

**Special  
Olympics**  
Ontario



Special Olympics  
**Unified Champion  
Schools®**

# 2024-2025 Season School Qualifiers



**Soccer Technical Package**  
Unified & Traditional

# SOO School Qualifiers Soccer 5-on-5 Rules

## 1. Qualifier Competition Format

*\*Note: SOO Soccer Qualifiers Require 4 Players Plus a Goalie to be on the Field at All Times\**

### 1a. Game Points and Team Ranking

- Round Robin Format within your division
  - Game Points Scoring System:
    - 3 points for a win.
    - 1 point for a tie.
  - Tie breakers at qualifiers to be determined in succession:
    - Highest game points (based on the scoring system outlined above)
    - Head-to-Head
    - Lowest points against average
    - Random Computerized Draw
  - In the event of a three-way tie, once a team has been eliminated from the tie, the tie-breaking process for the remaining two teams will start at the beginning.
- For qualification for Provincial School Championships, all teams are placed in **a conference** with schools from the surrounding regions, **meaning that schools are competing against all other schools within their conference, not only teams at their local qualifier.** All tie-breaking processes remain the same. This model allows for equitable chances of qualification despite the size of the local qualifier. To learn more about the qualifying process, our quotas for the year and our conference model, please visit our Schools Hub on our website: [Schools Hub](#)

### 1b. Uniforms

- All teams must supply their own uniforms. T-shirts or sports uniforms are permitted as long as all uniforms are identical for all players. Numbers on uniforms are not required.

### 1c. Equipment

- **\*Shin pads are required, and cleats are not permitted\***
- **\*If an athlete is wearing cleats during a game, their team will forfeit their match\***
- Teams are not required to bring their own practice balls. However, they can if they would like. All game balls will be supplied by SOO, with no exceptions.
- Note: SOO Soccer Nets Are a Modified 12' by 6' Size. If your school is interested in purchasing them or learning how to set them up, please follow the link below: [SKLZ Soccer Nets](#)
- Games are played outdoors on a modified soccer field (approximately 45 by 30 meters) – exact sizing is at the discretion of the host and subject to the number of fields needed. Typically, a traditional soccer field can hold 3 SOO fields. SOO recommends fields for recreational teams be 35 by 25 meters

### 1d. Game Forfeit

- Should a team forfeit a game, the following point allocation will be used:
  - Game note started: A score of 1-0 will be recorded.
  - Game started: The non-forfeiting team's score will be recorded as 1, or their current score at the time of the forfeit will be added to that number of 1, and the forfeiting team's score will be the current score when the forfeit occurred.

## 2. Rules of Play

### 2a. Divisioning

- The Head Coach must include a team ranking during online registration for each team.
  - Team rankings are meant as an overall rating of your team ability. Refer to our [Skill Assessments](#) if needed and make a judgement on your teams overall competitive ability. A - Indicates your team is established, has several strong players and would



be placed in the most competitive division, B - Team has an all-around understanding of the sport would be placed with some higher level teams, C - Middle of the pack team that has basic skills down for most players, D - Means your athletes are learning the sport and would be placed in the lowest ability division

- Traditional
  - **Recreational:** Teams in the recreational category have athletes who are relatively new to the sport or are just there for fun and do not want to compete/advance to the 2024 School Championships.
  - **Competitive:** Competitive Traditional athletes intend to compete at the School Championships if selected or have a mid-high skill level.
- Unified
  - Unified Partners are there to compete alongside SO Athletes. Unified Partners are **intended to score points, impact the game in a meaningful way** and compete in this category. This includes passing, shooting/scoring and defence. **Note: Unified Partners are not permitted to take over games but are expected to contribute.**
    - Teams are grouped in divisions according to their team ranking (A,B,C,D)
- Each team will be required to ensure all their players barring injury play during each game.

## 2b. Team and Players

- Traditional teams: minimum **5 and maximum 10 athletes** with an ID (5 players and 5 substitutes).
- Unified teams: minimum **5 and maximum 10 athletes** (a Unified roster is permitted to have a maximum of 4 mainstream Unified partners and needs a minimum of 2).
- During the competition, the 5-person team on the field must be made up of 4 athletes with an ID and a minimum of 1 Unified partner (max of 2 on the field at a time)
- 5v5 soccer includes four field players plus one goalie. Each team must start the game with five players or forfeit the game. If a team falls below five players once the game has started due to injury, the team will be permitted to continue with four players on the pitch. If a team falls below five players due to player ejection, the team will forfeit that game.

