

Get Your Kicks Playing the World's Most Popular Sport

Many sports, including baseball, basketball, and American-style football, are younger than the United States. Not soccer. This sport began more than 3,000 years ago. There are ancient written accounts and graphic illustrations of Chinese soldiers kicking a ball made of leather and stuffed with animal hair. The ancient Greeks and Romans played the game, too, and as the Roman Empire grew, so did the game.

Today, soccer—which is known as football in most places—is without a doubt the most popular sport in the world. When the World Cup finals are held every four years, more than 700 million people tune in to watch. That's 1 out of every 10 people on the planet!

Part of soccer's appeal is that it is a simple game. The object is to kick the ball into the opposing team's goal. To play, all you need is a ball, two goals, and two teams of players. Because of its simplicity, children everywhere play this sport whenever they can find a ball and a flat space to run around.

This month's program will help you learn more about soccer. While you may never make it to the World Cup, you will learn plenty about teamwork and fitness and have a great time along the way.

Objectives

This month's activities should:

- Give Scouts an understanding of the game of soccer.
- Teach Scouts the rules of soccer.
- Help Scouts identify key skills.
- Develop teamwork and team play.
- Inspire Scouts to pursue the Sports and Athletics merit badges.
- Encourage Scouts to share their knowledge with others.

RELATED ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

- Sports and Athletics merit badges
- Varsity Scout letter
- Varsity Scout Soccer activity pin
- Quest: Requirement 5



Leadership Planning

As a leadership team, you may want to discuss the following items when choosing soccer as your program feature during your planning meetings.

1. What is our unit's current skill level?
2. Who do we know who is a soccer expert? (Ideally a U.S. Soccer Federation–licensed coach with an E-level license or higher)
3. What equipment will we need?
4. What will we do for the main event?
5. Where will we do the main event?
6. Do we need permission to use that location?
7. What additional subtopics would fit well with this feature?
8. How can we involve parents?
9. To meet our needs, what should we change in the sample meeting plans?

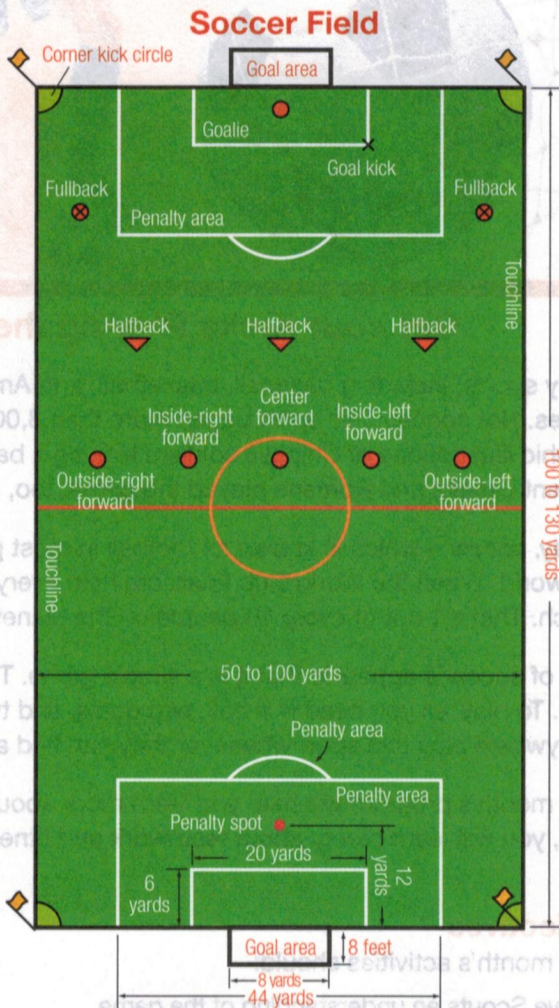
PARENTS CAN HELP WITH THE SOCCER PROGRAM FEATURE BY:

1. Loaning equipment
2. Providing transportation and leadership during meetings and for the main event
3. Serving as or recruiting a soccer expert
4. Providing water and refreshments
5. Cheering on the players

RULES OF SOCCER

The field—Soccer can be adapted to almost any area available. At minimum you will need a rectangular playing area with a center line and a goal on each end. The size and proportions can be adjusted for the area available and the number of players participating.

See the diagram for the official field of play.



The ball—Officially the ball should be 27 to 28 inches in circumference and 14 to 16 ounces in weight, but any round ball can be used.

Number of players—11 per side, but may be fewer. One person on each side must be the goalkeeper.

