



Soccer – Sport Rules Modifications, Interpretations, and Points of Emphasis

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Football (Soccer) dated June 2016 will be in effect for the 2017-2018 program year. This section is intended to be used in conjunction with the United States Soccer Federation (USSF) rules and SOI Rules; therefore, those rules are not repeated here but they will be enforced unless in direct conflict to SONC modifications.

Appropriate Attire and Equipment

- Uniforms: like-colored shirt/jerseys with numbers of a contrasting color, and shorts.
- Jerseys¹
 - Numbers must be centered horizontally and vertically on the front and back of the shirt/jersey and at least 4" high in the front and 6" high on the back.
 - All jerseys (except the goalie jersey) should have different numbers. 0 and 00 are the same number.
 - **All teams must bring a set of pinnies** to all competitions. It is recommended that each team have a set of jerseys with predominant color white or light (home), and one set dark (away). In the event teams have similar color jerseys, it is the home team's responsibility for changing jerseys or pinnies.
 - If visible apparel is worn under the jersey and/or shorts, it must be of similar length, all alike and of a solid color.
 - Absolutely no jeans are allowed. Sweatpants and/or sweatshirts are allowed. Team Jersey must be put over a sweatshirt to be visible.
 - Goalkeepers should wear a different color jersey to distinguish themselves from the other players and referees.
- A maximum of one goal will be awarded to the opposing team when the other team is in violation of uniform requirements.
- All SONC competition will use a size 5 ball.²
- All players must have **soccer** cleats without metal studs. They must be soccer cleats (no toe cleat).
- Shinguards: For safety reasons, shinguards must meet the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE) standard. The new NOCSAE shinguards will be stamped or labeled with the NOCSAE logo. They will specify which size is correct for a particular-sized player, making it easy for players and coaches to differentiate which shinguards are to be worn.³
- The goal size must be 4 meters by 2 meters.⁴

Competition Interpretations and Modifications

- Team quota slots for Fall Tournament will be allocated on a random-draw basis. This means that a local program may not be represented in that team sport (i.e. Jones County may not get their one team slot because Wake County had two team slots randomly drawn instead). This is done to ensure that all teams no matter from what size program they come will have an opportunity to be selected.
- All players on the roster must play in the game.
- Roster Size
 - Maximum allowable roster size is 10 players

¹ NFHS rule 4.1.

² SONC modification of SOI soccer sports rules Section 4.1.3.

³ SONC adheres to NFHS uniform standards. (NFHS Web site is www.nfhs.org.) Per NFHS soccer rules 4-1-1 and SONC modification of SOI Section 4.1.5.2.

⁴ SONC modification of SOI Section 4.1.2.3. This is consistent with size of goal at previous games.

- Minimum roster size is 6 players; however a minimum of 3 players is needed on the field to start a game.
- At start of play, a ball must be kicked forward from the center spot before being touched by another player.⁵
- Coaches and substitutes must remain within the bench area at all times. Only one coach can stand. Failure to adhere to this may lead to the coach being sent from the field of play.⁶
- When an indirect free kick is awarded to the attacking team inside the penalty area within 5 meters from the goal line, the referee must place the ball at 5 meters from the goal line.⁷
- A goal keeper cannot pick up a ball passed back to him by his own player.⁸
- Mercy Rule: The game will be over when one team has obtained a scoring advantage of 8 goals.
- Overtime/Penalty Kick⁹
 - During the preliminary round, ties are considered final. In tournament play, overtime will consist of two five minute periods.
 - If the game is still tied after the overtime periods, penalty kicks shall be used to decide the game.
 - The first 5 players to participate in the penalty kicks will be those on the field at the end of the last period.
 - Each player takes a penalty kick, alternating teams with each shot.
 - The highest score after five penalty kicks is declared the winner.
 - If, after both teams have taken five kicks, both have scored the same number of goals, or have not scored any goals, kicks will continue to be taken in the same order using the remainder of the team's players (including goal-keepers), until one team has scored one goal more than the other from the same number of kicks.

Special Notices

- The registration form includes individual ratings based on the individual assessment form. A completed registration and rating form is required for Fall Tournament registration.
 - All teams must participate in the divisioning round on Friday at Fall Tournament in order to be eligible for play Saturday and Sunday.
- Additional competition opportunities are being researched for Unified Sports. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2018-2019 program year.

⁵ SOI section C.1.h.

⁶ SOI Section C.1.u.4.

⁷ SOI section C.1.n.2

⁸ SONC modification of SOI section C.1.p.

⁹ SONC modification of SOI section C.1.t.