

BOWLING



MODIFIED EVENTS

Assisted Ramp

TRADITIONAL EVENTS

Traditional Doubles

UNIFIED EVENTS

Unified Doubles

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Bowling shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based upon World Bowling (WB) rules, which shall be employed except when they conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Bowling or Article I. In cases such as this, the [Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Bowling](#) will be used.

COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

1. Bowling Quota
 - a. Due to facility constraints, a quota must be established for the bowling competition. The State Office will distribute bowling quotas based on response to the Bowling Quota Request Form (due back to the State Office by April 6, 2026).
2. The State Tournament is a Handicap tournament. In a handicap tournament the final score is the total pin fall plus the bowler's handicap added together.
3. The handicap is based on 100 percent of the difference between the bowler's average and 200.
4. The Bowling Sport Management Team shall be the final authority for all rule interpretations and appeals during the tournament.
5. Blind Vacancy
 - a. There are no alternatives for bowling.
 - b. If an athlete arrives after the game has four (4) frames, or if he misses a game completely, a blind score will be given for that game, and they will begin bowling at the start of the next game.
 - c. The blind score is calculated by subtracting 10 pins from the entry score for the tournament. For example, if the bowler's entry score is 120, the blind score will be 110 (120 minus 10).
6. Illness or Injury
 - a. If an athlete gets sick or injured once the game has started, the following procedure will be used to determine the score for the game.
 - i. For the remaining frames, the bowler will receive 1/10 of his average per frame.
 - ii. Example: If a bowler has an entry score of 100, they will receive 10 pins per frame for the portion of the game that they are unable to bowl.
 - b. If the injury occurs in the first game and they are unable to bowl the second or third game, he will receive a blind score for each of those two (2) remaining games.
7. Bowling Etiquette
 - a. If two (2) athletes line up to bowl at the same time on adjacent lanes, the athlete on the right has priority to bowl first.
 - b. Due to time constraints at the State Tournament, a time limit will be imposed on the slower divisions.
 - i. All morning session bowlers must complete their second game before 11:30 a.m. or they will be stopped after the second game.
 - ii. For afternoon sessions, they must complete their second game before 4:00 p.m. or they will be stopped.
 - iii. Similar time constraints may be used at the Area Tournament.

DIVISIONING

1. Traditional Doubles:
 - a. Bowlers will be divisioned by and ability level.
 - b. There will be 3 - 8 athletes per division.
 - c. Gender groups and age groups will be combined as needed to provide for meaningful competition.
 - d. Divisioning by ability is based on the bowler's reported twelve (12) game average, handicaps not included. For teams, the averages of both athletes will be combined.
 - e. There will be no more than 20% difference between the highest average and the lowest average in the division.
2. Ramp Bowlers
 - a. Ramp bowlers will be placed in their own ramp divisions.
 - b. Ramp bowlers will be divisioned by gender and ability level.
 - c. Divisioning by ability is based on the bowler's reported average, handicaps not included.
 - d. There will be 3 - 8 athletes per division.
 - e. There will be no more than 20% difference between the highest average and the lowest average in the division.
 - f. Gender groups may be combined if space is limited or there is not a minimum of 3 athletes to make up a division.



BOWLING



3. Unified doubles
 - a. a. Bowlers will be divisioned by age and ability.
 - b. There will be 3 - 8 athletes per division.
 - c. Divisioning by ability is based on the bowler's reported average, handicaps not included. For teams, the averages of both the athlete and Unified Partner will be combined.
 - d. Age groups will be combined as needed to provide for competition.
 - e. There will be no more than 20% difference between the highest average and the lowest average in the division.
4. Athletes and Teams will not be disqualified for Maximum Effort for bowling.

RULES OF COMPETITION

UNIFORM SPECIFICATIONS

1. Players will dress in a manner which will bring credit to them and the sport of Bowling.
2. The tops are to be sleeved (short or long-sleeved) and collared or non-collared. Shirts with collars that identify the Special Olympics program are preferred.
3. Players must wear bowling shoes with socks.
4. Prohibited apparel includes:
 - a. Denim clothing, Cutoffs, tank tops, sleeveless shirts, hats, or anything with advertisements or inappropriate subject matter.
5. The Bowling Sport Management Team or sport official shall have the authority to bar offenders from competition until they comply with the rule.

EQUIPMENT

1. Coaches must provide any special equipment for their bowlers (i.e., guide rail, ramp).
2. Balls with retractable handles must require approval by the State Office.
3. All special equipment must be approved by the Bowling Sport Management Team.

GENERAL RULES

1. Athletes will bowl the cross-lane method (exception - Assisted Ramp).
2. Bumpers of any type shall NOT be used during competitions in the County Area or State Tournament.
3. Fouls
 - a. A foul occurs when a part of the player's person encroaches on or goes beyond the foul line and touches any part of the lane, equipment or building during or after delivery.
 - i. Foul the first ball: Reset the pins. The pin fall for the second ball is the score for that frame.
 - ii. Foul on the second ball: The bowler receives zero (0) pin fall for the second ball. The score for that frame is the pin fall for the first ball.
4. Bowling on the Wrong Lane
 - a. A dead ball shall be called and the player or players required shall re-bowl on the correct lane when one player bowls on the wrong lane.
5. When the following occurs, the delivery counts but the resulting pin fall does not:
 - a. A ball leaves the lane before reaching the pins.
 - b. A ball rebounds from the rear cushion.
 - c. A pin rebounds after encountering the body, arms or legs of a human pinsetter.
 - d. A pin is touched by mechanical pin setting equipment.
 - e. Any pin knocked down when dead wood is being removed.
 - f. Any pin knocked down by human pinsetter.
 - g. The player commits a foul.
 - h. A delivery is made with dead wood on the lane or in the gutter and the ball contacts such dead wood before leaving the lane's surface.
 - i. A ball comes out of the gutter and knocks down pins.
6. Athletes using a ramp may not compete in Unified Team competition.

GENERAL RULES FOR DOUBLES COMPETITION

1. Doubles teams can be all male, all female, or coed.
2. Unified doubles teams shall consist of one (1) athlete and one (1) Unified partner.
3. Doubles competition will consist of a four (4) game series.
4. Final scores will be determined by adding the actual pinfall and the doubles team handicap.

GENERAL RULES FOR ASSISTED RAMP COMPETITION

1. County Programs must provide the ramps their athletes will use during the ramp bowling competition.



BOWLING



2. Bowlers in the Assisted Ramp division will not use the cross-lane method of bowling.
3. Each ramp bowler will bowl frames consecutively. The format for one (1) game is:
 - a. Five (5) frames – Five (5) frames
 - b. This rule is designed to promote the pace of play.
4. County Programs MUST provide a ramp assistant for each ramp bowler.
 - a. Assistants must be registered as a Class A volunteer and be entered as a ramp assistant in GMS.
 - b. Assistants will be required to go through a ramp assistant meeting.
 - c. If you have an athlete who is entered in ramp bowling and does not need a ramp assistant, please notify the Tournament Director.
5. Ramp assistants may help ramp bowlers set their equipment on the lane, while allowing the athlete to do as much as physically possible.
 - a. The assistant may help initially line up the ramp.
 - b. The assistant may set the ball on the ramp.
 - c. After the ball is set on the ramp, the assistant must keep their back to the pins. The assistant can adjust the ramp based on the direction (either verbally or by physical cues) from the athlete.
 - d. The assistant may not give forward impetus to the ball. The athlete must provide the force that pushes the ball down the ramp toward the pins.
 - e. The assistant may hold the ramp to steady it while the athlete pushes the ball, if requested.