



**Dis+Abled**  
SPORT PROJECT



**GAME - POWERCHAIR FOOTBALL**  
TRADITIONAL AND ADAPTED **GAMES**  
**FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION AND INTEGRATION OF**  
**PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND ABLE-BODIED**

<https://disabled-erasmus.org/>



## HISTORY

Powerchair football, invented in France in the 1970s for students with physical disabilities, expanded internationally with the US and other countries joining. In January 2005, representatives from seven nations met in Le Chesnay, France, to form the International Powerchair Football Association (IPFA), aiming to create a global governing body and standardize the sport's various rules. By July 2006, in Atlanta, GA, a constitution was ratified, standardized "Laws of the Game" were adopted, and the Federation International Powerchair Football Association (FIPFA) was formally established with its headquarters in Paris, France.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE GAME

Powerchair Football is a fast-paced and strategic adaptation of soccer, designed specifically for electric wheelchair users. It emphasizes passing, dribbling, and spin-kicking an oversized ball to score goals.

## RULES

### I. Equipment

- Electric Wheelchairs (Powerchairs): Specially designed for the sport.
- Metal Foot Guards: Attached to the front of the powerchairs, these allow players to "kick" the ball.
- Oversized Football: A large football, adapted for the sport.

### II. Setup

- Teams: Two teams compete, each consisting of four players (including the goalkeeper).
- Court: A gymnasium court, 30 meters long by 18 meters wide.
- Goals: Two goals, positioned at each end of the court, similar to traditional soccer (most common format).

### III. Gameplay Objective

The objective of each team is to score more goals than the opposing team by propelling the oversized football into their goal.



#### IV. Core Gameplay and Rules

1. Ball Propulsion: Players "kick" the ball using the metal foot guards attached to their powerchairs.
  - Spin Kicks: Players can "spin" their powerchair to generate power, striking the ball with the side of the guard for the strongest hits.
  - Front Bars: Using the front bars of the guard often results in a more accurate hit.
2. The '2 on 1' Rule:
  - Only one player from each team is allowed to be within three (3) meters of the ball, actively affecting the play.
  - This rule ensures space for passes and strategic maneuvering.
  - Infringement: Any breach of the '2 on 1' rule results in the opposition receiving an indirect free kick.
  - Goalkeeper Immunity: Goalkeepers are immune to this rule when they are within their own goal box.
3. Spin Kicks and Contact Risk:
  - Players attempting a spin kick must ensure no opponent is within their spin zone.
  - Opponents must avoid entering the spinning zone of a player who has initiated a spin kick.
  - Although designed as a non-contact sport, unintentional contact can occur. Maintaining high safety standards and respecting the 'spin zone' is crucial.
1. Goal Scoring:
  - Teams try to score goals by getting the ball into the opponent's net.
  - Direct Goals from 'Hit-ins' and Kick-offs: Unlike traditional football, direct goals are allowed directly from 'hit-ins' (similar to throw-ins from the sideline) and kick-offs.
2. Set Plays and Distance Rule:
  - Powerchair Football places significant emphasis on set plays (e.g., hit-ins, corner kicks). Many goals result from these situations.
  - When play is being resumed from a hit-in or corner kick, opposing players are required to maintain a distance of at least 5 meters from the ball. This rule highlights the sport's tactical dimension.
  - Teams benefit from having a specialist skilled in these "dead-ball scenarios."

#### V. Game Dynamics

- Fast-Paced and Dynamic: The game is characterized by its speed and constant movement.
- Strategic Dimension: Rules like the '2 on 1' and the distance rule for set plays add significant tactical depth.
- Non-Contact (Aimed): While contact can occur, the sport is designed to minimize it.
- 

### INTEGRATION VALUES AND POSSIBLE ADAPTATIONS

#### I. Adapting Equipment (Beyond Standard Powerchair Football Gear)

- Ball Variations:
  - Lighter/Softer Ball: For recreational play or players with less powerful chairs, a lighter or softer oversized ball (e.g., a large beach ball, a very light foam ball) could make it easier to propel and control.
  - Larger Ball: An even larger ball might be easier to make contact with for some players.
- Goal Modifications:
  - Wider Goals: For recreational play, widening the goals could increase scoring opportunities and build confidence.
  - Lower Goals: While current goals are at ground level, for specific scenarios (e.g., if players struggle with trajectory), minor adjustments could be considered if the goal is to practice targeting.
- Foot Guard Alternatives:
  - While metal foot guards are standard, for very casual play, ensure they are securely attached and safe. For some players, different designs might be explored that provide a larger surface area or different angles for striking if the standard guard is challenging.

