from the official scorekeeper or field manager, which must be worn and visible at all times for the duration of the match, while on the bench. Passes must be returned to the pickup location following the conclusion of the match. Only those displaying a valid coach pass will be allowed in team areas. Coach passes are in addition to any other issued identification for the competition (e.g., wristbands).
 - d. Regional Entry Forms are considered frozen when submitted to the Games Director at the time that Registration Information is due. The Program office must approve any requests for a roster change.

2. Official Match Roster (Players from Regional Entry Form that are present for tournament)
 - a. For any given match, each team must submit the Soccer Scoresheet to the official scorekeeper. Only players who are listed on the Regional Entry Form may be listed on the Soccer Scoresheet. The head coach must also be listed on the Soccer Scoresheet.
 - b. Five-A-Side Traditional – A team must have at least five players from the Official Match Roster on the field to start any given match. Once the match begins, a minimum of three players shall be on the field at any one time.
 - c. Seven-A-Side Unified – A team must have at least seven players from the Official Match Roster on the field to start any given match. Once the match begins, a minimum of five players shall be on the field at any one time. Only the following lineups are allowed:
 - i. 4 Athletes and 3 Partners
 - ii. 3 Athletes and 3 Partners
 - iii. 3 Athletes and 2 Partners
 - iv. Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit.

SECTION E - COACHES AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Coaches shall remain within the designated team bench area “coaches’ areas” while the match is in progress. Coaches are not allowed to coach from the goal lines or from the opposing team’s bench area or the opposite sidelines.
2. Coaches are responsible for knowing and understanding the rules of the game, not only the modified rules in this manual, but also the National Governing Body Rules. The National Governing Body of rules for Special Olympics Soccer is Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA). To acquire your own FIFA Rules Book, click on the link below:

<https://www.theifab.com/laws-of-the-game-documents/>

3. Protests can only be made by the Head Coach and must be made immediately following an incident. The protest must be given to the Referee or Field Supervisor.
4. Protests are only allowed for rules interpretations and implementation issues. Protests are not allowed on judgment calls. The Soccer Rules Committee will decide on all protests within 30 minutes of the completed match.
5. Protest forms will be available with the Field Supervisor.

SECTION F - OFFICIALS AND THEIR DUTIES

1. There will be a minimum of one on-field referee for Level 4 and 5 matches, and a minimum of two on-field referees for Level 2 and 3 matches. At least one certified referee must be on the field for any given match. Linesmen (1 per side) are optional.
2. Referees shall have the power to make all decisions on any point not specifically covered in the rules.

