Coach Education Program

Online Golf Sport Certification
Coach Education Program

*If you have not already done so, please complete the following Class A Certification Process at: http://soky.org/coachcertification/ prior to completing this Sport Certification Training

• Become a Class A Volunteer
• Complete and Submit Class “A” Volunteer Application. *Required every three years*
• Complete the online Volunteer Orientation Training and submit its quiz. *Only required once during continued involvement with SOKY*
• Complete the online Special Olympics International Protective Behaviors course. *Required every three years for those over the age of 18*
• Complete the online CDC’s “Heads Up” Concussion Training for SOKY and submit its quiz. *Required every three years for those over the age of 18*
Golf Sport Certification

• This training will cover Special Olympics Kentucky Golf events, rules, competitions, the divisioning and registration process, along with any additional golf resources and other general information.

• The online Golf Sport Certification training is required for SOKY coaches who like to become sport certified and is part of the criteria to be eligible to attend both USA and World Games. The training is also for those coaches and/or volunteers that would just like to learn more information about Special Olympics Kentucky as a whole and specifically its Golf program.
Coaching Special Olympics Athletes prepares Special Olympics coaches to use their sport-specific knowledge in coaching athletes with intellectual disabilities. This course meets the Special Olympics standards and competencies for coach certification. For veteran Special Olympics coaches, this course serves as a reminder of the essentials sometimes forgotten after years of coaching. For new Special Olympics coaches, this course will help prepare you for your first role in coaching Special Olympics athletes.
Coaching Special Olympics Athletes (Cont.)

The better the coach ...

the better the experiences ...

the better the athlete!
I COACH BECAUSE...

Please take a minute to watch this “I Coach Because Clip” created by Special Olympics New Jersey

I COACH BECAUSE CLIP
Course Overview

Unit 1: The Athlete
Unit 2: Teaching & Training
Unit 3: Preparing & Coaching During Competition
Unit 4: Managing the Program
Unit 5: Additional Coach Information
Unit 6: SOKY Golf Specifics
Unit 1 – The Athlete Overview

- Psychological Issues or Learning Issues
- Medical Issues
- Social Issues
**Unit 1 – Psychological Issues & Considerations**

**Motivation** – helping athletes maintain interest
- May have shorter attention span; harder to keep independently “on task”.
- May be motivated more by short-term rather than long-term goals.
- May learn better with more frequent positive reinforcement

**Perception** – helping athletes understand the sport in which they are participating
- May have difficulty focusing attention on the appropriate object or task
- May have impairments in sight or hearing
**Comprehension**—helping athletes remember and perform the skill they have learned (understanding)
- May find it difficult to understand verbal explanations of new skills. Often find it easier to learn through visual demonstrations and physical prompts.
- May have difficulty in understanding complex, multi-part actions or explanations.
- Often take a longer time between learning one piece of information and the next (learning plateau).
- Less able to generalize skills learned in one situation to a different situation.

**Memory**
- May need frequent repetition and reminders in order to remember concept or skill
# Unit 1 – Psychological Challenges

*Each psychological item has its challenge and action:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological Item</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td>Easily distracted by noise</td>
<td>Control surroundings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motivation</td>
<td>History of neglect &amp; negative reinforcement, feeling of failure</td>
<td>Focus on positive, appropriate reinforcement, catch the athlete doing well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Difficulty applying skills in different environments</td>
<td>Practice in different settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>Difficulty learning through verbal explanation only</td>
<td>Add demonstrations and/or physical manipulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 1 – Medical Considerations

**Down Syndrome**

- Approximately 10% of individuals with Down Syndrome have a condition called atlanto-axial instability, which is a mal-alignment of the cervical vertebrae C-1 and C-2 in the neck. This condition may cause possible injury if they participate in activities that hyper-extend or radically flex the neck or upper spine.

- Prohibited sports – equestrian, gymnastics, diving, pentathlon, butterfly and dive starts in swimming, high jump, alpine/snowboarding, squat lift and soccer.

**Medications**

- Understand the physical side effects of an athlete’s medication

- Very important to know the medications athletes are taking
Unit 1 – Medical Considerations (Cont.)

