

GOLF COVID-19 RULES

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics golf competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon the *Rules of Golf* as written by the Royal and Ancient Club of St. Andrews (R&A). In efforts with the USGA, these rules shall govern all competition except when in conflict with the Official Special Olympics sports rules. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics sports rules shall apply. For more information, visit www.randa.org.

Rules have been modified based on SOWI Return to Play Protocol. Updated COVID-19 rules will be enforced until SOWI determines it is safe to move into Phase 4 of the Return to Play Protocol.

OFFICIAL EVENTS OFFERED

1. Level 2 – Unified Sports Alternate Shot Team Play*
2. Level 4 - Individual Stroke Play 9-Hole Competition*
3. Virtual Individual Competition
 - a. Short Putt
 - b. Long Putt
 - c. Chip Shot

ATHLETE MAXIMUM STANDARDS FOR COMPETITION

An athlete must be able to score under the maximum standard set for the level of golf in which they will be participating. An athlete may not be registered for an event unless he or she is able to meet the maximum standard listed below:

Level 4 – average of 81 or lower

COVID-19 RULE MODIFICATIONS

1. **All Levels of Competition**
 - a. Tournament Venue selection will be based on local ordinances at the time of competition and facility sanitation protocols.
 - b. Registration and Divisioning will be dependent on the status of the SOWI Return to Play phase at the time of competition. See Return to Play sport-specific guidelines. Each team shall register by submitting the most recent three scores over nine holes since last year's State Outdoor Sports Tournament. All three scores should be completed on the same course of 2400 yards or longer.
 - c. Equipment: Partners (team) may not share clubs during Phase 0 or Phase 1. Partners (team) may share clubs during Phases 2-4 if the total number of clubs carried by the partners (team) sharing does not exceed 14. Golf Ball should be distinctly marked. Golf balls should not be shared between Athletes and/or Unified Partners and must be frequently disinfected.
 - d. Only one person should be keeping score and touching the scorecard. Coaches or golf course officials should verify and sign the scorecard before submitting to SOWI.
2. **Alternate Shot Team Play**

- a. In Alternate Shot Team Play, only one ball per hole is used unless it is lost during play. If either player touches the ball during play, it must be disinfected immediately.
 - b. The partner (golfer without an intellectual disability) must be registered as a Class A volunteer with the Program Office by the seasonal medical deadline date in order to participate.
3. **Level 4 – Individual Stroke Play 9-Hole Competition**
- a. Use of Caddie – A caddie may assist a player with club selection, and lining up a shot only. Caddies should use wipes to disinfect each club before and after the athlete uses it. Caddies shall not coach during competition or cause undue delay in play. Caddies are not allowed for alternate shot competition.
 - b. Use of Golf Carts – A minimum physical requirement is that the athlete must be able to walk the entire nine-hole round in a reasonable time period. Those persons who wish to request the use of a cart for medical reasons must fill out a special needs form and must provide a written verification from a physician stating the reason. To accommodate physical distancing, only the athlete is allowed in the cart, no additional driver is allowed. Cart fees are to be paid by the participant.

SECTION A – GENERAL RULES

1. **All Levels of Competition**
- a. Undue Delay; Slow Play - The player shall play without undue delay. Upon lining up for a shot (or being informed to do so by the official) a player shall take no more than 45 seconds to strike the ball.
 - b. Between completion of the hole and playing from the next teeing ground, the player shall not unduly delay play.
 - c. Use of Caddie – A caddie may assist a player with club selection, and lining up a shot only. Caddies should use wipes to disinfect each club before and after the athlete uses it. Caddies shall not coach during competition or cause undue delay in play. **Caddies are not allowed for alternate shot competition.**
 - d. Teeing Ground – Female golfers shall tee-off at the forward (red) tees while male golfers shall tee-off at the middle (white) tees. This rule applies to all levels of golf.
 - e. Stipulated Round – A stipulated round shall be nine holes. At the discretion of the Golf Committee, a championship may be contested over one, two, three or four rounds.
 - f. Tournament Venue Selection
 - 1) Tournament Venue selection will be based on local ordinances at the time of competition and facility sanitation protocols.
 - 2) The committee should consider the degree of difficulty and its impact on the conduct of the tournament.
 - g. Registration and Divisioning
 - 1) Registration and Divisioning will be dependent on the status of the SOWI Return to Play phase at the time of competition. See Return to Play sport-specific guidelines.

