

GOLF

GENERAL RULES

Governing 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.

Medical Deadline and Participant Eligibility

Athletes must have active Medical Form AND Covid-19 Participant Release Form AND Communicable Disease Waiver on file with the Special Olympics WI State Office. Coaches and Unified Partners must have an active Class A Application, Covid-19 Participant Release form AND Communicable Disease Waiver on file. The Medical or Class A form must be received or postmarked by the deadline and remain valid through the end of Celebration Games

2026 Rules Change Summary: None

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1. OFFICIAL EVENTS

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

1.2. Level 4 - Individual Stroke Play 9-Hole Competition*

1.2.1. 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.

2. ROSTERS

2.1. Level 2 – Unified Sports Alternate Shot Team Play

2.1.1. 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 State Outdoor Sports Tournament medical deadline date in order to participate.

2.1.2. Caddies are not allowed for alternate shot competition.

2.2. Level 4 - Individual Stroke Play 9-Hole Competition*

2.2.1. One Individual athlete

2.2.2. Use of Caddie – A caddie may assist a player with club selection and lining up a shot only. Caddies shall not coach during competition or cause undue delay in play.

3. FACILITY REQUIREMENTS AND EQUIPMENT

3.1. Tournament Venue Selection

3.1.1. The selection of the golf course shall be at the discretion of the tournament committee.

3.1.2. The committee should consider the degree of difficulty and its impact on the conduct of the tournament.

3.2. Golf Course Set- Up

3.2.1. The course shall be set up at the discretion of the tournament committee.

3.2.2. Competitors may not play on the tournament golf course the day of competition prior to the start of the event.

3.3. Equipment

3.3.1. Each player is responsible for providing their own equipment including:

3.3.1.1. 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 share

clubs provided that the total number of clubs carried by the partners (team) sharing does not exceed 14.

3.3.2. A Golf Bag

3.3.3. Golf Balls

3.3.4. Pitch Mark Repairer

4. RULES OF COMPETITION

4.1. All Levels of Competition

4.1.1. Pace of Play

4.1.1.1. For the purpose of preventing slow play, the Committee may, in the conditions of a competition (Rule 33-1), establish pace of play guidelines including maximum periods of time to complete a stipulated round, a hole, or a stroke.

4.1.1.2. 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.

4.1.1.3. Between completion of the hole and playing from the next teeing ground, the player shall not unduly delay play.

4.1.2. Use of Caddie – A caddie may assist a player with club selection, and lining up a shot only. Caddies shall not coach during competition or cause undue delay in play. Caddies are not allowed for alternate shot competition.

4.1.3. Teeing Ground – Female golfers and those 8-11 years old 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.

4.1.4. 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. Information must be submitted with tournament registration. Cart fees are to be paid by the participant.

4.1.5. Penalties for breaching the before-mentioned rules:

4.1.5.1. First Offense – One Stroke

4.1.5.2. Second Offense – Two Strokes

4.1.5.3. Third Offense – Disqualification

4.1.6. Registration and Divisioning

4.1.6.1. Each team shall register by submitting the most recent six scores over nine holes since last year's State Golf Tournament. Two of the six scores must be completed on courses of 2400 yards or longer.

4.1.6.2. The score must be accompanied by the par and yardage for the course(s) for each score.

4.1.6.3. All scores must be verified by signature of the Agency golf coach or course golf professional.

4.1.6.4. Divisioning for State competition will be based on the six scores submitted.

4.1.6.5. Maximum Averages

4.1.6.5.1. The following are maximum averages for each level of competition that will be enforced at all sanctioned competitions. Scores not meeting these criteria may be subject to disqualification.

4.1.6.5.2. Level 4 – average of 70 (or a comparable handicap index) or lower (9 holes)

4.1.6.6. For the purpose of submitting scorecards for an event, reviewing scores/scorecards for the consideration of moving athletes/teams up in level and the enforcement of maximum scores, please note that scores/scorecards from executive courses or Par 3 courses should not be submitted.

4.1.6.7. When reviewing averages from scorecards, considerations should be taken to compare the yardages played vs. the maximum yardages for Special Olympics golf competitions, to determine if any adjustments should be made.

4.1.6.8. Use of a handicap index, via the World Handicap System (<https://www.whs.com/>) for registration and divisioning of golfers competing in Level 4 is encouraged

4.2. Level 2 – Unified Sports Alternate Shot Team Play

4.2.1. Unified Rules

4.2.1.1. The athlete to Unified partner ratio must be 1 athlete to 1 Unified partner in Team Play.

4.2.1.2. It is preferred that athletes and Unified partners are of similar age and similar ability. For more information on similar age and ability please see Sport Rules Article 1 Section 14.1.2

4.2.2. Form of Play

4.2.2.1. 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.

4.2.2.2. Only one ball per hole is used unless it is lost during play.

4.2.3. Scoring

4.2.3.1. 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.

4.2.3.2. If a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, the team shall record a score of 10x and proceed to the next hole.

4.2.3.3. Returning a wrong score for a hole – If the athlete or unified partner returns a scorecard with a wrong score for any hole:

4.2.3.4. Returned score higher than actual score – The higher returned score of the hole stands.

4.2.3.5. Returned score lower than actual score or no score returned – the athlete or unified team will record a 10X for the hole(s) where the returned score is lower than the actual score.

4.2.4. Ties

4.2.4.1. First-place ties shall be determined in the following manner:

4.2.4.2. Of the teams tied for first place, the teams with the fewest number of 10x scores shall be declared the winner.

4.2.4.3. 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.

4.2.4.4. 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.

4.2.5. Stipulated Round

4.2.5.1. A stipulated round shall be nine holes.

4.2.5.2. At the discretion of the tournament committee, a championship may be contested over one, two, three or four rounds.

4.3. Level 4 – Individual Stroke Play Nine-Hole Competition

4.3.1. The purpose of Level 4 golf is to allow athletes to train and compete in regulation golf competitions.

4.3.2. Level 4 Special Olympics athletes compete in nine-hole stroke play competition.

4.3.3. Scoring - After an athlete reaches a score of 10 on one hole, he/she should pick up their ball and move on to the next hole listing a 10x on their score card.

4.3.4. First-place ties shall be determined in the following manner:

4.3.4.1. Of the teams tied for first place, the teams with the fewest number of 10x scores shall be declared the winner.

4.3.4.2. 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.

4.3.4.3. 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.

5. OFFICIALS

5.1. Officials shall have full authority to interpret rules. For further questions, the tournament rules committee shall be consulted.

6. UNIFORMS

6.1. Appropriate golf attire is required and determined by the tournament committee for all levels of play.

6.2. No denim

6.3. Unified Pairs shall wear identical shirts.