Play equipment—Consists of shirt, shorts, socks, and shoes. Goalkeeper must wear colors distinguishing him or her from the other players. Shin guards are also very popular and highly recommended.



Referees—One referee is in control of each game. The referee's decisions are final.

Linesmen—Two linesmen assist the referee. They indicate offside, ball out of play, and which team is entitled to the corner kick or throw-in.

Duration of the game—A regulation game consists of two equal periods of 45 minutes. The league determines the length of play.

The start of play—A flip of a coin determines which team will kick off. Each team must stay on its own half of the field, and the defending players must be at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked. After a goal, the team scored on will kick off. At halftime, the teams change ends of the field, and the team that did not kick off at the beginning of the game kicks off to open the second half. A goal cannot be scored directly from a kickoff.

Ball in and out of play—The ball is out of play when it has entirely crossed the goal line or sideline, whether on the ground or in the air, or when the game has been stopped by the referee.

Method of scoring—A goal is scored when the entire ball has passed over the goal line between the goal posts and under the crossbar.

Offside—A player is in an offside position if he or she is nearer to the opponent's goal line than the ball *unless* (a) the player is in his or her own half of the field of play or (b) there are at least two opponents, including the goalkeeper, closer to their own goal line than the player.

If a player is declared offside, the referee awards an indirect free kick, which is taken by a player of the opposing team at the place where the offense occurred, unless the offense is committed by a player in the opponent's goal area. If committed in the goal area, the free kick is taken from a point anywhere within that goal area.

Fouls and misconduct—A player who intentionally attempts to or actually kicks, trips, jumps, charges violently, charges from behind, strikes, holds, or pushes an opponent, or intentionally handles the ball is penalized by a direct free kick. Any of these offenses committed in the penalty area by a defender will result in a penalty kick awarded to the offensive team.

A player committing less flagrant violations such as offside, dangerous play, obstruction, or unsportsmanlike conduct is penalized by an indirect free kick.

Free kicks—Free kicks are classified into two categories:

- Direct, from which a goal can be scored directly against the offending side.
- Indirect, from which a goal cannot be scored unless the ball has been touched by a player other than the kicker before entering the goal.

For all free kicks, the offending team must be at least 10 yards from the ball until it is kicked.

Penalty kick—A direct free kick taken at the penalty mark. All players except the goalkeeper and the player taking the kick must stay outside the penalty area or at least 10 yards from the ball (hence the arc at the edge of the penalty area).

Throw-in—When the ball has entirely crossed the sideline, it is put back into play by a throw-in from the spot where it went out and by a player from the opposite team that last touched it. A goal cannot be scored directly from a throw-in.

Goal kick—When the ball has entirely crossed the goal line after being last touched by a player from the attacking team, it is put back into play by a kick from the goal area by the defending team.

Corner kick—When the ball has entirely crossed the goal line after being last touched by a player from the defending team, it is put back into play with a kick by the attacking team from the corner on the side the ball went out.

THE NAME OF SOCCER

In the 19th century, people in Britain played several different football games. To differentiate between rugby and what we now call soccer, they came up with the term *association football*. British people sometimes make nicknames by adding “-er” to words, so *rugby* became *rugger* and *association football* became *assoccer*—and that eventually became just soccer.



Player Positions

There are seven named positions in soccer. Their names and duties are:

- **Forward**—An attacking player responsible for setting up and scoring goals. The forwards are the key offensive players.
- **Striker**—A central forward who scores often.
- **Winger**—The right and left outside forwards.
- **Midfielder**—Both an offensive and defensive player responsible for “linking” the forwards and defenders.
- **Defender**—Defensive player whose duty is to help the goalkeeper protect the goal. This player usually, but not always, stays at the rear of the attacking (offensive) team.
- **Sweeper**—A defender who covers behind the fullback line. This player’s duty is to pick off stray passes.
- **Goalkeeper**—The last defender of the goal. The goalkeeper is the only player who can use the hands. Use of hands is limited to the penalty area.

Soccer Techniques

Juggling is using the head, thighs, chest, and feet to control the ball without letting it touch the ground. It’s the first skill to learn in soccer because it develops balance, coordination, and confidence.

Dribbling is the skill of controlling the ball with your feet while moving around an opponent in any direction you want to go. Good dribbling requires speed, the ability to change directions quickly, and the use of feints to move the ball down the field while you look for openings for a pass or dodge past opponents.

Trapping is the skill of getting the ball to your feet as quickly as possible so that you are ready to dribble it forward, make a pass, or take a shot at the goal. However you receive the ball from a teammate, you must be able to control it as quickly as possible without using your hands and arms.

