



Special Olympics Ohio Golf Manual

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OFFICIAL EVENTS

The SOOH Golf season runs in the summer and into the fall from July to September. The State Tournament is held each year at the end of September. An athlete and Unified Partner may only enter into one event for State Competition.

Special Olympics Ohio provides a range of events to offer athletes of varying abilities the opportunity to compete. The following is a list of official events available in Special Olympics Ohio.

- Level 2—Unified Sports Alternate Shot Team Play Competition (9-hole)
- Level 4—Individual Stroke Play Competition (9-hole)

GENERAL RULES AND MODIFICATIONS

Eligibility Criteria

1. All competitors and teams must compete in a minimum of 3 nine hole qualifying rounds and submit the scores from those games with registration materials. The par for the 9 holes should be indicated on the registration materials with the scores.
2. All competitors and teams must compete in a Regional Qualifying Golf tournament held prior to state competition.
3. Teams/individuals who submit qualifying scores must average less than 3 times the par for that qualifying score. For example, a unified team or individual golfer submitting three qualifying scores from a par 36 golf course must be able to average less than 108 for those three scores.
4. Special Olympics Ohio does not enforce a minimum or maximum total score for each level since we only currently offer two different levels.
 - a. However, for scoring at each hole, there will be a maximum of 10 strokes at Regional and State Competitions. Please see the scoring section for more details.

Golf Carts

1. For Regional events, The decision to offer the use of power golf carts will be left to the discretion of the specific Tournament Committee.
2. Golf carts will be used at State Competition.
 - a. For Level 2, Unified Sports Alternate Shot, the Unified Partner will be required to drive the golf cart.
 - b. For Level 4, Individual Stroke, each competitor will be required to have a Caddy who will drive the golf cart.

Slow Play

1. For the purpose of preventing slow play, the Committee may, in the conditions of a competition (Rule 5), establish pace of play guidelines including maximum periods of time to complete a



stipulated round, a hole, or a stroke. Pace of play for State competition will be communicated at the Coaches Meeting prior to competition.

Attire

1. Athletes must wear shirts with collars and dress shorts or pants. Golf gloves are allowed. Shoes: Golf, tennis or athletic shoes are acceptable, but are subject to inspection by an event official. No heeled shoes are allowed. No metal spikes.
2. Jewelry and denim may not be worn during games or practice. Headwear for religious or medical reasons are acceptable but must be brought to the attention of the Games Director prior to competition.

Equipment

1. Each player is responsible for providing their own equipment. This includes
 - a. A Set of clubs (no more than 14 clubs)
 - b. A golf bag
 - c. Golf balls
 - d. Tees
 - e. Divot Repair Tool (Not required, but recommended)
 - f. Ball Marker
2. A set of clubs shall include at least one wood, one iron and one putter. These clubs should be in an appropriate golf bag and should include golf balls.

Caddies

1. Each athlete competing in Level 4 should be prepared to provide their own caddies for competitions.
2. As per the USGA, a caddy is defined as “one who assists the player in accordance with the Rules, which may include carrying or handling the player’s clubs during play.”
3. If you are unable to provide a caddy, this should be listed on your registration form so that the tournament director can assign the athlete a caddy.
4. For tournaments and competitions, coaches can assume the role of a caddy, with the understanding they will relinquish their coach privileges (ie. ability to file a protest) during the competition.
5. Caddies will assume the responsibility of driving the golf cart during competition.

LEVEL 2—UNIFIED SPORTS ALTERNATE SHOT TEAM PLAY RULES (9 HOLE)

Team Definition

1. A team shall consist of one athlete with an intellectual disability and one Unified partner without an intellectual disability.

Purpose for this Level of Play

1. For Special Olympics athlete golfers with an entry level of understanding of golf, this level is designed to give the Special Olympics athlete an opportunity to transition from individual skills to individual play and to progress under the guidance of a Unified partner whose ability and knowledge of golf is more advanced than that of the Special Olympics athlete. As a result, this scenario does not function in the traditional Unified Sports model where teammates are



expected to be of similar ability. The Unified partner serves as a coach and mentor so that the Special Olympics athlete becomes self-sufficient on the golf course.

