

GOLF RULE INTERPRETATIONS

SECTION A – GENERAL RULES

- A-1. In cases not covered by these interpretations, United States Golf Association rules will apply. Rules can be downloaded at <http://www.usga.org>.
- A-2. The Games Rules Committee will make all final decisions.
- A-3. Athletes and Unified Partners in golf must wear slacks or walking shorts and an appropriate top. No jeans or jean shorts will be allowed. Athletes and Unified Partners will not be allowed to wear jewelry or awards during competition.
- A-4. No advertising or sponsorship is allowed on competition or warm-up uniforms.
- A-5. At all times athletes are expected to compete to the best of their ability to ensure a quality competition at all levels. Coaches are expected to provide accurate and honest scores of their athlete's ability.
- A-6. Athletes and Unified Partners wearing golf shoes must use soft spikes.
- A-7. Competitors are expected to walk during competition. Request for use of a power cart must be made to the Regional Manager at the time of entry deadline. Requests will be handled on an individual basis and proof of medical need will be required from a doctor. Unapproved cart usage will result in disqualification.
- A-8. Athletes and Unified Partners must tee-up their own ball.
- A-9. Maximum score on any one hole will be 10x. Ball must be in the hole on tenth stroke or athletes pick up ball and goes on to next hole, thus 10x.
- A-10. Events Offered:
 Level 1 – Individual Skills
 Level 2 – Unified Alternate Shot – 9 hole
 Level 3 – Unified Alternate Shot – 18 hole
 Level 4 – Individual Stroke Play – 9 hole
 Level 5 – Individual Stroke Play – 18 hole
- A-11. Athletes and Unified Partners must qualify from a Regional event to attend the State tournament. A total of 27 holes must be turned in and signed. For the 2019 season, we will accept pieced together scores. However, they must be turned in with entries.
- A-12. EACH player will need to submit a scorecard for the following:*
- *Athlete must play the full hole and partner must play the full hole*
 - *Par 3*
 - *Par 4*
 - *Par 5*
- A-13. The use of any device for the purpose of gauging or measuring distance or conditions that might affect their play is prohibited.
- A-14. An athlete/partner may be given advice by their on-course caddie. Such advice may include the line of a putt or shot or club selection. Advice should not inhibit the pace of

play.

- A-15. Under no circumstances may spectators give advice to an athlete/partner on the golf course. Spectators should remain in the rough at all times or if in a cart on the cart path keeping a minimum of 10-yards distance between themselves and golfers. Spectators will be given one warning. If a second offense occurs, the spectator will be asked to leave the premises. If the spectator does not comply, the athlete/partner will be disqualified from the event.

SECTION B—EXPLANATION OF LEVELS

B-1. Level 2 — Unified Sports Alternate Shot Team Play Competition (9 Holes)

- a) Definition of a Team: A team shall consist of one athlete with an intellectual disability and one Unified partner without an intellectual disability.
- b) Purpose for this level of play
 - 1) For Special Olympics athlete golfers with an entry level of understanding of golf, this level is designed to give the Special Olympics athlete an opportunity to transition from individual skills to individual play and to progress under the guidance of a Unified partner whose ability and knowledge of golf is more advanced than that of the Special Olympics athlete. As a result, this scenario does not function in the traditional Unified Sports model where teammates are expected to be of similar ability. The Unified partner serves as a mentor so that the Special Olympics athlete becomes self-sufficient on the golf course.
 - 2) For more experienced Special Olympics athlete golfers, this level is also designed for athletes and Unified partners that have comparable ability levels and knowledge of the sport. This scenario would more closely resemble the traditional Unified Sports model whereby the teammates would be of similar ability. Even if the athlete has the skill set to play individually in Level 4, he/she may choose to continue playing at Level 2.
- c) Form of Play
 - 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-numbered holes, then Player “B” would play from the tee on the even-numbered holes. Only one ball is in play on a hole.
- d) Scoring
 - 1) 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. Note: a swing and miss count as a stroke.
 - 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.
 - 3) Scoring (marking of cards) — Athletes should be taught to keep score and, whenever possible in competition, serve as a marker for a fellow competitor. The Tournament Committee may also appoint a volunteer or partner to serve as a marker. Both players on the team should verify their team's hole-by-hole scores, and one of the players -- preferably the athlete with an intellectual disability-- shall sign the scorecard.