SECTION G - UNIFORMS

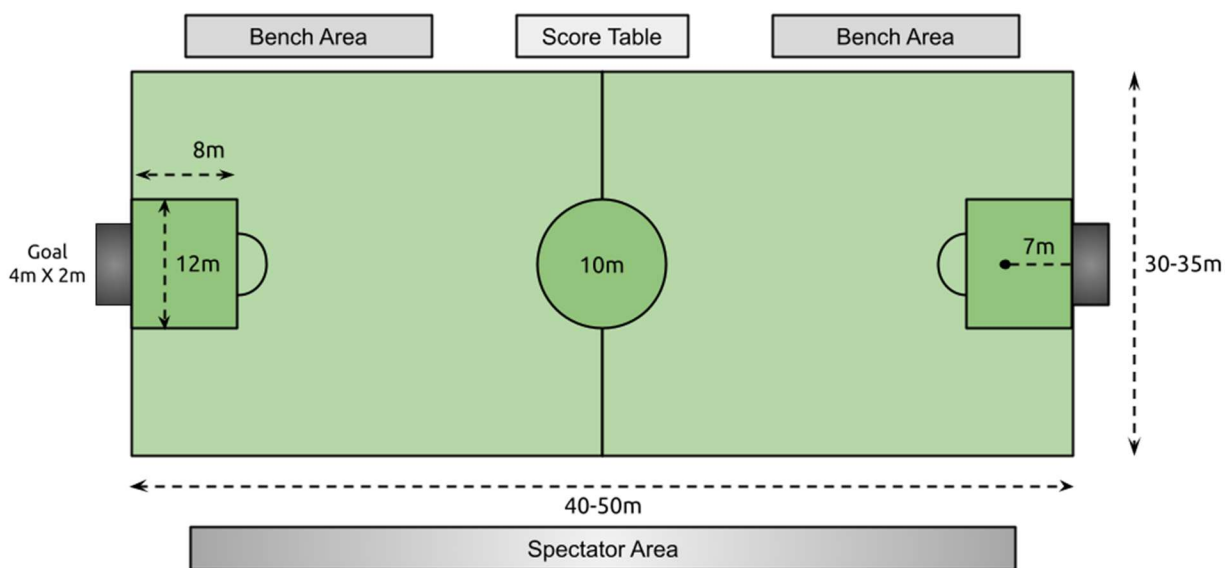
1. All players should wear matching uniforms (trim and style), that are of the same color. The jersey should have at least a 6” number on the back and be contrasting to the shirt color. No two players may wear the same number.
2. Goalkeepers must wear a jersey or top that is of a different color than that of the rest of the team.
3. Shin guards are required and must be covered by socks.
4. No jeans.
5. Hats are not allowed, with the exception of goalkeepers who desire to block the sun from their view, or athletes who need to wear a hat for medical or sun allergy reasons. It is recommended that the hat either have a Special Olympics logo, or no logo.
6. Soccer shoes are recommended (rubber sole cleats). No metal cleats.

SECTION H - PRE-MATCH PROTOCOL

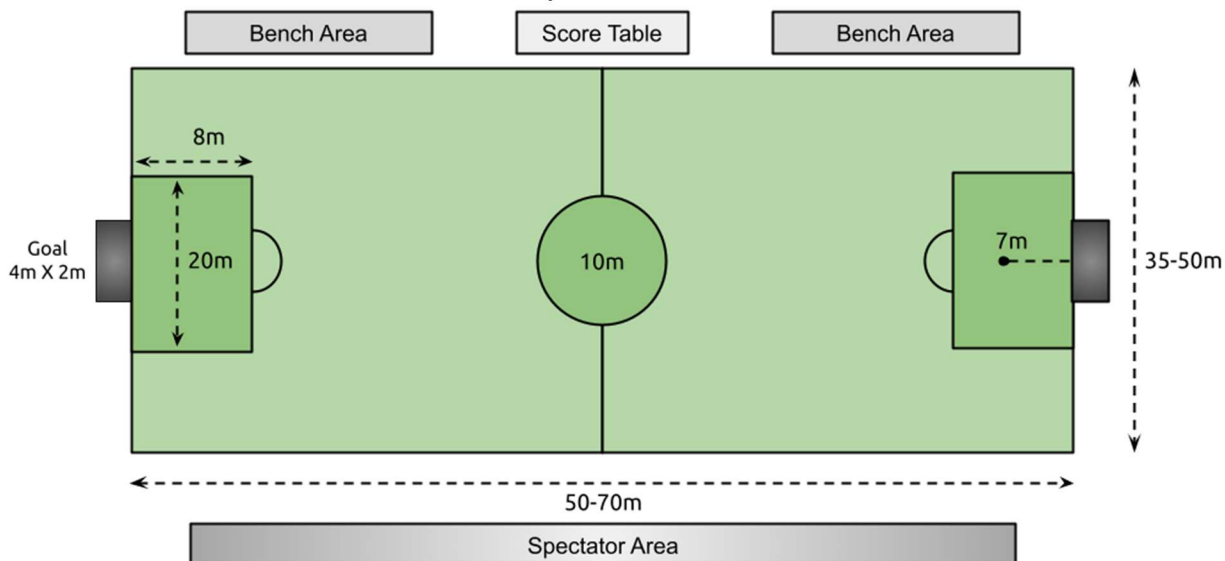
1. Coaches must present their rosters at the Official Score Table prior to match time.
2. Official will meet with coaches to ensure there are no questions regarding rules, substitution procedures and sideline conduct, and ask if there is anything the official should be aware of regarding individual players.
3. Official will call the captains of each team over to the sideline and perform the coin toss to choose ends, with the team winning the coin flip having the option to select either the first-half kickoff or which side they wish to defend to start the match. The team that starts on defense in the first half will start on offense in the second half, and teams will switch directions at halftime.
4. Two minutes prior to the start of the match, teams line up in a single line on either side of the halfway line facing the spectator bleachers. Official will review each team member for appropriate attire and soccer shoes.

