



The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Golf dated June 2016 will be in effect for the 2017-2018 SONC program year. This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the United States Golf Association (USGA) rules and SOI Rules; therefore, those rules are not repeated here but they will be enforced unless in direct conflict to SONC modifications.

Appropriate Attire and Equipment

- Comfortable slacks or shorts (no jeans or jean shorts), collared shirt (e.g. golf shirt; mock turtle necks acceptable), golf shoes (soft spikes only), windshirt/pullover. Please note appropriate attire may vary by golf course.
- Golf clubs (should include at least 1 wood, 2-3 irons, 1 putter and 1 wedge)
- Golf bags, golf balls, tees, pull carts, ball markers, green repair tool.

Competition Interpretations and Modifications

Level 1: Individual Skills Competition

- Coaching on the field of play during competition is not allowed.
- Tees are only permitted for iron and wood shots.
- Athletes may use a Hybrid or Rescue club as an iron **or** a wood but not for both.¹
- **In order for an athlete to move from Level 1 to Level 2 in 2017 they must have scored a minimum total score of 60 at the 2016 SONC Fall Tournament. A minimum of 10 points in either the wood or iron shots is also required.**²

All Course Play Competition

- All athletes, partners, and caddies will ride in golf carts during state-level competition.³
- Athletes participating in levels 4 & 5 are required to provide their own caddie for state level competition. Remember, for any breach of a rule by his/her caddie, the player incurs the applicable penalty. If an athlete is not able to bring a caddie, please indicate this on the registration form.⁴
- The use of range finding devices without a slope indicator is permitted during play. Anyone found using such devices **with** a slope indicator will incur a stroke penalty for each hole. (Levels 2 and 4, 9 - stroke penalty, Levels 3 and 5, 18 - stroke penalty).
- On all holes regardless of par, if a 10th stroke is played without holing the shot, record a score of 10X and proceed to the next hole.⁵
- Rules regarding slow play will be emphasized to ensure all participants have enough time to complete their round. Penalties for slow play will be as follows: 1st offense (warning), 2nd offense (1-stroke penalty), 3rd + offense (2-stroke penalty).⁶

¹ Per SOI Section 4.8.2.5.

² SONC eligibility modification notice for 2009

³ SONC modification of SOI Section 3.2.1

⁴ SONC modification of SOI 3.5.1

⁵ Per SOI Sections 5.4.2, 6.4.2, 7.3.1, and 8.3.1

⁶ SONC modification of USGA Rule 6-7.

- Official results for first place ties will be determined in the following manner: Of the players tied for first, the player/team with the fewest number of X's on their scorecard will be declared the winner. All other ties will remain as ties and the same awards will be presented.⁷
- Two tees will be used for practice and SONC Fall Tournament. The only tees to be used by any athlete or Unified Partner are the ladies (typically red) or senior (typically gold; **not** men's or championship distance) **regardless of age**. See below under each level for specific guidelines.⁸
- Athletes or teams arriving late to state level competition/missing their scheduled tee times will be allowed to compete **if the schedule permits**. However, the athlete/team will only be able to compete for a participation ribbon.

Level 2 and 3

- Only team members and caddies may consult on strategy during competition.
- Teams will play by the Foursome Rule 29 of golf.⁹
- In Level 2, athletes will tee off first, and will do so on five of the nine holes.¹⁰
- In Level 3, teams will be allowed to determine who will tee off on the first hole, but must alternate who tees off thereafter.¹¹
- Teams must be consistent on all scorecards and Fall Tournament.
- Teams competing in Level 2 must submit 6 scorecards with a **maximum average of 75 or lower**.¹²
- Teams competing in Level 3 must submit 6 scorecards with a **maximum average of 120 or lower**.¹³
- Tee assignments are as follows
 - Male athlete & male partner: both use senior tees
 - Male athlete & female partner: athlete tees off at senior tees, partner tees off at ladies tees
 - Female athlete & female partner: both use ladies tees
 - Female athlete & male partner: athlete tees off at ladies tees, partner tees off at senior tees.

Level 4

- Athletes may only consult with caddies on strategy during competition.
- Submit six scores via the Carolina Golf Association GHIN system with a **maximum average of 70 or lower**.¹⁴
- Male athletes will use the senior tees. Female athletes will use the ladies tees.¹⁵

Level 5

- Athletes competing in Level 5 must meet the following qualifying criteria:
- Submit six scores via the Carolina Golf Association GHIN system with a **maximum average of 120**.¹⁶
- Athletes who do not meet the Level 5 criteria will be allowed to compete in Level 4.
- Athletes may only consult with caddies on strategy during competition.
- Male athletes will use the senior tees. Female athletes will use the ladies tees.¹⁷

Special Notices

- Scorecard names should match those who are registering for Fall Tournament, and teams must remain consistent on all scorecards to be eligible for state level competition. Please include full names of **athletes and partners** on all scorecards submitted for Level 2 and Level 3 teams.

⁷ Per SOI Sections 5.5.1.1, 6.5.1.1, 7.4.1.1, and 8.4.1.1

⁸ SONC modification

⁹ Per SOI Section 5.3.1. The players play alternately from the teeing grounds and then alternate strokes until the ball is holed.

¹⁰ SONC modification of Section 5.3.2.

¹¹ SONC interpretation of Section 6.3.

¹² Per SOI Section 5.9.1.

¹³ Per SOI Section 6.9.1.

¹⁴ Per SOI Section 7.8.

¹⁵ SONC modification

¹⁶ Per SOI Section 8.8.

¹⁷ SONC modification.

- For 2017 Fall Tournament, athletes that competed as Level 5 athletes for the 2016 Fall Tournament will be permitted to play Level 5 competition at the 2017 Fall Tournament. This is to give enough time for athletes to submit scores via the CGA GHIN system to receive a handicap for 2017.
- Additional competition opportunities are being researched for Unified Sports. This is being done in anticipation of potentially removing all Unified competition from state-level events starting in the 2018-2019 program year.