## 2c. Unified Sport/Teams

- Unified Sports brings people with intellectual challenges and disabilities together on the same team as people without intellectual disabilities. This program is dedicated to promoting inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences.
- Unified Sports looks to develop **meaningful competition** where coaches work together to create a balanced competitive environment. **Coaches are responsible for ensuring the meaningful involvement of all players in the game.**
- Please review our principle of meaningful involvement to understand and apply the Unified Competition Model: [SO Unified Sports Principle of Meaningful Involvement](#)
- Also, see our Unified Coaching Guides and Training Resources
  - [Guiding Unified Sport Principles](#)
  - [Unified Sports Coach Guidelines](#)
  - [Unified Coach Course \(Option A\)](#)
  - [Unified Coaching Course \(Option B\)](#)

## 2d. The Game

- The game will be played for **20 minutes**, with **two 10-minute halves**. A **two-minute 'halftime' break will** occur between the first and second half of play.
  - There will be a **running clock applied** for the full 20 minutes.
  - **One 60-second timeout is allowed per team per game.** When a timeout is called, the clock will be stopped. The clock may stop at the referee's discretion
- A team will be declared the winner if they reach **7 goals**. The full 20-minute **game time is to be played out**, but the score will stand once one team scores its seventh goal. Thus, the winning team is the first team to score seven goals or the team with the highest score after the 20-minute game.



- The game will start with a flip of a coin for possession. Possession starting the second half of the game will be granted to the team who lost the coin toss at the start of the game.
- All games will be played with a size 5 soccer ball.
- **Teams will not change ends after half.**
- **Substitutions:** Coaches can make substitutions after any whistle, including balls going out of bounds, goals, after a timeout, after a penalty and after halftime. Officials will whistle in substitutions.
- Note: During play, **coaches and support staff cannot participate in the competition** in any way beyond physically supporting individuals who need one-on-one support or guidance to compete (**cannot participate in active play**).
  - If a coach participates in the game, the team will be given a **technical foul** and free hit for each infraction.

## 2e. Competition

- Games tied at the end of playing time will stand. **There will be no overtime at regional qualifiers.**
- The referee will handle the ball on all out-of-bounds and stoppage of play.
- The ball is dead after a foul or violation is called, a goal is scored, or any other time the referee blows his/her whistle.
- Teams change possession of the ball after a goal has been scored. However, if a player is fouled in the act of shooting and scores the goal, the goal is credited, and the offended team retains possession of the ball.
- Start of play:
  - After a goal has been scored, the game shall be restarted by a kick-off, to be taken by a player of the team against which the goal was scored.
  - The 2<sup>nd</sup> half kick-off shall be taken by a player of the team opposing that which started the game.
  - For any stoppage not mentioned elsewhere in these rules, the referee shall restart the game by dropping the ball at the place where it was played when stopped unless play was stopped in the penalty area. In this case, the ball shall be dropped on the penalty-area line at the point nearest to where the ball was when play was stopped.
  - The ball shall be in play as soon as it touches the ground.
  - A goal may be scored directly from the kick-off.
- The ball is OUT of play when:
  - The whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, or touch-line, whether on the ground or in the air.
  - The play has been stopped by the referee.
- The ball is IN play at all other times, including when it rebounds into play from a goal post, a cross-bar, a corner flag post, or a referee and remains on the playing field.
- A goal is scored when the whole of the ball has crossed over the goal line, between the goalposts and under the cross-bar, provided it has not been thrown, carried or intentionally propelled by hand or arm by a player of the attacking team except by a goalkeeper from within his/her own penalty area.
- Free Kicks:
  - For any infringement of the rules when the ball is in play, the referee may award a free-kick to the non-offending team. The free-kick shall be taken from the place where the infringement occurred unless the free-kick is awarded to the attacking team within its opponents' penalty area. In this case, the penalty kick shall be taken from the penalty mark.
  - At the taking of a free-kick, the ball shall be stationary, and all opponents shall be not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked. The ball shall be in play when it is kicked and moved.
  - A player taking a free kick within his/her own penalty area shall kick the ball into play beyond the penalty area. The ball shall be in play when it has been kicked and moved



