



Special Olympics

UNIFIED SPORTS®

COURSE Module 2

Football (Soccer) Guide



Special Olympics

North America

Be a fan™

November 2008

Unified Sports® Course Module 2 – Football (Soccer) Guide

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Coaching Resources for Unified Sports® Course Module 2 Unified Football/Soccer Training

- Building Successful Unified Sports® Programs DVD
- Unified Sports® Handbook
- Player Assessment Guidelines
- Special Olympics Football Rules and Coaching Guide
- Course Agenda
- Course Evaluation Form
- Certificate of Participation

Acknowledgements

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Unified Sports® Course – Football (Soccer) Practical Module

Introduction

1. SPECIAL OLYMPICS NORTH AMERICA (SONA) UNIFIED SPORTS® TRAINING RESOURCES

1.1 Link to the Special Olympics North America Coach Education System: This Unified Sport-Specific Course Module is extremely important in relation to the Unified Sports® Course Module 1 because it takes one through a successful process of forming appropriate Unified Sports® teams. It also provides important information on team cohesion, solving challenging issues, etc. In addition, it is an approved course within the Special Olympics North America Coach Education System.

The key to improving athlete performance and well being is based on the quality of sport training and experiences provided by the local Special Olympics coach. (Coach refers to an individual who assumes responsibility for athletes, actively trains athletes, and coaches them in competitions.) The SONA Coach Education System identifies basic standards and competencies necessary and essential for being a Special Olympics coach. Standardization of essential knowledge and coaching proficiency adds credibility and consistency to the entire SONA Coach Education System, worldwide. The SONA Coach Education System will assist Special Olympics Programs in designing and providing quality sports training for Special Olympics coaches. In addition, coaches will gain new and/or improved competencies and skills, which will provide better training opportunities for their athletes.

All Special Olympics coaches must take the General Orientation one time and Protective Behaviors as a foundation and beginning to the coach certification process. The first level of the SONA Coach Education System is the sport-specific Skills Course or the Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course depending on prior sport experience. However, if the coach has no prior experience in working with Special Olympics athletes, the Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Course must include a 1- 1 ½ hour activity session in working with Special Olympics athletes. The coach who desires to be trained specific to Unified Sports® would begin with the Unified Sports® Course Module 1 (which may be part of the General Orientation) and then proceed with a sport specific training school and/or Principles of Coaching. The Unified sport-specific training has been designed to build coaching competency above this basic coach education system to better assist with the delivery of Unified Sports® programs.

- Special Olympics General Orientation and Protective Behaviors – *Foundation Both are prerequisites before any certification is approved and must be attended.*
- Protective Behaviors – must be taken once every 3 years
- Special Olympics Unified Sports® Training
This may be offered as an independent course or additional classroom material in General Orientation.
- Special Olympics Skills Course–Module 1
- Specific Unified Sports® Course–Modules 1 & 2
- Special Olympics Principles of Coaching Course–Module 2
- Coaching Special Olympics Athletes Seminar–Module 2 for individuals who are sport qualified
- Special Olympics Tactics Course–Module 3
- Special Olympics Comprehensive Mentoring–Module 4
- American Sport Education Program (ASEP) online courses
- First-Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) Course
- Officials Training; Rules Updates
- Special Olympics Protective Behavior
- Education Updates [New Training Techniques; Safety Issues; Inappropriate Techniques, etc.]
- National Governing Body Courses; other sports organizations' coaching courses
- Positive Coaching Alliance Workshops
- Other Special Olympics North America approved coaching courses

[SONA Coach Education System diagram on next page]

Coach Education System Training and Certification



To receive SONA coach certification, an individual will:

- Attend an approved course, training seminar, or mentoring program;
- Complete the prescribed exam, workbook, etc. as applicable;
- Complete a specified practicum of working with Special Olympics athletes; **AND**
- Be authorized by a Special Olympics Program representative verifying such experiences and coaching competencies.

Coaches must achieve the beginning certification level within three years upon entering Special Olympics to become a coach. They must also take the Principles of Coaching Course once within the first six years. (Program planning for implementation will begin in 2009 with implementation beginning in 2010.) Coaches can choose from many approved courses for certification, maintaining certification or continuing education. This includes Unified Sports® Course, Principles of Coaching Course, sport-specific Tactics Course, ASEP online courses, Mentoring, Rules Update, CPR Courses, Protective Behaviors, Positive Coaching Alliance Workshops, etc. In order to maintain and/or upgrade coach certification, a coach continues taking approved coaching education courses. Each coach upgrades knowledge at least once every three years.

1.2 Link to Unified Sports® Handbook

This section emphasizes the relationship between the Unified Sports® training and sport-specific application. Furthermore, key reference points are to be identified from the Unified Sports® Handbook and Unified Sports® Course Module 2 Football/Soccer Guide.