Seizures
• Incidents tend to be higher with Special Olympics athletes
• Athlete safety to minimize the adverse effects of a seizure

Physical Disabilities
• Some athletes also have physical disabilities which may affect the sports they can participate in or the methods of teaching a coach must use. Special Olympics has events for individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers or other assistance. *GOLF IS A NON-ASSISTED SPORT*
• Muscle strength may be needed for particular sports and some athletes may not have the strength for those sports. This is often due to lack of use rather than a permanent disability.
**Autism**

- 20% of athletes exhibit one or more of the autism spectrum disorders
- Over stimulate

**Fetal Alcohol Syndrome**

- These athletes consistently function better on performance tasks compared with verbal tasks. The more concrete the task, the better the performance.
- Tend to have more verbal comprehension skills, despite being comfortable and chatty around people. These athletes will also tend to have attention and memory deficits and often display poor judgement in distinguishing right from wrong.
Unit 1 – Medical Considerations for each action

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>See the challenge that correlates with the appropriate action.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) Down Syndrome</td>
<td>Ensure the athlete is screened for atlanto-axial instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) Seizures</td>
<td>Be prepared to protect the athlete and minimize adverse affects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) Autism spectrum disorders</td>
<td>Control and/or block self-stimulatory behavior and set up a behavior support plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) Attention deficit/hyperactivity</td>
<td>Shorten drills and provide one-to-one assistance when needed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) Fetal alcohol syndrome</td>
<td>Provide concrete performance tasks</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 1 – Social Considerations

**Social Skills**
- May lack basic social/adaptive skills due to a lack of opportunity or training
- May also lack communication skills and positive interaction with others

**Recreation at Home**
- Lack of physical activity
- Lack of encouragement

**Economic Status**
- May lack financial means
- May not have access to independent transportation
All of the following social consideration(s) may impact an athlete’s participation in Special Olympics:

- Inappropriate responses to social situations
- Physical inactivity being modeled
- Lack of endurance
- Lack of access to transportation

Our challenge as coaches is to develop a full understanding of our athletes and the strengths and weaknesses they bring with them to a Special Olympics program. By doing so we can begin to develop a training and competition program that they will benefit from and enjoy.
Unit 2 – Teaching & Training the Athlete
There are many ways to organize a training session for Special Olympics athletes. Because of some of the things previously identified concerning comprehension and memory, there is considerable value in developing a consistent training routine that provides familiarity, stability, and comfort.
## Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component and Details</th>
<th>Layout of Drill or Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Warm-up &amp; Stretching</td>
<td>Specific to the sport, repetitive and involve athletes in leading activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills Construction</td>
<td>Break skills into smaller tasks, involve many athletes at a time and practice skills related to event situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition Experience</td>
<td>Scrimmage, simulate event/game situations and work towards what the competition will look like</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cool-Down, Stretch, &amp; Reward</td>
<td>Playing a game related to the sport and end each training with a cool down activity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Warm-Up

- A warm-up should be the first physical activity in every training session or competition. It helps prepare the body and mind for the activity we are about to do. Warm-ups should begin at a slow pace and gradually become a little faster and more difficult.

- A warm-up helps us to reach a state of physical and mental readiness. When we prepare both the body and the mind, we are less likely to suffer an injury and will perform better at each practice, training and competition.
Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session: Warm-Up (Cont.)

- **Physical Benefits**: A warm-up prepares the body for sport or exercise and helps to prevent injury by:
  - Increasing heart rate
  - Increasing breathing rate
  - Increasing blood flow to the active muscles
  - Increasing body and muscle temperature

- **Mental Benefits**: Warm-ups prepare the mind to focus on the sport or exercise by:
  - Helping athletes shift focus from life to sport
  - Mentally reviewing skills previously learned
  - Connecting the mind and the body (linking hand and eye coordination)
Every sport is different and each sport has specific skills and movements. The warm-up should be personalized to the sport and the ability levels of all of the athletes.

However there are some general components that should be included in all warm-ups regardless of the sport in which includes the following:

- Aerobic activity to raise heart rate
- Dynamic stretches
- Sport specific movements
- Aerobic activities are whole body movements that will increase the heart rate that may include:
  
  • Walk or jog around the field for five minutes
  • Team Dance
  • Team Game (i.e. – tag or sport specific game)
  • Build an obstacle course using the equipment and space you have for practice

- Aerobic activities should start at a slow pace and gradually increase in intensity/difficulty and last at least five minutes.
Now that the body is warm it is time to focus on stretching the muscles you will use during your sport.

Dynamic stretches consist of active, controlled movements that take body parts through a full range of motion.

Sport specific dynamic stretches include:

- Sprints
- Agility drills
- Balance drills

General dynamic stretches include:

- High knees
- Butt kicks
- Leg swings
- Torso twists
- Side stepping
- Arm circles
Unit 2 – Organizing a Training Session: Cool-Down

Cool-Down

- When your training, practice or sport session is complete you should always cool down. It is as important to have a good cool-down as it is to have a good warm-up. A good cool-down allows the body to gradually return to a state of rest.

