

SPECIAL OLYMPICS TEAM MATCH PLAY RULES

HOW TO PLAY TEAM MATCH PLAY CORNHOLE | 4 OR 8 PERSON TEAMS

Overview

Two teams (consisting of 4 or 8 players on each team), compete in 6 rounds of gameplay to determine the winner of the match.

The 6 rounds of play consist of:

- 3 rounds of doubles match play
- 2 rounds of singles match play
- 1 round of an airmail shootout

Each round of play is assigned a match point value. Teams compete to be the first team to reach a total of 21 match points to win the match.

Setup | The Court

Depending on your layout, space, and time allocated to play, there are many variations to layout the court. The minimum layout requires one set of 2x4 cornhole boards, meeting official board specifications.

At least 2-3 courts are recommended for completing the match in an efficient amount of time. A maximum of 5 courts are required for team match play.

Court Dimensions

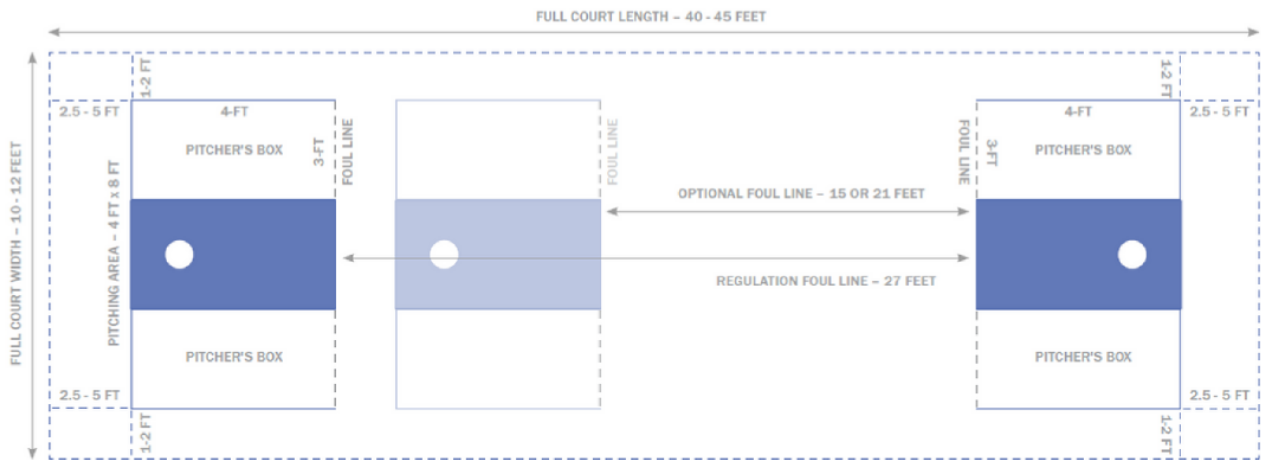
A cornhole court shall be a level rectangular area 10-12 feet wide and a minimum of 40-45 feet long. The court consists of two cornhole boards, designated pitcher's boxes, and foul lines. A vertical clearance of 12 feet is strongly recommended for indoor or sheltered cornhole courts.

Pitcher's Box

The pitcher's box is a rectangle 4 feet by 3 feet at each end of the court, parallel with, and on both sides of the boards. Each player must remain in the pitcher's box while pitching a cornhole bag.

Foul Line

The foul lines are imaginary lines parallel to the front of each cornhole board. The foul-line distance for official gameplay is 27 feet. However, local programs may choose to offer a 15-ft. or 21-ft. throwing distance, according to an athlete's skill assessment.



A standard court layout with extra spacing dimensions

Multiple Courts

To eliminate distraction and safely separate activity, cornhole courts adjacent to each other shall be a minimum of 10 feet wide. A greater distance of at least 12 feet is preferable.

A 4-player match requires between 1-3 cornhole courts:

- Rounds 1-2 may be played simultaneously on adjacent courts.
- Rounds 3-5 may be played simultaneously on adjacent courts.
- Rounds 1-5 may be played sequentially if fewer than 3 courts are available.
- Round 6 Airmail Shootout must only begin when the first 5 rounds are complete.

An 8-player match requires 1-5 cornhole courts:

- Rounds 1-5 may be played simultaneously on adjacent courts.
- Rounds 1-5 may be played sequentially if fewer than 5 courts are available.
- Round 6 Airmail Shootout must only begin when the first 5 rounds are complete.

Setup | Equipment

Cornhole Boards

OFFICIAL SPECIFICATION STANDARDS

The following dimensions and measurements serve to determine standards and specifications for regulation cornhole boards.

- Each cornhole board shall be 47½ to 48 inches long and 23½ to 24 inches wide, made of smooth plywood that measures at least ½-inch in thickness.

- The hole in each cornhole board shall be 6 inches (+-1/4-in) in diameter. Its center shall be 9 inches (+-1/4-in) from the top and 12 inches (+-1/4-in) from each side of the board edges.
- The front of the cornhole board shall be 3-4 inches from bottom to top.
- The back of the cornhole board shall be approximately 12 inches (+- 1/4-in) from ground to the highest point of the deck.
- The board finish shall be sanded to a very smooth texture, and there shall not be any blemishes on the wood surface that might disrupt or distort play.
- Application of non-permanent foreign substances onto cornhole boards is strictly prohibited. This includes talc, resin, spray, or powders.

Cornhole Bags

OFFICIAL SPECIFICATION STANDARDS

The following dimensions and measurements serve to determine standards and specifications for cornhole bags.

- The cornhole bags shall be made from two fabric squares 6¼ x 6¼ inches with a ¼-inch stitched seam on all four sides.
- Bags should be made from durable fabric.
- The thickness of the bag when lying flat on a hard surface should be approximately 1 inch (+-1/8-in) thick.
- Each bag shall be filled with plastic pellets or corn feed. Finished cornhole bags should be roughly 6 inches square and weigh 14-16.25 ounces.
- All bags in a set of four shall be identical in color, design, or pattern.
- A player may not switch bags during gameplay unless a bag is damaged or broken during a match.
 - In the case of a broken bag during a match, an identical or equivalent set of 4 bags may be substituted for the player/team.

Pregame | Coin Toss

Prior to beginning the match, a coin toss determines playing lanes and sequence of play. An official present assigns heads and tails to each team.

The team that wins the coin toss chooses either their throwing lane or choose to throw first in the first round of play.

The team that did not win the coin flip chooses the remaining option.

Scoring

There are two types of points: **game** points and **match** points.

Game Points

Rounds 1-5 shall be played to the predetermined number of 21 game points. The first player/team to reach (or exceed) that amount at the conclusion of an inning is the winner of that round.

The approved method of scoring for the sport of cornhole is “cancellation” scoring. In cancellation scoring, the points of one player cancel out the points of their opponent. Using this method, only one player/team can score in each inning.

Bag In-The-Count (Woody): Any bag which comes to rest anywhere on top of the board. Each is worth one (1) point.

Bag In-The-Hole (Cornhole): Any bag which is thrown through the hole or knocked through the hole by another bag. Each is worth three (3) points.

Foul Bag: Refers to any bag that has not been determined as Bag In-The-Count or Bag In-The-Hole or was designated a foul bag as the result of a rules violation.

Match Points

Match points are points that go to the overall match score and are what determines the match winner. Each team’s objective is to be the first to score 21 match points.

Match points can be earned two ways:

- The first way is by winning a game during rounds 1-5. Each round has a certain amount of match points that is awarded (see schedule below).
- The second way to earn match points is to successfully throw a cornhole bag into the hole or onto the board during the airmail shootout in round 6.

Game Format and Match Point Structure

	ROUND PLAY FORMAT	OFFICIAL MATCH POINT VALUE (BY ROUND)	SPECIAL OLYMPICS MODIFIED MATCH POINT VALUE (BY ROUND)
ROUND 1	DOUBLES GAME	WORTH 2 MATCH PTS	WORTH 4 MATCH PTS
ROUND 2	DOUBLES GAME	WORTH 3 MATCH PTS	WORTH 4 MATCH PTS
ROUND 3	DOUBLES GAME	WORTH 4 MATCH PTS	WORTH 4 MATCH PTS
ROUND 4	SINGLES GAME	WORTH 5 MATCH PTS	WORTH 4 MATCH PTS
ROUND 5	SINGLES GAME	WORTH 6 MATCH PTS	WORTH 4 MATCH PTS
ROUND 6	AIRMAIL SHOOTOUT	WORTH 1 MATCH PT PER BAG ON THE BOARD 2 MATCH PTS PER AIRMAIL	WORTH 1 MATCH PT PER BAG ON THE BOARD 2 MATCH PTS PER AIRMAIL

Match Rounds 1–5: Doubles and Singles Match Play

Rounds 1-3: Doubles Match Play

Two teams, consisting of two players, compete against one another until a winning team is determined.

Players line up directly across from their playing partner, in the same lane.

In Unified Sports, partners and athletes should be aligned at opposite boards. In this setup, partners toss against partners, and athletes toss against athletes.

Each team stays in their designated lane for the whole game.

Players at the headboard alternate pitching bags until each player has pitched all four of their bags.

An inning is completed when both players, pitching from one board, pitch all eight bags (four each).

Officials take the score and players at the footboard resume pitching back to the other board.

All players who are not pitching bags, should be behind the cornhole board, outside of the pitcher's box, to prevent interference of play.

Rounds 4-5: Singles Match Play

Two single players compete against one another until a single winner is determined.

Both players stay in their designated lane for the whole round.

Players start the round at the headboard and alternate pitching bags until each player has pitched all four of their bags.

Players then walk to the end of their lane to the other court, officials take score, and players resume pitching back to the other board.

An inning is completed when both players, pitching from one board, pitch all eight bags (four each).

Rounds 1-5: Pitching

The player or team who scored in the preceding inning has the honor of pitching first in the next inning. If neither player nor team scores, the player or team who pitched first in the preceding inning shall retain the first pitch in the next inning.

A player must pitch all four bags from their designated pitcher's box.

Players must pitch the bag with an underhand release.

A player may not step over or contact the foul line during their pitching or release of a cornhole bag.

A player must wait until the previous bag has come to a complete stop for at least 2 seconds before pitching the next bag.

Players may not jump, blow, kick, or otherwise do anything that may affect the cornhole board or the position of bags during an inning.

Touching, adjusting, or aligning a cornhole board during an inning is prohibited. Court officials may align the cornhole board between innings at the request of a player.

Rounds 1-5: Overtime Rules

Each game may be given a time limit according to the competition manager's discretion. (See "Game Clock" section below).

If neither team has reached 21 points before time expires, the round is over and the team that is winning the round at that point receives the match points for that round.

In the event the score is tied after time expires, 1 more inning is played.

If after 1 tie-breaker inning, still no team has scored a Sudden Death bag is played.

- In this round, following the natural flow of the game, the last frame winner first tosses a single bag.
- The opponent then tosses 1 bag, attempting to match or beat the first player's throw.
- Whichever player scored more points from the Sudden Death Bag is considered the winner of the round.
- Additional Sudden Death Bags may be played until a winner is game.
- All Sudden Death Bags should follow the natural flow of the game.

Match Round 6: Airmail Shootout

Round 6: Gameplay

All active players from both teams must participate in the airmail shootout round (excluding subs or players removed from the match).

To begin the round, players from each team line up at each of the boards.

Players may choose which pitcher's box (L or R) they throw from. Players may switch pitcher's boxes within the round if they choose.

To begin the round, Player #1 from **the trailing team** (Team A) pitches their bag. The bag is cleared from the board or picked up from the ground. Player #1 from Team B, then pitches their first bag, and the board is cleared.

Player #2 from Team A then pitches, clears the board, and Player #2 from Team B pitches. This pattern continues.

Each team must have all players throw once before players can throw again. Each player must stay in the same order as when they started the airmail round.

Each player must pitch their bag from behind the foul line.

Once a team reaches 21 MATCH points, the match is over, and the team wins the match. There is no rebuttal or second chance for the losing team.

Round 6: Scoring

Any bag which comes to rest anywhere on top of the board is worth **1 total MATCH point**.

Any bag which is thrown through the hole is worth **2 total MATCH points**.

Cancellation scoring is not used for this round of the match. Each bag in the hole or on the board is counted as its own match point. After every throw, the board and hole are cleared of previously thrown bags.

Roster & Lineups

Submitting a Lineup

Coaches must submit a lineup sheet prior to the beginning of Round 1. Lineups should be submitted to opposing coaches and the court official.

Lineups will determine player positioning and matchups throughout the first five rounds of play.

In a 4-player match, each player shall play in 2 rounds of the match. This includes 1 game in either Round 1 or 2 and 1 game in Rounds 3-5.

In an 8-player match, each player shall play in exactly 1 position in the lineup.

Round 6: Airmail Shootout Lineup

During Round 6, lineups are used to determine tossing order of the Airmail Shootout.

A court official should be present to maintain playing order integrity throughout the round.

