

Eligibility Criteria and Maximum Scores

The general guideline to move from Level 1 to Level 2 is 60 points. Additionally:

- The athlete should score 10 points or more in at least four out of the six skills, with one of the four scores of 10 being in either the wood or iron shot.
- The athlete should also achieve a minimum of five points in the two skills that total less than 10.

The following scores are limits for each level and should serve as guidelines for coaches determining the appropriate level of play for athletes and Unified teams. Scores submitted in Regional and State competition which exceed these limits will be awarded participation ribbons:

- Level 2: 70 (team score)
- Level 3: 120 (team score)
- Level 4: 70 (athlete score)
- Level 5: 120 (athlete score)

Individual Skills Competition Clarifications

- Iron and Wood Shot: Athletes may use an Iron or hybrid golf club for either an iron shot or wood shot, but not both.
- Iron and Wood Shot: The athlete may choose to hit the ball off a tee, a mat or the ground.
- In all five skill areas, athletes are awarded 1 point for making a stroke at and striking the ball.

Power Carts

Athletes are required to walk. Use of a power cart during any competition will be considered upon presentation of a Golf Cart Request Form to SOWA with the player's name and brief description of need prior to the registration deadline. Athletes granted use of a power cart must also provide a driver for the cart. That driver is considered a caddie.

Caddies

It is strongly recommended that athletes competing in Levels 4 and 5 provide their own caddies for tournaments and competitions. As per the USGA, a caddie is defined as "one who assists the player in accordance with the Rules, which may include carrying or handling the player's clubs during play." If you choose to not bring a caddie, it is not the responsibility of the tournament committee to provide a caddie at the competition. Additionally:

- For athletes transitioning from Levels 2 and 3, it is encouraged that the Unified partner become the athlete's caddie, as they will have experience understanding how the athlete plays the sport. They should give advice to the athlete, including club selection, course management, keeping of the scorecard and etiquette.
- For tournaments and competitions, coaches can assume the role of a caddie, with the understanding they will relinquish their coach privileges (e.g. ability to file a protest) during the competition.

10X Rule

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. If a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, the team shall record a score of 10x and proceed to the next hole. In cases of ties for first place, the player or team with the fewest number of 10x scores shall be declared the winner.

Scorecard Playoff

In an 18-hole competition, if players have the same score for the stipulated round, determine the winner based on the score for the last nine holes, last six holes, last three holes and finally the 18th hole. If there is still a tie, then the last six holes, three holes and final hole of the first nine holes will be considered in turn. In 9-hole competitions, determine the winner based on the score for the last six holes, last three holes, and the last hole.

Ideal Course Setup

The golf course shall be set up at the discretion of the Tournament Committee. The Tournament Committee is authorized to designate teeing grounds for the competition that are not consistent with the recommended restrictions for the length of holes and for forced carries to provide the fairest challenge and the best possible experience for all of the competitors. They are encouraged to provide alternate teeing ground locations on each hole for the Special Olympics players using the following guidelines:

- Avoid any shots that require the golfer to carry a distance of greater than 47 meters (50 yards) over hazards or other obstacles, anywhere on the golf course.
- Hole yardages should not exceed following measurements:
 - Par 3: 150 yards
 - Par 4: 350 yards
 - Par 5: 475 yards

Unified Foursome Play

The players play alternately from the teeing grounds and then alternate strokes until the ball is holed. Example: In an 18-hole competition, 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. In a 9-hole competition on the front nine, golf athletes tee off on the odd numbered holes, and if on the back nine, golf athletes tee off on the even numbered holes. 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. Only one ball is in play on a hole.

Distance Measuring Devices

Distance measuring devices are prohibited for Special Olympics Washington golf competitions in 2019, and will be permitted for competition in 2020.

New Alternative to Stroke and Distance for Lost Ball or Ball Out of Bounds

When a player's ball has not been found or is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds, the player may proceed as follows rather than proceeding under stroke and distance.

- For two penalty strokes, the player may take relief by dropping the original ball or another ball in the relief area using two estimated reference points:

Ball Reference Point: The point where the original ball is estimated to have come to rest on the course, or last crossed the edge of the course boundary to go out of bounds.

Fairway Reference Point: The point of fairway of the hole being played that is nearest to the ball reference point, but is not nearer the hole than the ball reference point.

Anywhere between a line from the hole through the ball reference point (and within two club-lengths to the outside of that line), and a line from the hole through the fairway reference point (and within two club-lengths to the fairway side of that line).

- For purposes of this Local Rule, "fairway" means any area of grass in the general area that is cut to fairway height or less. If a ball is estimated to be lost on the course or last crossed the edge of the course boundary short of the fairway, the fairway reference point may be a grass path or a teeing ground for the hole being played cut to fairway height or less.
- The relief area must be in the general area, and must not be nearer the hole than the ball reference point.
- Once the player puts a ball in play under this rule, the original ball that was lost or out of bounds is no longer in play and must not be played. This is true even if the ball is found on the course before the end of the three-minute search time.
- The player may not use this option to take relief for the original ball when that ball is known or virtually certain to have come to rest in a penalty area, or the player has played another ball provisionally under penalty of stroke and distance.
- A player may use this option to take relief for a provisional ball that has not been found or is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds.