

# GOLF



## MODIFIED EVENTS

Individual Skills Competition  
3 Holes Individual Competition  
6 Holes Individual Competition

## TRADITIONAL EVENTS

9 Holes Individual Competition

## UNIFIED EVENTS

Unified 2-person Competition

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Golf shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based United States Golf Association rules, which shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the [Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Golf](#) or Article I. In such cases the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Golf shall apply.

## COMPETITION MANAGEMENT

1. Qualification Scores
  - a. Each individual golfer entering the tournament must play at least four (4) rounds of individual stroke golf (3, 6 or 9 holes) on any public or private course in Indiana.
  - b. Unified golfers must play four (4) rounds of alternate stroke golf (foursome) as a team on any public or private course in Indiana.
  - c. No player's handicap (individual or team) shall exceed 35.
  - d. Golfers who enter the Individual Skills Competition will be required to participate in every skill offered.
    - i. Individual skills participants must participate in four (4) rounds of each skill.
    - ii. Golfers will be placed into flights (divisions) according to overall results of all skill tests.
    - iii. Each participant will receive one (1) overall medal or ribbon.
2. Scoring
  - a. Each team/individual shall have their score maintained by a volunteer.
  - b. If a team/individual does not make the 10th stroke on a given hole, they shall pick up their ball and move to the next hole, listing a 10X on the scorecard.
  - c. Returning a wrong score for a hole—if the athlete or Unified partner returns a scorecard with wrong score for any hole:
    - i. Returned score higher than actual score—The higher returned score of the hole stands.
    - ii. 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.
3. Pace of Play
  - a. In Unified play during the Unified Golf Tour, Sectional, and State play golf carts may be used. The driver must have completed the Golf cart best practices form prior to use of golf cart.
  - b. Golfers who participate in individual or Unified competition may be expected to walk the course during their competition in a reasonable time period (use of a pull cart is allowed) if capacity is met.
    - i. The following situations will be an indication you are playing too slow:
      1. If your group is averaging more than 15 minutes per hole, you are behind.
      2. If there is a one (1) hole gap in front of you as you begin teeing off, you are behind.
    - ii. Penalty: If your group is in one (1) of the above situations, officials will either:
      1. Give a warning, with help to locate golf balls and give tips on how to pick up pace.
      2. Give a penalty, in extreme circumstances.
4. Coaching/Advice
  - a. The coach may not give advice or physical assistance to a golfer during a stipulated round.
  - b. Advice is defined as any counsel or suggestion which could influence a player in determining their play, the choice of club, or the method of making a stroke.
  - c. Information on the rules or on matters of public information, such as the position of hazards or the flagstick on the putting green, is not advice.
5. The golf course shall be setup at the discretion of the Tournament Committee. The following guidelines should be used:
  - a. Women play from the forward tees. Men play from the next tee back from the forward tees.
  - b. Avoid any shots that require the golfer to carry a distance great than 50 yards over hazards or other obstacles.
  - c. Create holes that do not exceed the following measurements:
    - i. Par 3: 150 yards, Par 4: 350 yards, Par 5: 475 yards

## DIVISIONING

1. Unified Golf Tour
  - a. No qualification scores needed & no divisioning
2. Sectionals
  - a. Qualification scores submitted
  - b. Separated into sectionals by county location in state and by sectional location capacity



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- c. Divided into divisions based on ability
- d. Teams from the same county may be placed in the same division
3. State
  - a. Teams advancing to State via Unified Golf Tour and Sectional Tournament Play
  - b. Divisioned by ability
  - c. Teams from same county may be placed in same division
4. Athletes will not be disqualified for Maximum Effort for golf.