All Special Olympics Unified Sports® coaches should have completed the Special Olympics General Orientation and Protective Behaviors, the Unified Sports® Course – Modules 1 & 2, and have either completed 10 hours of practical experience with Special Olympics athletes or a sport-specific training school. The intent of the sport-specific Unified Sports® training is to help Special Olympics coaches with the unique nuances of Unified Sports® in respective sport settings. It is not a substitute for preliminary coach education, but an additional resource for coach development.

Coaches participating in the Sport-specific Unified Sports® Course – Module 2 should have access to the Unified Sports® Handbook, appropriate rules guides for the sport, and coaching guide for the sport.

2. BASIC ORGANIZATION OF UNIFIED FOOTBALL (SOCCER)

This information is included in the Unified Sports® Handbook – but framed within the unique needs of each sport.

2.1 Partner Eligibility (See 1.3 of Unified Sports® Handbook.)

- Meaningful inclusion/participation is best served with partners of similar age and physical and social skills with athletes.
- People with disabilities should never be the sole participants.

2.2 Team Selection (See 2.6 of Unified Sports® Handbook.)

- All teammates should possess the requisite skills of the sport and an understanding of teamwork.
- Teams work best when all team members have similar sport-specific skills. However, successful development of a Unified Sports® team is possible as long as each team member contributes in a meaningful way, regardless of their ability. For example, a player may not be a good shooter, but may be a great defensive player.
- All team members should be closely matched in age, especially for athletes under 21 years of age, because of the influence of strength, speed and height on risk management.
- In Football, utilize Unified Sports® to reach athletes and peers not currently involved in Special Olympics.
- Use a targeted approach when recruiting teammates to match the local program's needs. For example, if athletes are older and higher skilled, local colleges would be a good resource of potential partners. Community youth sport programs or schools would more adequately serve the needs of younger athletes.

2.3 Rules (See 1.4 of Unified Sports® Handbook and Special Olympics Official Sports Rules; identify specific modified rules for the sport.)

- Regarding roster size in 5-a-side Football, a proportionate number could mean 6 athletes and 4 partners, which would allow 2 substitutes for each.
- During 5-a-side play, there can be no more than 3 athletes and 2 partners on the field at any given time.
- During 11-a-side play, there can be no more than 6 athletes and 5 partners on the field at any given time.
- A Unified Football team must have an adult non-playing coach.

3. PREPARATION FOR ON-FIELD AND ATHLETE SESSIONS TO FOLLOW

3.1 Scope and Sequence of Training Activities

Clearly list the goals and activities in the practical application section of training before working with athletes.

- Learn and practice assessment tools.
- Learn and practice a model practice plan (warm-up, skills instruction, competition experience, and cool-down plus team talk).

3.2 Coach Participation – Expectations and Responsibilities with Athletes

The upcoming practical session with athletes and partners will afford coaches the opportunity to practice assessing players' skills and team play, forming teams, and evaluating team composition.

- Each coach participant will have the opportunity to practice and demonstrate basic skills.
- Teach basic team play to identify player readiness (partners' and athletes' skills and game understanding).

Preparation for Unified Sports® Training and Competition

4. ASSESSING PLAYERS AND FORMING TEAMS

Utilize the following Unified Sports® Player Assessment material or a collection of best practices from the field on how the assessments were done in different Unified Sports® settings.

4.1 Introduction

Unified Sports® is not for everyone. Before any player is placed on a Unified Sports® team, it is critical to utilize a procedure for screening and skills testing all players. In this way, the results ensure that athletes and partners are appropriate and reasonably well matched for the Unified Sports® program.

Special Olympics North America recommends that the following assessment tests and player evaluations be made **mandatory** for all prospective and current Unified Sports® team players.

4.2 Assessing Players

Player assessment is made up of two components: objective sports-specific skills assessment tests and subjective game-play assessment.

While it might be said that it is performance in a game that is the only meaningful assessment criteria, we feel that using additional objective skills tests help improve the assessment process in a number of ways:

- a) Objective tests are useful to verify subjective assessments.
- b) Objective tests provide a measurable indicator for Special Olympics athletes who wish to move from traditional Special Olympics to Unified Sports®.
- c) Objective tests also serve to provide data for pre-classifying teams for Unified Sports® competitions.

4.3 Recommended Testing Procedure

Step 1: Form an Assessment Team which includes individuals who are experienced in or with Special Olympics and individuals who are specialists in the sport (such as a college, high school or club coach).

Step 2: Put all participants through the Football (Soccer) Skills Assessment Tests (SATs). These tests can be found under each respective sport in the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules. Allow time for each participant to practice the test first. Participants should do each test per instructions to gain the most accurate measure of their

ability. On the score sheet provided, indicate each participant’s score for each test. It is important to carefully read and consistently follow the instructions for administering each test.

Step 3: Calculate the average score for athletes and the average score for partners.

Step 4: Divide the group into preliminary teams based on participants SATs’ scores, mixing equal numbers of athletes and partners on each team. (Note: during actual team play, at least 50 percent of the team playing must always be athletes.) Play 10-15 minute assessment games. Using the Player Evaluation Record (see section 4.5) make notes on each player. Pay particular attention to athletes who have scored extremely low on the skills tests (more than 25% below the average partner score) and partners who scored extremely high (more than 25% above the average athlete score).

