Section 6 Sport - Football

6.01. Objectives
6.02. What does the Competition Manager do?
6.03. What to plan for in managing a Football Competition?
6.04. How to choose a venue?
- **Minimum Standards**
- **Venue Capacity**
- **Athlete Quota**

6.05. Do all events and Games have registration?
6.06. What is the Games Management System?
- **What is divisioning?**
- **How to produce a schedule and programme for the event?**
- **Who needs the results?**

6.07. Paper and athlete flow
- **What paperwork is required?**
- **Who needs to see it?**
- **Where does it need to go?**
- **Paper Trail**
- **Where does all of this happen?**

6.08. Staging for competition and Awards
- **What is staging?**
- **Why two staging areas?**

6.09. Field of Play (FOP)
- **How to mark the layout of the Field of Play?**
- **What equipment is required on the Field of Play?**

6.10. Sports Information Desks –What information and where?
6.11. Protests and Appeals
6.12. Head Coaches Meeting
- **When to have it**
- **Where to have it**
- **Who chairs the meeting?**
- **The Agenda**

6.13. Officials
6.14. Awards

6.01 Objectives

The main objectives of the Event management Guide is

- To offer a consistent level of service at all football events across the 5 regions
- To ensure that all sport policies and procedures are adhered to at all events
- To run quality sports events in terms of
  Venues - Rules - Equipment - People

6.02 Role of the Football Competition Manager (CM)

A Competition Manager (CM) will be appointed for each football event and will be responsible for the overall planning, development and implementation of the competition at the event. He or she will be a key member of the Venue Team and work closely with the Event Manager (EM) from time of appointment until the event report is submitted. Key tasks in relation to this position are

- Ensure all registration details including an Overview by Sport, depending on the level of the event, are sent to the Affiliated Groups (AGs). Set timeline for receipt of entries.
- Ensure that the Schedule is distributed AGs in advance of the event
- Ensure the implementation of the competition operating plan
- Ensure divisioning is done fairly and schedule is devised.
- Ensure that all key positions are staffed, scheduled and confirmed.
- Arrange training or information sessions where required for sports volunteers and officials
- Attend all meetings with the event and sports teams
- Inspect and sign off the set up and tear down of the Field of Play (FOP)
- Be the decision maker in conjunction with the Event Manager on all sport related delays and postponements.
- Assist with the recruitment of officials and sport specific volunteers to join the team.
- Plan the agenda and conduct the first Head Coaches meeting
- Identify the Sports Rules Committee (SRC) in accordance with National
- Governing Body guidelines
- Ensures all sports specific equipment is in place for the event
- Ensure a safe competition is run according to Special Olympics policies and procedures
- Submit an After Action Report by the agreed date

The CM should not take on the responsibilities of any other volunteer or official role at the event e.g. Referee

6.03 Planning for the sport

In planning for the football event there are a number of items that need to be considered including

1. What venue to use?
2. Venue Capacity
3. Maximum quota that can be managed in a venue

Each of these areas will be dealt with in more detail in the following 3 sections.

6.04 What Venue to use

In deciding what venue to use for the event, there are a number of factors to consider.

1. Venue availability
2. Venue capacity including the number of available pitches and changing facilities
3. Maximum quota i.e. the number of teams, 5 or 11 a side teams, male and/or female that can be managed in the venue
4. That the minimum standards are met as stated below

In deciding what venue to use for a football event, there are a number of things to consider. There are minimum standards set for each sport in terms of the venues and what facilities should be available and the following are some of these minimum requirements

Minimum Standards – Football
Sports Specific

- Adequate number of pitches to cater for the number of participating teams
- Warm up pitch
- All lines clearly marked – dependent on event – 5 a side or 11 a side
- Goal posts and nets, securely fixed and in good condition.
- Corner flags in situ
- NGB officials
- Match Cards
- Changing facilities – male and female
- Showers
- Balls – Regulation size and pumped to specifications
- Loudhailer or PA system
- Available space in venue for both Competition Management Office & Sports Information Desk
- Drinking water available for athletes
- Team benches

Generic:

- Available space for CMO & SID
- Available space for staging for 6 – 8 events
- Trained NGB officials
- Water available for athletes
- Suitable area for Awards (incl Podium & Awards staging)
- Athlete changing areas (male & female)
- Athlete toilets
- Suitable area for the Event Management Office
- Delivery of first aid or medical care
- Information desk
- Volunteer check-in desk
- Public toilets
- Athlete drop-off/pick up point
- Head Coach check-in desk
- Family Centre
- Volunteer break area
- Medical Centre

- Spectator seating
- Emergency vehicle parking
- Parking facilities (for athlete busses and cars, public, guests, media, volunteers and disabled parking).