B-2. Level 3 Golf — Unified Sports Alternate Shot Team Play Competition (18 Holes)

- a) Definition of a Team: A team shall consist of one athlete with an intellectual disability and one Unified partner without an intellectual disability.
- b) Purpose for this Level of Play

- 1) For the Special Olympics athlete golfer that has a basic to moderate level understanding of golf, this level is designed to give the Special Olympics athlete an opportunity to transition from Level 2 to Level 3 and to progress under the guidance of a Unified partner whose ability and knowledge of golf is more advanced than that of the Special Olympics athlete. As a result, this level does not function in the traditional Unified Sports model where teammates are expected to be of similar ability.
 - 2) For more experienced Special Olympics athlete golfers, this level is also designed for athletes and Unified partners that have comparable ability levels and knowledge of the sport. This scenario would more closely resemble the traditional Unified Sports model whereby the teammates would be of similar ability. Even if the athlete has the skill set to play individually in Level 4 or 5, he/she may choose to continue playing at Level 3.
 - 3) This level of play is designed for an alternative type of competition for the player capable of playing at Level 4.
 - 4) The players should be capable of playing independently.
- c) Form of Play
Foursomes – Rule 29 of 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-numbered holes, then Player “B” would play from the tee on the even-numbered holes. Only one ball is in play on a hole.
- d) Scoring
- 1) 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.
 - 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.
 - 3) Scoring (marking of cards) — Athletes should be taught to keep score and, whenever possible in competition, serve as a marker for a fellow competitor. The Tournament Committee may also appoint a volunteer or partner to serve as a marker. Both players on the team will be responsible for verifying the team score and signing their scorecard.
- B-3. LEVEL 4— INDIVIDUAL STROKE PLAY COMPETITION RULES (9 HOLE)
- a) Purpose for this Level of Play
- 1) This level is designed to meet the needs of those Special Olympics athletes who wish to play individually in a tournament where the stipulated round is nine holes.
 - 2) While the player should be capable of playing independently, it is strongly recommended that the player provide their own caddie for tournaments and competitions Form of Play The form of play shall be stroke play competition.
- b) Scoring
- a. Each stroke counts as 1.
 - b. If a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, the player shall record a score of 10x and proceed to the next hole.
 - c. Marking of cards — Athletes should be taught to keep score and, whenever possible in competition, serve as a marker for a fellow competitor. The Tournament Committee may also appoint a volunteer or caddie to serve as a marker.
 - d. The competitor will be responsible for verifying his/her own score and signing his/her scorecard.
- B-4. LEVEL 5 - INDIVIDUAL STROKE PLAY COMPETITION RULES (18 HOLE)
- a) Purpose for this Level of Play
- 1) This level is designed to meet the needs of those Special Olympics golfers who wish to play individually in a tournament where the stipulated round is 18 holes.
 - 2) This level will challenge the golfer on a golf course with few, if any, modifications. While the player should be capable of playing independently, it is strongly recommended that the player provide their own caddie for tournaments and competitions.
- b) Form of Play

- a. The form of play shall be stroke play competition. Scoring If a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, the player shall record a score of 10x and proceed to the next hole.
- c) Scoring
 - a. Each stroke counts as 1.
 - b. If a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, the player shall record a score of 10x and proceed to the next hole.
 - c. Marking of cards — Athletes should be taught to keep score and, whenever possible in competition, serve as a marker for a fellow competitor. The Tournament Committee may also appoint a volunteer or caddie to serve as a marker.
 - d. The competitor will be responsible for verifying his/her own score and signing his/her scorecard.

B-5. Ties

First place ties shall be decided in the following manner:

- a) Of the teams tied for first place, the team with the fewest number of 10x scores shall be declared the winner.
- b) If teams have an equal number of 10x scores they shall enter a sudden death playoff to start at the hole determined by the Tournament Committee. All other ties shall remain as ties and both teams should be presented with the same award.

SECTION C – COURSE GUIDELINES

C-1. Course guidelines

The following are maximum averages for each level of competition that will be enforced at competitions. Scores not meeting these criteria may be subject to review for advancement to State competitions.

- *Level 2 – average of 70 or lower*
- *Level 3 – average of 120 or lower (18 holes)*
- *Level 4 – average of 70 or lower*
- *Level 5 – average of 120 or lower*

C-2. Time limits for Regional and State Play

- *9 holes – 2 ½ hours*
- *18 holes – 5 hours*
- *If teams are still on the course, they will pick up their balls and be done, receiving a 10X for the remaining holes not played.*