- There are many purposes of a cool-down including:
  - Decrease heart rate
  - Decrease breathing rate
  - Decrease body and muscle temperature
  - Decrease muscle soreness
  - Improve flexibility
  - Promote relaxation
Cool-Down

- The cool-down is also a great chance for coaches to review the session, to tell athletes what to expect at the next session, and to ask for feedback from athletes. Remind your athletes they need to drink water and have a healthy snack to help recover from practice. The Fit 5 Guide has suggestions for healthy snacks and recommendations for proper hydration.

- Cool-down activities may include: static stretching, controlled breathing intervals and some light aerobic activity.
- The key is to break down skills into small tasks or steps; tasks are then put together to form skills. Use drills and activities that involve many athletes at all times. Practice skills in situations that are related to the game or event. Break skills down into small steps.

Task → Skill → Application → Competition
## Unit 2 – Training Sequence
What’s the challenge and how to fix it?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Training Sequence Element</th>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Acquire ability to repeatedly demonstrate sport competencies in different situations &amp; environments</td>
<td>Provide game like drills or situations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Acquire ability to perform series of sport competencies effectively and necessary to perform a sport</td>
<td>Work on essential sport competencies to perform the sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition</td>
<td>Acquire ability to put essential sport competencies into practice</td>
<td>Provide scrimmage opportunities in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasks</td>
<td>Acquire ability to perform essential sport competencies</td>
<td>Break essential sport competencies down into individual parts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communication is key to immediately reinforcing desired behavior. There are several key words that begin with a “C” which address what a coach should say:

- **CONCISE**
- **CONSISTENT**
- **CLEAR**
- **COMMAND-ORIENTED**
- **CONCRETE**
## Unit 2 – Communication (Cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication Criteria</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sport Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concise</td>
<td>Use a few key words that cue a desired action</td>
<td>“Go to the free throw line” Showing an athlete where to stand on defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consistent</td>
<td>Use the same word or phrase for the same action</td>
<td>Coach constantly say “Breathe” – teaching an athlete when to take a breath in swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear</td>
<td>Use easy to understand words that have one meaning</td>
<td>“Swing the bat” teaching how/when to swing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command-Oriented</td>
<td>Use words that elicit or reinforce a desired action</td>
<td>“On your mark. Set. Go.” Using this phrase for starts in athletics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concrete</td>
<td>Connect words to something defined or tangible</td>
<td>“Jump forward” when coaching an athlete in the long jump.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unit 2 – Levels of Assistance or Instruction

- It is important to use the appropriate level of instruction and assistance.
  - A lower ability athlete may require more assistance
  - Verbal cues should always be accompanied by demonstration
  - Partial physical assistance may be needed to properly position the athlete
  - When all else fails take the athlete through the complete motion
# Unit 2 – Levels of Assistance or Instruction

## Level of Instruction or Assistance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Instruction or Assistance</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Sport Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Physical Assistance</td>
<td>Help the athlete through the entire motion of the skill</td>
<td>Softball: coach makes an adjustment to the athlete's arm motion when throwing the ball by moving the athlete's arm through the entire throwing movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>Tell the athlete what to do</td>
<td>Footwork: “run forward to the line; then return, running backward”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration</td>
<td>Show the athlete the proper technique</td>
<td>Soccer: one athlete shoots on goal while another watches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial Physical Assistance</td>
<td>Place the athlete's hands in the proper position</td>
<td>Golf: coach physically adjusts the athlete's hands on the golf club with the correct grip</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The goal is for coaches to meet each athlete where he/she is and treat him/her accordingly.

However, a coach may often have certain expectations of an athlete that may not be realistic ... not because the coach does not care, but because the coach does not understand or appreciate the differences that may exist.

When an athlete exhibits what is generally perceived as inappropriate behavior, the inappropriate behavior may not be defiance, acting out or silliness. These behaviors may simply be a reflection or part of the person and/or what is operating in the moment.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Athlete Behavior Characteristics</th>
<th>Strategies to Improve Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Swimmer has a short attention span | 1. Dwell on a stroke or activity for short periods of time; provide numerous activities focusing on same task  
2. Provide different opportunities for repetition and review, which is the key to gaining new skill.  
3. Work one-on-one to gain full attention. |
| Basketball athlete yells if he/she misses a shot | 1. Emphasize the other aspects of the game besides shooting  
2. Work on shooting drills without a hoop  
3. Begin to shoot at a hoop but in a non-game setting with a one-on-one coach |
| Bowler doesn’t wait their turn | 1. Have a coach at the lane help with the order of bowlers, explain whose turn it is  
2. Have the bowler wait with a coach behind the bowling area until their turn is up  
3. Emphasize the order and that the bowler will always follow the same individual |
- A key goal of Special Olympics is to provide an opportunity for all athletes to experience success in competitions.