Venue Capacity
In this section we look at how many people the venue can cope with during the event. It is necessary to view this section together with the minimum standards for the sport as they both impact on each other. Once the minimum standards have been checked and it is agreed that the venue will be used, it is now time to view the Field of Play area, to see how many people plus the necessary FFE (furniture, fittings and equipment) these areas can comfortably accommodate.
Once this step is completed it is now time to decide how many teams can be registered for the event.

Athlete Quota
There are three main things to consider in establishing the maximum quota of teams that you have at the event.

1. Overall time to run the event, e.g. one-day competition with 9.30am start and a 4.30pm finish.
2. Available facilities- i.e. 2 pitches, changing facilities and warm up area.
3. Competition Format.

Example

9.30 am Buses arrive at venue
4 pitches - 2 all weather pitches – lined for 5 a side and
2 full size grass pitches – lined for 11 a side
Changing facilities – 4 dressing rooms with showers
Events being offered – Women's 5 a-side and Men's 11 a-side
Buses depart at 4.30pm

Competition Format: Team Competition Schedule and Formats
Guidelines
1. Stay on schedule.
2. Offer as many playing opportunities as possible given the time available, but allow teams to have at least one hour rest between their games.
3. Even if time is short, do not eliminate on-site divisioning. This is critical to the success of any competition. Refer to section 6.06 Divisioning for details of the divisioning tool which will assist you in this process.
4. Effectively manage staging athletes and teams so that time is not lost between games.

Recommended Competition Formats

Pool Play
For a **six-team** division, there are two pools of three teams. Each team in that pool plays each other. After this round robin play, the top two teams in Pool A and the top two teams in Pool B play each other. The third team in each pool play for fifth and sixth place. Brackets are provided below.

Pool play consists of a round robin schedule of games within each pool as follows

	Pool A – Pitch 1	**Pool B – Pitch 2**
Match 1	Team 2 v Team 3	Team 5 v Team 6
Match 2	Team 1 v Team 3	Team 4 v Team 6
Match 3	Team 1 v Team 2	Team 4 v Team 5

Teams break for lunch when they are not competing.

Based on the pool play results, teams are placed in a single elimination/consolation format with playoffs for all places. Awards may be presented following a team's last game or awards may be presented in blocks – refer to section 6.14 Awards

Single Elimination
If time does not permit, a **single elimination/consolation** format should be played.
If there are **six teams** competing in a division, two pitches are recommended and the six teams are seeded on the basis of the divisioning process.

For competition involving a **four-team** division, four teams are seeded on the basis of the divisioning process.

Round Robin

- Round robin competition will occur within one pool of Teams 1-5 (ranked according to assessed ability during divisioning).
- Each game consists of two ten-minute halves as follows:-

	Pitch 1	**Pitch 2**
Match 1	Team 2 v Team 5	Team 3 v Team 4
Match 2	Team 1 v Team 5	Team 2 v Team 3
Match 3	Team 1 v Team 4	Team 5 v Team 3
Match 4	Team 1 v Team 3	Team 4 v Team 2
Match 5	Team 1 v Team 2	Team 4 v Team 5

- Medals and ribbons are based on order of finish.

Once the competition has been completed, the results/places are based on win - loss record with each team receiving 2 points for a win, 1 point for a loss, and 0 points for a forfeit.
In the case of ties, (a) places will be based on games won vs. games lost; (b) if there is still a tie, places will be based on total goals scored vs. goals against and (c) if a tie still exists, compare only the total goals scored by each team.