A team that plays out of order during the Airmail Shootout forfeits the offending toss and automatically scores 0 points for that position in the lineup.

In Unified Sports matches, athletes and partners must always alternate tosses.

Unified Sports Teams & Lineups

Each Unified Sports 4-player lineup shall consist of two athletes and two partners. Two additional substitute players may be on the roster.

Each Unified Sports 8-player team shall consist of four athletes and four partners. Two additional substitute players may be on the roster.

The game structure for Unified Athletes and Partners shall be as follows:

- Round 1: Unified Doubles

- Round 2: Unified Doubles
- Round 3: Unified Doubles
- Round 4: Partners Game (Singles)
- Round 5: Athlete Game (Singles)
- Round 6: Airmail Shootout

In Unified Doubles rounds, partners and athletes should be aligned at opposite boards. In this setup, partners toss against partners, and athletes toss against athletes.

Roster Size

In 4-player matches, teams may carry one additional player available for substitution.

In 8-player matches, teams may carry two additional players available for substitution.

In all Unified Sports matches (4 and 8 player), teams may carry two additional players available for substitution. The two available substitutes must consist of one athlete and one partner.

MAXIMUM ROSTER SIZE

	4-Player Match	8-Player Match
Traditional	5	10
Unified Sports	6 (3 athletes, 3 partners)	10 (5 athletes, 5 partners)

Substitutions

Substitutions may be made at the end of any inning of play, with approval from the court official. Substitutes may take the place of any player on the team.

Officials must be notified of substitutions at the time of substitution.

Once a player has been removed from the match via substitution, the player may not re-enter the match at any point. Once a substitution has been made, the substitute player must complete the match.

During Unified Team Play, all teams must maintain the ratio of Athlete to Partner and Unified Rules.

Forced Substitutions

In the event of a forced substitution during a match due to medical or another verified emergency and the team has no substitute players available, the opposing team shall appoint an opponent's player to fill the open position.

In this event, the selected player may exceed the predetermined number of rounds per player. (2 rounds + shootout in 4-player match, 1 round + shootout in an 8-player match).

When a forced substitution has been made, the missing player's position in the Airmail Shootout round is skipped. That position in the lineup is scratched and scored an automatic 0.

When this occurs, the opposing team shoots two consecutive airmail shots since the missing player's turn is forfeited.

Forfeiture

Teams with less than the prescribed number of players before the match begins must forfeit the match.

The score of a forfeited game shall be 21-0 in favor of the team not at fault.

Violations and Penalties

Foul bags and rules violations are divided into impacting fouls and non-impacting fouls. A court official is responsible for spotting and calling penalties. The court official must also determine if a foul bag was impacting or non-impacting.

Non-Impacting Bag

If the bag in question does not impact gameplay or any other bag in play, the bag is considered dead and is removed from play at time of infraction. This bag scores 0 points for the round. All other bags remain in play.

No other movement of bags is permitted at this time.

The only person allowed to remove a bag from play is a court official.

Impacting Bag

If the bag in question impacts the position of one or more bags in play, it is an impacting bag foul.

- Leave the bag in question and all affected bags in play.
- Continue the round until the end of the inning without touching or removing any bags.
- At the end of the inning, the team that threw the offending bag removes the highest value bag in play.

The only person allowed to move bags is a court official.

- Example: Team A steps over the line during their 3rd toss of the round. The offending bag knocks a bag from Team B off the board. Bags are not replaced or affected at this time. At the end of the round, subtract *the highest scoring bag* from Team A from the scoring calculation.
 - If 0 points were scored for Team A in the inning, no scoring updates are made.

List of Fouls

The following are foul violations that must be spotted and called by an assigned judge. A foul is assessed to the offending team.

- Any bag pitched when the player has made contact with or crossed over the foul line.
- Any bag pitched when the player has started or stepped completely outside the pitcher's box before the bag is released.
- Any bag not delivered within the 20-second time limit.
- Any bag pitched from a different pitcher's box than the first bag.
- Any bag that is not pitched with an underhand release.

Interrupting Gameplay

A player shall not touch, alter, move, or affect the board or any bags on the board or in the hole before scoring has been agreed upon for the inning.

- If this foul occurs amidst an inning of play, please refer to IMPACTING BAG section above.
- If this foul occurs at the conclusion of an inning, and before a court official has taken score, the non-offending team receives 3 points for each bag removed prior to scoring confirmation.