## **SPORT RULES**

### **UNIFORM & EQUIPMENT SPECIFICATIONS**

1. All participants must wear nice slacks or shorts and a shirt with a collar.
2. Jeans or t-shirts are not permitted.
3. Only golf shoes (no metal spikes) or tennis shoes will be allowed on the golf course.
4. Each player (individual and Unified golfer) must provide their own equipment including:
  - a. A set of clubs (14-club maximum), golf bag, and golf balls.
    - i. A set of clubs shall include at least one (1) wood, one (1) iron, and one (1) putter.
  - b. Individual Skills Competition participants must bring appropriate clubs for competition.
5. Golf Carts
  - a. Golf carts will be provided for all individual and Unified stroke play golfers. Golfers competing in individual skills will not be granted use of golf carts.
    - i. Depending on the number of competitors, 9-hole and 6-hole competitors will be given priority of carts if we have more individual competitors at the state competition.
  - b. Entries may be limited at the discretion of the Golf Sport Management Team based on the number of available golf carts.
  - c. Golf cart operators must . . .
    - i. Be over 18 years of age and possess a valid driver's license.
    - ii. Sign the Golf Cart Best Practices created by SOIN's risk management provide, supplied by the State Office.
  - d. If Rule 2-c-i does not apply, the golfer must provide the driver who is over 18 and has a valid driver's license.
    - i. Golf cart drivers provided by the golfer must register with the State Office at least two (2) weeks prior to the Sectional or State event, whichever comes first.
    - ii. Golf cart drivers provided by the golfer must be registered Class A Volunteers with the State Office.
  - e. Golf carts are restricted to athletes and Unified partners. Coaches and spectators will not be granted use of golf carts on the course.
  - f. The County Program is responsible for reimbursement of expenses associated with the golf cart.

### **GENERAL RULES FOR INDIVIDUAL PLAY**

1. Purpose
  - a. Individual golf is designed to meet the needs of those Special Olympics golfers wishing to play individually in a tournament where the stipulated round is 3, 6, or 9 holes.
  - b. The player should be capable of playing independently.
2. Format of Play
  - a. The format shall be stroke play competition
3. Number of Holes to be Played
  - a. Athletes will be allowed to enter 3-, 6-, or 9-hole competition.
  - b. When entering athletes in the 3-hole competition shall play three (3) holes no longer than 150 yards.
  - c. Players entered in the 6-hole competition shall play six (6) holes no longer than 200 yards.
  - d. Players entered in the 9-hole competition will play the course as is.
4. Scoring
  - a. If a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, then the player shall record a score of 10X and proceed to the next hole.
5. Ties
  - a. First place ties shall be decided in the following manner.
    - i. Of the players tied for first place, the player with the fewest number of 10X scores shall be declared the winner.
    - ii. All other ties shall remain as ties and both individuals should be presented with the same award.



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## TIPS TO PICK-UP YOUR FACE

1. Play "Ready Golf." This means when it is your turn to play, you have already made your club selection and you know your yardage.
2. When it is your fellow competitor's turn to play, use this time to choose your club or find yardage. Be sure not to disturb anyone while you do this.
3. Help the other players in your group by moving their bag. You may help your group's pace by moving your teammate's bag while they hit their shot.
4. Help watch each other's shots. Line up stray shots with reference points to help locate lost balls.
5. When approaching a green, lay your bag down on the side of the green that is closest to the next tee.
6. Move off greens quickly and mark scores on the next tee.

## GENERAL RULES FOR UNIFIED SPORTS® TEAM PLAY

1. Purpose
  - a. Unified team play is to provide athletes and Unified partners the opportunity to develop a mastery of the basic skills, rules, and etiquette of the game of golf in a team format.
2. Definition of a Team
  - a. A team shall consist of one (1) athlete and one (1) Unified partner.
  - b. Athletes who participate on a Unified team must be players that can participate in one (1) of the individual golf rounds independently. Athlete's participating in the Individual Skills Competition are not eligible for Unified golf.
3. Format of Play
  - a. Foursome (alternate shot) - The players play alternately from the teeing grounds and then alternate strokes until the ball is holed.
    - i. Example: If player "A" plays from the tee on the odd numbered holes (1, 3, 5...) then player "B" would play from the tee on the even numbered holes (2, 4, 6...).
  - b. Only one (1) ball would be in play on a hole.
4. Scoring
  - a. Once the ball is in play on each hole, the players shall alternate turns hitting the ball until the ball is holed or until 10 strokes have been played.
  - b. If a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, the team shall record a score of 10X and proceed to the next hole.
5. Ties
  - a. Ties shall be decided in the following manner.
    - i. Sectional Play
      1. All ties will be broken, no matter place.
      2. First tiebreaker: of the tied teams, the team with the fewest 10X scores shall be awarded the higher place.
      3. Second tiebreaker: if the teams are still tied after applying the first tiebreaker, the scores of tied teams from the top handicap hole (most difficult hole) of the course will be used. If the scores are equal, the scores from the second most difficult handicap hole of the course will be used; and so on until the tie is broken.
      4. In the event the tie remains after applying the second tiebreaker to all holes, the Golf Sport Management Team will flip a coin.
    - ii. State Tournament Play
      1. All times shall remain as ties and both teams should be presented with the same award.
6. Modifications
  - a. Penalty Strokes
    - i. i. Penalty strokes do not alter the order of play.
  - b. Order of Play
    - i. If teammates play a stroke or strokes in incorrect order, such strokes shall be cancelled and the side shall incur a penalty of two (2) strokes).
    - ii. The side shall correct the error by playing a ball in correct order as near as possible to the spot from which it first played in incorrect order.
    - iii. If the side plays a stroke from the next teeing ground without first correcting the error, or in the case of the last hole of the round, leaves the putting green without declaring its intention to correct the error, the side shall be disqualified.
  - c. Coaching/Advice