Passing is the skill of kicking or heading the ball to a teammate and is essential to successful team play. Soccer passes are made with the inside or outside of the foot, the instep, or the forehead (called “heading”).

Shooting the soccer ball utilizes the techniques of kicking, passing, and heading to score by shooting at the goal. When you shoot, aim away from the goalkeeper and into the corner of the goal with a lot of power behind the shot so that the goalkeeper can’t get to the ball and block your score.

Heading means controlling the ball with the center of the forehead and is an important skill for all players to learn. Heading doesn’t hurt if it is done right. You might want to learn heading using a volleyball or other softer ball at first. Power and distance are achieved by getting the weight of your body behind the ball and by good timing.

Tackling means using your feet to charge your opponent and take the ball from him or her. Tackling is similar to a slide in baseball. This is an essential defensive skill in soccer. The most important thing to remember about tackling is that you must attack the ball—not the player.

The **throw-in** is awarded a team when the opposing team last touches the ball before the entire ball passes beyond the sideline. The throw-in is very important in soccer. It is the only time you may use your hands (unless you are the goalkeeper). Although you cannot score by throwing the ball into the goal, you can use a good throw-in to set up a scoring play. You may take a one- or two-step run-up before you throw the ball, but most of the power comes from strong arm and wrist action with a firm swing of the body from your waist.

Goalkeeping is the goalkeeper’s duty—to keep the other team from scoring by preventing the ball from entering the goal. As the only player allowed to use the hands, the goalkeeper may catch the ball, block it away, or deflect the ball off course. Goalkeeping is the most specialized position on a soccer team because it requires a set of skills unlike those used by the other players. All players should learn the skills of goalkeeping and play this position as well as all others. Young players should not specialize in any one position.



SOCCER GAMES

Dribble the Ball Relay

Equipment: One soccer ball per team

Method: Divide into teams. Have a race dribbling the ball around a course and then passing it off to the next player.

Scoring: The first team to get all players through the course wins.

Note: This game is best played outside but could be done indoors (in a gym, for example).



Team Captain

Equipment: One soccer ball and one hat per team, a playing area of 20 yards by 30 yards per team

Method: Divide into teams of four players, then pair two teams to play the game. Each team selects a captain, who wears a special hat. One team passes the ball around the playing area, trying to keep it away from the other team. The ball is given to the opposing team when it is intercepted or goes out of play, or when a point is scored.

Scoring: A team scores 1 point when its captain receives the ball. The team with the most points at the end of the game wins.

Note: Switch captains after three or so minutes and continue the game.

Throw-In for Accuracy

Equipment: One soccer ball per team, stopwatch or timer



Method: Divide into two teams. Establish a sideline where one team member will throw in the ball using a two-handed overhead throw. Another player stands in the field to "head butt" the thrown ball.

Scoring: Each team scores 1 point for every ball that is head-butted.

Note: If teams have varying skill levels, you can position the head-butting players closer to or farther from the sideline.

Defending the Goal

Equipment: Soccer ball and soccer goal

Method: Divide into two teams. One player from team 1 is designated as the goalkeeper. Players from team 2 take turns trying to score on the goalkeeper. After all players on team 2 have taken a turn, switch sides so that the members of team 1 try to score on a goalkeeper from team 2.

Scoring: Each team scores 1 point for each goal it makes.

Note: If you have a large group, divide into four teams and assign two teams to each of two goals. Have the winning teams come together for a playoff round.





E.D.G.E. Ideas

Explain how it is done—Tell them.

Demonstrate the steps—Show them.

Guide learners as they practice—Watch them do it.

Enable them to succeed on their own—Have them practice/teach it.

EXPLAIN

- Explain the rules of the game.
- Discuss soccer safety and hazards.
- Describe the principles of teamwork and team behavior.
- Review the requirements for the Sports and Athletics merit badges with the Scouts.
- Explain the components of a personal training program that is suited to soccer.

DEMONSTRATE

- Demonstrate basic skills of the game.
- Show how to properly dress for the game.
- Show instructional videos about soccer skills.
- Demonstrate how to warm up and stretch before playing.
- Invite high school or college soccer players to put on an exhibition game, and have a coach provide play-by-play commentary.

GUIDE



- Guide Scouts as they practice basic skills.
- Shoot videos of Scouts going through skills drills, then play them back and point out good and bad technique.
- Supervise Scouts as they set up a temporary soccer field.
- Have Scouts warm up and stretch under supervision.
- Schedule time for Scouts to meet with a Sports or Athletics merit badge counselor.