- Athletes who receive a “YES” check mark in **all** of the listed criteria should be considered *appropriate* for this Unified Sports® team.
- Partners who receive a “YES” check mark in **any** one of the listed criteria should be considered *inappropriate* for this Unified Sports® team.

Step 5: Have a meeting of the Assessment Team to discuss their ratings. Make a preliminary decision about appropriate versus inappropriate athletes and partners.

Step 6: Create two Unified Sports® teams of as close to the same ability (balanced) athletes and partners and play them against each other.

Step 7: Play one of these “balanced” Unified Sports® teams against the remainder of the partners (considered to be extremely high level) to ensure placement. Play the other “balanced” Unified Sports® team against any remaining athletes to ensure placement.

Step 8: Meet with the Assessment Team to discuss final decisions. Complete and sign each player's assessment form. Send one copy to the Program Office.

Step 9: Inform all participants, individually (later that week), about the decision of the Assessment Team. Invite appropriate participants to the next practice. Discuss alternative participation options for participants who have been assessed as “inappropriate”. Such options may include becoming a coach or training partner. Options may also include joining a different Unified Sports® team of more comparable skill, joining a traditional Special Olympics team, or trying out for a different Unified sport.

Step 10: Periodically review the effectiveness of the initial assessment.

4.4 Formation of Teams Based on Skills Assessment Tests’ (SATs) Scores

Observe the athletes as they go through the SATs so that you can determine their knowledge of the game, their sport-specific skills, and how they respond to coaching.

Evenly balance the teams (in essence you are ranking each athlete based on skills/ability). Start with the best players (athletes and partners) and systematically position players from there.

	<u>Team 1</u>	<u>Team 2</u>	<u>Team 3</u>	<u>Team 4</u>
Athletes:	1	2	3	4
	8	7	6	5
	9	10	11	12
	16	15	14	13
	17	18	19	20
	24	23	22	21
Partners:	4	3	2	1
	5	6	7	8
	12	11	10	9
	13	14	15	16

4.5 Unified Football (Soccer) Evaluation Checklist: This is helpful tool regarding the appropriateness of all team members during team play. It also appears in the Unified Sports® Handbook page 32 – 45.

Checklist to Determine Appropriateness of Team Members

1) Is there an athlete(s) on the team who, when competing to his/her highest ability level, would place other athletes on the team or on an opposing team at risk of injury?

Yes ____ No ____

2) Is the composition of the team such that **ALL** athletes without intellectual disabilities are higher skilled than athletes with intellectual disabilities?

Yes ____ No ____

3) In order for a game to be played by the rules and at the same time allow for safe and meaningful involvement of all team members, must certain teammates significantly lower their level of skill and not compete as hard as they are capable?

Yes ____ No ____

4) Are there athletes on the team who are so highly skilled that no other member of the team could defend him or her in a competitive situation? (Specifically, this person could score at any time he or she chooses.)

Yes ____ No ____

5) Are there athletes on the team who do not have the sport's skills or understanding of the rules necessary to compete according to the rules in a competitive situation? Do they need significant assistance from teammates? Must the rules be significantly modified above and beyond Special Olympics Sports Rules adaptations?

Yes ____ No ____

6) Are there athletes on the team who in a competitive situation rarely touch the ball or participate in competition because of their low ability level?

Yes ____ No ____

7) Are there athletes on the team who do not compete in more than 50% of all league competition?

Yes ____ No ____

8) Are there athletes on the team who do not attend more than 50% of the practices during a season?

Yes ____ No ____

9) Will the team fail to train and compete together as a team at least eight weeks before entry in Special Olympics area or program level competition?

Yes ____ No ____

If the answer to any of the above questions is “yes”, your team is probably inappropriate for entry in official Special Olympics Unified Sports® competition according to “Meaningful Involvement” guidelines.

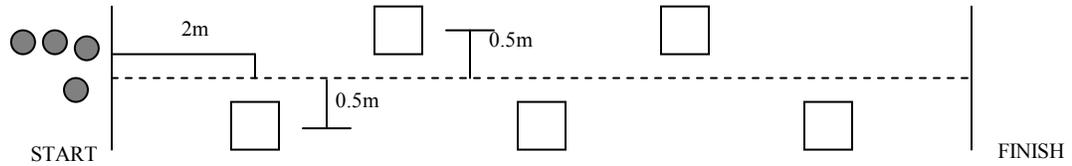
4.6 Leadership Opportunities for Athletes

The goal is to promote and provide opportunities for capable athletes to be leaders on the team.

- Plan for opportunities to involve athletes as captains, training assistants, team manager, officials, etc.
- Use team meetings to involve athletes in the planning process.
- Encourage athletes to evaluate practices and games.
- Encourage athletes to be ambassadors of the program (player recruitment and public speaking).

5. FOOTBALL (SOCCER) SKILLS ASSESSMENT TESTS (SATs)

5.1 Football (Soccer) Team Skills Assessment Test – Dribbling (12m Slalom)



SET UP

12-meter dribbling slalom: five cones (minimum 18 inches high), 2 meters apart, staggered 0.5 meters from central line. Three to five balls at the start line.

TEST

Time: one minute

Player dribbles through slalom as quickly as possible, rounding (weaving in and out of) all cones.

Player leaves ball over the finish line (ball must be stopped) and sprints back to the start.

If there is time remaining, player starts with the second ball and repeats.

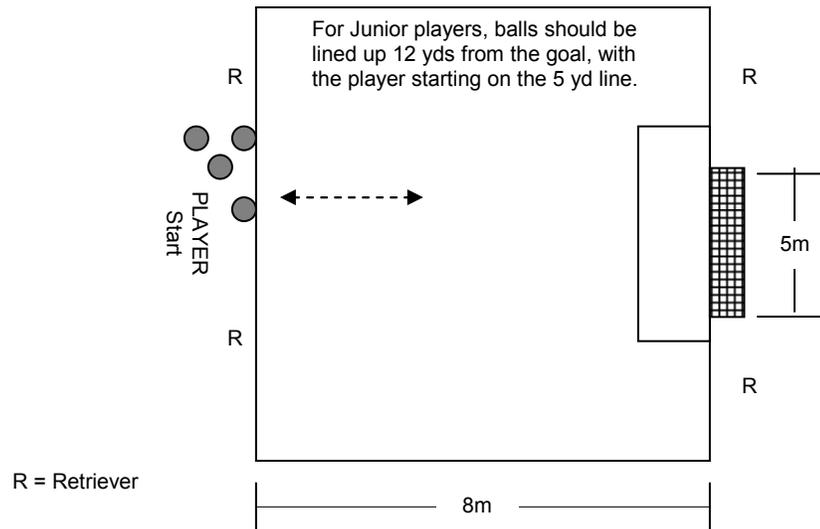
Player continues until one minute has elapsed.

A whistle will be blown when one minute has elapsed to signify the end of the test.

SCORING

Player scores five points for each cone passed (to the outside) (i.e., 25 points per successful run).

5.2 Football (Soccer) Team Skills Assessment Test – Shooting



SET UP

Penalty area and full-size goal with nets, on a regulation field.

Four to eight balls at the top of the penalty arc. If balls are in short supply, the test can be run with four to five balls with a good retrieval and return system.

TEST

Player starts at the 8m mark. Collects the ball. Dribbles into the penalty area and shoots, attempting to shoot the ball in the air into the goal.

Players can shoot from whatever distance they choose once they are inside the penalty area.

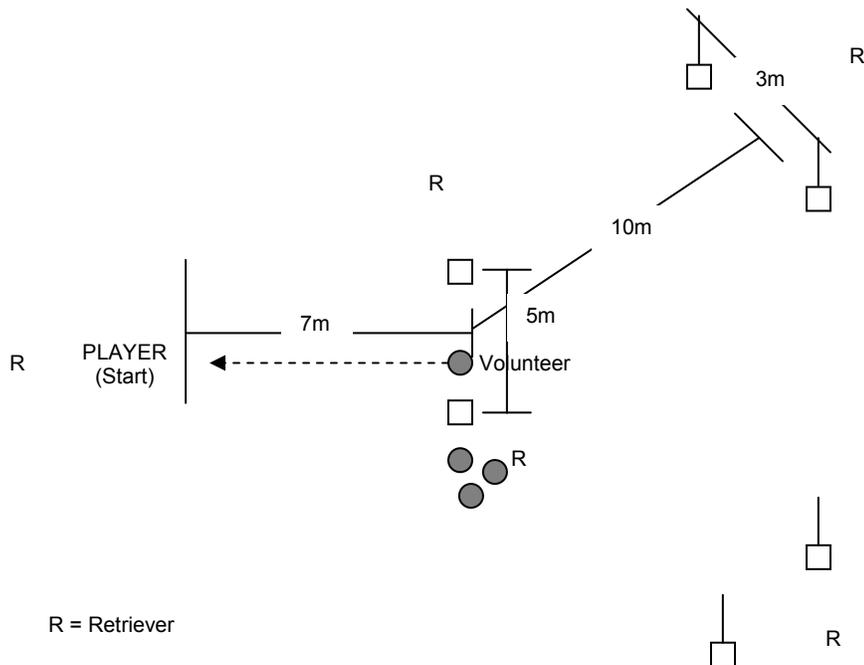
As soon as the player has shot, he/she returns and repeats with another ball.

A whistle will be blown after one minute to signify the end of the test.

SCORING

Player scores ten (10) points for each shot traveling from foot to goal in the air and five (5) points for each shot that touches the ground before entering the goal.

5.3 Football (Soccer) Team Skills Assessment Test – Control and Pass (Direction on Cue)



SET UP

Two cones to form a “passing gate” 5 meters wide, 7 meters from the starting line.

Two passing “target gates” cones and 1-meter flags (if possible) as shown.