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- i. During a stipulated round, members of a Unified team may provide advice, but may not provide physical assistance to each other.
- ii. Advice is defined as any counsel or suggestion which could influence a player in determining their choice of club or the method of making a stroke.
- iii. Information on the rules or on matters of public information, such as the position of hazards or the flagstick on the putting green, is not advice.

## GENERAL RULES FOR UNIFIED TOUR PLAY

1. Unless otherwise stated, the Golf Rules (Uniforms Specifications, General Rules, Equipment, and General Rules for Unified Sports Team Play) found in the 2025-2026 Program Information Guide will govern the Unified Golf Tour competition.
2. Entry Information
  - a. Teams will be entered into three (3) Tour stops based on their entry form.
  - b. Once all teams have been assigned to three (3) Tour stops, unfilled stops at each Tour stop may be filled on a first come, first served basis.
  - c. Teams who do NOT sign up for at least three (3) Tour stops will receive the lowest priority when filling spots at each tour stop.
  - d. Teams that sign up for three (3) and/or four (4) stops but are a “no show” at one of their assigned stops will be disqualified from advancing to the State tournament via the Unified Golf Tour. These teams will only have the opportunity to advance via sectional play.
3. Qualification Scores
  - a. No qualification scores are required to enter the Unified Golf Tour.
  - b. Each round of golf played on the Unified Golf Tour can be used as one (1) of the four (4) qualifying rounds necessary for Sectional or State Tournaments. Rounds will only count if the team consists of the same athlete and Unified partner that will be playing together in Sectional or State Tournaments.
  - c. Teams that finish at a minimum of three (3) Tour stops will have their requirement for four (4) qualifying scores waived prior to Sectional or State Tournaments.
4. Tour Format
  - a. Because this is a high performance event, there will be no divisions for the duration of the Tour. Teams will be randomly assigned to the group with which they will play at each Tour stop.
  - b. Tour stops can accommodate a maximum of 36 teams. Tour stops may choose to accommodate less teams based on their available resources, but no fewer than 27 teams.
  - c. Overall Standings will be based on the team’s tour average. The tour average will be obtained by dividing their total score from their top 3 tour stops by 3 (the minimum number of tour stops).
    - i. Teams that went to four (4) Unified Golf Tour Stops will be awarded their top 3 scores to serve as the team’s tour average.
  - d. Teams who do NOT sign up for at least three (3) Tour stops will NOT be entered in the Unified Golf Tour.
  - e. Tour Stop Cancellation
    - i. Per SOIN’s Event Policies, any Tour stop cancelled due to weather will not be rescheduled.
    - ii. Teams assigned to a cancelled Tour stop will receive a score that is the average of all their other tour stops. Scores will not be determined until all teams assigned to the cancelled stop have completed all other stops.
      1. These awarded scores will be differentiated from the earned scores by a different color in the overall standings.
    - iii. In the event, there are two tour stops on the same day and one is cancelled. Coaches may call the other Tour Stop Director to ask to play in their stop.
      1. Acceptance of the new teams is determined by tour stop availability and must be cleared by the Tour Stop Director. Final call from the Tour Stop Director will be given on a first come, first serve basis.
      2. If a team is cleared to play at the other stop, their earned score at this stop will be included in their scoring calculation and will not follow the cancelled stop procedures listed in 4.e.(ii).
    - iv. Once all teams’ round averages have been calculated, they will be placed in order of lowest average to highest average.
5. Advancement to State Golf Tournament
  - a. Spots in the State Golf Tournament will be reserved for half of the number of teams who sign-up for the Unified Golf Tour with a cap of 36 teams. For example, if 50 teams sign-up for the Tour, 25 teams will advance to the State Tournament through the Tour.