SECTION I - RULES OF COMPETITION

Field of Play: 5-A-Side Traditional



Field of Play: 7-A-Side Unified



1. Field of Play
 - a. The Five-A-Side field shall be a rectangle; maximum dimensions 50m x 35m, minimum dimensions 40m x 30m. The smaller field is recommended for lower levels.
 - b. The Seven-A-Side Unified field shall be a rectangle; maximum dimensions 70m x 50m, minimum dimensions 50m x 35m.
 - c. The field shall be marked as shown in the above diagrams.
 - d. The goal size shall be 4m x 2m.
 - e. The recommended playing surface is grass or artificial turf suitable for soccer.
2. The Ball
 - a. Size five (5) for all players.
3. Number of players
 - a. No individuals other than registered athletes and match officials are allowed on the field during competition.
 - b. Teams must have a minimum of five players to start the match.
 - c. Five-A-Side – The match is played between two teams, each consisting of five players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper. A minimum of three players (including the goalkeeper) shall be on the field at any one time (in the case of player injury or player misconduct).
 - d. Seven-A-Side – The match is played between two teams, each consisting of seven players, following the proper ratio of athletes and unified partners (see Section D), one of whom shall be the goalkeeper. A minimum of five players (including the goalkeeper) shall be on the field at any one time (in the case of player injury or player misconduct). An athlete or unified partner may play any and all positions, including goalkeeper.
 - e. Unified Partners are not permitted to solely dominate or dictate competition. Player dominance shall be regulated at the discretion of the on-field official(s) and Games Director.
 - f. 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.
4. Duration of the match
 - a. The minimum allowable match duration shall be two, 15-minute halves.
 - b. The maximum allowable match duration shall be two, 20-minute halves.
 - c. The referee should be responsible for keeping the playing time.
 - d. If overtime is used to break a tie, two, five-minute “sudden death” overtime periods shall be used (first goal scored wins). If the match is still tied, penalty kicks will be used to break the tie.
5. Start of play
 - a. A ball must be kicked and clearly move (in any direction) from the center-spot before being touched by another player.
6. Ball in and out of play
 - a. The ball must be completely over the line to be considered out of play.
 - b. Kick-in or throw-in
 - i. When the whole of the ball passes over a side-line, it may be kicked, or thrown, back into the field of play, 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.
 - a) Kick-in
 - (1) The ball must be stationary before being kicked.
 - (2) It shall be deemed in play immediately after it has traveled the distance of its own circumference.
 - (3) The ball cannot be played again by the kicker until it has been touched by another player.
 - (4) The players from the opposing team must retire at least five (5) meters from the spot where the kick is being taken.
 - b) Throw-in