ENABLE

- Have older Scouts set up teams for a unit tournament.
- As a group, plan a soccer festival.
- Reward Scouts who show good sportsmanship.
- Hold a soccer clinic where Scouts can teach basic skills to Cub Scouts or other young children.
- Have Scouts serve as officials at unit-level soccer games.

MAIN EVENT SUMMARIES

● ESSENTIAL	■ CHALLENGING	◆ ADVANCED
Day Activity	Day Activity	Day Activity or Overnight
A few good games—Play small-sided games using skills and knowledge learned in this module.	Join a tournament—Participate in a soccer tournament organized by your local community, a youth group, a church, or the BSA local council. Follow all the rules for team play. Demonstrate the skills and plays learned in this module.	Put on a soccer festival—Plan and coordinate a soccer festival for your community. Provide skills workshops and small competitions. Provide play for small teams as well as pickup games.

	<h1 style="text-align: center;">SOCCER</h1> <h2 style="text-align: center;">Meeting Plan: This Is Soccer</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Week 1 Date _____</p>		
ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Teach early arriving Scouts proper techniques for warming up and stretching before physical activity.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an overview of the game of soccer. • Introduce soccer equipment and terminology. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 45 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review team behavior. • Introduce the rules of the game. • Learn basic skills of the game (dribbling and movement with the ball). 		7:15 p.m.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the above information. • Learn basic skills of the game (passing and receiving). • Learn about basic equipment for the game (cleats, shin guards, balls). 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the above information. • Learn about the requirements for a soccer field. • Learn basic skills of the game (throw-ins). 		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on basic skills associated with the group's skill level. • Work on advancement requirements as needed. This is a good time to have counselors for the Sports and Athletics merit badges available. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Dribble the Ball Relay (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



SOCCER

Meeting Plan: Rules of the Game



Week 2 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Have merit badge counselors on hand to introduce Scouts to the Sports and Athletics merit badges.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 5 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review key points from week 1. Discuss how teamwork is shown while playing soccer. Explain the basic rules of soccer. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 45 minutes	Continue to develop individual and team soccer skills from week 1, including passing and receiving.		7:15 p.m.
	Continue to develop individual and team soccer skills from week 1, including passing, receiving, and throw-ins.		
	Review the above information. Learn proper technique for receiving a ball in flight (trapping with chest, thigh, and foot).		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on basic skills associated with the group's skill level. Work on advancement requirements as needed. This is a good time to have counselors for the Sports and Athletics merit badges available. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Throw-in for Accuracy (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



SOCCER

Meeting Plan: It's a Goalkeeper's Life



Week 3 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Have a Sports or Athletics merit badge counselor on hand to help Scouts set up a personal training program suited to soccer (or another sport they are interested in); see requirement 5 of the Sports merit badge or requirement 3 of the Athletics merit badge for details.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 15 minutes	Discuss the role of the goalkeeper and the rules that apply to this position. Also discuss goalkeeper techniques; if possible, show part of an instructional video about the position.		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 35 minutes	Practice basic goalkeeper techniques, focusing on use of the hands.		7:25 p.m.
	• Review the above information.		
	• Learn how to kick the ball in.		
	• Review the above information. • Learn how to dive safely and make saves.		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	• Work on basic skills associated with the group's skill level. • Begin planning for participation in the main event.		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Defending the Goal (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



SOCCER

Meeting Plan: Working as a Team



Week 4 Date _____

ACTIVITY	DESCRIPTION	RUN BY	TIME*
Preopening 15 minutes before meeting	Show an Internet video of a World Cup game.		6:45 p.m.
Opening Ceremony 10 minutes	Flag presentation Oath and Law Uniform inspection		7 p.m.
Group Instruction 10 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review key points from previous weeks. Discuss good sportsmanship and have Scouts give examples from sports they play or watch. Describe the proper venue for a full-sided soccer match. 		7:10 p.m.
Skills Instruction 40 minutes	Review and practice the basic skills covered in weeks 1 and 2.		7:20 p.m.
	Review and practice the basic skills covered in weeks 1 and 2.		
	Review and practice the basic skills covered in weeks 1 and 2.		
	Learn about goal kicks and corner kicks.		
Breakout Groups 15 minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work on basic skills associated with the group's skill level. Finalize plans for participation in the main event. 		8 p.m.
Game 10 minutes	Play Team Captain (described earlier).		8:15 p.m.
Closing 5 minutes	Announcements Leader's minute Closing		8:25 p.m.
Total 90 minutes of meeting			
After the Meeting 15 minutes	Leadership team reviews plans for the next meeting and for the main event.		

