



National Alliance for
Accessible Golf

**SPECIAL OLYMPICS
YOUNG ATHLETE
DEVELOPMENTAL SPORTS
GOLF COACH'S GUIDE**

(Ages 6-12)



National Alliance for
Accessible Golf



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WHY GOLF?

- Recognized as a **lifetime sport**
- Promotes **socialization**
- Enhances **self-esteem**
- Improves **motor skills**, resulting in **better physical fitness**
- Refines **hand-eye coordination**
- General **body control** is often improved.



WHY GOLF?

The joy and gratification of experiencing the achievement of new skills learned or a new performance level reached, will add much to the participants' personal satisfaction.



Setting Expectations

- Because golf is a game where skill may improve with time and practice, it is necessary that we do not raise our expectation too high.
- Conversely, to enter this training period with very low expectations would be wrong because much improvement can result from inspiration and instruction on the correct level for the Athlete concerned.
- If an Athlete and instructor enters this training period with high expectations, the rewards, which may be garnered, are beyond belief.



Progressive Golf Training Program

- Special Olympics Athletes should participate in a progressive golf training program before entering any Special Olympics competition.
- This includes instruction on the basic skills of golf and Rules of Golf.
- It should be up to the individual instructor or coach to plan his or her own eight-week training program using this information as a guideline.
- Other material related to golf training or golf experience by the instructor is encouraged.



Before Starting the Program

Prior to beginning, you should :

1. Review the Special Olympics Golf Rules as well as the Special Olympics Golf Coaching Guidelines for planning golf training and teaching golf skills.

Available online:

<https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials/sports-and-coaching/golf>.



Before Starting the Program

2. Recruit Athletes and coaches

Tips for Success:

- Preferably engage a golf instructor with a background with individuals with disabilities as lead instructor, who is committed to leading the program long term.
- Number of coaches/instructors depends on number of Athletes in the program – (suggest ratio of 1 coach/instructor to every 2 to 3 Athletes)



Before Starting the Program

3. Develop your budget.

4. Train coaches and volunteers. Use parents as resource.



Before Starting the Program

5. Host an Orientation.

6. Secure a training site, preferably at no charge.



Before Starting the Program

7. Conduct a physical and cognitive assessment of the Athletes with parents present.

(Use either assessment through Special Olympics or sample on next 2 slides)



What Does a Training Session Look Like?

ATHLETE ASSESSMENT

Athlete's Name: _____

DOB: _____ Current Age: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Alternate Contact Name: _____

Alternate Phone: _____



What Does a Training Session Look Like?

ATHLETE ASSESSMENT

Allergies: _____

Medical Concerns: _____

Physical Concerns that may affect golf functions:

Limited movement

Limited endurance

Limb difference

Balance issues

Limited strength

Limited vision

Limited hearing

Mobility concerns: _____

Does the Athlete use: Wheelchair

Braces

Crutches

Hearing aids

Visual aids

Upper extremity prosthesis

Lower extremity prosthesis

What interventions or accommodations at home might be used during the golf program to help the Athlete be more successful? _____



What Does a Training Session Look Like?

Frequency: It is suggested that the training program consist of at least two practice sessions per week.

Duration: Each practice should be at least 30 minutes in duration.



What Does a Training Session Look Like?

It is recommended that each practice include a review of the following five elements:

1. **Warm-up session**
2. **Review previous instruction**
3. **Introduce new skills**



What Does a Training Session Look Like?

4. Incorporate rules into instruction.

Refer to the USGA Modified Rules of Golf for Individuals with Disabilities

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules/rules-2019/rules-of-golf/rules-and-interpretations.html#!ruletype=mr§ion=rule&rulenum=1>



What Does a Training Session Look Like?

5. Play a fun game. Keep it fun!!!



INSTRUCTOR CONSIDERATIONS

- Ideally, a golf professional should give supervision of the instruction of each program even though volunteers from various sources may assist with the instruction process.
- Ensure that the golf professional has experience in working with individuals with disabilities. Where did they get their training?



INSTRUCTOR CONSIDERATIONS

- Trained personnel must give the volunteers as much instruction as possible.
- This instruction should be perfectly clear and acceptable to each potential instructor.
- Provide an instructional handout with guidelines for medical issues that may be used currently by Special Olympics



INSTRUCTOR CONSIDERATIONS

Each instructor:

- Must be comfortable in his/her physical teaching skills
- Have a high level of enthusiasm
- Maintain realistic hopes and expectations as to what is to be gained through this process



SETTING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goals and Objectives:

- Review the following goals and objectives.
- Be prepared to set small goals for the Athlete to attain during each session.
- Assign each assistant coach his or her responsibilities in writing as well so that everyone feels needed and important.



SETTING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

1. Long Term Goals

Our aim is to impart to the Athlete:

- basic golf skills,
- acceptable social behavior, and
- fundamental knowledge of the rules of golf to enable him/her to participate in a regulation or modified game of golf.