Fouling Out

Any team that commits 3 or more fouls in a match automatically loses the match. The match ends immediately.

The non-offending team is awarded up to 21 points and wins the match.

The offending team ends the game with the score they have when the 3rd foul occurs.

Dead Bags

Any bag that contacted the court or the ground before coming to rest on the board shall be ruled a dead bag.

Any bag that struck a previously defined object such as a tree limb, wire, indoor court ceiling, etc. shall be ruled a dead bag.

- Immediately remove the bag from play and continue the round. The offending team is not assessed any penalty or foul.

- If the bag impacts another bag, remove the offending bag where it lies and leave the remaining bags as they lie and continue play. The offending team is not assessed any penalty or foul

Additional Foul Rules

A bag that leaves a player's hand once the final forward swing of the delivery process has started shall count as a pitched bag.

A bag that is accidentally dropped by a player before the final forward swing has started shall not be considered foul and may be picked up and pitched.

If players believe they have thrown all bags, clear the board for the next round, but then realize they missed one bag, the round ends. Points are scored as if the round ended, and the missed bag is forfeited.

Any action or intentional use of a penalty that undermines the integrity of the game, as determined by the court official, will result in the player's disqualification and forfeiture of the match.

Game Clock

The competition manager may limit games to a maximum game clock at their discretion.

A 30-minute clock is recommended for play. However, if an event has time limitations, a shorter game clock can be implemented. It is not recommended to use a game clock of less than 15 minutes.

During a team timeout, the game clock should continue to run.

The official may stop the game clock at their discretion during an extended delay due to weather, injury, or other unforeseen circumstances.

Timeouts

Each team is permitted one (1) 2-minute timeout per match.

The team calling the timeout must have possession of play and throw.

A timeout cannot end the match.

The official may grant a timeout whenever the circumstances appear to be valid.

Coaching

Coaches or spectators shall be prohibited from engaging in discussions with any athlete and/or partner once the athlete and/or partner steps onto the field of play area as designated by the program coordinator, except during a timeout.

If a court official determines a coach is strategically communicating with a player, the official may provide a verbal warning, or citation with unsportsmanlike conduct according to the discretion of the court official.

Discussions or disputes related to scoring or rules should be directed toward the court official.

Court Officials

Each cornhole court should have at least one assigned court official. Court officials must be easily identifiable at an event.

Each team has the right to object to a designated official for any reason before the start of a match. The competition manager considers and decides upon this objection.

No member of a team or registered substitute of a team is permitted to assist in officiating a match in which that team is playing.

Captain

On any team, the captain must be designated and made known to the officials before play begins. The captain may not be changed during the course of a game but may be changed during the course of a tournament. The tournament officials must be notified of this change prior to any subsequent games.

Delay of Games

If the official believes that the game is intentionally delayed without sufficient or valid reason, the official must issue a warning.

If the delaying team does not immediately resume play, they will forfeit the match.

For delays caused by weather, acts of God, civil disorder, or other unforeseen circumstances, the ruling of the **competition manager** is decisive and final.

Modifications / Adaptive Devices

Any assisting device being used for adaptive purposes must not give the athlete a competitive advantage and must be approved by the Competition Director prior to competition.

Protests

It is the responsibility of each team captain, or coach to sign the scorecard after a match. The signatures will indicate the indisputability of the final score. Games in which protests will be filed should not be signed by any captain, or coach who disagrees with the score or its validity.

Any protest to an official's or competition manager's decision must be made by a Special Olympics certified cornhole coach within 30 minutes of the completion of any game or the decision made by the official or competition manager will be considered as accepted.

Protests will be acknowledged and judged on the basis of merit in circumstances not specifically proved for hereunder.

Unsportsmanlike Conduct

Players shall act in a sportsmanlike manner at all times.

Any behavior deemed unsportsmanlike, such as using insulting language, attempting to distract an opponent, or displaying inappropriate gestures, actions, or words, may result in disqualification at the discretion of the court official.

Purposely interfering with an opponent's pitching motion will disqualify a player and result in forfeiture of the match.

Any action or intentional use of a penalty that undermines the integrity of the game, as determined by the court official, will result in the player's disqualification and forfeiture of the match.

Attire

Players will dress in a manner which will bring credit to them and the sport of cornhole.

It is recommended that all players wear closed-toe athletic shoes.

Uniforms tops must be similar in cut, color, and style for all team members.