*All times are suggested.



SOCCER

Main Event: A Few Good Games



Date _____ Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 2 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Tour and activity plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____



Essential (Tier I)

Play small-sided games using skills and knowledge learned in this module.

Equipment List

- Soccer balls
- Shin guards for all players
- Cones or some other markers to identify field borders and goals
- Water for each player
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit

Activity

Have Scouts play small-sided games, with the field size based on the number of players, as follows:

- 3 vs. 3: 20 yards by 20 yards
- 4 vs. 4: 30 yards by 30 yards
- 5 vs. 5: 40 yards by 40 yards
- 6 vs. 6: 50 yards by 50 yards

Divide Scouts into teams that include both more experienced and less experienced players. This is an activity that you can have parents help with, especially with younger Scouts.

Planning steps:

- Identify the appropriate field location.
- Get permission to use the location as required.
- Travel to location with equipment.
- Create teams with varied ability levels.
- Play small-sided game(s) with 10-minute halves.

Safety

- Wear proper soccer safety equipment (shin guards).
- Have a first-aid kit handy.
- Don't forget to hydrate and wear sunscreen.

Notes



SOCCER

Main Event: Join a Tournament



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 6 to 8 hours

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Tour and activity plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____

Challenging (Tier II)

Participate in a soccer tournament organized by your local community, a youth group, a church, or the BSA local council. Follow all the rules for team play. Demonstrate the skills and plays learned in this module.

Equipment List

- Uniform for each player (usually a matching colored shirt)
- Soccer balls
- Shin guards for all players
- Water for each player
- Food
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit

Activity

- Find a soccer tournament in your community that you can participate in.
- If one is not available, consider recruiting other units in your area to participate in your own tournament.
- Under the direction of appropriate referees, play several games.
- Have fun.

Safety

- Wear proper soccer safety equipment (shin guards).
- Have a first-aid kit.
- Don't forget to hydrate and wear sunscreen.

Notes

<p>• Travel to location with equipment.</p> <p>• Create teams with varied ability levels.</p> <p>• Play small-sided games with 10-minute halves.</p>	<p>• Wear proper soccer safety equipment (shin guards).</p> <p>• Have a first-aid kit handy.</p> <p>• Don't forget to hydrate and wear sunscreen.</p>
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SOCCER

Main Event: Put on a Soccer Festival



Date _____

Logistics

Location: _____

Departure time: _____

Return time: _____

Duration of activity: 6 to 8 hours (could be combined with an overnight if desired)

Budget: Completed _____ Approved _____

Camping: Duty roster _____ Menu _____

Transportation: Group _____ Self _____

Tour and activity plan: Completed _____ Submitted _____



Advanced (Tier III)

Plan and coordinate a soccer festival for your community. Provide skills workshops and small competitions. Provide play for small teams as well as pickup games.

Equipment List

- Soccer balls
- Shin guards for all players
- Cones or some other markers to identify field borders and goals
- Water for each player
- Food
- Sunscreen
- First-aid kit

Activity

- Set up a series of skill workshops addressing dribbling and passing.
 - Have Scouts set up and lead small-sided games, with the field size based on the number of players, as follows:
 - 3 vs. 3: 20 yards by 20 yards
 - 4 vs. 4: 30 yards by 30 yards
 - 5 vs. 5: 40 yards by 40 yards
 - 6 vs. 6: 50 yards by 50 yards
- Planning steps:
- Identify the appropriate field location.
 - Identify the groups that should participate.
 - Advertise the festival.
 - Assign Scouts to serve as coaches, officials, registration volunteers, etc.
 - Create a schedule for the day and make copies for participants.
 - Travel to location with equipment and set up ahead of time.
 - Conduct the festival.

Safety

- Wear proper soccer safety equipment (shin guards).
- Have a first-aid kit.
- Don't forget to hydrate and wear sunscreen.

Notes

Be sure to have water available for participants. Food is also important if the festival will run longer than a couple of hours. Consider setting up a simple concession stand as a fundraiser.



SOCCER



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Organizations and Websites

U.S. Soccer

Website: <http://www.ussoccer.com>

Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA)

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

SoccerQuick.com

Website: <http://soccerquick.com>

Basic Soccer Rules from Kids-Play-Soccer.com

Website: <http://www.kids-play-soccer.com/basic-soccer-rules.html>

Related Program Features

Fitness and Nutrition, and Spectator Sports

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