



***Special  
Olympics***  
*Kansas*

# **UNIFIED SOCCER RULES**





## **FOOTBALL (SOCCER)**

These rules shall govern all Special Olympics Kansas Unified Soccer competitions. Special Olympics Kansas has created these rules based upon National Federation of High School (NFHS) rules for soccer. NFHS rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with these Rules. In such cases, these rules shall apply.

### **SECTION A — OFFICIAL EVENTS**

Currently, Special Olympics Kansas (SOKS) only offers 5-a-side team outdoor for Unified Soccer.

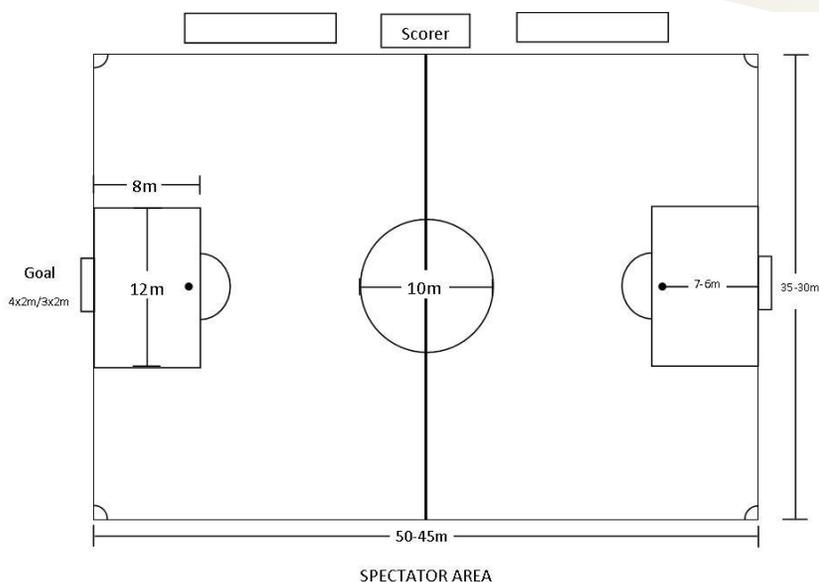
SOKS may determine at any time to offer other events, or none, at various competitions and, if required, guidelines for the management of those events. Coaches are responsible for providing training and event selection appropriate to each participant's skill and interest.

### **SECTION B — DIVISIONING**

1. SOKS currently only offers a single "Player Development" Division in the Kansas City, Kansas region.
  - a. The Player Development Division requires teammates to be of similar age but not necessarily similar ability.
  - b. Teammates of higher ability may serve as mentors to assist players of lower abilities.
2. Divisioning assessment is the responsibility of each team's head coach.
  - a. Unified Teams will be divisioned based on the SOKS Soccer Team Assessment Form (see Coach's Guide).
    - i. The head coach shall ensure that all goalkeepers are adequately assessed.
  - b. A Team Assessment Form shall be completed prior to establishing a team or beginning to train in order to ensure that each team meets the SOKS requirements.
  - c. A Team Assessment Form shall be submitted during registration prior to league competition.
  - d. Individual Assessment Forms DO NOT need to be submitted.

### **SECTION C — RULES OF COMPETITION: 5-A-SIDE**

- 1) The Field of Play:
  - a) The 5-a-side field shall be a rectangle: maximum dimensions of 50 meters by 35 meters, minimum dimensions of 40 meters by 30 meters. The smaller field is recommended for lower ability teams.
  - b) The field shall be marked out as shown below. (See 5-a-side field diagram)
  - c) The goal size shall be between 4 meters by 2 meters and 3 meters by 2 meters.
  - d) The goal/penalty area shall be 8 meters by 12 meters.
  - e) The penalty mark shall be at 7 meters or 6 meters for smaller goals.
  - f) The recommended playing surface is grass.



