



CP Soccer US

Rules of Play

The Benefits of CP Soccer

Soccer has the power to bring people together and to break down barriers. It is a great spectator sport that youths with Cerebral Palsy get tremendous pleasure from taking part in. It is important to CP Soccer that the soccer opportunities we provide to this group of youths with disabilities are as close as possible to programs experienced by their neuro-typical counterparts. That is, appropriate training, meaningful fair play and fair competition. Through this structure, benefits of CP Soccer for these youths include:

- Improve their health by participating in a regular activity
- Participate in a team sport with other football players with similar abilities
- Learn team and individual cerebral palsy soccer skills
- Future opportunity to compete in a high sport level

The Paralympic Games is the aspiration for many young athletes with an impairment growing up. Utilising the rules of play for Paralympic Soccer as a basis for the sport rules of CP Soccer ensures a universal understanding and helps form a foundation from which our athletes can build their skills and knowledge for higher competitions.

Our rules of play and eligibility are modified versions of those set by Paralympic Soccer to make the sport of cerebral palsy soccer more attractive and accessible for young ambulant players with cerebral and other similar neurological conditions.

Eligibility of CP Soccer Players

Age: 8 to 18 years of age

Gender: Male and female. We support mixed gender participation in all development trainings. Some competitions stipulate co-ed or separate male and female players, and CP Soccer shall follow competition rules for participation.

Diagnosis

For players to be eligible for CP Soccer, they must be ambulant (no requirement for assistive walking aids) and have one of the following neurological conditions:

- Cerebral Palsy
- Stroke
- Traumatic Brain Injury / Acquired Brain Injury

What is Cerebral Palsy?

Cerebral Palsy (CP) is defined as a health condition affecting movement, muscle tone, reflexes and posture, primarily due to a shortage of oxygen in parts of the brain for a certain period of time at birth or very young age. It may be present from birth or acquired up to the age of three.

This group may also include those who have an acquired brain injury:

- An acquired brain injury (ABI) is an injury caused to the brain since birth. There are many possible causes, including a fall, a road accident, tumor and stroke.
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI). TBI is a form of acquired brain injury which occurs when a sudden trauma causes damage to the brain. TBI can result when the head suddenly and violently hits an object, or when an object cuts the skull and enters brain tissue. Symptoms of a TBI can be mild, moderate or severe, depending on the extent of the damage to the brain.

Individuals with the above conditions may display varying degrees of the following impairments: Diplegia, Hemiplegia, Triplegia, Quadriplegia, Monoplegia, Dystonia, Athetosis, Ataxia, Balance issues, Co-ordination issues, Weakness in certain areas of the body.

Terminology

Diplegia: More involvement in Lower limbs than upper limbs, may be asymmetric.

Hemiplegia: Involvement in upper and lower limb and trunk on same side.

Monoplegia: Involvement in only one limb.

Classification

Athletes participating in CP Soccer have an impairment that leads to a competitive disadvantage in sport. The range of impairments and diagnoses for these youths are similar to those athletes participating in Paralympic Soccer.

Paralympic Soccer development and competition eligibility follows a sport class which group athletes depending on how much their impairment impacts performance in their sport. Since soccer is team sport, classification aims to ensure fairness in competitions.

Paralympic Soccer includes 3 classes, called FT1, FT2, and FT3, with FT1 being most severely affected and FT3 the least. Paralympic Soccer sport classes are allocated through athlete evaluation by classifiers who are either health professionals or technical experts in soccer. They may have a background in physical therapy or medicine, or be a former coach or sport scientist.

As a development program, CP Soccer does not directly classify each participant in our program. At CP Soccer, eligibility guidelines provide a structure for fair play and competition. It also ensures that the success of a participant is determined by skill, fitness, power, endurance, tactical ability and mental focus.

CP Soccer adopts the GMFCS (The Gross Motor Function Classification System) to determine the eligibility of participants in the program. GMFCS is now the standard in both North America and Western Europe for mobility assessment and ambulatory ability prediction for cerebral palsy. The examination is done using the GMFM (Gross Motor Function Measure), usually by a child's physical therapist, at diagnosis or at onset of physical therapy episodes.

The GMFCS is a 5-level classification system that describes the gross motor function of children and youths with cerebral palsy, with particular emphasis on sitting and walking. The higher the level in GMFCS, the more severe the CP is.

The first two levels of the GMFCS best maps to the three classes of Paralympic Soccer classification. CP Soccer participation eligibility thus includes players falling under the GMFCS Level I and Level II categories.

GMFCS Level I – Children walk indoors and outdoors and climb stairs without limitation. Children perform gross motor skills including running and jumping, but speed, balance and coordination are impaired.

GMFCS Level II – Children walk indoors and outdoors and climb stairs holding onto a railing but experience limitations on uneven surface and inclines and walking in crowds or confined spaces.

The Rules of CP Soccer

CP Soccer trainings are centered on CP Soccer pedagogy designed for youths with cerebral palsy. They are physically intense and yet balanced to both leverage the kids' abilities and strengthen their weaknesses.

Trainings and games are adapted for the participating age group and based on the rules for Paralympic Soccer. CP Soccer players are taught modified rules of Paralympic Soccer. Modifications make the program exciting and relevant to the skills and ability of the participants.

Some of these rule modifications include:

- Only 7 players on the field of play
- Two halves of 30 minutes
- Smaller pitch and goal posts
- No off-side rule
- Under-arm throw-in is permitted if a player is physically unable to execute a throw-in
- Substitution differences to allow for open substitutions giving players more chance to play.

CP Soccer will play all league and tournament games as designated by US Soccer and IFCPF. Except for the sub rule