- (1) The thrower must face the field of play, have part of each foot either on the touchline or on the ground outside the touchline, use both hands and deliver the ball from behind and over his/her head.
 - (2) The ball cannot be played again by the thrower until it has been touched by another player.
 - (3) The players from the opposing team must retire at least five (5) meters from the spot where the throw is being taken.
- ii. A goal cannot be scored directly from a kick-in or throw-in.
- iii. A goalkeeper may not pick up a ball passed back to him from kick-in or throw-in.
- c. Goal Clearance
 - i. All Goal clearances must be thrown.
 - ii. 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/her 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 passes outside the penalty area.
 - iii. The above rules of goal clearance also apply when a goalkeeper gains possession, with his/her hands, of a ball that is still in play.
 - iv. 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.
- d. Corner Kick
 - i. As in 11-a-side, a corner kick is awarded to the attacking team when a player from the defending team kicks the ball over his/her own end-line.
 - ii. Opposing players must retire at least 5m from the ball.
- e. Free Kick
 - i. Opposing players must retire at least 5m from the ball for all free-kicks.
 - ii. Any free-kick that is awarded to the defending team inside their own penalty area will be restarted with a throw from the goalkeeper.
 - iii. 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.
 - a. A direct free-kick is defined as a method of restarting play following a foul, in which a goal may be scored directly against the opposing side without the ball having first touched another player.
 - b. An in-direct free-kick is defined as a method of restarting play following a foul, where the ball must be passed before an attempt on goal.
- f. Headers
 - i. Headers (using the head to direct the ball) are allowed in all Levels and may be used to direct a ball towards the goal for a score.
7. Fouls and misconduct
 - a. With the exception of no off-sides: slide tackling, tripping, pushing, handball, or charging result in a direct free-kick. Obstruction or dangerous play results in an indirect free-kick.
 - b. Yellow Cards & Red Cards
 - i. An athlete can receive a yellow card by the official for a cautionable offense. When an athlete receives a 2nd yellow card (equivalent to a red card) he/she will be suspended from playing the current match and the next scheduled match.
 - ii. An athlete receiving a red card will be suspended from playing the current match and the next scheduled match.

- iii. If a team coach is ejected from the match by the official, it will be considered a red card. The coach will not be allowed to coach the remainder of the current match and will be suspended from coaching the next scheduled match.
 - c. If a player is expelled from the match (receives two yellow cards or a red card), this player may not re-enter the match. His/her team must play a player down for two minutes unless a goal is scored before the two minutes have elapsed. Keeping check of the two minutes shall be the task of the official or scorekeepers. In this case the following shall apply:
 - i. The player who enters the match as a substitute after two minutes may only do so with the consent of the official and when the ball is out of bounds.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. If both teams are playing with four players and a goal is scored, both teams may be completed.
 - iv. 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 the three players may be increased by one more player only.
 - v. If both teams are playing with three players and a goal is scored, both teams may add one more player.
 - vi. If the team scoring the goal is the one with fewer players, the match shall continue without changing the number of players.
- 8. Overtime & Penalty Kicks
 - a. The Games Committee will determine if overtime & penalty kicks will be used for pool play, round-robin or leveling matches. Overtime & penalty kicks will always be utilized for medal play. If overtime is used, the teams will be given a five-minute rest and immediately proceed with two successive five minute “sudden death” periods.
 - b. If the teams are still tied at the end of the two overtime periods, the winner will be determined using FIFA kicks from the penalty mark method (penalty kicks).
 - i. Only the players on the field at the end of the second overtime period will be allowed to participate in the FIFA kicks (including goalkeepers).
 - ii. All participating players will immediately meet at the center of the field. A coin toss will determine who kicks first.
 - iii. The referee will decide which goal will be used.
 - iv. The 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.
 - v. With teams alternating, 5 kicks will be taken by each team. The team scoring the most goals will be declared the winner.
 - vi. Seven-A-Side Unified – alternate kicks by athletes and partners must be taken, with athletes taking the first penalty kick for each team.
 - vii. If the teams remain tied after the first round, the remaining participating players from each team will take their kicks. Teams will alternate and the first team to score with the opposing team missing will be declared the winner.
 - viii. Each team may select any of their participating players on the field to serve as the goalkeeper. The keeper may be changed at any time by one of the participating players. In the event that the goalkeeper becomes injured, he/she may be replaced by a player not currently on the field.