- 2) Each team shall register by submitting the most recent three scores over nine holes since last year's State Outdoor Sports Tournament. All three scores must be completed on the same course of 2400 yards or longer.
- 3) All scores submitted as qualifying or final scores must be accompanied by the par and yardage for the course(s) for each score. All scores must be submitted on a course scored card and verified by signature of the Agency golf coach or course golf professional.

i. Equipment

- 1) Each player is responsible for providing their own equipment:
 - a) A set of clubs that should include at least one wood, one iron and one putter. The maximum number of clubs per player is 14. Partners (team) may not share clubs during Phase 0 or Phase 1. Partners (team) may share clubs during Phases 2-4 if the total number of clubs carried by the partners (team) sharing does not exceed 14.
 - b) A Golf Bag
 - c) Golf Ball should be distinctly marked. Golf balls should not be shared between Athletes and/or Unified Partners and must be frequently disinfected.
 - d) Pitch Mark Repairer

2. **Level 2 – Unified Sports Alternate Shot Team Play**

- a. Definition of a team: A team shall consist of one golfer with an intellectual disability and one golfer without an intellectual disability. **NOTE:** The partner (golfer without an intellectual disability) must be registered as a Class A volunteer with the Program Office by the seasonal medical deadline date in order to participate.
- b. Form of Play
 - 1) The form of play will be foursome Rule 29 under the rules of golf (alternate shot) – The players play alternately from the teeing grounds and then alternate strokes until the ball is holed. Example: If player "A" plays from the tee on the odd number holes, then player "B" would play from the tee on the even number holes. Only one ball is in play on a hole.
 - 2) All balls will be marked and only touched by the athlete or partner. If either player touches another golf ball during play, it must be disinfected immediately.
- c. 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 ten strokes have been played. **NOTE:** A swing and a miss, counts 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.
- d. Ties
 - 1) First-place ties shall be determined in the following manner:

- a) Of the teams tied for first place, the teams with the fewest number of 10x scores shall be declared the winner.
- b) If teams have an equal number of 10x scores they shall compare stroke total on the 4th hole of play and any subsequent holes until the tie is broken.

2) All other ties shall be broken by counting the number of 10x scores with the fewest getting the higher place. Ties after the 10x scores have been counted will remain as ties.

3. **Level 4 – Individual Stroke Play Nine-Hole Competition**

- a. The purpose of Level 4 golf is to allow athletes to train and compete in regulation golf competitions. Level 4 Special Olympics athletes compete in nine-hole stroke play competition.
- b. Form of Play
 - 1) A minimum physical requirement is that the athlete must be able to walk the entire nine-hole round in a reasonable time period. Those persons who wish to request the use of a cart for medical reasons must fill out a special needs form and must provide a written verification from a physician stating the reason. To accommodate physical distancing, only the athlete is allowed in the cart, no additional driver is allowed. Cart fees are to be paid by the participant.
- c. Scoring
 - 1) Once the ball is in play on each hole, the player shall continue to hit the ball until the ball is holed, or ten strokes have been played. **NOTE:** A swing and a miss, counts 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.
- d. Ties
 - 1) First-place ties shall be determined in the following manner:
 - a) Of the teams tied for first place, the teams with the fewest number of 10x scores shall be declared the winner.
 - b) If teams have an equal number of 10x scores they shall compare stroke total on the 4th hole of play and any subsequent holes until the tie is broken.
 - 2) All other ties shall be broken by counting the number of 10x scores with the fewest getting the higher place. Ties after the 10x scores have been counted will remain as ties.

4. **Virtual Competition – Individual Skills Competition**

- a. The purpose of the Virtual Competition is to allow athletes to train and compete in basic golf skills from the safety of their homes while observing social distancing.
- b. Form of Play
 - 1) Short Putt

- a) Set-up: Competition must take place on short grass outdoors, or carpet indoors. The hole must be clearly marked (ex: tape, sticky note, playing card, etc). The hole must be no larger than 6in X 6in. The starting line must be clearly marked, 6 feet away from the hole.
 - b) Equipment: Putters are the only club allowed for this competition.
 - c) Competition: The athlete will have 10 attempts to sink the putt from a clearly marked spot, 6 feet from the hole.
 - d) Scoring: The athlete scores 1 point for every putt made, with a maximum of 10 points.
- 2) Long Putt
- a) Set-up: Competition must take place on short grass outdoors, or carpet indoors. The hole must be clearly marked (ex: tape, sticky note, playing card, etc). The hole must be no larger than 6in X 6in. The starting line must be clearly marked, 12 feet away from the hole.
 - b) Equipment: Putters are the only club allowed for this competition.
 - c) Competition: The athlete will have 10 attempts to sink the putt from a clearly marked spot, 12 feet from the hole.
 - d) Scoring: The athlete scores 1 point for every putt made, with a maximum of 10 points.
- 3) Chip Shot
- a) Set-up: Competition must take place on short grass outdoors, or carpet indoors. The target must be clearly marked (ex: tape, cup, bowl, bucket). The target must be no larger than 3ft X 3ft.
 - b) Competition: The athlete will have 10 attempts to chip the ball from a clearly marked spot, 12 feet from the hole.
 - c) Scoring: The athlete scores 1 point for every chip shot made, with a maximum of 10 points.