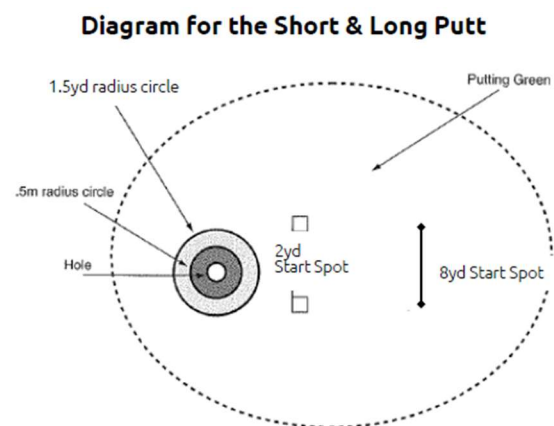
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- b. Teams will be awarded spots in the State Tournament based on the accumulated scores at their BEST THREE (3) Tour stops. If a team competes at a fourth (or more) Tour stop, their worst score(s) will be removed from the calculations for Overall Standings.
- c. Teams must compete in at least 3 Tour stops to be eligible to advance to State through the Tour.
  - i. Any team who signs up for a Tour stop and fails to show up will become ineligible for advancement to the State Tournament through the Tour and will automatically be entered into Sectional competition.
- d. Tiebreakers
  - i. Ties will not be broken at each Tour stop.
  - ii. At the end of the Tour, all ties in the standings will be broken to determine which teams advance to the State Tournament.
    1. First tiebreaker: The team who competed at the most Tour stops will be awarded the higher place.
    2. Third tiebreaker: if teams are still tied after applying the second tiebreaker, the team names will be put into a hat and the name drawn out will be awarded the higher place.

## GENERAL RULES FOR INDIVIDUAL SKILLS COMPETITION

1. Purpose
  - a. The Individual Skills Competition is to allow athletes to train and compete in basic golf skills. The development of these key skills is necessary prior to advancing on to individual or Unified golf.
2. Registration
  - a. Each player shall register by submitting four (4) rounds of short putting, long putting, chip shot, and wood shot skills tests.
3. Short Putt
  - a. Purpose
    - i. To measure the athlete's ability to putt focusing on the short putt.
  - b. Equipment
    - i. A regulation putting green with a properly marked (target) hole should be used. One (1) putter is needed for each athlete. Five (5) balls are needed for each hole being used. A chalkier may be used to put the targets around the hole.
  - c. Description
    - i. A target hole is selected and two (2) circles are placed around the hole.
    - ii. One (1) circle will have a 1/2 yard radius and the other circle will have a 1-1/2 yard radius.
    - iii. The athlete will strike five (5) putts towards the hole.
    - iv. The putts will be made from a distance of two (2) yards.
    - v. The starting point should be marked clearly on the green, two (2) yards from the hole.
    - vi. The starting point should be set up on the green with as little contour as possible.
    - vii. Putting uphill is recommended instead of over a side putt or a downhill breaking putt.
  - d. Scoring
    - i. The athlete will putt five (5) balls at the target from a line two (2) yards from the hole, scoring points according to where the ball comes to rest.
    - ii. Athletes will score one (1) point for making a stroke at, and striking the ball. A swing and miss counts as one (1) attempt and receives a score of zero (0) for that shot.
    - iii. A second point is scored if the ball stops within the 1-1/2 yard circle.
    - iv. A third point will be scored if the ball stops inside the 1/2 yard circle.
    - v. If the ball goes in the hole, a total of four (4) points will be scored.
    - vi. The total score from the five (5) shots will be the athlete's final score for the putting competition.
4. Long Putt
  - a. Purpose
    - i. To measure the athlete's ability to putt focusing on the long putt.





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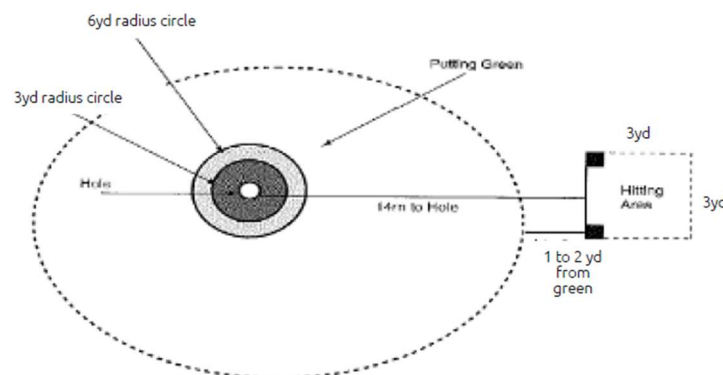