Modified Single Elimination/Consolation
This is an acceptable competition format when time is limited; however, it provides a limited number of games for teams.

- Teams 1-5 are ranked according to assessed ability during divisioning.
- Each game consists of two 15-minute halves. Each team will play at least two games.

In a 2-day competition, **pool play followed by play-offs** should be offered. When time is short, a **single elimination or double elimination** format may be the most effective.

Sample one-day schedule

09:00 - 9:30 Check in of athletes and teams
09:30 -10:00 Opening Ceremonies
10:15-11:15 Divisioning
11:30 First round games
12:15-13:15 LUNCH

13:30 First round games
14:30 Finals
15:30 Finals
16:15-17:00 Team Awards followed by Closing Ceremony

Sample two-day schedule

Day 1

09:00 - 9:30 Registration
09:30 -10:00 Opening Ceremonies
10:15-11:15 Divisioning

11:30 Pool play
12:15-13:15 LUNCH
13:30 Pool play
14:30 Pool play

Day 2

10:00 Play-offs
11:00 Consolation games
12:00 Medal games
13:00 Awards followed by Closing Ceremony

6.05. Do all events and Games have registration?

In order to successfully run the sport it is vital to have all of the necessary information pertaining to each athlete. An athlete registration form is used for this purpose and contains the following information, athlete's name, Affiliated Group, date of birth, event being entered and the athlete's Football Team Assessment Test (FTAT) Score. Two forms are used for registering athletes for a football event, 1) an individual athlete entry form and 2)a team entry form. With the entry forms the CM will also distribute an Overview by Sport. An Overview by Sport details the events being offered and how many events each athlete may enter. It will also give details on

official uniform requirements and competition information. As every event may not be offered at every level of competition, this detail should be included in the overview and it is the Head Coaches responsibility to check these details.
Special Olympics Ireland has standard registration/entry forms which are available from each of the regional offices and should be used for all football events across the programme.
In addition an athlete Medical and Consent form must be available at the venue during competition for each athlete.
The CM will establish a timeframe for managing the registration process for the event and will be the point of contact for all sports related queries.
In establishing this timeframe the following points need to be given consideration:
1. The date of the event – the time of year can adversely affect timely responses i.e. Christmas and Easter holidays etc. With the introduction of the 4 year calendar of events all sports will have a designated time of year when they will take place. Football events take place in May/June.
2. How long the process will take (how long will it take the CM to do this piece of work) i.e. his or her available time
3. Access to the regional office to use the Games Management System (GMS)

Ideally Athlete Registration forms for a one day event should be distributed approximately 6 – 8 weeks prior to the event date and returned to the CM within two to two and a half weeks, leaving 4 – 6 weeks to develop the schedule and programme for the event.
Once the forms are returned to the CM all of the information should be entered into GMS. If an athlete is already registered on GMS, they can be advanced in to the new event. Please refer to section 6.06.

6.06. What is the Games Management System?

The Games Management System (GMS) is a software package used by Special Olympics programmes worldwide to manage all events and Games. All Special Olympics Ireland regions have GMS on a local PC, which can used to register athletes and coaches for events. The current registration forms in use are designed so that they mirror the steps in GMS for registering athletes.
It is important for anyone planning to use GMS to have attended training on the system or to utilise volunteers in the region who have done so.
Once the football competition is set up correctly on GMS, the CM and GMS operator can begin the initial divisioning process.

What is divisioning?
Divisioning is the process whereby athletes or teams are placed in groups according to age, gender and ability to provide fair and equitable competition to all. Ability is the over-riding factor when divisioning athletes in Special Olympics. It is important that all available options are explored to ensure that each athlete has a good competitive experience.
The following are the age groups for team sports.

Team

15 and under
16 – 21yrs

22 and over

The aim when divisioning is to place at least three teams and a maximum of 8 teams in each division.
Where there are a range of age groups on a team, the oldest athlete determines the age group of the team.

In exceptional cases where it isn't possible to offer a good competitive experience for two teams they may participate in a two team division i.e. a straight final.
For a one day event, athletes are divisioned on their Football Skills Assessment Test (FSAT) score from the athlete registration form and all events on the day are finals. In football, all regions should have their teams graded using the Special Olympics Europe Eurasia grading DVD and the team's level can be submitted to the CM. This grading level together with the athlete's entry score achieved in the Football Skills Assessment Test form the basis for each athlete's entry score.
For events that run over a number of days or for Games, athletes are divisioned twice, once on their entry scores and secondly after they have competed in preliminary rounds of competition. In this case athletes may be re-divisioned for finals.
In Football, the divisioning process is carried out by teams playing a series of shortened games where athletes are assessed by a group of observers prior to being placed in final divisions. All players on a team's roster must play in each match in the divisioning rounds as per the rules for team sports. All Special Olympics rules can be downloaded from the website at www.specialolympics.ie

How to produce a schedule and programme for the event?
When the CM is satisfied that the divisioning is complete, pitch numbers can be assigned to each team, together with a start time for their matches on GMS. The GMS operator will be familiar with this process.
When this piece or work is completed a full schedule of events can be circulated to all Affiliated Groups.
This schedule should be produced from GMS by printing match times and pitch numbers in time order. This document then becomes the programme for the event.
It is important that the bracketing tool on GMS is enabled following divisioning as this will allow the system to randomly draw matches and progress teams through the play-down system. Once this is complete and a match result is entered on the system a team will be advanced automatically to their next match. This is shown in a tree diagram and is updated each time a new result is entered. Please refer to the GMS training manual for more detailed information.

Who needs the results?
On the day of the event match results can be entered directly into GMS and results produced immediately. Match cards will also be filled in by the referee at each match. When GMS is used, it will produce most of the necessary paperwork on the day and the Competition Management Office will communicate the results to the awards area. They will also post them on a notice board in the venue.
Where this is not possible, all results should be held by the CM and following the event, be input to GMS in the regional office by the GMS coordinator. A full copy of results should be signed off by the CM and the Regional Sport Development Officer and distributed to all AG's within two weeks of the event.

6.07. Paper and Athlete Flow

When planning the sport it is important for the CM to know what paperwork is required in order to run the sport, where the paper needs to go during the event and how it's going to get there. The CM will also need to plan how athletes will move through the venue on the day keeping the sport running smoothly. The areas to plan for are as follows

1. What paperwork do you need?
2. Who needs to see it?
3. Where does it need to go?
4. Paper Trail

1. What paperwork is required?

- Team rosters
- Team Divisioning Sheets
- Match cards as well as bracketing trees or tables

It is important for both the CM and the GMS operator to have as much paperwork as possible prepared in advance of the event, which will obviously greatly assist the smooth operation of the event if there was a power failure. When each Affiliated Group checks in, a team roster, produced from GMS should be checked by each Head Coach and signed off.

Match cards will then be filled in using this information for each match.

2. Who needs to see it?

Once it has been decided what paperwork is necessary to run the sport the next step is deciding who needs to receive it? The CM needs to identify the first piece of paper that will be used and by moving it through the event to see how many people will handle it and the number of copies required, it will assist the CM to work out the required amounts.

3. Where does it need to go?

Once it has been decided who needs to see the paperwork, you can now easily identify the different areas that need to get the information. Paper will flow from the Competition Management Office as this is the central hub of activity for the sport. From here all communication pertaining to the sport will move through the venue. A typical piece of paper will move on average through 4 cycles

CMO » Staging » Field of Play » CMO

While this is a very simple flow, all sports follow the same basic principle.

The awards area in each venue also needs to be taken in to consideration and will be covered in more detail in section 6.14.

4. Paper Trail

It is essential at all events that all of the paperwork is maintained by the CM and those working in the Competition Management Office. It is good practice for all CMs to establish a tracking or audit system for the event. This is to ensure that

1. A proper system is in place to maintain records.
2. In the event of a protest being submitted a proper tracking is in place to establish the outcome of the protest.

3. May be used as a means of educating future CMs in terms of what the benefits of different systems are.

5. Where does all of this happen?
You will have seen and heard the term Competition Management Office or CMO a number of times throughout this document. This is the site, be it an actual office or a cordoned area in the venue, where GMS is housed and all paperwork is produced in relation to the sport. This is a secure, accessed controlled area and only those working in that area should be admitted. In the event of a protest being lodged, the CM and the other members of the Sports Rules Committee would meet here to discuss the protest and arrive at a decision.