- A Special Olympics athlete can benefit from many aspects of a competition (including meeting new people, participating in the festivities of Opening Ceremonies and other social events, the excitement of traveling to new places and staying away from home, etc.). None of these things, however, should be as important to the coach as the focus on the participation in the competition itself.

- This section highlights ways to improve the quality of an athlete’s competition experience.
Unit 3 – Preparing for Competition

Registration and Key Pre-Season Items

- Provide accurate entry and roster information along with accurate scoresheets, appropriate divisioning guidelines in which all are provided to SOKY State Office in a timely manner and by the requested due date.

- Help the specific Program Director prepare a successful competition for your athletes by meeting the registration deadlines and by turning in accurate and up to date information.

- As a coach, know and understand all of the rules in which can then be properly taught to your athletes

- Hold preseason meeting with athletes, coaches & family members to discuss expectations of the season – set the standard and any guidelines needed.
Unit 3 – Preparing for Competition (Cont.)

**Supervision**

Discuss the challenges associated with participating in competition away from home, and why adequate, non-coaching additional support personnel are needed (other persons).

Transportation

Lodging (need for same-sex supervision) [SOKY Housing Policy](#)

Social activities - [SOKY Recreational Swimming Guidelines](#)

Coaches meetings (Who will supervise athletes during these?)
Unit 3 – Preparing for Competition (Cont.)

**Travel and Overnight**

- Discuss overnight concerns with parents or group-home supervisors

- Write up a simple checklist of items to bring and distribute to athletes and parents

- Make sure that all special medication needs are understood. Coaches may have to assist with handling medications. Have all medical forms and information readily available at all times.

- Work with most effective rooming arrangements, taking into account athlete choice, behavioral and personality clashes, etc.
Unit 3 – Competition-Day Coaching

**Guidelines for Success**

- **Teach responsibility & independence:** Assist athletes in dressing appropriately (proper uniform), understanding what is happening at competition site, maintaining a focused attitude and appropriate behavior.

- **Arrive Early:** Allow time for putting on uniforms, warm-up and stretching routines and time to focus on the competition.

  Encourage maximum effort no matter your specific division or opponents throughout the entire competition!
Guidelines for Success

- Help athletes learn from winning & losing
  *Deal graciously and realistically with winning and losing. Focus on effort made, recognize accomplishments and new skills that were performed and taking something positive away from the experience.

- Let athletes compete without direct supervision (depending on ability or division)
  *Not running down the side of the court shouting instructions, allowing the competition officials to conduct the competition and allowing athletes to make mistakes and helping them learn from their mistakes.

IF YOU MUST PROTEST A RESULT OR OUTCOME OF AN EVENT, PLEASE DO SO IN A CALM & RESPECTFUL MANNER!
The coach can be the key person who makes any competition experience a good one.

*Please, take the time to adequately prepare for competition and plan for on-site supervision and make sure your time coaching is time well spent.
The successful Special Olympics Kentucky coach:

Is sports and coaching knowledgeable:
- Special Olympics Kentucky is a sport organization
- Technical knowledge of the sport and how to teach it is essential if coaches are to effectively help athletes improve their sport skills and truly benefit from Special Olympics.
- Successful coaches are constantly looking for opportunities to learn more about the sport.

Is Special Olympics Kentucky knowledgeable:
- Special Olympics Kentucky offered sports and modified rules to each sport
- Special Olympics Kentucky Mission Statement
- Special Olympics Kentucky Athlete and Coach Oath
- Special Olympics Kentucky Coaching Requirements (Coach Certification Process)

A better understanding of these will benefit your athletes!
The successful Special Olympics Kentucky coach:

**Recruits and trains assistant coaches:**

- Individualized coach-athlete teaching is key to successful training in Special Olympics.
- Assistant coaches can be recruited to help provide individualized attention.
- Assistant coaches are useful only if they are trained and coordinated at practice.
- Invites fellow co-workers or friends out to see a game or a practice in hopes they will become involved.

