



About Football: Played in just about every country, the sport's success is due to the fact that it can be played by boys, girls, men and women of just about any physical build and ability. Football requires little in the way of specialized equipment and is organized using simple, intuitive rules.

Established: Football has been offered in the Special Olympics Ireland programme since it began in 1978.

Differences of Special Olympics Football: In 11-a-side competition Special Olympics football follow FIFA rules. However, the length of halves, substitution and overtime rules are defined by each Special Olympics Programme. In 5-a-side and 7-a-side football matches, some rule variations include: kick-ins from the touch line, throw-ins by the goalkeeper; throw-ins by goalkeepers cannot touch the other side of the half field until touched by a player first, and there are no off-sides.

By The Numbers:

- In 2014, 1,755 Special Olympics Ireland athletes participated in Football
- In all seven Special Olympics International regions across the globe, Football ranks as a top 5 sport.

Events for Competition:

- 5-a-side Team
- 7-a-side Team
- 11-a-side Team Competition according to FIFA rules

Associations/Federations/Supporters:

Football Association of Ireland (FAI)

<http://www.fai.ie/>

Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

<http://www.fifa.com/>

Divisioning at Special Olympics:

Athletes in every sport and event are grouped by age, gender, and ability, giving everyone a reasonable chance to win. At Special Olympics there are no World Records because each athlete, whether in the fastest or the slowest division is valued and recognized equally. In every division, all athletes receive an award, from gold, silver, and bronze medals, to fourth through eighth place ribbons. This idea of equal ability groupings is the foundation for competition in Special Olympics and can be witnessed at all events, whether it's athletics, aquatics, table tennis, football, skiing, or gymnastics. All athletes are given an equal chance to participate, perform, and be recognized for doing their best by their teammates, family, friends, and fans.