#### II. Adapting the Playing Environment

- Court Size & Boundaries:
  - Smaller Court: Reduce the court dimensions (e.g., 20m x 10m or even smaller) for recreational games, particularly if there are fewer players or players with slower chairs. This increases ball touches and reduces



- required travel distance.
- Clearer Markings: Use highly contrasting tape for court lines. For players with low vision, consider slightly raised lines (e.g., thin rubber strips) that can be felt by chairs.
- Surface: The gymnasium floor is ideal. Ensure it is perfectly smooth, clean, and free of obstacles to prevent chair damage or mobility issues.
- Warm-up/Cool-down Space: Ensure ample, accessible space off the court for players to warm up, cool down, and take breaks, with easy access to water and facilities.

### III. Adapting Rules and Gameplay (Beyond Competitive Powerchair Football Rules)

- "2 on 1" Rule Flexibility:
  - Relax Enforcement: For recreational or introductory play, relax the strict enforcement of the '2 on 1' rule. Allow more players near the ball initially to encourage participation, then gradually introduce the rule's strictness as skills develop.
  - Larger Buffer Zone: Increase the 3-meter distance to 4 or 5 meters, providing more space around the ball.
  - Positional Focus: Emphasize understanding why the rule exists (space, strategy) rather than immediate punishment for infringement.
- Spin Kicks:
  - Emphasis on Safety: Reiterate that this is a non-contact sport. If unintentional contact is frequent due to spin kicks, encourage players to simplify their kick (e.g., front-bar hits only) or increase the spin-zone distance for recreational play.
  - Drills: Dedicate practice time to mastering spin kicks in a controlled environment before using them in full gameplay.
- Substitutions:
  - Rolling Substitutions: Allow unlimited rolling substitutions (players can enter/exit the game freely) to manage fatigue and ensure all players get ample playing time, regardless of stamina.
- Goalkeeper Zone:
  - No Goalkeeper Restriction: For very casual play, if the focus is purely on shooting, remove the specific goalkeeper zone and let any player defend the goal, simplifying roles.
- Fouls & Penalties:
  - Focus on Education: For recreational games, use fouls primarily as teaching moments rather than strict penalties. Explain why a foul occurred and how to avoid it.
  - Less Severe Penalties: Instead of free kicks, minor infringements might result in a "do-over" or a restart from the center.





- Offensive vs. Defensive Roles:
  - Fluid Roles: While teams of 4 have positions, for adaptive play, allow for more fluid roles. Some players might naturally be better at offense, others at defense. Encourage them to play to their strengths without strict positional enforcement.
- Timeouts: Allow for frequent timeouts for hydration, strategy discussions, or equipment adjustments.
- Game Length: Adjust quarter lengths to match the endurance levels of the players. Shorter quarters or fewer quarters can be beneficial.
- Inclusive Language: Use language that is empowering and focuses on ability, not disability.

#### IV. People & Support

- Trained Coaches/Facilitators: Coaches should be specifically trained in adaptive sports and familiar with powerchair operation and maintenance. They are crucial for creating a safe, fun, and inclusive environment.
- Referees: Referees should be knowledgeable about both the standard rules and any specific adaptations in play, and prioritize player safety.
- Volunteers/Support Staff: Have dedicated volunteers or support staff available to assist with chair issues, retrieve balls, help players on/off the court, and provide general assistance as needed.





# Dis+Abled

S P O R T P R O J E C T



Co-funded by  
the European Union

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

<https://disabled-erasmus.org/>