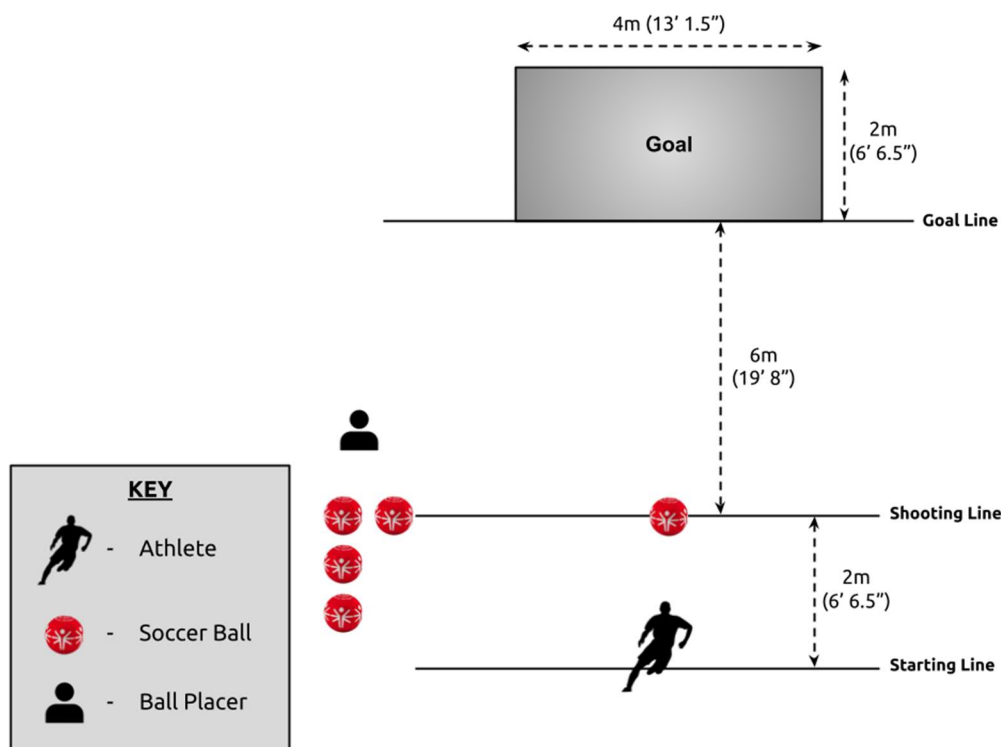
SECTION J - TIE BREAKERS

1. For divisions at a competition where, at the discretion of the Competition Director, places do not need to be determined for advancement purposes (in final division play), the following procedures will take place:
 - a) Head to Head: counting only matches between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to b).
 - b) The remaining tied teams will receive the same award (double, triple, etc.) and subsequent places will be skipped.
 - c) Forfeit Rule:
 - i. If any team involved in a tie has forfeited a match (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches), it will be placed in the lowest position of the teams involved.
 - ii. If any team involved in a tie received a win as the result of a team forfeiting to them, ALL matches involving the team that forfeited will be omitted and the resulting records will be used in the foregoing tiebreaker procedures.
2. For divisions at a competition where, at the discretion of the Competition Director, places need to be determined for advancement purposes (to final divisions, medal or placement matches), the following procedures will take place:
 - a) Head to Head: counting only matches between the teams that are tied; if still tied proceed to b).
 - b) Lowest total defensive goals allowed, counting only matches (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches) between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to c).
 - c) Highest goal differential (difference between goals scored and goals allowed in each match), counting only matches (not including divisioning, leveling or play-in matches) between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to d)
 - d) Highest total offensive goals scored, counting only matches (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches) between the teams that are tied; if still tied, proceed to e)
 - e) Lowest total defensive points allowed, counting all matches (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches) between common opponents; if still tied, proceed to f)
 - f) Highest point differential (difference between points scored and points allowed in each matches), counting all matches (not including divisioning, leveling or play-in matches) between all common opponents; if still tied, proceed to g)
 - g) Highest total offensive points scored, counting all matches (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches) between common opponents; if still tied, proceed to h)
 - h) If all of the tiebreakers described above still do not decide the outcome of a tie, a coin flip will be used, where the winner will be given the higher placement.
 - i) Forfeit Rule:
 - i. If any team involved in a tie has forfeited a match (not including divisioning, leveling, or play-in matches), it will be placed in the lowest position of the teams involved.
 - ii. If any team involved in a tie received a win as the result of a team forfeiting to them, ALL matches involving the team that forfeited will be omitted and the resulting records will be used in the foregoing tiebreaker procedures.