6.08. Staging for competition and awards

In this section we will outline what a staging area is, why it is necessary and finally why two staging areas are beneficial when organising your event.

What is staging?
Staging is the process whereby athletes are held in an area to prepare them for participation on the Field of Play. In Football this is generally done either in the dressing rooms or on a warm up pitch. When the teams check in on arrival at the venue, they will be assigned a dressing room for each match. Teams, once ready are generally escorted by a volunteer to the pitch for their match.

Why two staging areas?
At most events, following competition, athletes are brought to a second staging area to prepare them for the awards ceremony.
The staging area for awards will be similar to the staging area for competition, but this time athletes will be seated by division and also in the order that they will be presented on the podium.
It differs slightly from competition staging in that the order of seating is either

8th place, 6th place, 4th place, 2nd place, 1st place, 3rd place, 5th place, 7th place
Or
7th place, 5th place, 3rd place, 1st place, 2nd place, 4th place, 6thplace, 8th place

In Team competition, each team is called out alone in reverse order to be presented with medals or ribbons (refer section 6.13)
Similar to other staging areas, access is limited and coaches are not permitted unless specifically required and requested.
Staging for both competition and for awards ensures that the correct team or athlete is in the correct starting or finishing place and also aids the flow of an event.

6.09. Field of Play

The Field of Play (FOP) is the area in the venue where the competition will be held i.e. soccer pitches. This is the most controlled area in a venue and only those who need to be on the FOP i.e. officials and athletes will be permitted. All substitutes and coaches must remain on the team benches at the sideline. At some events where media are in attendance they may request access and they can only do this if escorted by a sport volunteer and with permission from CM’s.

How is the FOP laid out or marked?
During the planning process for the event it is always good practice to map out on a venue drawing where each aspect of the sport is going to be for the event. Some of the areas to be marked are:

- Field of Play i.e. pitches
- Changing rooms
- Competition Management Office
- Awards Staging
- Podium if available

If there is no venue map available a simple hand drawn layout should be used to illustrate the sport needs to the Event Manager.

What equipment is required on the FOP?

- All lines, 5 a side or 11 a side clearly marked
- Goal posts and nets in good condition. (Please ensure these are securely fixed in place)
- Corner flags in situ
- Match Cards
- Match Balls – Regulation size and pumped to specifications
- Drinking water available for athletes
- Team benches

6.10. Sports Information Desks –What information and where?

In each venue it is essential to have a Sports Information Desk (SID) as the main point of contact for Head Coaches to the Competition Management. This desk should be in operation a half hour prior to the start of competition and a half hour after the end of competition. It needs to be visible in the venue and the location of the desk should be communicated to the Head Coaches at the Head Coaches meeting on the day of the event.
The desk should have, at a minimum, the following information available:

- Protest Forms
- Replacement/Collection Awards Form
- Sport Schedule – Match Fixtures and location i.e. Pitch Number
- NGB Rules – FAI or FIFA
- Official Special Olympics Summer Sports Rules

6.11. Protests and Appeals

At all Special Olympics events a Head Coach has the right to make a protest if he or she feels that the rules have been infringed or misapplied during the event.
Only a Head Coach or designated registered coach (in the absence of a Head Coach) may lodge a protest in writing on an official Protest Form. This expressly prohibits any other individual from protesting. The decision of a referee cannot be protested. The protest must be lodged within 30 minutes after the conclusion of an event or the agreed timeframe as outlined in the rules of competition.

Please refer to Policy SPT 06 and Procedure SPT 06.01 for managing protests and appeals at an event which is part of the Event Management Guide – Section 2.

A referee's decision may not be protested

A Sports Rules Committee (SRC) should be in place for all football events. Depending on the level of the event, Area, Regional or All Ireland, the composition of the SRC may include the CM, Head Official and a representative from Special Olympics Ireland.

