



Golf Competition Rules and Training Guidelines

- The **Official Special Olympics Sports Rules** shall govern all Special Olympics golf competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based upon The Rules of Golf as approved by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews (R&A) and the United States Golf Association (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. Teams should train like a competition.
- Competition may consist of a **Level 2 Alternate Shot** Team Unified Play Competition (9-holes), a **Level 3 Alternate Shot** Team Unified Play Competition (18-holes), a **Level 4 Individual Stroke (9-holes)**, a **Level 5 Individual Stroke** Competition (18-holes) and a **Level 5 High Performance Individual Stroke** competition (18-holes).
- Each **Level 2 & 3** team consists of one Athlete and one Unified Partner, while **Levels 4 & 5** teams consist of one athlete and a caddy.
- For **Level 2 Alternate Shot** golf, **athletes** tee off on **odd numbered** holes and **partners** tee off on **even numbered** holes. Alternating shot does not occur until the ball is in play. A swing and a miss counts as a stroke, but does not “alternate” players.
- **Level 2** and **Level 4** golfers will tee off from **the red tees**; **Level 3** and **Level 5** golfers will tee off from the **white tees**.
- Final results for **Level 2** and **Level 4** will be based on **two, 9-hole rounds**. Level 4 golfers must golf below a 70 to avoid disqualification. Level 2 teams will not be disqualified for golfing over a maximum.
- Final results for **Level 3** and **Level 5** will be based on **two, 18-hole rounds**. Level 5 golfers must golf below a 120 to avoid disqualification and Level 5 High Performance must golf below an 85.
- **Scoring** – The **highest possible score per hole is 10**. If the ball is not holed in 10 strokes, the score written on the scorecard must be **10x**. **NOTE: A swing and a miss is counted as a stroke**.
- **Golfers are required to walk the course**. Under certain circumstances cart drivers are provided to transport teams to the restroom, medic station, etc.
- Scorecards will be traded between members of each foursome at the first hole and the **Unified partners will be responsible** for keeping opponents’ score.
- Per the Athlete/Partner Code of Conduct, **smoking is not permitted** at Special Olympics training sessions, competitions or activities.
- Scorecards are to be signed by **both the Athlete and the Unified Partner** and turned into the Team Check-In table at the end of play.
- **Pace of Play** – 2 minutes maximum time will be allowed to look for lost balls. Excessive time spent looking for lost balls will be penalized an additional stroke.
- **Abnormal Ground Conditions** – Under Rule 16-1 of the USGA Rules of Golf - This Rule covers free relief that is allowed from interference by animal holes, ground under repair, immovable obstructions or temporary water. Relief is allowed for the following circumstances: Your ball touches or is in or on an abnormal course condition, an abnormal course condition physically interferes with your area of intended stance or area of intended swing, or only when your ball is on the putting green, an abnormal course condition on or off the putting green intervenes on your line of play.
- **Competition Tie-Breakers** – Ties shall be broken in the following order 1) the least amount of 10x’s over the entire tournament 2) the lowest 2nd round score 3) using the hole-by-hole score starting with the #1 handicap (hardest hole) and going backwards starting with the second round then through the first round if necessary 4) a coin toss.