

BOWLING
GENERAL RULES

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Bowling shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon Federation Internationale des Quilleurs (FIQ) Rules as well as World Tenpin Bowling Association (WTBA) Rules for bowling found at www.worldtenpinbowling.com. FIQ, WTBA or National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Bowling or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Bowling shall apply. The NGB for the United States is the U.S. Bowling College at www.bowl.com.

Rules Change Summary

1. Special Olympics Wisconsin will no longer include handicapping in scoring. All competitions will be scratch competitions. Athletes are assigned divisions based on their entered average. An athlete's bowling average is determined by dividing the total number of pins knocked down by the number of games bowled.
2. All Regions will hold in-person regional bowling competitions which will be considered advancing competitions to State. For those competing virtually, it will be one State Virtual Bowling League. Virtual competition will be modified league play. Athletes and Unified Partners will bowl 12 games (2 games per week for 6 weeks).
3. Athletes must be neat and clean in their dress and wear proper bowling uniform/clothing. Cut off shorts or shirts with advertising and logos are not allowed. **No denim bottoms allowed.** Slacks, long pants (i.e. neat sweatpants), dress pants, walking shorts, knee length skirts allowed. The tops are to be sleeved (short or long-sleeved) and collared or non-collared. Team and doubles bowlers must wear identical shirts. Team & Doubles must wear matching-colored bottoms- can be short or long. All competitors must wear bowling shoes. Socks are required. Players not wearing proper attire will not be allowed to participate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GENERAL RULES

1. OFFICIAL EVENTS
2. ELIGIBILITY
3. GENERAL RULES OF COMPETITION
4. RAMP BOWLING
5. DEVELOPMENTAL BOWLING
6. FOULS

1. OFFICIAL EVENTS OFFERED

****ATHLETES CAN COMPETE IN ONLY ONE EVENT!****

- 1.1. Individual Ramp (singles)
- 1.2 Individual (singles)
- 1.3 Developmental Individual and Individual Ramp
- 1.4 Mixed Doubles – Any combination of males and females (no ramps allowed – 2 players per team)
- 1.5 Mixed Team – Any combination of males and females (no ramps allowed – 4 players per team)
- 1.6 Unified Sports Mixed Doubles – One athlete and one unified partner (2 players per team). Only offered at Unified Tournament, not In-Person State Bowling.
- 1.7 Unified Sports Mixed Team – Two athletes and two unified partners (4 players per team). Only offered at Unified Tournament, not In-Person State Bowling.
- 1.8 Virtual Competition

2. PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

- 2.1 Athletes must have an active Medical Form on file with the Special Olympics State Office.
- 2.2 Coaches and Unified Partners must have an active Class A Application on file.
- 2.3 The Medical or Class A Forms must be received or postmarked by October 1, 2025 and remain valid through the conclusion of the State Bowling Competition December 7, 2025.
- 2.4 All participants must have the Communicable Diseases waiver on file at the State Office.

3. GENERAL RULES

3.1 All state competition will be scratch tournaments.

3.2 A scratch score based on a 12-game average shall be used for determining divisions. The 12-game average can be accumulated starting immediately after the state bowling tournament. Athletes shall complete at least 8 weeks of practice prior to the Regional competition. The 12-game average does not need to be completed within the 8 weeks of practice.

3.2.1 The quota is the number of athletes that can advance from a regional/district tournament to a state tournament.

3.2.2 Local Programs will be given a number of allotted quota spots based on their number of participation and State wide participation.

3.2.3 Final score is the total pin fall after three (3) games played.

3.2.4 Once an athlete has started to bowl, the athlete must complete all remaining frames of all games to receive a place; otherwise, a participation ribbon will be given.

3.3 **Athletes will not alternate lanes after each frame.**

3.4 From the approach, athletes have 45 seconds to deliver the ball. If the athlete fails to release the ball after 45 seconds, a zero is recorded for that ball.

- Ramp bowlers may be allowed to bowl three or more consecutive frames (at discretion of event manager).
- All athletes must use a ball no less than 8 lbs.
- Legal line up for doubles and team competition:
 - A team must register four players to be eligible. However, if a team is short-handed, a legal line-up shall consist of three or more eligible players on a four-player team. In years where higher levels of competition are offered, if a bowler is absent from Regional competition, the team or double is unable to advance to State.
 - A team must have one eligible player on a two-player doubles team.
- Double or team scores will be determined using scores for present team members only. Missing team members' scores will be reflected as zero. The team or double may receive a place based on this score, but will be ineligible to advance to the next level of competition. Any player or team arriving late (less than one hour) may start any time before his or her division reaches the fourth frame of the first game; otherwise, they will be scratched. The bowler or team may not make up frames that have been missed and will receive zero points on the missed frames.
- If a lane must be moved due to equipment malfunction (at the discretion of the venue manager), athletes will start in the frame they left off on.
- Any protests or rules infractions must be brought to the attention of the sports rules committee.
- Coaches, chaperones, parents, etc., are not allowed on the lanes during competition. Once competition begins, coaches are allowed to coach, but must stay behind designated barriers. The athletes must also stay seated in the lane and still continue to bowl within the 45 seconds

allotted. No coaching will be allowed once the athlete is on the approach and until completing the frame. The Games Management Team holds the right to determine if the situation becomes problematic.