**Recruit and trains athletes:**

- A coach is also a promoter and recruiter; always tries to expand participation
- Places athletes in correct division or ability level every season
- Puts a priority on safety
- Puts a priority on Health and Fitness & overall well-being of athletes
- Conducts high-quality training and competition
- Involves and educates families of participants
- Assists with community inclusion to improve social and communication skills of participants
Understands the proper and preferred method for wanting to communicate any feedback, suggestions, or complaints to the SOKY state office.

- NONE OF THE LISTED ITEMS ABOVE SHOULD TAKE PLACE AT OR DURING AN EVENT

- THE ITEMS ABOVE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED VIA EMAIL OR PHONE CALL BY THE HEAD COACH AND ONLY THAT PARTICULAR COACH (EMAILS SHOULD BE SHORT AND TO THE POINT)

- THE HEAD COACH SHOULD FUNNEL ALL COMPLAINTS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE TEAM, PARENTS, GRANDPARENTS, ETC. THROUGH THEM PRIOR TO BRINGING IT UP TO SOKY STATE OFFICE

We understand that every coach deserves to be heard, but in order to communicate most effectively every coach should also understand the proper methods listed above! It is also very important for all family members to follow proper protocol at all events, trainings and other SOKY related functions. They must also adhere to both the family member code of conduct along with the spectator guidelines.
A Positive Sport Experience Starts With The Coach

- Coaches have the greatest opportunity to create positive change in Special Olympics athletes, because they are the ones who work with athletes on a consistent basis. Good coaches know that learning to play a sport is more than just mastering skills associated with the sport – it takes teamwork, commitment, sacrifice, and dedication. These are qualities that Special Olympics coaches work to instill in their athletes, with the understanding that these lessons can have a positive impact on the athletes’ lives outside of sports. The second reason is that it is a requirement.

- You as a Special Olympics coach are role models and character builders. Coaches help our athletes discover their physical skills, their self-worth, their human courage, and their capacity to grow. Being a Special Olympics coach is one of the most important and rewarding volunteer roles.
Unit 5 – Additional Information

Coaches Corner (Cont.)

Responsibilities of the Special Olympics Coach

• Assist athletes in learning sports skills and applying them in competitions.
• Encourage confidence and self-esteem through sport.
• Obtain equipment for athletic training.
• Help to recruit athletes and assistant coaches.
• Register athletes for competitions.
• Know and share the mission of Special Olympics in your community
• Most importantly HAVE FUN!
Coach Resources

- **Coach Code of Conduct**: Special Olympics Coaches are role models whose behavior should serve as a positive example for their athletes.

- **Athlete Code of Conduct**: Special Olympics Kentucky is committed to the highest ideals of sport and expects all athletes to honor sports and Special Olympics.

- **Family Member Code of Conduct**: This should be emphasized during training, competition, and special events at any level.

- **Volunteer Code of Conduct**: For SOKY volunteers.

  - [Volunteer Code of Conduct]
  - [Family Code of Conduct]
  - [Athlete Code of Conduct]
  - [Coach Code of Conduct]
Unit 5 – Additional Information
Coaches Corner (Cont.)

Key Coaching Forms

• Accident/Incident Form: Online Version
• Certificate of Insurance: Online Version
• Athlete Medical Form: Online Version
• Class A Volunteer and Unified Partner App: Online Version
• Local Program Contact List: Online Version
• Special Olympics Logo Usage Guidelines: Online Version
• Recreational Swimming Guidelines: Online Version

All can be found on the SOKY COACHES CORNER PAGE
Special Olympics Coach Oath – “In the name of all coaches, we shall follow written and verbal instructions of Special Olympics officials at all times, have our athletes at the appropriate events and activities at the proper time and abide by the rules and policies, in the spirit of sportsmanship.”
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

Important General Information

• **Main Point of Contact:** SOKY Individual Sports Program Manager

• **Summer Sport:** Season runs from June-August

• **Season Timeline:**
  - Local/Area sign-ups/tryouts take place in June
  - Intent to Participate Forms (registration packet) is sent out via email in mid-May
  - Three area/regional competitions take place June-July: WKY (Murray), Elizabethtown, NKY (Kenton County)
  - State Tournament (mid-late August) is currently being held at Quail Chase in Louisville

*SOKY GOLF SPORTS MANUAL*
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

**SOKY Golf**

- The Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Golf shall govern all Special Olympics competitions. As an international sports program, Special Olympics has created these rules based upon The Rules of Golf as approved by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews (R&A) found at [http://www.randa.org/](http://www.randa.org/) National Governing Body (NGB) rules shall be employed except when they are in conflict with the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Golf or Article I. In such cases, the Official Special Olympics Sports Rules for Golf shall apply. Additional rules clarifications related to individuals with disabilities (for example visually impaired or wheelchair bound athletes) can be found on the R&A or USGA website.

**SOKY Golf Sports Manual**

Special Olympics North America Golf Rules
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

SOKY Golf Dress Code

❖ All participants must wear a shirt with a collar or golf mock along with either long pants or dress shorts of appropriate length. No denim, cutoffs, nylon or warm-up pants. Either golf shoes with soft spikes or athletic shoes must be worn. No exceptions to this rule. Failure to comply will lead to disqualification.
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

**SOKY Golf**

- Official Events currently offered by SOKY
  - Level 1 – Individual Skills Competition
  - Level 2 – Unified Sports Alternate Shot Team Play Competition (9-hole)
  - Level 3 – Individual Stroke Play (9-hole)
General Rules and Modifications

The standard for eligibility is for an athlete and unified partner to have completed the Individual Skills Competition with a total score of at least 60 points. In addition, 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. If the athlete is scoring above 100 in the Individual Skills Competition, it is recommended that they begin participating in Level 2 Competitions.
GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR EVENTS
HEAT, COLD AND LIGHTNING WEATHER POLICIES

Heat Guidelines
- A heat index of 95-99 degrees Fahrenheit will result in a shortened event.
- A heat index of 100 degrees Fahrenheit and above will result in a cancelled or postponed event.

Cold Guidelines
- A wind chill of 10 degrees Fahrenheit and below will result in a cancelled event.

Lightning Guidelines
- Activity may not be resumed or started for 30 minutes after both the last sound of thunder and the last flash of lightning.

General Statement
As staff of Special Olympics Kentucky, our number one priority is the safety of our athletes, volunteers and spectators. It is to be understood that all cancellations will be decided as soon as possible, and to assume the event is still on if you have not heard anything from a staff member via email and/or by phone. You may also check for updates on our website and all our social media accounts; Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. In advance, we greatly appreciate your cooperation with this, and ask that you abide by the policies above for both competition and practice/training.
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

**Required Averages**

- When considering moving up in levels, the following scores are the required averages that the athlete must have when practicing:
  - Level 2 to Level 3 = average of 120 or lower (team score)
  - Level 2 to Level 4 = average of 70 or lower (athlete only score)
  - Level 3 to Level 4 = average of 70 or lower (athlete only score)
  - Level 3 to Level 5 = average of 120 or lower (athlete only score)
  - Level 4 to Level 5 = average of 120 or lower (athlete only score)
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

**Maximum Averages**

- The following are maximum averages for each level of competition:
  - Level 2 – Average of 70 or lower
  - Level 3 – Average of 120 or lower
  - Level 4 – Average of 70 or lower
  - Level 5 – Average of 120 or lower

- For the purpose of submitting scorecards for an event, reviewing scores/scorecards for the consideration of moving athletes/teams up in level and the enforcement of maximum scores, please note that scores/scorecards from executive course or par 3 courses should not be submitted.
Golf Carts

• The decision to offer the use of power golf carts will be left to the discretion of the specific tournament committee.
• At any event, athletes will be required to walk. A case may be considered for using a power cart during any competition upon presentation of a medical certificate to the Tournament Committee no later than the registration deadline.
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.
• For tournaments and competitions, coaches can assume the role of a caddie, with the understanding they will relinquish their coach privileges (i.e. Ability to file a protest) during the competition.
• A caddie should not be utilized for Unified competition, as the Unified Partner would assume the role of providing advice to the athlete, including club selection, course management, keep of the scorecard and etiquette.
Each player is responsible for providing his/her own equipment, including the following:

- A set of clubs (No more than 14 clubs)
- A golf bag
- Golf Balls
- Tees
- Divot Repair Tool (Not required at level 1)
- Ball Marker (Not required at level 1)
**Individual Skills Competition Rules**

- The purpose of the Individual Skills Competition is to allow athletes to train and compete in basic golf skills. The development of these skills is necessary prior to advancing to Level 2-5. A maximum of 140 points may be scored in Level 1, if the bunker shot is included.
- Skills events include: short putt, long putt, chip shot, pitch shot, bunker shot.
**ISC – Short Putt**

- **Purpose:** To measure the athletes ability to putt, focusing on the short putt.

- **Equipment:** A regulation putting green with a properly marked (target) hole, five balls, and a chalker may be used to mark the circle targets around the hole.

- **Description:** A target hole is selected and two circles are placed around the hole. The first circle shall have a radius of 0.5 meter and the second shall have a radius of 1.5 meters from the hole. The athlete will have **five** attempts from a clearly marked spot, 2 meters from the hole. The short putt should be set-up on a green with as flat a surface as possible.

- **Scoring:** The athlete will have five attempts to putt the ball at the hole from a line 2 meters (6.56ft) from the hole, scoring points according to where the ball comes to rest. The athlete will score one point for making a stroke at, and striking the ball. (A swing and a miss count as one attempt, and the athlete will receive a score of zero) A second point is scored if the ball stops on or within the 1.5 meter (4.92ft) circle. A third point is scored if the ball stops on or within the 0.5 meter (1.64ft) circle. If ball goes in the hole, a total of four points will be awarded for that attempt. The short putt score shall be the sum total of **five** attempts.
ISC – Long Putt

- **Purpose:** To measure the athletes ability to putt, focusing on the long putt.
- **Equipment:** A regulation putting green with a properly marked (target) hole, five balls, and a chalker may be used to mark the circle targets around the hole.
- **Description:** A target hole is selected and two circles are placed around the hole. The first circle shall have a radius of 0.5 meter and the second shall have a radius of 1.5 meters from the hole. The athlete will have five attempts from a clearly marked spot, 8 meters from the hole. The short putt should be set-up on a green with as flat a surface as possible. (Putting up hill is recommended)
- **Scoring:** The athlete will have five attempts to putt the ball at the hole from a line 8 meters from the hole, scoring points according to where the ball comes to rest. The athlete will score one point for making a stroke at, and striking the ball. (A swing and a miss count as one attempt, and the athlete will receive a score of zero) A second point is scored if the ball stops on or within the 1.5 meter (4.92ft) circle. A third point is scored if the ball stops on or within the 0.5 meter (1.64ft) circle. If ball goes in the hole, a total of four points will be awarded for that attempt. The long putt score shall be the sum total of five attempts.
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

**ISC – Chip Shot**

- **Purpose:** To measure the athletes ability to hit chip shots 14 meters from the hole. Woods and putters are not permitted for this skill.

- **Equipment:** An appropriate number of golf balls based on the number of competitors (five per player is recommended).

- **Description:** A chipping area is set-up which includes a 3 meters by 3 meters square hitting area, 14 meters from the hole. The chipping area should be 2 meters from the edge of the green. A 3-meter radius circle and a 6-meter radius circle will be placed around the hole. The athlete is instructed to chip the ball at a designated hole, getting it as close to the hole as possible.

- **Scoring:** The athlete will attempt **five** shots at the target, scoring points according to where the ball comes to rest. The athlete will score one point for making a stroke at and striking the ball. (A swing and a miss count as one shot and the athlete will receive a score of zero for that shot). A second point is scored if the ball comes to rest inside the 6-meter (19.68ft) circle around the hole. A third point is scored if the ball comes to rest inside the 3-meter (9.84ft) circle around the hole. A fourth point is scored if the chip shot comes to rest in the hole. The total score from the **five** attempts will be the athlete’s final score.
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

ISC – Pitch Shot

- **Purpose:** To measure the athletes ability to hit controlled pitch shots in the air in the proper direction to a defined circular target area.
- **Equipment:** An appropriate number of golf balls based on the number of competitors (five per player is recommended). A marked hitting area; paint, chalk, or cones. Shag bags or tubes to retrieve balls at station. A target flag and hitting mat or artificial surface. A banner, sign, net or barrier that measures one meter (3.28ft) high by five meters (16.40ft) wide.
- **Description:** A target area shall be a circle with six-meter (19.68ft) radius. The distance from the hitting area to the one-meter (3.28ft) high barrier shall be five meters (16.40ft). The athlete shall make five attempts. The athlete is instructed to pitch the ball over the barrier at the designated target area.
- **Scoring:** The athlete will attempt five shots at the target, scoring points according to where the ball lands. Athletes will score one point for making a stroke at and striking the ball. (A swing and a miss count as one shot and the athlete receives a score of zero for that shot). A second point is scored if the ball goes over the barrier. A third point is scored if the ball lands inside the 6-meter circle and rolls out, or if the ball lands outside the 12-meter circle and comes to rest inside the circle. A fourth point is scored if the ball lands inside the 6-meter circle and comes to rest inside the circle. The pitch shot score shall be the sum total of five attempts.
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

ISC – Iron Shot

• **Purpose:** To measure the athletes ability to hit an iron shot within a set hitting area.

• **Equipment:** An appropriate number of golf balls based on the number of competitors (five per player is recommended). Marking paint or chalk, and marker to mark hitting area and boundary lines. Hitting mat or carpet, tees, helmets, a safety zone for scorekeepers to stand in and shag bags or tubes to retrieve balls (if necessary). A target flag and eight cones or other visible markers to identify distance locations. Athletes may use an iron or hybrid for an iron shot, but not both.

• **Description:** The athlete may choose to hit the ball off a tee, a mat or the ground. The athlete is instructed to hit the ball from the teeing area toward a designated flag in the hitting area, trying to keep the ball within the boundary markers and achieving a distance of more than 90 meters.

• **Scoring:** The athlete will attempt **five** shots at the target, scoring points according to where the ball comes to rest. Athletes will score one point for making a stroke at and striking the ball. (A swing and a miss count as one attempt and the athlete receives a score of zero for that shot). Two points are scored for a ball that comes to rest between the 30 meter and 60 meter lines within the 35-meter wide boundary lines. Three points are scored for a ball that comes to rest between the 60 meter and 90 meter lines within the 35-meter boundary lines. Four points are scored for ball that comes to rest beyond the 90 meters line within the 35-meters wide boundary lines. The athlete's score shall be the sum total of the **five** attempts.
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

ISC – Wood Shot

- **Purpose:** To measure the athletes ability to hit a wood shot within a set hitting area.
- **Equipment:** An appropriate number of golf balls based on the number of competitors (five per player is recommended). Marking paint or chalk, and marker to mark hitting area and boundary lines. Hitting mat or carpet, tees, helmets, a safety zone for scorekeepers to stand in and shag bags or tubes to retrieve balls (if necessary). A target flag and eight cones or other visible markers to identify distance locations. Athletes may use a Fairway Wood, or Driver and if they didn’t use a Hybrid Club for their iron shot, then they can use it for the Wood shot.
- **Description:** The athlete may choose to hit the ball off a tee, a mat or the ground. The athlete is instructed to hit the ball from the teeing area toward a designated flag in the hitting area, trying to keep the ball within the boundary markers and achieving a distance of more than 120 meters.
- **Scoring:** The athlete will attempt five shots at the target, scoring points according to where the ball comes to rest. Athletes will score one point for making a stroke at and striking the ball. (A swing and a miss count as one attempt and the athlete receives a score of zero for that shot). Two points are scored for a ball that comes to rest between the 60 meter and 90 meter lines within the 50-meter wide boundary lines. Three points are scored for a ball that comes to rest between the 90 meter and 120 meter lines within the 50-meter boundary lines. Four points are scored for ball that comes to rest beyond the 120 meters line within the 50-meters wide boundary lines. The athlete’s score shall be the sum total of the five attempts.
Unified Alternate Shot Team Play (9 Hole)

- **Team Definition:** A team shall consist of one athlete with an intellectual disability and one Unified Partner without an intellectual disability.

- **Purpose for this Level of Play:** 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 the 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 coach and mentor so that the Special Olympics athlete becomes self-sufficient on the golf course.

- **Form of Play:** 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.

- **Scoring:** 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 hoing the shot, the team shall record a score of 10x and proceed to the next hole. Athletes should be taught to keep score and, whenever possible in competition, serve as a marker for a fellow competitor. Both players on the team should verify their team’s hole-by-hole scores, and one of the players (preferably the SOKY athlete) shall sign the scorecard.

- **Ties:** If a team ties for first place, the team with the fewest number of 10x scores shall be declared the winner. If teams have an equal number of 10x scores they shall enter a sudden death playoff to begin on a hole determined by the SOKY Golf Sport Advisory/Development team. (No playoff holes at regional tournaments, this only applies at the State Tournament). All other ties shall remain as ties and both teams should be presented the same award.
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

Individual Stroke Play (9 Hole)

• **Purpose for this Level of Play:** 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. 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.

• **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. Athletes should be taught to keep score and, whenever possible in competition, serve as a marker for a fellow competitor.

• **Ties:** If individuals tie for first place, the individual with the fewest number of 10x scores shall be declared the winner. If the individuals have an equal number of 10x scores they shall enter a sudden death playoff to begin on a hole determined by the SOKY Golf Sport Advisory/Development team. (No playoff holes at regional tournaments, this only applies at the State Tournament). All other ties shall remain as ties and the individuals should be presented the same award.
Unit 6 – SOKY Golf Specifics

Special Olympics External Resources

This online coaching guide covers planning a season, teaching skills, teaching rules, and includes a quick start guide. It also includes virtual training/learning videos in which can offer you a more hands-on experience when learning about the sport of Golf.

Online Special Olympics Golf Coaching Guide
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