Four to eight soccer balls. (If balls are in short supply, use four balls but have an efficient retrieval system for returning balls to the coach.)

TEST

Time: One minute

Coach rolls the ball at moderate pace to the waiting player.

The player may wait on the line or move toward the ball once it has been rolled.

Player controls the ball and dribbles through the passing gate.

Coach alternately calls and physically indicates “left” or “right” to designate target.

Ball one – right / Ball two – left / Ball three – right, etc.

Players can dribble as close as they like before passing the ball through the target.

The coach will roll the next ball as soon as the player returns to the starting line.

After one minute, a whistle will be blown to signify the end of the test.

SCORING

Player scores 10 points for each successful pass through a target gate.

A ball that hits the cone and goes through will count.

Practical Experience with Players/Teammates (Athletes and Partners)

6. WARM-UPS AND STRETCHING – FOOTBALL SPECIFIC

7. SKILLS ASSESSMENT TESTS’ (SATs) STATIONS

Use high ability player(s) [athletes or partners] to demonstrate. Allow one practice to get the feel for the activity. Be sure all players understand the task, but keep instruction at a minimum. SATs’ scores will be used to form preliminary teams.

- Dribbling
- Shooting
- Control & Passing

8. ASSESSING TEAM PLAY

Have scrimmage vests to identify each team. Use a simple offense and defense. Use visual aids to assist in positioning and transition from offense to defense to offense. Determine appropriates of all team members.

- Team Play – Set up 5-a-side Positions
- Scrimmage – 5 v 5 (Clarify and enforce the rules when playing.)

9. FORMING TEAMS & SCRIMMAGING TO ENSURE EQUITY

Ensure that athletes and partners are appropriate for each team. Ensure that teams are equitable. Move athletes & partners among teams to ensure equity.

- Meet to assess team equity and move players as necessary.
- Scrimmage again to ensure team equity.

10. COOL-DOWN AND TEAM TALK

Go through big muscle group stretches such as sitting toe touch with both legs out straight and then one leg at a time with opposite leg bent and bottom of foot touching straight leg. (Suggest doing this in a big circle in the middle of the field.) Then affirm all teammate’s efforts and contribution to the team experience.

Debriefing the Practical Session and Closing

- Evaluate the assessment process: regarding layout, equipment, instructions, etc.
- Discuss the readjustment process and creation of teams after they have played; talk about what adjustments may be appropriate. (Was there player dominance; how would you adjust accordingly? What of skill and game readiness?)
- Explore coaching strategies for various team compositions and insight on what each learned.
- Identify training needs, coach education, and behavior management issues. (See “Athlete Behavior Characteristics and Strategies to Improve Learning” handout.
- Go over certification process and submission of completed forms.
- Evaluate the training.

Unified Sports® Course Module 2 - Unified Football (Soccer)

Agenda

- 45 mins. **Classroom Session – Unified Sports®**
- Welcome; Introductions; Objectives of the Training
 - Basics of Unified Football (Soccer)
 - Partner Eligibility; Selection of Team; Rules; Competition Issues, etc.
 - Getting into the Schools (*if not provided in Module 1*)
 - Preparation for On-field and Athlete Session to Follow
- 1 hr. 30 mins. **Activity Session on Field with Coaches – Preparation for Team Composition**
- Warm-up and Stretching
Economy of Training; Matching Participants; Grouping for Assessments
 - Football (Soccer) Skills Assessment Tests (SATs)
Step 1: Skills Assessment Tests
Step 2: Team Play Assessment; Using Checklist to Determine Appropriateness
Step 3: Forming Teams
 - Assessment of Team Play
Evaluating Appropriateness of Teammates (Requisite Skills; Safety)
Ensuring Equity among Teams
 - Going over Upcoming Activity Session and Assignment of Tasks and Teams
- 15 mins. Break (Meet & greet players upon arrival; provide name tags.)
- 1 hr 30 mins. **Activity Session with Players (Athletes and Partners); Responsibilities Identified**
- Warm-up and Stretching - _____
 - Stations: Skills Assessment Tests (SATs)
1 – Dribbling ~ _____
2 – Shooting ~ _____
3 – Control & Pass ~ _____
 - Form Teams Based on SATs' Scores
 - Team Play – *Assessments (playing three 5-min. games among teams) ~ _____*
 - Feedback on Appropriateness of Members (*moving athletes/partners accordingly*)
 - Scrimmage in New Teams (*three 5-min. games; ensure equity if time permits*)
 - Cool-down and Team Talk (*wrapping up session; lessons learned; provide recognition*) ~ _____
- 45 mins. **Classroom Wrap-Up Session**
- Debriefing Day and Review of Key Points (Situations)
 - Challenges: Competition Issues
 - Addendum for the Coach: Drills; Team Play; Team Cohesion; Coaching Guidelines
 - Comments; Questions Regarding Program; Concerns
 - Certification Process
 - Course Evaluation