NOTE: An athlete with special needs is one who has a communication limitation, hearing impairment, visual impairment, special equipment adaptation or behavioral need. If special needs are noted on the lane card, then this athlete's coach will be allowed on the lanes for consultation with the volunteer during a special time period set up just prior to the beginning of competition. All SOWI competitions should have a 5-10 minute period before competition starts when coaches can interact with lane helpers to aid in proper procedures for their assisted ramp bowlers.

- Athletes and volunteers are not allowed to smoke, eat food or drink during competition. Water will be provided for hydration. (The only other exception is for athletes with a medical condition requiring a regular intake of food or beverage. A Special Needs Form is required for such circumstances).
- Athletes, coaches, volunteers or any other Special Olympics supporters are not allowed to drink alcoholic beverages or smoke at the competition site.
- Athletes and volunteers are not allowed use electronic devices during competition. The only exception is for athletes with a behavioral need, a Special Needs Form is required for such circumstances.
- Athletes must be neat and clean in their dress and wear proper bowling uniform/clothing. Cut off shorts or shirts with advertising and logos are not allowed. **No denim bottoms allowed.** Slacks, long pants (i.e. sweatpants), dress pants, walking shorts, knee length skirts allowed. The tops are to be sleeved (short or long-sleeved) and collared or non-collared. Team and doubles bowlers must wear identical shirts. Team & Doubles must wear matching-colored bottoms- can be short or long. All competitors must wear bowling shoes. Socks are required. Players not wearing proper attire will not be allowed to participate.
- Unified Sports Mixed Doubles will only be offered at the Unified Tournament. This event will not be offered and will not qualify for the State Bowling Tournament.
- Unified Sports Mixed Team will only be offered at the Unified Tournament. This event will not be offered and will not qualify for the State Bowling Tournament.
- See Special Olympics, Inc. rules regarding official bowling balls, ramps and special equipment. Bowling shoes must be worn.

4. RAMP BOWLING

4.1 Ramp bowlers include those athletes in wheelchairs, the visually impaired, and only those ambulatory athletes with severe CP or other conditions too severe to allow for sufficient balance. Ambulatory athletes who are unable to bowl correctly due to lack of strength are ineligible for ramp bowling.

4.2 **Ramp bowlers will compete only against other ramp bowlers in singles competition.** Ramp bowlers may not be part of a doubles or a team.

4.3 Athletes using ramps shall be placed in separate divisions from other bowlers.

NOTE: SOWI only offers one ramp bowling event in which all athletes using a ramp will compete. For athletes who need physical assistance setting the ramp, the coach must supply that

information on the Special Needs Form. The athlete's coach may want to give further verbal instructions to the volunteer lane helper prior to the start of competition. In the case where the bowling ramp must be set, the volunteer will stand with his/her back to the pins and aim the ramp according to the athlete's verbal or physical cues, or if no cue is given, the ramp will be set to center of the lane.

- 4.4 Athletes must initiate the forward motion of the ball with his/her hand touching the ball.
- 4.5 All SOWI competitions should have a 5-10 minute period before competition starts when coaches can interact with lane helpers to aid in proper procedures for interacting with their athletes.
- 4.6 A volunteer can hold the ramp in order to stabilize it (the specific information must be written on the Special Needs Form). A rubber mat can be placed under the ramp in order to keep the ramp from moving.
- 4.7 All parts of the ramp must be behind the foul line; it is considered an extension of the bowler.
- 4.8 Special Needs: The Special Needs Form is to be used to give information to the volunteer(s) on how to deal with an athlete's behavior, and/or special needs. It is not to be used for coaching tips or instructions on how the volunteer should place the ramp.

5. DEVELOPMENTAL BOWLING

- 5.1 This transitional event is intended for use by those athletes who are not ready or are no-longer capable of participating fully in the competition experience. Athletes registered in these transitional events are ineligible to register and participate in any other event or sport during the season. Host Regions will determine how these transitional events will be implemented during existing tournaments. Contact your host Region for details.
- 5.2 Levels of Competition
 - 5.2.1 At tournaments, Individual and Ramp athletes will bowl only one (1) game.
 - 5.2.2 In virtual league competition, Developmental, Individual, and Ramp athletes will bowl 1 games per week for a total of 6 games.

Virtual Competition

Virtual competition will be modified league play. Athletes and Unified Partners will bowl 12 games (2 games per week for 6 weeks).

- 5.3 Divisions will be calculated by the average score after the first 2 weeks of competition (4 games).
- 5.4 Final score will be calculated by the average score of all games played (12 games).
- 5.5 All scores must be submitted by 11:59pm each Sunday. Athletes must compete in two games per week. Athletes will receive a score of zero for missing games.
- 5.6 The virtual bowling league is a non-advancing event. Athletes will be awarded medals for 1st through 3rd places and ribbons for 4th through 8th places based on their 6 weeks of league play.

5.7 The virtual bowling league is not a qualifying event for USA Games nomination.

6. FOULS

6.1 A foul occurs when a part of the player encroaches on, or goes beyond, the foul line and touches any part of the lane, equipment or building during or after a delivery. A ball is in play after a delivery until the same or another player is on the approach in position to make a succeeding delivery.

6.2 Foul lights shall be used for all bowlers (individual, mixed doubles, team and ramp).

6.3 When a foul occurs on the first ball of a frame, an "F" should be placed in the box (pins down will not count) and the pins will be re-racked. The number of pins knocked down on the second ball will be scored.

6.4 When a foul occurs on the second ball of a frame, an "F" should be placed in the box and the pins knocked down will not be scored for that ball.

6.5 If all pins are knocked down on the second ball, after a foul with the first, it is scored as a spare.