

*ARTICLE VIII*

**Seven-A-Side Soccer**

The Special Olympics Canada (SOC) Official Sport Rules shall govern all SOC Soccer competitions. As a national sport program, SOC has created these rules based upon Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) and the Canadian Soccer Association (CSA) rules for soccer. FIFA or CSA rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the SOC Official Sports Rules. In such cases, the following sections outlining the SOC Official Seven-A-Side Soccer Rules shall apply.

*SECTION A*

**Official Events**

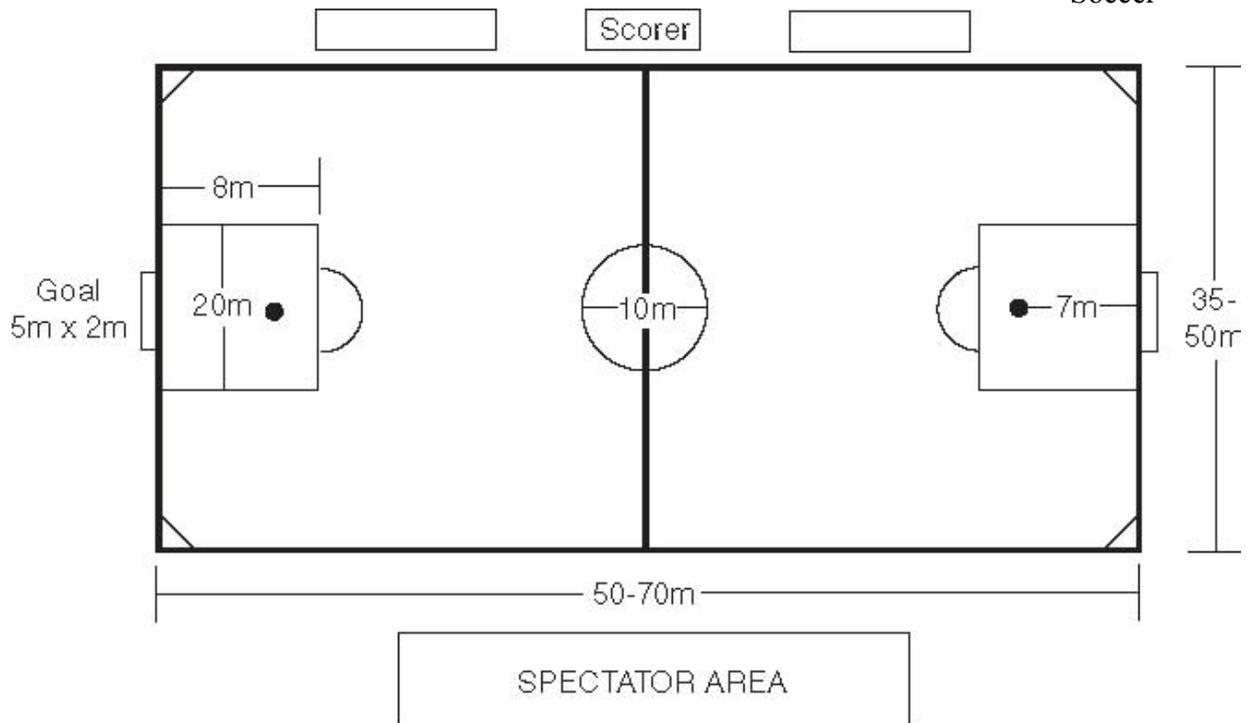
1. Seven-A-Side Soccer Team Competition (using 11-A-Side Soccer rules with modifications).

*SECTION B*

**Rules of Competition**

a. The Field of Play:

- 1) The 7-a-side field shall be a rectangle: maximum dimensions of 70 meters by 50 meters, minimum dimensions of 50 meters by 35 meters. The smaller field is recommended for lower ability teams. For logistical reason, the field may be a slightly smaller or bigger at certain competitions in order to use pre-existing field lines.
- 2) The goal size shall be 5 meters by 2 meters.
- 3) The goal area shall be 8 meters by 20 meters.
- 4) The recommended playing surface is grass.



**b. The Ball:**

- 1) Ages 8-12: Size 4 ball, not more than 66 cm (26 in.) and not less than 63.5 cm (25 in).
- 2) All other players: Size 5 ball, not more than 70 cm (28 in) and not less than 68 cm (27 in).

**c. The Number of Players:**

- 1) Allowable roster size is to be determined by the Competition Committee. At the Special Olympics National and World Games, the roster size may not exceed 12 players.
- 2) The game is played between two teams, each consisting of seven players, one of whom shall be the goalkeeper. A minimum of five players shall be on the field at any one time.
- 3) 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.

**d. Players' Equipment:**

- 1) Shirts must be numbered.
- 2) Shin pads are required.
- 3) No metal studs are allowed.

**e. The Referee:**

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.

f. The Assistant Referees:

Two assistant referees are appointed to each match for National and International Competitions. For National Competitions it is recommended to have two referees if there are not enough Assistant Referees.

g. Duration of the Game:

- 1) The duration of the game shall be two equal periods of twenty-five minutes with a halftime interval of five minutes. The referee should be responsible for keeping the playing time.
- 2) If overtime is used to break a tie, two five-minute overtime periods are used. If the game is still tied, penalty kicks will be used to break the tie. (See 11-a-side tie-break protocol).

h. Start of Play:

A ball must be kicked forward from the center spot before being touched by another player. A goal can be scored directly from a kick off.

i. Ball In and Out of Play:

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

j. Method of Scoring:

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

k. Free Kick:

- 1) Opposing players must retire at least 5 meters from the ball for all free kicks.
- 2) 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 five meters from the goal line.

l. Penalty Kick:

- 1) 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.

m. Throw In:

- 1) 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. The ball cannot be played again by the thrower 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 throw is being taken.
- 2) A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw in.
- 3) A goalkeeper may not pick up a ball passed back to him/her by their own player.

n. Infringement penalties:

- 1) If the player taking the throw 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.

**o. Corner-Kick:**

Awarded to the attacking team when a player from the defending team kicks the ball over his/her own end line.

- 1) Opposing players must retire at least 5 meters from the ball.

- p. 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.

**q. Overtime/Penalty Kick:**

- 1) In regular league play, ties are considered final.
- 2) In tournament play, overtime periods shall be five minutes each.
- 3) If the game is still tied after the overtime periods, penalty kicks shall be used to decide the game.
  - a) The referee chooses the goal at which the kicks will be taken
  - b) The referee tosses a coin and the team whose captain wins the toss decides whether to take the first or the second kick
  - c) 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
  - d) The highest score after five penalty kicks is declared the winner. The referee keeps a record of the kicks being taken.
  - e) Subject to the conditions explained below, both teams take five kicks
  - f) The kicks are taken alternately by the teams
  - g) 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
  - h) 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
  - i) 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
  - j) With the exception of foregoing case, 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.
  - k) 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 centre circle and they shall take the kicks
  - l) Each kick is taken by a different player and all eligible players must take a kick before any player can take a second kick

- m) 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
  - n) An eligible player may change places with the goalkeeper at any time when kicks from the penalty mark are being taken
  - o) In Unified Sports penalty kicks, alternate kicks by athletes and partners must be taken, with the athlete taking the first penalty kick for each team
- r. Coaching from the Bench Area:
- 1) A team bench area will be provided for each team.
  - 2) 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.
  - 3) A team bench should be provided within each area.
    - 4) 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.
- s. 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.