Resources for Unified Football (Soccer) Training

Building Successful Unified Sports® Programs DVD; Unified Sports® Handbook; Player Assessment Guidelines; Special Olympics Football Rules and Coaching Guide; Course Agenda; Course Evaluation Form; Certification Form

Addendum

11. TEAM PLAY (SEE - SPECIAL OLYMPICS FOOTBALL COACHING GUIDE)

Athlete Readiness

Players who can kick a stationary ball at least 5 meters; pursue a moving ball, perhaps with some verbal prompting; react safely to a ball coming at them in the air; and distinguish, most of the time, a teammate from an opponent, can successfully play at least 5-a-side Football. Players who possess good basic skills and an understanding of the basic rules of the game and are also good athletes, with some speed and endurance, may be appropriate for the more demanding 11-a-side Football. Higher ability players may also be appropriate for 11- a-side Unified Sports Football.

Football Concepts and Strategies

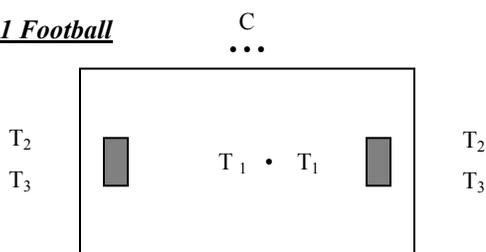
The best way to teach Football is to play the game. This gives players an understanding of the concepts. From here, you can break up play into specific drills. To enhance players' skills when running to warm up, use a ball at their feet. Always encourage players and pick out what they are doing right, more than what they are doing wrong. Try and adapt training to be fun and interesting. Most importantly, include progression in the drills so that everyone's ability is challenged. Individualize instruction and progressions as appropriate.

11.1 Attack/Defend

Activity: One vs. One

1. Designate a 15-meter-by-10-meter area with 4-meter-by-2-meter goals at each end.
2. Form two teams of three, wearing different colored scrimmage vests, and number the players 1-2-3 (no goalkeepers).
3. Coach stands at the halfway line with several soccer balls.
4. When a player's number is called, the player comes out and plays for 30-45 seconds against opponent with the same number.
5. Other players wait behind the goal, help collect balls and return them to the coach.
6. If the ball goes out, the coach will immediately roll in another ball.
7. Key points of emphasis for offensive player – ball control and possession, attempt to attack and shoot.
8. Key points of emphasis for defender – patience, positioning (stay between ball and the goal and don't "stab" at the ball, tackle ball when offensive player makes a mistake)

1 v 1 Football



Key Questions to Ask Your Players

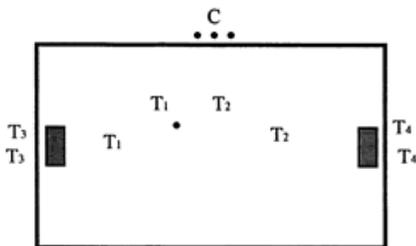
- Which goal are you scoring in?
- Which goal are you defending?
- What do you do when you have the ball? (Attack)
- What do you do when the opponent has the ball? (Defend)

11.2 Teammates

Activity: Two vs. Two

1. Designate a 20-meter-by-10-meter field with 4-meter-by-2-meter goals at each end.
2. Form four teams of two. Two teams stand behind each goal.
3. Coach stands at the halfway line with several soccer balls.
4. Teams come out to play two vs. two.
5. If the ball goes out of play, leave it and receive another from the coach.
6. If the defending player gains possession of the ball, the player must pass the ball to a teammate before trying to score.
7. For lower ability players, allow each team to dribble and pass from one goal to the other without any opposition.
8. Introduce opponents later.
9. Goalkeepers can be added as well to provide additional training and challenge for field players.

2 v2 Football

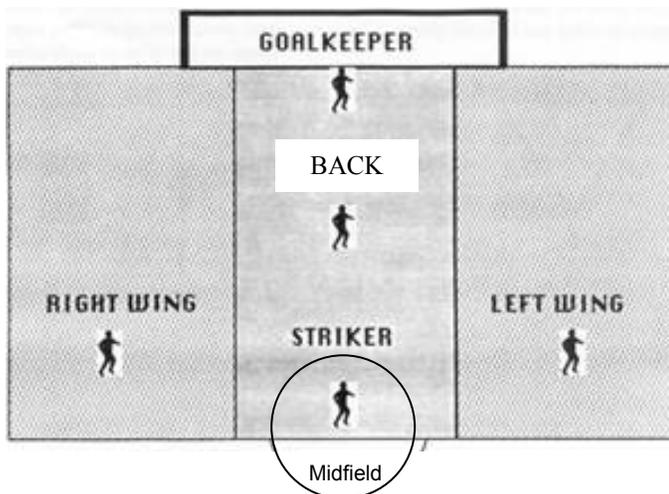


Key Questions to Ask Your Players

- Who is your teammate?
- What color shirt is your team wearing?
- Who do you pass to?
- What color shirt is the other team wearing?
- Do you tackle your teammate? (No)
- Great Football players play as a _____? (Team)

11.3 Team Play: 5-A-Side Football

Teaching Team Formations & Selecting Positions for Each Player



Goalkeeper

This is a critical position and requires an athlete with good vision and awareness, some patience, an ability to concentrate and is not afraid of the ball coming at them. This must be a confident player who is able to bounce back after letting in a goal.

