



Special Olympics Minnesota 2024 Golf Handbook

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COACH CERTIFICATION RATIO TABLE

The updated coach certification ratio tables can be found in the Special Olympics Minnesota Coaches Portal under policies and fact sheets, or here: [Coach Ratio Table](#)

MORE INFORMATION

Practice ideas, skill assessment/development, and rules can be found in the SOI Quick Start Guides and SOI Rules for each respective sport can be found at www.specialolympics.org/sports.aspx

The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Golf shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. Special Olympics has created these rules based on The Rules of Golf as approved by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews. Special Olympics Minnesota will adhere to The Rules of Golf except in the instances highlighted below.

RULES OF COMPETITION

General Competition Details

Traditional golfers can compete in the 3-hole or the 9-hole event. For an athlete to compete in 9-hole traditional stroke play or 9-hole Unified alternate shot team play at state they must have an individual skills score of 40 at a previous regional or state competition.

Special Olympics Minnesota will select venues for competitions that have an ample amount of golf carts to be used for competition. Athletes can expect to ride in a cart, along with having their golf clubs in the back. Carts will be driven by another person, as athletes will not be allowed to drive the carts. If there are any situations where there are not enough carts for everyone, that message will be relayed well in advance of the competition. Those with medical exceptions will always be given a cart. These exceptions must be submitted to the state office, only in the case that there are not going to be carts provided for the entire competition.

The most strokes that may be taken on any hole is 9. If an athlete or team has not holed the ball after 9 strokes, a score of 9X is recorded on the scorecard. When this happens, the ball should be picked up, and the athlete or team will follow the rest of the group until the hole is completed by everyone.

All regulation golf rules and penalties apply. To keep pace of play, a player will not look for a lost ball longer than 5 minutes. At this time, all players and volunteers in the group will decide the general area where the ball was lost, drop, and assess a penalty stroke.

Participants can choose to keep the flag in the hole while on the green but must declare this before their shot has been made.

Delegations must register enough coaches to meet the coach ratios. Unified partners can count towards the ratio provided the delegation has at least one non-playing Level 2 certified coach registered.

Caddies

As of 2023, caddies will no longer be provided by Special Olympics Minnesota. Caddies may be provided by each delegation for any athlete and must be registered to attend the competition. They will need to be registered as a coach in online registration and be level 1 certified. This caddy will be the scorekeeper and cart driver for the athlete.

In traditional competitions, volunteers will be recruited by Special Olympics Minnesota to be the scorekeeper and cart driver for each athlete. In Unified Alternate Shot Play, the Unified Partners will be the scorekeepers and the cart drivers for each pair. In either scenario, scorekeepers will validate the score with other pairs in the tee time at the end of each hole. All scorecards will be turned in together to the awards area at the end of the round.

Unified Alternate Shot Team Play Rules

This event is designed to give the athlete an opportunity for transition from skills to individual play and progress under the guidance of a partner whose ability and knowledge of golf is advanced. The alternate shot partner can assist with club selection, teeing the ball, and alignment. The Unified partner will serve as the cart driver and scorekeeper for their team.

Unified Alternate Shot offers 3-hole or 9-hole competition. Athletes will tee off one more time than the Unified partner. Teams will typically switch teeing off at each hole unless otherwise noted by competition management.

When creating a team name during registration, please use the format of Athlete last name/Partner last name (e.g., Johnson/Andersen). There are no substitutions in Unified from regional to state competitions. If an athlete or Unified partner scratches, then the team is also a scratch.

Five-hole Competition (State Only)

Athletes in traditional or Unified 9-hole competitions whose regional score is 70 or higher will be required to play in 5-hole at the state competition. 9-hole participants can request to be moved from 9-hole to 5-hole after their regional competition, but this must be done before the state registration deadline.

The event is designed to assist with pace of play, along with overall experience for golfers. Traditional and Unified teams will be notified prior to state if they will be required to participate in the 5-hole competition.

INDIVIDUAL SKILLS RULES

Golfers competing in individual skills must submit their individual skills score for registration. Individual skills qualifying scores are the total points of all six stations. The stations are short putt, long putt, chip shot, pitch shot, iron shot, and wood shot.

For information on how each station is set up and scored, including measurements and diagrams for each skills station, you can visit the [Individual Skills Setup and Rules](#) on pages 6-12 of the SOI rules. A blank skills scoresheet can be found on page 5 of this handbook.

Individual Skills Competition

Scoring for Long & Short Putt and Chip Shot:

- For each attempt, score:
- 0 Points total for a swing and miss at the ball
 - 1 Points total for striking the ball
 - 2 Points total for landing the ball in the first circle
 - 3 Points total for landing the ball in the second circle
 - 4 Points total for getting the ball in the hole

Long Putt + + + + Subtotal

Short Putt + + + + Subtotal

Chip Shot + + + + Subtotal

Scoring for Pitch Shot

- For each attempt, score:
- 0 Points total for a swing and miss at the ball
 - 1 Points total for striking the ball
 - 2 Points total for the ball making it over the barrier
 - 3 Points total for landing the ball in the circle and rolling out or landing outside the circle and rolling in
 - 4 Points total for getting the ball in the circle

Pitch Shot + + + + Subtotal

Scoring for Wood Shot

- For each attempt, score:
- 0 Points total for a swing and miss at the ball
 - 1 Points total for striking the ball
 - 2 Points total for landing the ball beyond the 60M line
 - 3 Points total for landing the ball beyond the 90M line
 - 4 Points total for landing the ball beyond the 120M line

Wood Shot + + + + Subtotal

Scoring for Iron Shot

- For each attempt, score:
- 0 Points total for a swing and miss at the ball
 - 1 Points total for striking the ball
 - 2 Points total for landing the ball beyond the 30M line
 - 3 Points total for landing the ball beyond the 60M line
 - 4 Points total for landing the ball beyond the 90M line

Iron Shot + + + + Subtotal

Final Score

A player's final score is determined by adding together the scores achieved in each of the six events which comprise the Individual Skills Competition.

Total

DIVISIONING

Coaches need to submit individual skills scores for all athletes competing in individual skills. Athletes competing in traditional or Unified events must submit their average score for the number of holes they are competing in. The state competition will be divisioned using the scores from the regional competitions.

CLOSED COMPETITION INFORMATION

Regional and state competitions are closed competitions, which means that coaches, parents, and guardians can walk along the course, but cannot coach the athletes. For example, they cannot tell them which club to use or say things like “remember to bend your knees” before teeing off. The competitions are for athletes and partners to show what they have learned through practice.

SPORTSMANSHIP

Good sportsmanship is both the coach’s and athlete’s commitment to fair play, ethical behavior, and integrity. In perception and practice, sportsmanship is defined as those qualities which are characterized by generosity and genuine concern for others. Below we highlight focus points and ideas on how to teach and coach sportsmanship to your athletes by leading by example.

Competitive Effort

- Put forth maximum effort during each event
- Practice the skills with the same intensity as you would perform them in competition
- Always finish a round/station; Never quit

Fair Play Always

- Comply with the rules
- Demonstrate sportsmanship and fair play
- Respect the decision of the officials
- Strategy discussions with any athlete or partner are prohibited once the competition begins
 - If an official determines that a coach, partner, or spectator is violating this rule, the official may sanction the offending individual. Sanctions may include verbal warning, citing the coach/partner with unsportsmanlike conduct, or expulsion from the games.