SECTION K - INDIVIDUAL SKILLS CONTEST (ISC)

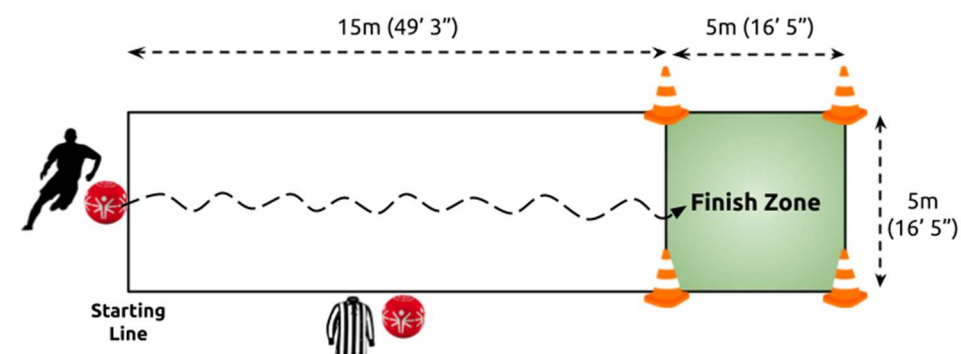
1. The following events provide meaningful competition for athletes with lower ability levels and/or need to use a walking device. It is not for athletes who can already play the game.
2. Athletes who receive assistance in the portion of the event that determines the score will receive a “Non Score” for the event. Athletes who score “Non Score” in all of the events will only be eligible for a Participation award. In order to receive a placement award (Gold through 8th Place), athletes must perform at least one of the events below without receiving assistance in the portion of the event that determines the score (see specific events for details).
3. The ISC consists of 3 events: Dribbling, Shooting, and Run & Kick. Competitors should perform each event twice. The total score from the two rounds is added together to give the final score.

ISC Event #1: Shooting



1. Purpose: To measure the athlete's shooting ability.
2. Equipment
 - a. 5 Size 5 soccer balls
 - b. Tape, chalk or field paint
 - c. 4 meter X 2 meter (1 feet, 1.5 inches X 6 feet, 6.5 inches) 5-A-Side goal with net
3. Description
 - a. Athlete begins at starting line and walks/runs forward to shoot the ball into the goal from 6 meters.
 - b. Athlete returns to the starting line.
 - c. Official places next ball for athlete to shoot.
 - d. Player receives 5 total attempts.
4. Scoring
 - a. Each successful goal scored is 10 points.
 - b. The maximum score for this event is 50 points. The minimum score is zero.
 - c. If the athlete receives assistance moving toward the ball and/or kicking, or otherwise moving the ball in a forward motion, they will receive a “Non Score” for this event.

