

Section I – Special Olympics Competitions

How to Use The Competition Management Guide.....	1
Goals of A Well-Managed Special Olympics Competition	
Factors for Planning Your Competition	
Elements of Quality Special Olympics Competitions	
Different Types of Golf Competitions.....	2
Individual Skills Competition	
Tournament Series	
Major Tournament	

Special Olympics Golf Official Events

Level I – Individual Skills Competition

This level is designed for entry level athletes or those with lower ability to test the athletes in six skills; short putt, long putt, chip shot, pitch shot, iron shot, and wood shot. Individual Skills provides an introduction to the game that can be used to establish a foundation of fundamentals for those interested in playing on the golf course. For those who may never go onto the golf course, it provides an opportunity to train and compete in the sport.

Level II – Alternate Shot Team Play Competition

This level is designed to give the Special Olympics golfer an opportunity for transition from skill to individual play and progress under the guidance of 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. The golfers must be able to walk during the entire nine-hole round.

Level III – Unified Sports Team Play

This level is designed to give the Special Olympics athlete an opportunity to play in a team format with a partner in the traditional Unified Sports model where the teammates are of similar ability. The players should be capable of playing independently and must be able to walk during the entire 18 hole round.

Level IV – Individual Stroke Play Competition (9 hole)

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 nine holes. The player should be capable of playing independently and must be able to walk during the entire nine-hole round.

Level V – Individual Stroke Play Competition (18 hole)

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. This level will challenge the golfer on a golf course with few if any modifications. The player should be capable of playing independently and must be able to walk during the entire 18 hole round.

Special Olympics wishes to thank the professionals, volunteers, coaches and athletes who helped in the production of this Competition Management Guide. They have helped fulfill the mission of Special Olympics: to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for people 8 years of age and older with intellectual disabilities (intellectual disabilities), giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics welcomes your ideas and comments for future revisions of this guide. We apologize if for any reason an acknowledgement has been inadvertently omitted.

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2003 Special Olympics World Games Organizing Committee – Sports Department
1999 Special Olympics World Games Organizing Committee – Sports Department



Competition is the heart of Special Olympics. Competition should be the motivation for training and sustaining participation in the sport. This Special Olympics Competition Management Guide has been designed to assist you in the effective planning, organization and administration of a safe, quality and dignified sports competition. It is intended to serve as a guide that should stimulate thinking on the part of the Competition Management Team.

The uniqueness of each event makes it impossible to list all specifics. Therefore, an effort has been made to identify fundamental technical responsibilities and concepts. There may be situations where time, structure or facilities do not allow some of these functions, or there may be situations where much more can be done. However, the basic principles should remain the same for any level of competition.

Conducting a successful Special Olympics competition is a challenge that takes dedication and a lot of hard work. The results can be one of the most satisfying experiences in sports.

Let's get started.

The Goals of a Well-Managed Competition:

- ♦ To provide a safe environment
- ♦ To provide a fair competition for all athletes
- ♦ To ensure quality sport experience
- ♦ To show respect for the athletes, coaches, officials and volunteers

Factors for Planning Your Competition:

- ♦ Who? – athletes, coaches, volunteers, families, sponsors, spectators
- ♦ Where? – single or multiple venues, facility, accessibility
- ♦ What? – number of events, level of events, events offered
- ♦ Why? – qualifier, additional competition opportunity
- ♦ When? – date, number of days, time
- ♦ How? – management, budget, format, part of multi-sport Games, single sport competition

Elements of Quality Special Olympics Competitions:

- ♦ Well-trained athletes
 - Minimum 8 weeks of training, certified coaches, proper facilities and equipment
- ♦ Well-trained coaches
 - Certification, national governing body involvement, international federation involvement, coaches meetings and clinics
- ♦ Quality officials
 - National governing body officials, international federation officials, Special Olympics training
- ♦ Competition Committee responsibilities
 - Appropriate venues, proper divisioning, Olympic-type sports, sports listed in the Special Olympics rulebooks, enforcement of rules, good registration process, excellent communication among all the groups, etc.
- ♦ Well-trained volunteers



Different Types of Golf Competitions

A golf tournament may incorporate any combination of the types of competition. The three types of competition and their purpose outlined in this guide include: Individual Skills, Tournament Series and a Major Tournament. Tournament organizers may use discretion in determining the tournament parameters

The technical information regarding golf operations should support the objectives below. Remember to respect the game and protect its integrity, uphold the Rules of Golf and respect the Special Olympics golfer in your efforts to:

- ◆ Provide quality competition opportunities for Special Olympics golfers;
- ◆ Facilitate the organizational process of golf competitions;
- ◆ Provide fundamental technical golf competition information for competition operations;
- ◆ Support growth of Special Olympics golf by increasing competition opportunities; and
- ◆ Provide comprehensive models of competition operations for all levels and scales of golf competition.

Individual Skills Competition

This level of competition is designed for entry-level athletes or those with lower ability to test the athletes in six skills: short putt, long putt, chip shot, pitch shot, iron shot and wood shot. Individual Skills provides an introduction to the game that can be used to establish a foundation of fundamentals for those interested in playing on the golf course. For those who may never go onto the golf course, it provides an opportunity to train and compete in the sport.

Tournament Series

A tournament series is a sequence of golf competitions that are organized and conducted jointly with the option of a championship tournament at the end of the series. The individual competitions within the series may be conducted at various venues in a broad geographic region. The individual tournaments within a series should be conducted on a small scale with emphasis purely on competition. It is recommended these tournaments be conducted without Opening or Closing Ceremonies. The players arrive at the golf course, play their round, turn in their signed scorecard and leave. The tournament series allows players the opportunity to compete on several occasions within an established season. The scores from the series can serve as qualifying scores for the series championship.

Major Tournament

A major tournament is defined as a large-scale golf competition. Major competitions could include competition in all five levels of play or a championship final of a specific level of competition, such as a Tournament Series Championship. Major tournaments may be single- or multi-day competitions. Opening and Closing Ceremonies should be conducted at major tournaments.