- 2) The Ball:
  - a) Size 5 ball, not more than 70 cm (28 in) and not less than 68 cm (27 in).
- 3) Players and Substitutions:
  - a) The game is played between two teams, each consisting of five players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper.
    - i) A team is allowed to play with a maximum of five and a minimum 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
 Failure to adhere to the required ratio results in a forfeit.
    - ii) If at any time a team is not in compliance with the athlete–partner ratio, the opposing team coach shall notify the referee. If the referee determines non-compliance, the team shall make adjustments to reach compliance and the referee shall award the opposing team a Penalty Kick.
    - iii) In Level 3, an additional non-playing partner may be on the field to assist a specific athlete for safety concerns. This non-playing partner will wear a pinny to distinguish as non-playing, and must refrain from participating in the game play.
    - iv) Players who utilize wheelchairs, or similar adaptive equipment, may only participate in Level 3.
  - b) A Unified Partner may play the goalkeeper position. Unified Partners may score.
  - c) The roster shall contain a proportionate number of athletes and partners.
  - d) 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. The coach shall 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) Dominant play:
  - a) All players shall be allowed meaningful involvement and play.
  - b) Dominant play is defined as an action or play by a player that does not allow another teammate to play their position or controls the game to the detriment or exclusion of teammates.
  - c) Dominant play will be a judgment call determined by the officials on the field. Penalty will be a verbal warning for a first offense with subsequent calls resulting in a yellow card on the offending player.
  - d) Goal per person maximum:
    - i) Level 1: 5 goals
    - ii) Level 2: 4 goals
    - iii) Level 3: 3 goals



- 5) Players' equipment:
  - a) Teams should wear uniforms with colors to distinguish them from the opposing team and referees.
  - b) Shirts shall be numbered.
  - c) Shin guards are required.
  - d) No metal studs are allowed.
  - e) No hats or jewelry allowed.
- 6) Coaches:
  - a) A non-playing bench coach shall be designated at the beginning of the match.
  - b) The coach may not enter the field during play, even to provide instruction.
- 7) Referees:
  - a) Each match is controlled by one referee who has full authority to enforce the Laws of the Game in connection with the match to which he has been appointed.
  - b) Two assistant referees are appointed to each match for Regional and International Competitions. For Local, Program and National Competitions, it is recommended to have two referees if there are not enough assistant referees.
- 8) Duration of the game:
  - a) The duration of the game shall be two equal periods of fifteen minutes with a halftime interval of five minutes.
  - b) The referee should be responsible for keeping the playing time.
  - c) In the case of extreme heat, the official representative from the Competition Committee (e.g., Field Manager) may signal to the referee to introduce a water break (maximum of three minutes) at a natural break in play, approximately halfway through each half.
  - d) Overtime is used to break a tie (see Rule 18) during tournament play.
- 9) Kickoff:
  - a) A kickoff will start play at the start of each period and after a goal has been scored.
  - b) A ball shall be kicked from the center spot in any direction.
  - c) A goal may be scored directly from a kickoff.
- 10) Ball in and out of play:
  - a) Ball over the sideline results in a throw in (see Rule 15).
  - b) Ball over the end line results in a goal clearance or a corner kick (see Rule 16 & 17).
  - c) The ball shall be completely over the line to be considered out of play.
- 11) Method of scoring:
  - a) The whole of the ball shall have completely crossed the goal line between the posts and underneath the crossbar to count as a goal.
- 12) Fouls and misconduct:
  - a) Tripping, pushing, handball or charging result in a direct free kick from the spot of the foul.
    - i) In Level 2, handball will result in re-do.
    - ii) In Level 3, only handball with significant advantage will result in re-do.
  - b) Obstruction or dangerous play results in an indirect free kick from the spot of the foul.
    - i) In Level 3, only intentional obstruction or dangerous play will result in an indirect free kick. All others will result in re-do.
  - c) In Level 2, defense must allow at least one meter of space when guarding
    - i) In Level 3, one meter of space must be given, plus defense should not steal the ball from a player in control of the ball.
    - ii) Infractions result in "re-do."
  - d) A goalkeeper may not pick up a ball passed back to him/her from a kick in or by their own player.
  - e) There is no offsides rule.
  - f) If a player is expelled from the game (receives two yellow cards or a red card), this player may not re-enter the game. His team shall play a player down for two minutes unless a goal is scored before the two minutes have elapsed. In this case, the following shall apply:
    - i) 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.
    - ii) If both teams are playing with four players and a goal is scored, both teams may be completed.