- and has passed outside the penalty area. All opponents shall be outside the penalty area and not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked.
- For any infringement of this rule, the free-kick shall be retaken.
    - A player taking a free-kick shall not play or touch the ball a second time until another player has played or touched it. A free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team for any infringement of this rule.
    - A goal may be scored directly from a free-kick.
  - **Penalty Kicks:**
    - A penalty kick shall be taken from the penalty mark. All players, with the exception of the defending goalkeeper and the player taking the kick, shall be outside the penalty area but within the field of play, not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked.
    - The goalkeeper shall remain on his/her own goal line facing the kicker and between the goalposts until the ball has been kicked.
    - The player taking the penalty kick must kick the ball forward. The ball shall be in play when the ball is kicked and moves forward. The player shall not play or touch the ball a second time until another player has played or touched it.
    - For any infringement of this rule:
      - By a defending team member, the kick shall be retaken if a goal has not been scored.
      - By a member of the attacking team, if a goal is scored, it shall be disallowed, and a free-kick awarded to the defending team to be taken from the place where the infringement occurred.
      - By a member of both teams, the kick shall be retaken whether a goal has been scored or not.
      - If, after the kick has been taken, the ball or the goalkeeper is interfered with by an outside agent, the kick shall be retaken.
  - **Kick-Ins will be used when:**
    - The whole ball has crossed the touch-line, either on the ground or in the air; the ball shall be kicked in from the point where it left the field of play by a team member opposing that of the player who last played or touched it.
    - The player taking the kick-in shall:
      - Face the field of play and
      - Kick the ball from on or behind the touch-line.
      - The ball will be in play immediately after entering the field.
    - If the player taking the "kick in" plays or touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
      - At the taking of a kick-in, all opponents must be at least 2 yards (1.8 meters) from the ball.
      - A goal may not be scored directly from a kick-in.
  - **Goal Kicks:**
    - When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goalposts, having last been played or touched by a member of the attacking team, a goal-kick shall be awarded to the defending team.
    - The ball shall be kicked into play from a point within that half of the penalty area nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line.
    - At the taking of a goal-kick, all opponents shall be outside the penalty area until it has been kicked into play. The ball shall be in play when it has travelled directly beyond the penalty area.
    - If the player taking the goal-kick plays or touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free-kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
    - A goal may be scored directly from a goal-kick.
  - **Corner Kicks:**



- When the whole of the ball has crossed the goal line, either on the ground or in the air, excluding that portion between the goalposts, having last been played or touched by a member of the defending team, a corner kick shall be awarded to the attacking team.
- The corner kick shall be taken from within the corner arc nearest to where the ball crossed the goal line. All opponents shall be not less than 6 yards (5.5M) from the ball until it has been kicked. The ball is in play when it is kicked and moves.
- If the player taking the corner kick plays or touches the ball a second time before it has been played or touched by another player, a free kick shall be awarded to the opposing team.
- A goal may be scored directly from a corner kick.
- Substitutions may be made on a dead ball. When one team makes a substitution, the other team must be given an opportunity to substitute as well. Players entering the game must report to the scorer's table and be beckoned into the game by the referee.

## **2f. Fouls & Penalties**

- A player who, in the opinion of the referee, intentionally commits any of the following offences shall be penalized by the awarding of a free-kick to the opposing team:
  - Kicks or attempts to kick an opponent.
  - Trips or attempts to trip an opponent.
  - Jumps at an opponent.
  - Charges an opponent.
  - Strikes or attempts to strike an opponent.
  - Holds an opponent.
  - Pushes an opponent.
  - Handles the ball deliberately (except for a goalkeeper from within his/her own penalty area).
  - Tackles an opponent to gain possession of the ball, making contact with the opponent before touching the ball.
- Should a player commit one of the above offences within his/her own penalty area, a penalty-kick shall be awarded.