

# Special Olympics Middle School Unified Sports® Cornhole Rules

2022-2023

Special Olympics  
New Hampshire



The Official Special Olympics Unified Sports Rules for Middle School Cornhole shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics New Hampshire has created these rules based on The AMERICAN CORNHOLE ASSOCIATION (ACA) that can be found at <https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0074/8512/8777/files/ACARules-105744->

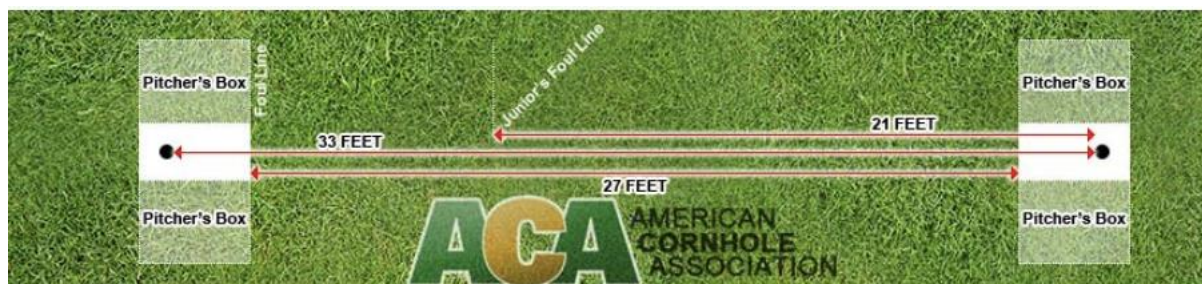
[RevD.pdf?v=1627387585&utm\\_source=Klaviyo&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Download%20Rules%20PDF%20Returning%20%28VteXzn%29&\\_kx=uYsMn6xrMPvF0fqbbqDn9zksKBP4rFWMedmecqXGZuA%3D.RSHNyh](https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0074/8512/8777/files/ACARules-105744-RevD.pdf?v=1627387585&utm_source=Klaviyo&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Download%20Rules%20PDF%20Returning%20%28VteXzn%29&_kx=uYsMn6xrMPvF0fqbbqDn9zksKBP4rFWMedmecqXGZuA%3D.RSHNyh). These rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with rules listed in this document. In such cases, the rules in this document shall apply.

## EVENTS OFFERED

- Unified Sports Doubles

## RULE 1 – COURT LAYOUT

Dimensions – A court shall be a level rectangular area 8-10 ft wide and a minimum of 40-45 ft long. The court should consist of two boards, designated pitcher's boxes and foul lines. A north-south setting is recommended for outdoor courts to minimize the effects of the sun.



**Pitcher's Box** – The pitcher's box is the rectangle 4 ft by 3 ft at each end of the court, parallel and on both sides of the boards. Each player must remain in the pitcher's box while pitching the bag.

**Multiple Courts** – To eliminate distraction and safely separate activity, courts adjacent to each other shall be a minimum of 10 feet apart. A greater distance (at least 12 feet) is preferable.

**Foul Lines** – There are two sets of foul lines: (1) open Level 1 play and (2) Level 2 play. The open Level 1 play foul lines shall be defined as an imaginary line 27 ft. from the beginning of the opposite board. For Cornhole sets that meet ACA specifications, this foul line will be parallel to the front of the board. The Level 2 Middle School play foul lines shall be defined as an imaginary line 21 ft. from the beginning of the hole in the opposite board. See the diagram above.

**Covered or Indoor Courts** – The regulations for covered and indoor Cornhole courts are exactly the same with the additional stipulation that they shall have a minimum 12-foot vertical clearance to the lowest possible obstruction.

## RULE 2 – PLAYING EQUIPMENT; CORNHOLE BOARDS AND BAGS

**Equipment Standards** – The ACA has adopted the following equipment specifications and standards for Cornhole:

1. Each board shall be a 47.5-48" x 23.5-24" rectangle made of half-inch plywood. ACA sanctioned tournaments should only be played with wooden boards as there is significant variance in play between wooden and plastic or other surfaces.

2. The hole in the board shall be six inches in diameter and be centered nine inches from the top and 12 inches from each side of the board edges.
3. The front of the board shall be from 3"-4" inches from bottom to top.
4. The back of the board shall be 12 inches from ground to the highest point of the deck.
5. The board finish shall be sanded to a very smooth texture, and there shall not be any blemishes in the wood surface that might disrupt or distort play.
6. The board can be painted with a semi-gloss exterior latex paint resulting in a surface that allows corn bags to slide, but is not so slippery that it allows the bags to slide back down the board.
7. The bags shall be made from two fabric squares 6.25" x 6.25" with a quarter inch stitched seam on all four sides. Bags should be made from durable fabric. Each bag shall be filled with approximately 2 cups of feed corn, and finished bags should be a minimum of 6" X 6" square and weigh between 14 and 16 ounces. We will allow the use of plastic pellets (all-weather cornhole bags) in lieu of feed corn.

### **RULE 3 – PITCHING DISTANCES**

- Level 1: All open Level 1 players shall pitch from the pitcher's box behind the 27-foot foul lines. Physically impaired adults or seniors may, if agreed by all players, observe the 21-foot foul lines.
- Level 2 Middle School: Level 2 players pitch from the 21-foot foul lines.