- Protects the goal.
- Uses two hands as much as possible.
- Stays close to the goal.
- Throws the ball out quickly to the wings, on gaining possession.
- Communicates to teammates and assists in organizing team play and defense.

Back

The athlete at this position can be a less mobile player with a strong kick.

- Stops the opponents from shooting.
- Chases and tackles.
- Passes the ball up to attacking players.
- Follows the play up to the halfway line.

Wings

This position requires athletes with good stamina and endurance.

- Helps attack and defend.
- Gets open by going wide and spreading the field.
- Stays on their side of the field much of the game, particularly when their goalkeeper has the ball.
- Good passing skills, moving to open spaces and game understanding are important.

Striker

This position requires an athlete with a strong shot. Good skills and speed are ideal as this is the team's offensive leader.

- Goes for goal!
- Scores!
- Stays on the opponent's side of the field most of the game.
- Uses skill and shot to put pressure on opposing defense.

Assigning 5 v 5 positions

- Begin by putting cones out to mark the positions on the field. Have players move the ball down the field without opponents, keeping a team shape.
- Use clues from 1 v 1's, 2 v 2's, and Skills Assessment Tests to position players to their natural tendencies, i.e., players that are strong with the ball may be good wingers, those that tend to stay back may prefer to play as backs, those that are aggressive to goal may make natural strikers, etc.
- Allow players opportunities in different positions.
- Reemphasize coaching points from the 1 v 1's and 2 v 2's.
- Be sure to allow for some time for specific basic goalkeeper instruction. (Perhaps as part of an economical warm up.)

11.4 Positional Play Assessment – Specific questions to ask to help assess each team's members according to individual skills and overall team abilities.

Goalkeeping

- Does the goalkeeper use good technique when collecting the ball, such as using hands to make a save rather than letting the ball hit him/her?
- Is the keeper comfortable with shots directly at him/her?
- Can the keeper move to save shots not directly at him/her?
- Can the keeper distribute the ball effectively by finding open teammates rather than throwing the ball to the other team?

Defense

- Do the players without the ball stay in good position and effectively defend attacking opponents?
- Do the defending players aggressively go after loose balls?
- Can the defending players effectively clear the ball away to prevent scoring opportunities for the opponent?
- Do players understand the concept of defending set plays such as corner kicks and kick-ins?

Midfield/Playmaking

- Do midfield players have physical stamina to cover entire field?
- How many players on the team can effectively pass the ball to an open teammate?
- How many players understand the concept of making a run to a space to get open for a teammate?
- How many players communicate with their teammates during play, such as “I’m open”, “Cross”, “Help”, etc.?
- What is the overall skill level of the team (trapping, ball control, dribbling)? Low? Below average? Average? Above average? Good?
- What is the overall team speed? Slow? Average? Above average? Fast?
- Are there any players that are dominant due to exceptional size, speed, skill, game awareness or a combination of these traits?
- Are there any players that are well below the ability of other players on the team?

Offense

- How many players on the team can effectively pass the ball to an open teammate?
- How many players understand the concept of “open space”?
- Do players first look to play the ball forward when gaining possession of the ball?
- Can players shoot the ball on goal accurately?
- Which players attempt and can beat an opponent by dribbling past them?
- Do players understand positioning for set plays such as corner kicks and kick-ins?
- What is the technique level for controlling (trapping) a passed or loose ball?

Transition

- How well do players transition to defense once their team loses possession of the ball?
- How well do the players understand and defend when the opponent has the ball?
- How well do players transition to offense once their team gains possession of the ball?
- How well does the entire team play offense when in possession of the ball?

11.5 Adjustment of Teams Based on Ability as Seen During Competition

▪ Mixed Team Adjustments

Most teams will actually fall into the “Mixed Team” category. There will be athletes at all ends of the spectrum. The critical decision for a coach to make is to place athletes so they can make a contribution or develop specific skills to make a contribution.

12. GROUP DYNAMICS

This section gives coaches some additional information on how to facilitate positive player interaction, meeting both the safety and interpersonal needs of the participants.

12.1 Matching Participants

An important responsibility of the coach is to match athletes in pairs or small groups for training and skill development. Inappropriate matching may lead to unnecessary injury or lessen the effectiveness of the training experience. The coach should consider the level of skill, sport experience, cognitive functioning in pairing for warm-up and group activities, and the obvious physical characteristics of height, weight, and fitness level when the task involves body contact.