2. For more experienced Special Olympics athlete golfers, this level is also designed for athletes and Unified partners that have comparable ability levels and knowledge of the sport. This scenario would more closely resemble the traditional Unified Sports model whereby the teammates would be of similar ability. Even if the athlete has the skill set to play individually in Level 4, he/she may choose to continue playing at Level 2.

Form of Play

1. The form of play will be Foursome Rule 22 under the Rules of Golf (Alternate Shot) — The players play alternately from the teeing grounds and then alternate strokes until the ball is holed.
2. Each foursome will be assigned to one of the nine holes for a “shot gun” start.
3. Example: If Player “A” plays from the tee on the odd-numbered holes, then Player “B” would play from the tee on the even-numbered holes. Only one ball is in play on a hole.
4. In Alternate Shot, the partner and the athlete will predetermine which holes, odd or even, they will tee off from. After the first shot, players will alternate turns until the ball is holed out.
5. The ball must be played as it lies.
6. You have three minutes to search for your ball before adding a penalty stroke or if your ball is in a penalty area playing then you may place another ball from where you played your last shot. We recommend you play a provisional ball when you first think your ball is lost.
7. All whiffs and duffs are considered 1 stroke. Whiffs are completely missed balls. Duffs are topping the ball. In both cases that stroke or attempt at the stroke counts as a player's turn, it would be the other teammates turn in Unified Competition
8. Tees to be used at:
 - a. Gold Tees – Female Athletes, Female Partners
 - b. White Tees – Male Athletes, Male Partners

Scoring

1. Once the ball is in play on each hole, the players shall alternate turns hitting the ball until the ball is holed, or until 10 strokes have been played. Note: a swing and miss count as a stroke.
2. If a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, the team shall record a score of 10x and proceed to the next hole.
3. Scoring (marking of cards) — Athletes should be taught to keep score and, whenever possible in competition, serve as a marker for a fellow competitor. At state competition there will be a volunteer appointed to each foursome to serve as a marker. Each player on the team should verify their team's hole-by-hole scores, and one of the players -- preferably the athlete with an intellectual disability-- shall sign the scorecard at the end of the round.

Registration and Divisioning

1. Each team shall register by submitting the most recent three scores under this format.
2. The scores must be accompanied by the par and rating for the course for each score.



3. All scores must be verified by signature of the Golf Professional, Club Secretary or Golf Association Director.
4. The Director of Sports and Competition and the Sport Director will use these scores to establish divisions for tournament play.

LEVEL 4—INDIVIDUAL STROKE PLAY RULES (9 HOLE)

Purpose of this Level of Play

1. This level is designed to meet the needs of those Special Olympics athletes who wish to play individually in a tournament where the stipulated round is nine holes.
2. While the player should be capable of playing independently, it is strongly recommended that the player provide their own caddie for tournaments and competitions

Form of Play

1. The form of play shall be stroke play competition.
2. Athletes will play their round paired with a caddie from their local program.
 - a. This athlete and caddie will have a golf cart and be matched with one other athlete and caddie during play.
3. The ball must be played as it lies.
4. Golfers will be assigned to a hole so that we can have a “shotgun” start.
5. You have three minutes to search for your ball before adding a penalty stroke or if your ball is in a penalty area playing then you may place another ball from where you played your last shot. We recommend you play a provisional ball when you first think your ball is lost.
6. All whiffs and duffs are considered 1 stroke. Whiffs are completely missed balls. Duffs are topping the ball. That stroke or attempt at the stroke counts as a players turn.
7. Tees to be used at:
 - a. Gold Tees – Female Athletes, Female Partners
 - b. White Tees – Male Athletes, Male Partners

Scoring

1. If a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, the player shall record a score of 10x and proceed to the next hole.
2. Scoring (marking of cards) — Athletes should be taught to keep score and, whenever possible in competition, serve as a marker for a fellow competitor. The caddies for each competitor will serve as a marker. The competitor will be responsible for verifying his/her own score and signing his/her scorecard.

Registration and Divisioning

1. Each competitor shall register by submitting the most recent three scores under this format.
2. The scores must be accompanied by the par and rating for the course for each score.
3. All scores must be verified by signature of the Golf Professional, Club Secretary or Golf Association Director.

4. The Director of Sports and Competition and the Sport Director will use these scores to establish divisions for tournament play.