ISC Event #2: Dribbling

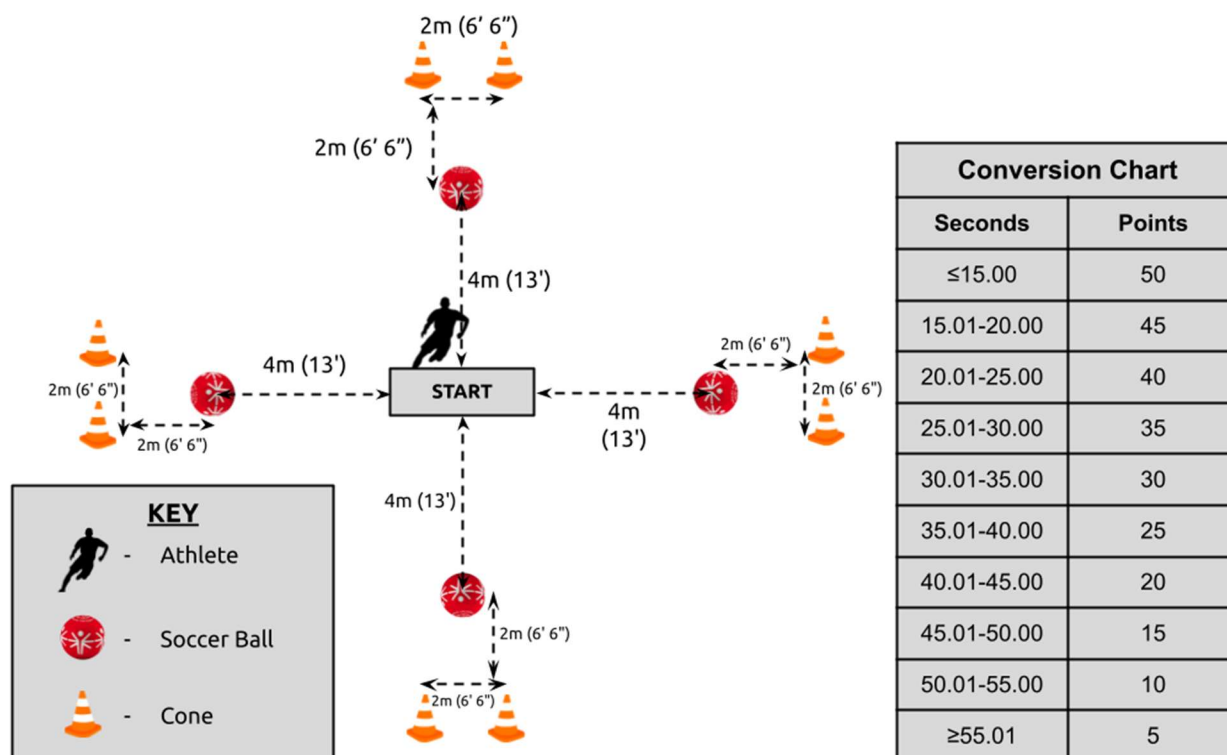


KEY	
	- Athlete
	- Soccer Ball
	- Official

Conversion Chart			
Seconds	Points	Seconds	Points
≤10.00	60	35.01-40.00	30
10.01-15.00	55	40.01-45.00	25
15.01-20.00	50	45.01-50.00	20
20.01-25.00	45	50.01-55.00	15
25.01-30.00	40	≥55.01	10
30.01-35.00	35		

1. Purpose: To measure an athlete's ball dribbling ability.
2. Equipment
 - a. 2-3 Size 5 soccer balls
 - b. Tape, chalk or field paint
 - c. 4 large cones to mark finish zone
 - d. Stopwatch
3. Description
 - a. Athlete dribbles from the starting line to the finish zone (distance of 15 meters (49 feet, 3 inches), staying inside the marked lane.
 - b. Finish zone (5 meter (16 feet, 5 inches) square box is marked with cones and chalk.
 - c. Clock is stopped when both the athlete and the ball are stopped inside the finish zone.
 - d. If athlete overshoots the finish zone, he/she must dribble ball back in the finish zone to finish (stop time).
4. Scoring
 - a. Time (in seconds) elapsed while athlete is dribbling ball is converted into points using scale above.
 - b. Deduction of 5 points is made for each time the ball runs over the sidelines of the lane or if athlete touches ball with his/her hands.
 - c. If the ball runs over the sideline, the official will immediately place another ball in the center of the lane opposite the point at which the ball went out.
 - d. The maximum score for this event is 60 points. The minimum score is 10.
 - e. If the athlete receives assistance moving from Start to Finish, and/or dribbling, or otherwise moving the ball in a forward motion, they will receive a "Non Score" for this event.

