

Unified Golf

Revised 2025

Special Olympics
Iowa





Registration Entries

Entry forms are available online at www.soiowa.org

- ▶ Website: Competitions tab > click on Participation Forms > scroll to Unified Golf Tour

State Competition Entries

- ▶ Entries can be emailed to: registrations@soiowa.org
- ▶ After your entries have been put into GMS you will be sent a Delegation Report
 - Review the report and return to the State Office with any corrections

Events



- Events differ based on location of competition and options may include
 - Three hole
 - Six hole
 - Nine hole
 - Mini golf
- **Equipment**
 - Athletes must provide their own bags and clubs

Rules



- Shot gun start (except for mini golf).
- Tee off between the tee markers or a little behind them.
- The person with the farthest ball away from the green hits first.
- The person with the lowest score of the previous hole will tee off first on the next hole.
- When a person is hitting their ball, all other people should remain behind them for safety reasons.
- Unified golf is a two-person alternate shot competition. Partners will tee off on the odd holes and the athletes will tee off on the even holes. Players will hit alternating shots through the remainder of the hole.
- A participant may move the ball off the cart paths, dirt areas, and ground under repair, nearest point of relief, one club length but no closer to the hole.

Rules



- If a team has take five strokes and has not reached the green, the team will pick up the ball and drop it on the closest spot on the green. The team will then be allowed five strokes on the green. The maximum number of strokes per hole is 10.
- Only athletes will be allowed to use a tee on the fairways.
- The Special Olympics Sports Rules shall govern all Special Olympics Golf competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon the rules of golf as written by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews (R&G) and the United States Golf Association (USGA). These rules shall govern all competition except when in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules shall apply.
- [Golf Rules](#) can be found on the SOIA website.

Grip



- Place the handle of the golf club with the face of the club positioned square to the target. The butt end of the club should rest just below the heel pad of your hand, extending the club diagonally across the fingers.
- The club should touch the base of the pinkie finger and just above the first joint of the index finger.
- The club should sit across of the left hand.
- Imagine as you hold the golf club with your left hand, that you are facing a clock, with the shaft of the club at 12 o'clock. Place the thumb of the left hand on the grip of the club at one o'clock. You should be able to see the knuckles of the index and middle fingers of the left hand. You now have the correct left-hand grip of your golf club.
- Now position your right hand with the pad of your right thumb resting over the left thumb. The club should rest diagonally across the fingers of the right hand as well, not in the palm. Notice the dots on the right hand in the image, outlining the correct position of the club in the right hand.
- Using the clock analogy again, place your right thumb at 11 o'clock. You now have the correct right-hand grip of your golf club.

Grip



- In order to confirm that your hands are in their proper position, the “V” that is formed by the thumb and forefinger of each hand should point just inside your right shoulder.
- Your right pinkie finger can overlap or interlock with the left index finger depending on the style of grip that you prefer
- Styles of Grip
 - Vardon or overlap grip – the pinkie finger of the right hand rest in the space between the index finger and the middle finger.
 - Interlock grip – the pinkie finger of the right hand hooks under the index finger of the left hand, resting between the index and middle fingers
 - Baseball grip – the left hand is placed first at the end of the club, with the right hand immediately below it, as you would if you were holding a baseball bat.
 - [How to Master the Golf Grip](#)

Posture



- Feet about shoulder-width apart.
- Feet in neutral position, with your toes not pointing inward nor flared out too far
- Upper body bent over from your hips
- Tailbone back
- Chest and chin up
- Shoulders back
- Weight centered, so not too far out on your toes and not far back on your heels. Think about keeping your weight centered under your shoe laces.
- [How to create a good posture for your golf swing.](#)

Shoulder Turn



- Make a full chest turn, turning your whole upper torso so the lead shoulder comes under your chin, the shoulders at 90 degrees angle to the target line.
- Keep hips relaxed.
- Shift weight onto your back foot on the backswing.
- [Make a full shoulder turn.](#)

Swing Tempo



- Make sure you start with body and get full turn
- Focus on hips and shoulders
- Gradually and smoothly start the swing
- Make a smooth transition between shoulder turn and swing
- Stay relaxed with forearms
- [How to get a slow easy swing](#)



Ball Positions

- Driver – straight out from the inside of the front foot
- Fairway wood – straight out from front shoulder
- 7 iron – slightly in front of center of stance
- Wedge – in the center of stance
- [Ball position for distance](#)

Driver Tee Height



- Center of the golf ball level with the top of the club face
- Aim to hit the ball just above the center of the club face
- [How high should you tee the golf ball](#)

Clubs and Distances



Driver – designed to give you distance off the tee

Fairway woods (3-wood, 4-wood, 5-wood, 7-wood)

- Use this club from the fairway or good lie in the rough
- Average distance 125 to 240 yards

Irons (2-iron, 3-iron, 4-iron, 5-iron, 6-iron, 7-iron, 8-iron, 9-iron)

- Average distance 120 yards too 190 yards (each club 10 yards farther)

Wedges

- Pitching wedge – this club has the lowest loft angle, allowing for more distance (110 yards)
- Gap wedge – has a little more loft and is used in shots approaching the green (90 yards)
- Sand wedge – your go-to when trying to get the ball out of a bunker (80 yards)
- Lob Wedge – highest-lofted wedge that creates a very steep angle of ascent and descent

Additional Resources



Special Olympics North America

- [Golf Coaches Guide](#)

Quiz



Click the link to take the quiz:

[Unified Golf](#)