- iii) 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 three players may be increased by one more player only.
  - iv) If both teams are playing with three players and a goal is scored, both teams may add one more player.
  - v) If the team scoring the goal is the one with fewer players, the game shall continue without changing the number of players.
  - vi) The player who enters the game as a substitute after two minutes may only do so with the consent of the referee and when the ball is out of bounds. Keeping check of the two minutes shall be the task of the Time or Fourth Official.
- 13) Free Kick:
- a) Opposing players shall retire at least 5 meters from the ball for all free kicks.
  - b) When an indirect free kick is awarded to the attacking team inside the penalty area, within 5 meters from the goal line, the referee shall place the ball at five meters from the goal line.
  - c) A goal may be scored directly from a Direct Free Kick, but an Indirect Free Kick must first be touched by another player.
  - d) Restart exception:
    - i) Any free kick that is awarded to the defending team inside their own penalty area will be restarted with a goal clearance.
- 14) Penalty Kick:
- a) A penalty kick is awarded against a team that commits one of the offences for which a direct free kick is awarded, inside its own penalty area and while the ball is in play.
  - b) A penalty kick is taken from the 7-meter line (6-meter line for smaller goals). All players except the kicker and the goalkeeper shall retire outside the penalty area and arc. The goalkeeper shall stand on his/her goal line until the penalty kick is taken.
- 15) Throw in:
- a) When the whole of the ball passes over a sideline, it shall be thrown 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.
  - b) The player shall be stationary before throwing with both feet on the ground. The players from the opposing team shall retire at least 5 meters from the spot where thrown. It shall be deemed in-play immediately after it has left the players hands.
  - c) The ball cannot be played again by the thrower until it has been touched by another player.
  - d) A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.
  - e) Infringement penalties:
    - i) If the thrower 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.
    - ii) Other infringements will result in a turnover from the same point on the sideline.
- 16) Goal Kick:
- a) When the ball passes over the goal line (not in the goal), having last been played by an attacking player, the goalkeeper shall kick the ball from the ground from any point within the penalty area by a player of the defending team back into play beyond his own penalty area, but not further than the halfway line.
  - b) Infringement penalties from Goal Kick or goalkeeper delivery when possession is gained with his hands of a ball that is still in play:
    - i) If the ball kicked or 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 halfway line.
    - ii) From the goalkeeper's kick or throw, if the ball is touched by any player inside the penalty area, the kick or throw shall be retaken.
- 17) Corner-Kick:
- a) Awarded to the attacking team when a player from the defending team kicks the ball over the goal line (not in the goal).
  - b) Opposing players shall retire at least 5 meters from the ball.



18) Overtime:

- a) In regular league play, ties are considered final.
- b) In tournament play, if overtime is used to break a tie, a 5-minute, 'sudden-victory' period shall be played.
- c) If the game is still tied after the overtime period, penalty kicks (see Rule 14b) shall be used to decide the game.
  - i) The referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken.
  - ii) The referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or the second kick.
  - iii) Each team is responsible for selecting 5 players from those on the field of play at the end of the match and the order in which they will take the kicks. The order must alternate kicks between athletes and partners with an athlete taking the first kick for both teams.
  - iv) The highest score after five penalty kicks is declared the winner. The referee keeps a record of the kicks being taken.
  - v) Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take five kicks.
  - vi) The kicks are taken alternately by the teams.
  - vii) If, before teams have taken five kicks, one has scored more goals than the other could score, even if it were to complete five kicks, no more kicks are taken.
  - viii) 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 a goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.
  - ix) A goalkeeper who is injured while kicks are being taken from the penalty mark and is unable to continue as a goalkeeper may be replaced by a named substitute.
  - x) With the exception of foregoing case, only players who are on the field of play at the end of the match, which includes overtime period, are eligible to take penalty kicks.
- xi) If at the end of the match one team has a greater number of players than its opponents, it must reduce its numbers to equate with that of its opponents. The team captain must inform the referee of the name and number of the excluded player. The referee must ensure that an equal number of players from each team remains within the center circle and they shall take the kicks.
- xii) Each kick is taken by a different player and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick.
- xiii) Once all eligible players have taken a penalty kick, the same sequence does not have to be followed as in the first round of kicks.
- xiv) An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper at any time when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken.

19) Coaching from the bench area:

- a) A team bench and bench area will be provided for each team.
- b) Each bench area will be defined by a marked off rectangle, 15 meters in length, located on the sideline at least 5 meters away from the sideline and within 10 meters of the halfway line.
- c) Coaches and substitute players are expected to remain seated within the bench area at all times except when making a substitution.
- d) Coaches are expected to restrict their coaching to simple, verbal encouragement.
- e) Verbal abuse of players or officials, or excessive and explicit coaching from the sidelines will be considered unsportsmanlike conduct and may result in a warning from the referee. If such behavior persists, the referee may eject the offending coach from the field.



## **Skill Division Breakdown**

Note: divisioning may also be based on age and gender.

Division offerings based on team availability and the discretion of the Games Management Team

### **All Levels:**

- 5v5, one of whom is goalkeeper, ratio 3 athletes to 2 partners (Rule 3)
- 15-minute halves, 5-minute halftime.
- No offsides rule (Rule 12e)
- Goalkeeper may not deliver the ball past the halfway point without first touching a player or the ground (Rule 16)
- Ties are final in non-Tournament Play (Rule 8d)
- Higher-skilled players (especially partners) act as mentors and should put the skill development of lower-skilled players (especially athletes) above their own personal interests. (Rule 4)

### **Level 1**

Game play is similar to Middle School, JV or higher. All players understand the game and can mostly follow the rules. Skill levels may vary.

1. 5 goals per player max.\* (Rule 4d)
2. Fouls common and should be called with appropriate, Free Kicks, PKs and cards. (Rule 12)
3. Rules strictly enforced. (Rule 12)

### **Level 2**

All players understand the basics of the game, but may not be able to regularly follow the rules. Players go after the ball and get involved, but are not highly-skilled.

1. 4 points per player max.\* (Rule 4d)
2. Fouls less common, but should be called with appropriate Free Kicks, PKs and cards. (Rule 12)
3. Rule infringements result in a 're-do.'† (Rule 12)
4. Close guarding (within 1 meter) not allowed.

### **Level 3**

Several players have difficult time with basic skills and understanding of game. Some may be afraid of the ball.

- 1) 3 goals per player max.\* (Rule 4d)
- 2) Fouls uncommon, but should be called with appropriate Free Kicks, PKs and cards. (Rule 12)
- 3) Rule infringements with significant advantage gained result in a 're-do.'†(Rule 12)
- 4) Close guarding (within 1 meter) and stealing not allowed.
- 5) Participants who use a wheelchair or similar adaptive equipment may participate in this level.
- 6) An additional non-playing partner may be on the field to assist a specific athlete for safety concerns. This non-playing partner will wear a pinny to distinguish as non-playing, and must refrain from participating in the game play.

†Re-do scenarios are determined by official and should start at initiation of foul/ misconduct. All re-do's should be accompanied by an explanation of the offense by the official and the correct manner to proceed. If the re-do does not change behavior, official may opt to change possession.

\*If a player scores over their personal allotment, subsequent points will not count.