ISC Event #3: Run & Kick



- Purpose: To measure athlete's ability to run and then kick the ball with accuracy.
- Equipment
 - 4 Size 5 soccer balls
 - Chalk, tape or field paint to mark starting point
 - Cones or flags for 2-meter (6 feet, 6 inches) wide target gate
- Description
 - Athlete begins at starting point.
 - Athlete runs to any ball, 4 meters (13 feet), and kicks it through target gate (each ball can only be kicked once).
 - Athlete then proceeds to run and kick another ball through target gate.
 - Clock is stopped when athlete kicks last remaining ball.
- Scoring
 - Total time (in seconds) elapsed from when the athlete start to when he/she kicks the last ball is recorded and converted into points using the conversion chart above.
 - Bonus of 5 points is added for each ball kicked successfully through a target gate.
 - The maximum score for this event is 70 points. The minimum score is 5 points.
 - If the athlete receives assistance moving toward the ball and/or kicking, or otherwise moving the ball in a forward motion, they will receive a "Non Score" for this event.

FINAL ISC SCORE

- The athlete's final score for the Individual Skills Contest is determined by adding together the scores achieved in Rounds 1 and 2 for each of the three events. The maximum final score possible for one round is variable.
- A sample of the Soccer Individual Skills Contest Scorecard can be found on following page (Page 16).

SAMPLE SOCCER INDIVIDUAL SKILLS CONTEST SCORECARD

Special Olympics Northern California

Individual Skills Contest (ISC) Scorecard SOCCER

Place Athlete Label Here

Athlete Name:		Age Group:		Division:	
Delegation:		Gender:			

SHOOTING	ATTEMPTS					Score	Sum of Points	
	1	2	3	4	5			
ROUND 1								
ROUND 2								
DRIBBLING	Time (seconds)	Points (See Chart)		Penalty (-5 pts each)				Points minus penalties
ROUND 1								
ROUND 2								
RUN & KICK	Time (seconds)	Points (See Chart)		Bonus (+5 pts each)			Points plus bonuses	
ROUND 1								
ROUND 2								
Total Score (Round 1 + 2)								

Shooting

- Athlete begins at the starting line and runs/walks forward to shoot the ball into the goal
- Athlete returns to the starting line for each attempt
- **Scoring:** - **10 points** for each goal scored
- **Score is the total of 5 shots (Maximum of 50 points)**

Dribbling

- Athlete begins at the starting line and dribbles the ball to the finish zone inside the marked lane
- Clock starts when the athlete moves the ball and stops when the athlete and the ball are stopped inside the finish zone
- **Scoring:** - Time in seconds is converted to a score -->
- A deduction of five points is made each time the ball overruns the sidelines of the lane or if the athlete touches with his/her hands
- **Score is points (from scale) minus penalties (Maximum of 60 points)**

Dribbling Conversion Chart			
Seconds	Points	Seconds	Points
0-10.00	60	35.01-40.00	30
10.01-15.00	55	40.01-45.00	25
15.01-20.00	50	45.01-50.00	20
20.01-25.00	45	50.01-55.00	15
25.01-30.00	40	≥55.01	10
30.01-35.00	35		

Run & Kick

- Athlete begins at the starting point in the center of the target gates
- Clock starts when the athlete moves towards the first ball and stops first ball and stops when the athlete kicks the last remaining ball towards the target gate
- **Scoring:** - Time in seconds is converted to a score -->
- A bonus of five points is added for each ball kicked successfully through a target gate
- **Score is points (from scale) plus bonuses (Maximum of 70 points)**

Run & Kick Conversion Chart			
Seconds	Points	Seconds	Points
0-15.00	50	35.01-40.00	25
15.01-20.00	45	40.01-45.00	20
20.01-25.00	40	45.01-50.00	15
25.01-30.00	35	50.01-55.00	10
30.01-35.00	30	≥55.01	5

SECTION L - 2026 RULE CHANGES

1. There are NO rule changes for SOCCER in 2026.