### **RULE 4 – COURT PREPARATION AND MAINTENANCE**

Court Maintenance – Every effort shall be made to keep the play surface in perfect playing condition. Courts should be free of anything that might distract a contestant during play. Each player is responsible for making sure the court is in good playing condition prior to starting the game. During a game, a player shall not be allowed to alter the court in any manner without the consent of the opponent or official.

Distractions During Play – Every effort shall be made to keep from distracting players during play. Drinks and other personal belongings should be placed behind the boards in designated beverage holders or other secure locations to keep from distracting players.

### **RULE 5 – PLAY OF THE GAME**

Unified Doubles Play – In Unified doubles play two players (one athlete and one partner) are teammates against another team of two players (one athlete and one partner). Team A competes against Team B.

1. Each team will stay in their designated lane for the whole game.
2. Players at the headboard will alternate pitching bags until each player has pitched all four of his/her bags.
3. Players at the footboard will take score and resume pitching back to the other board.
4. The top of the inning is completed when both players pitching from the headboard pitch all four bags; the bottom of the inning is completed when the remaining players pitching from the footboard pitch all four bags.

#### Value of The Bag

1. **Bag In-The-Count (Woody)** – Any bag which comes to rest anywhere on top of the board. Each is worth one (1) point.
2. **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.
3. **Foul Bags** – Refers to any bag that has not been determined as Bag In-the-Court or Bag-In-the-Hole or was designated a foul bag as a result of a rules violation. It has no (0) value.

Pitching Rotation During the Game – The player or team who scored in the preceding inning has honor pitching first in the next inning. If neither player or team scores, the player or team who pitched first in the preceding frame shall retain first pitch in the next frame.

#### Position of Players During Pitching

1. The pitcher must be within the pitcher's box (See diagram above) or behind the foul line at the time of the release. The only exception is for Level 2 (Middle School) and physically challenged players, who must simply remain completely behind the 21 ft. foul line when the bag is released.
2. A player must pitch all four bags from their designated pitcher's box.
3. Players must pitch the bag with an underhand release.

## Foul Bags

1. The following are rule violations that must be spotted and called by a player or assigned judge. The penalty is to declare the bag a foul bag, which requires the bags to be removed from the court prior to resuming play. A foul is defined as:
  - a) Any bag pitched when the player has (1) made contact with or crossed over the foul line or (2) started or stepped completely outside the pitcher's box over the before the bag is released.
  - b) Any bag not delivered within the twenty-second time limit.
  - c) A bag pitched from a different pitcher's box than the first bag.
  - d) Any bag that contacted the court or the ground before coming to rest on the board.
  - e) Any bag that struck a previously defined object such as a tree limb, wire, indoor court ceiling, etc.
  - f) Any bag on the board that is also touching the ground.
  - g) Any bag removed from the board before scoring has been agreed upon for that bag.
    - i. The offending team (who touches the bags) forfeits all remaining bags and tallies the score of just the bags thrown before the foul was reported.
    - ii. The non-offending team tallies twelve (12) points as if they had thrown four Bag In-the-Holes (Cornholes) during the inning.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. A bag hanging off the edge of the board has value unless it is touching the ground.

Protests – If a player desires to make a protest, the protest shall be made to the judge or official at the time the problem occurs. The judge shall make the final ruling on all protests.

## **RULE 6 – LENGTH OF THE GAME**

Point Limits – The game shall be played to the 21 points or 30 minutes. The first team ahead after 30 minutes or who reaches 21 points at the conclusion of an inning is the winner. The winning team does not need to win by two or more points.

The Inning Must Be finished – The game can never end in the middle of an inning. Thus, if a team ahead after 30 minutes or who reaches 21 points is tied, the game cannot end until the other side is allowed to pitch all of their corn bags and the inning is completed.

Ties at the End of an Inning – If the game is tied after 30 minutes or at 21 or more at the end of an inning, play continues until one team or the other achieves a higher score at the end of an inning and wins the match.

Skunks – The game shall be played to 21 unless a team scores 7 or more points at the end of an inning before their opponents score any points. In this case the game is a skunk and the team that scores 7 or more points wins the match.

## **RULE 7 – SCORING**

Cancellation Scoring – In cancellation scoring, bags in-the-hole and bags in-the-court pitched by opponents during half of an inning in doubles play cancel each other out. Only non-cancelled bags are counted in the score for the inning.

1. Bags In-The-Hole – Hole-ins (HI's) cancel each other. A bag in-the-hole of one contestant shall cancel a corn bag in-the-hole of his competitor and those bags shall not score any points. Any non-cancelled corn bag in-the-hole scores three points.
2. Bags In-The-Count – Bags in-the-count cancel each other. A bag in-the-count of one contestant shall cancel a bag in-the-count of the opponent and those bags shall not score any points. Any non-cancelled bags in-the-count score one point each.

## **House Rules (non-cancellation)**

This game mode is played like normal except scoring does not cancel, instead every point is counted. The pros of this style moves the game along quicker. These games can be played with the first team to 21 wins or 21 exact.