6.12. Head Coaches Meeting

At all events a Head Coaches meeting should be held at the start of the day to set the scene for the participating teams. This is a prime opportunity for the CM and the EM to explain how the event is going to run on the day, including the schedules, emergency procedures, awards etc. It is the responsibility of each Affiliated Group to ensure that a Head Coach attends the meeting and passes on the information to the other coaches from their AG.
In an event run over more than 1 day it is important for the CM to notify coaches of any changes or possible changes of schedule at this meeting.

A Sports Rules Committee (SRC) should be in place for all golf events. Depending on the level of the event, Area, Regional or All Ireland, the composition of the SRC may include the CM, Head Official and a representative from Special Olympics Ireland.

When to have the Meeting?

While the coaches from each AG are checking in their athletes and getting everyone settled on arrival at an event, the EM and CM have approximately a half hour available to them to deliver their key messages to the Head Coaches.

Where to have the meeting?

The meeting should be held in as quiet a place as is possible. As the awards staging area is not being used at this time, it or an unused seating area in the venue would be ideal.

Who chairs the meeting?

The meeting is jointly chaired by the Event Manager who outlines all aspects relating to the venue with all sports aspects outlined by the Competition Manager.

The Agenda

Items on the agenda should include but are not limited to the following:

- Introduction of Event and Competition Manager
- Venue Layout
- Coaches and athlete's responsibilities
- Staging
- Rules and Honest Effort reminder
- Protest & Appeals procedures
- Sports Information Desks
- Divisioning Schedule if this applies
- Medical
- Awards

6.13. Officials

During the planning stages of the event, once the quota for the event and the time available is defined, the required number of officials can be determined.
Only qualified officials should be used at events and sufficient numbers of these may be secured through the Volunteer Support Centres in each region. If there is a shortfall in the numbers required the FAI Development Officers locally should be able to assist in the recruitment.
Once the required numbers of referees are recruited it may be necessary to do some additional training with them, if they have not been involved in a Special Olympics event previously.
If using new referees for team sports, it is vital to brief them prior to the match to ensure that the rules are applied consistent with the NGB rules.

6.14. Awards

The functional area of awards is the final part of the sports function at an event. Awards Ceremonies should highlight the achievement of each athlete in a dignified manner and there should be some pageantry attached to the ceremony itself. The Award Ceremony is planned and scripted to follow specific Special Olympics Protocol.
The awards ceremony should allow awards to flow smoothly and efficiently in tandem with the competition.
Medals will be presented to those teams in 1st through to 3rd place and ribbons will be presented to teams in 4th through to 8th place. Refer Policy - Definition of Awards.
Athletes who are disqualified for un-sportsmanlike behaviour will not receive an award.

Ties

In the case of a tie in a final match the match will go to extra time in 2 periods of 5 minutes for 5 a-side matches and 2 periods of 15 minutes for 11 a-side matches. If teams are still tied following this, a penalty shoot should be conducted with 5 penalty shots for each team.
If the competition has been run using a league or round robin format and two teams are tied on points then the competition should be decided on goal difference.

It is the intention that all Awards ceremonies should take place within 30 minutes, or as soon as possible following completion of the event. Awards will not wait for a protest or a ruling of a protest before presenting awards.
Depending on the level of the event, awards may be presented to teams following the completion of each round of matches e.g. once the play off for bronze and 4th place has been completed, this award may be presented. The other option is for a series of matches to be complete and then awards are presented to all teams.

There are four areas in each awards location:

1. **Staging Area**: athlete escorts bring the results and teams to the staging area from each competition. Once checked-in in the staging area, teams are lined up on chairs, in order of place (see section 6.08), in preparation to receive their awards.

2. **Preparation Area**: the awards are organised and placed on a tray in the correct sequence in preparation for the ceremonies.
3. **Presentation Area**: where the actual awards ceremony takes place
4. **Exit / Athlete Pick Up Area**: teams remain here until an official delegation member arrives to escort them from awards

Where possible, the entire awards area will be zoned with a designated area for coaches and spectators to view the Awards Ceremonies. Coaches, spectators and volunteers other than the awards team will not be permitted access to the awards area other than to the designated spectator area.
The template for the awards protocol is included in the tool kit.