- b. Equipment
  - i. A regulation putting green with a properly marked (target) hole should be used. One (1) putter is needed for each athlete. Five (5) balls are needed for each hole being used. A chalker may be used to put the targets around the hole.
- c. Description
  - i. A target hole is selected and two (2) circles are placed around the hole.
  - ii. One circle will have 1/2 yard radius and the other circle will have 1-1/2 yard radius.
  - iii. The athlete will strike five (5) putts towards the hole.
  - iv. The putts will be made from a distance of nine (9) yards.
  - v. The starting point should be marked clearly on the green, nine (9) yards from the hole.
  - vi. The starting point should be set up on the green with as little contour as possible.
  - vii. Putting uphill is recommended over a side-hill or a downhill breaking point.
- d. Scoring
  - i. The athlete will putt five (5) balls at the target from a line nine (9) yards from the hole, scoring points according to where the ball comes to rest.
  - ii. Athletes will score one (1) point for making a stroke at, and striking the ball. A swing and miss counts as one (1) attempt and receives a score of zero (0) for that shot.
  - iii. A second point scored if the ball stops within the 1-1/2 yard circle.
  - iv. A third point will be scored if the ball stops inside the 1/2 yard circle.
  - v. If the ball goes in the hole, a total of four (4) points will be scored.
  - vi. The total score from the five (5) shots will be the athlete's final score for the putting competition.

## 5. Chip Shot

- a. Purpose
  - i. To measure the athlete's ability in hitting a controlled chip shot 15 yards from the hole.
- b. Equipment
  - i. An assorted number of irons for both left and right handed players. Woods and putters are not permitted for this skill. Five (5) balls for each hole being used. A safely marked hitting area 3-yards x 3-yards square. A putting green with a clearly marked target flag and hole.
- c. Description
  - i. A chipping area is set up which includes a 3-yard x 3-yard square hitting area 15 yards from the hole.
  - ii. The chipping area should be between 3-4 yards from the closest edge of the green.
  - iii. A 3-yard radius circle and a 6-yard radius circle will be placed around the hole.
  - iv. The athlete is instructed to chip the ball at a designated hole getting it as close to the hole as possible.
- d. Scoring
  - i. The athlete will attempt five (5) shots at the target, scoring points according to where the ball comes to rest.
  - ii. Athletes will score one (1) point for making a stroke at, and striking the ball. A swing and miss counts as one (1) shot and receives a zero (0) for that score.
  - iii. A second point is scored if the ball comes to rest inside the 6-yard circle around the hole.
  - iv. A third point is scored if the ball comes to rest inside the 3-yard circle around the hole.
  - v. If the ball goes in the hole, a total of four (4) points will be awarded.
  - vi. The total score from the five (5) attempts will be the athlete's final score for the chipping contest

**Diagram for the Chip Shot**



## 6. Wood Shot

- a. Purpose
  - i. To measure the athlete's ability to hit a wood shot for distance within a set hitting area.



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b. Equipment

- i. An assorted number of woods for both left and right handed players. An appropriate number of golf balls based on the number of competitors. It is recommended that five (5) balls per player be available to eliminate having to retrieve balls. A safely marked hitting area, chalk, and marker; ball retrievers for the scorers. A target flag and eight (8) cones or other visible marker to identify distance locations.

c. Description

- i. The athlete may choose to hit the ball off a tee, a mat, or the ground.
- ii. The athlete is instructed to hit the ball from the teeing area toward a designated flag in the hitting area trying to keep the ball within the boundary markers and achieving a distance of more than 60m.

d. Scoring

- i. The athlete will attempt five (5) shots at the target, scoring points according to where the ball comes to rest.
- ii. Athletes will score one (1) point for making a stroke at, and striking the ball. A swing and miss counts as one (1) attempt and the athlete receives zero (0) points for that shot.
- iii. Two (2) points are scored for a ball that comes to rest between the 60yd and 90yd lines within the 50yd wide boundary lines.
- iv. Three (3) points are scored for a ball that comes to rest between the 90yd and 120yd lines within the 50yd wide boundary lines.
- v. Four (4) points are scored for a ball that comes to rest beyond the 120yd line within the 50yd wide boundary line.
- vi. The athlete's score for the wood shot shall be the sum total of the five (5) attempts.

**Diagram for Wood Shot**

