

RKW

Ray Kennedy Weekend

Rules & Regulations

Ray Kennedy Cup



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1. INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

The Ray Kennedy weekend is an international football event dedicated to individuals with Parkinson's disease, held in memory of former professional footballer Raymond "Ray" Kennedy. Founded by former football player Eigil Sabroe and physiotherapist Finn Egeberg Nielsen from the organization Fit4cure. The tournament highlights the physical and social benefits of football for people with Parkinson's.

Football is an ideal sporting activity for individuals with Parkinson's because it challenges movement strategies through footwork, balance, coordination, and rhythm. Training improves mobility, reduces rigidity, and strengthens both body and mind.

We are all committed to providing a safe, fair, and enjoyable environment for all participants. The rules below are adapted from standard 7-a-side football laws, some with modifications to suit players with Parkinson's disease.

The Weekend contains two tournaments:

RAY KENNEDY CUP:

7-a side regular football tournament

RAY KENNEDY SHIELD:

6-a side "Walking Football" tournament

2. ELIGIBILITY & ENTRY

Who can participate

Anyone who meets the requirements can participate in this event.

Anyone diagnosed with Parkinson's disease can take part in the tournament.

Each squad may include one player without Parkinson's, provided that this player is 60 years or older. (documentation may be requested).

Players with other neurological conditions: Each squad may instead include one player without Parkinson's who has another neurological disease causing functional impairment. In this case, there are no age requirements.

Examples of accepted neurological conditions

Multiple Sclerosis (MS): An autoimmune disease that attacks the central nervous system. Symptoms can vary greatly but often include paralysis, cognitive problems, and fatigue.

Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS): A progressive disease that attacks the nerve cells controlling muscle movement. It gradually leads to the paralysis of all muscles in the body.

Stroke: Occurs when the blood supply to a part of the brain is interrupted. Depending on the affected area, it can cause paralysis, speech difficulties, memory loss, and other disabilities.

Cerebral Palsy (CP): A condition caused by damage to the brain during its development. It affects muscle control and can lead to a wide range of disabilities in movement and coordination.

Number of teams per club

A club may register more than one team for the tournament. Each team will be considered an individual team in the competition and will not receive special seeding or grouping.

Teams can be mixed gender.

Registration:

Teams register directly with the host city's organizing committee. Applications must be submitted by the announced deadline. Once accepted, teams will receive confirmation and practical information.

Host cities:

See the official *Rules of Hosting the Event* for detailed requirements regarding facilities, accessibility, and medical support.

Changes:

Significant changes must be approved by each of the representatives of the group.

3. TOURNAMENT FORMAT

Structure

Group stage followed by semifinals and a Cup Final.

Advancement

Normally, the top two teams from each group progress to the semifinals. However, depending on the total number of participating teams, only the top team from each group may advance.

Groups

There will be both an **A-group** semifinals and final, and a **B-group** competition to ensure all teams continue to play.

Tie-break rules

There will be both an **A-group** semifinals and final, and a **B-group** competition to ensure all teams continue to play.

Tie-break rules

1. Goal difference
2. Goals scored
3. Penalty shootout (3 players from each team)

4. RULES & REGULATIONS

The Ray Kennedy Cup tournament follow the official **7-a-side football rules** from the Laws of the Game, with adaptations for safety and accessibility.

§1 Pitch

Matches are played on a reduced-size pitch in line with 7-a-side standards: approx. **68 × 52.5 m** (or across an approved 11-a-side pitch). Preferred surface is **artificial grass** for safety reasons.

Size of the goals are normally **5 × 2 m**.

§2 Ball

A standard size 5 football is used, as per football law.

§3 Number of players & substitutions

Matches are normally 7-a-side. Each squad may have a **maximum of 12 players** per match. Unlimited rolling substitutions are allowed from the halfway line. Matches may continue with fewer players. There is also an opportunity to play **8-a-side**, but this must be approved by the organizers.

§4 Equipment

Normal football equipment as per the Laws of the Game. Shin guards are mandatory.

§5 Referees & officials

Matches are controlled by an official referee with full authority under the Laws of the Game. Assistant referees are not used.

§6 Match duration

Games consist of two halves. The **minimum total playing time is 10 minutes** and the **maximum is 25 minutes**, set by the organizers.

§7 Kick-off & restarts

Kick-off follows standard 7-a-side rules. Opponents must remain 7 m from the ball until in play.

§8 Goals & scoring

Standard football law applies.

§9 No offside rule

The offside law does not apply in this tournament.

§10 Free kicks & penalties

All free kicks are direct. Opponents must remain 7 m from the ball. Penalties are taken 8 m from goal.

§11 Kick-in (instead of throw-in)

The ball is kicked in from the sideline instead of being thrown.

§12 Tackling & fair play rules

Tackling is permitted under normal football law, but **any kind of sliding tackle is strictly forbidden**. Careless or aggressive behavior is not tolerated.

§13 Disciplinary rules

Yellow card = *5-minute suspension*.

Two yellow cards = *red card and suspension from the next match*.

Direct red card = *suspension from the rest of the match plus the following two matches*.

Teams with a player serving a suspension must play with **one fewer player** during the suspension period.

5. HEALTH & SAFETY

Each venue must provide essential safety equipment, including a **first aid kit** and an **AED (defibrillator)** on site.

It is preferable that a qualified medical professional is present during the tournament. At minimum, there must be at least one person with recognized **first aid skills** available at all times.

Players participate in the tournament at their **own risk**. The event organizers and host city cannot be held responsible for any injury, accident, or damage an individual may cause to themselves or others during participation.

Players are encouraged to listen to their bodies, take rest breaks, and hydrate regularly.

Liability Waiver

By registering for and participating in the Ray Kennedy Cup, each player and team acknowledges and accepts that

Participation is at their **own risk**.

Neither the organizers, host city or anyone else can be held responsible for personal injury, illness, accidents, or damage to personal property occurring during the event.

It is the responsibility of each player, football club, or team leader to assess whether the player is medically and physically fit to participate.

By joining the tournament, participants accept this waiver of liability.

6. SPIRIT OF THE TOURNAMENT

The Ray Kennedy Cup and Shield are built on values that go far beyond competition. The tournaments are about celebrating the joy of football, creating friendships, and honoring the courage of people living with Parkinson's.

***Inclusion** – Everyone, regardless of age, gender, or ability, is welcome and valued.*

***Respect** – For opponents, teammates, referees, volunteers, and officials with respect at all times.*

***Community** – Building bonds across clubs, countries, and cultures.*

***Safety first** – Protecting health and well-being is always the top priority.*

7. CONTACT

For questions, registration, or further information about the Ray Kennedy Cup or Ray Kennedy Shield, please contact:

Organizing Committee

Thomas Helmann Jensen
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You are also welcome to reach out directly to the local **host city organizers**, who will provide details about schedules, facilities, and practical arrangements for each edition of the tournaments.



RKW – Hosting the event

RKW2025
Ray Kennedy Shield
Walking football is like the game you love, played in a new way

**WALK,
DONT
RUN**

RKW2025
Ray Kennedy Cup
Football is like the game you love, played the way you know it

**RUN,
DONT
WALK**

FIT4CURE

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