12.2 Grouping for Drills

The most effective learning occurs when athletes are actively learning by doing. Instruction designed for small groups and pairs will maximize time on task and aid in providing critical feedback on performance. In designing small groups for a Unified Sports® mixed or training team model, you can either place athletes/partners with similar ability in the same group, or design groups of mixed ability. In all cases there should be a representative number of athletes and partners. The following recommendations are useful in making decisions about grouping players:

- When a skill, rule, or strategy is being taught that all your players need to know, use a single group for instruction, but then allow for small groups of similar ability to practice the skill at various learning stations.
- When the activity involves combination drills or team tactics, use multiple groups of mixed ability for practice. Some players will seem to play better with certain other players, but encourage all players to get to know how to perform their best in any group situation.
- Establish new groups or pairs for practicing different skills. Avoid similar player pairing for more than one or two activities a practice.
- Have a prepared plan for how to group or pair athletes for each activity. Have players self-select partners once in a while to build a sense of control and competence, but be careful of cliques that may form or of devaluing less skilled athletes.

12.3 Team Dynamics

As in all sports, the need for most athletes to belong or affiliate with other team members is of critical importance. The process of making friends and developing certain roles within the group is as much a part of sport as training and competition. Coaches should be especially alert at the beginning of the season when teammates are getting to know each other and judgments about others are being developed.

A key component in the genuine integration for special populations in programs like Unified Sports is the attitude, knowledge and subsequent behavior of the coach. Genuine integration of athletes and partners relies on three key factors, all influenced by the coach:

- (a) interaction between athletes,
- (b) perception of special treatment given the athlete or partner by the coach,
- (c) recognition and acceptance of individual impairments in preparing athletes to successfully train and compete with partners.

The challenge of Unified Sports is to help people without intellectual disabilities integrate into the previously exclusionary teams of Special Olympics. Coaches need to plan, implement and evaluate actions to assure meaningful participation and enhanced social development of all players. The type of activity, amount of accommodation necessary, and intensity of competition are considered in structuring the sport experience. Activities should foster respect for the uniqueness of everyone's abilities, motivation and contribution to the Unified Sports® team.

Developing sport skills is the foremost task of the coach since athletes, who are not competent to meet the demands of the Unified Sports® setting and related social roles, risk disapproval from teammates and others, along with blows to self-esteem. The risks of winning and losing in integrated programs are compounded for the athlete.

Group cohesion is the term to describe the tendency for members of a group to stick to together and remain united as they work toward collective goals and social purposes. Athletes and partners in cohesive teams will display more positive attitudes, increased confidence and maximize sport performance. Group cohesion can be improved by the following suggestions:

- Use small groups (3-6 people) for practice drills and other team tasks when possible.
- Set team goals that athletes and partners understand and success can be easily determined.
- Clarify each team member's role on the team
- Encourage all players to communicate by calling each other by their name
- Create opportunities for general communication among players before, during, and after practice or competition.
- Take the time to recognize specific players for good performance and encourage teammates to do the same.
- Use cooperative drills that build respect for each player's contribution to the sport.

13. COACHING CHALLENGES

13.1 *Game Coaching Skills*

- Because of the endurance needed in this sport, coaches need to know each player's physical fitness and utilize all available player substitutions.
- Substitute so that an individual has enough time for meaningful play.
- Avoid making a substitution immediately after a player error. Allow a player an opportunity to adjust to the situation and learn from the experience.
- Use positive, specific and consistent instruction. Generate some cue words that your team understands and will lead to desired actions.
- "The game is the best teacher." Less is better; let your athletes play. Use cue words sparingly to elicit desired adjustments.

13.2 *Competition Issues (such as player dominance and training team competition)*

- Playing to "win" is part of the Olympic Spirit and should be embraced by all players as an appropriate goal. However, remember the effort and courage in trying to win should equally be rewarded by the coach and players.
- All teams may have 1 or 2 outstanding players. Conduct an upfront discussion on player dominance and the differences between ideal, mixed and training teams.
- If the dominant player happens to be an athlete, the coach needs to assist that athlete in finding a more appropriate team for future participation. However, in the moment, assign the player a different position to better balance the team.
- In training teams, ask the highest functioning players not to play down, but play differently. A partner's role is to keep the ball in play, make transitions, help advance the play of lesser ability players, etc.
- Remember, a player can dominate without scoring (such as dominant defending or bringing the ball down the field/pitch. A coach should assist each player develop a variety of skills contributing to team play.
- Ongoing competition for all teams is essential. Competition should be viewed as part of the learning process for a training team.
- Teach your athletes to appreciate your opponent, the referees, and the spirit of the game. Good sports are winners every time.

13.3 *Appropriate Use of Assistant Coaches*

- Everyone should have a part to play on the team, including the assistant coaches.
- Divide the labor; ensure that each assistant coach has a role.
 - Some may serve to conduct the warm-up and stretching as well as cool-down and team talk aspects of practice.
 - Some may be in charge of a specific station through out the season, such as dribbling, shooting, goalkeeping, 1 v 1's, etc.
 - Others may serve as equipment managers; others may also be in charge of charting performance.
 - Others may be in charge of the conditioning and/or strength training aspects.
 - Each coach may be responsible for the development of specific players or specific positions.
- Utilize assistant coaches in season and practice planning.
- Reward and acknowledge assistant coach efforts in front of the team, parents and peers.