SETTING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

2. Short-Term Objectives

- a. The instructor will demonstrate and assist the individual to perform golf warm up procedures.

- b. The instructor will demonstrate and help the individual to perform the basic skills in putting. Start with a putt 2 to 3 feet from the hole or target. Then progress to longer distances.



PUTTING



SETTING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

2. Short-Term Objectives

c. After a demonstration, the instructor will assist the Athlete in practicing the basic skills of the chip shot. Like in putting, start with a short distance to the hole or target and progress to longer distances.

d. If the ability progresses, follow the same procedure-first demonstrate, and then assist in the skills of the pitch shot starting with short distances and progress to longer distances.



CHIPPING AND PITCHING



SETTING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

2. Short-Term Objectives

e. If the ability progresses for the Athlete, next in the progression follow the skills of the short iron.

f. If the ability progresses for the Athlete, next in progression are skills of the long iron shot.



IRONS



SETTING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

2. Short-Term Objective

g. If the ability progresses for the Athlete, next in progression are skills of the hybrid or fairway metal shot.

h. Time for practice on all of the above shots will vary in length but must be adequate for each Athlete.

Follow this with inspirational instruction on etiquette and sportsmanship appropriate to the game of golf.



SETTING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

3. Benefits of Goal Setting

- Prepares the Athlete and coaches mentally and emotionally to act out their commitment.
- Expresses confidence.
- Creates a positive self-image that the Athlete and coach are in control of improvement and performance.
- Provides a positive focus of energy.

It is the process of attaining the goals rather than winning or losing that is important in golf.



SETTING GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Goals should be SMART:

1. Specific
2. Measurable
3. Achievable
4. Relevant
5. Time-Bound



SIX STEPS TO SETTING GOALS & ATTAINING THEM

Step 1: Know the Athlete and your coaches

Step 2: Know the skills required for golf

Step 3: Assess the Athlete with the parent present (see sample assessment form attached)



SIX STEPS TO SETTING GOALS & ATTAINING THEM

Step 4: Define goals that are realistic
yet challenging

Step 5: Plan and implement

Step 6: Evaluate progress



BUILDING A PRACTICE SESSION

When planning your training season, consider the following factors:

- Schedule
- Budget
- Equipment
- Staffing/Volunteers
- Athlete's Ability
- Location/Facility
- Transportation
- Dress code/Golf attire



BUILDING A PRACTICE SESSION: VENUE ASSESSMENT

The Golf Course, practice areas or playing field:

- Turf/Floor Conditions – putting green on course or smooth floor indoors
- Level grade
- Foreign objects
- Obstructions to practice or play area
- Inclement weather options
- Adaptations required to facility (indoor/outdoor)



BUILDING A PRACTICE SESSION: EQUIPMENT

- Number of clubs, including adapted clubs, and golf balls available per individual.
- Alternative equipment such as SNAG, Short Golf, etc. may be needed.
- Proper size and fit of equipment. Modified or alternative equipment may be needed, including flat lie clubs for those Athlete playing from a wheelchair.



BUILDING A PRACTICE SESSION: EQUIPMENT



BUILDING A PRACTICE SESSION: FOCUS ON ABILITY

- Know any physical/social/medical concerns and golf experience of each Athlete.
- Early, it is important to administer a Golf Skills Assessment to determine the ability range and set goals for improvement.

http://digitalguides.specialolympics.org/golf/index.php?_ga=2.170199904.1104900566.1601582176-1902235938.1601582176#/p/39



BUILDING A PRACTICE SESSION: FOCUS ON ABILITY

- The physical preparation of the Athlete is important.
- Develop fitness components into the training process.
- Athletes will perform differently because of their physical and intellectual abilities.



BUILDING A PRACTICE SESSION: FOCUS ON ABILITY

Consider after consultation with the parent:

- Flexibility: Stretching Routine
- Muscular Fitness: Strength, Endurance, Power, Speed
- Cardiovascular Endurance



BUILDING A PRACTICE SESSION: VOLUNTEERS

- Golf knowledgeable
- Coaching experience
- Commitment
- Completed training and orientation
- Individuals with disability to Coach ratio



BUILDING A PRACTICE SCHEDULE: TRANSPORTATION

Assure Athletes and volunteers have reliable and consistent transportation to and from sessions.



BUILDING A PRACTICE SCHEDULE: GOLF ATTIRE

- Confirm appropriate dress code of facility if at a golf course
- **Ensure** proper Golf Attire **(including footwear)**



SECURING THE USE OF A FACILITY

Assuming you secure the use of a golf facility, it is important to meet with the golf professional or club director to review facility policy and procedures.

AND

Communicate all policy and procedures for trainings and competitions to coaches, volunteers, and family members.



SECURING THE USE OF A FACILITY

Confirm with facility golf professional or club director:

- Dates and times of trainings and competitions
- Driving Range and practice area accessibility and rules (secure donated/discounted fees)
- Provision and storage of equipment
- A designated greeting and registration areas for Athletes, coaches and volunteer arrival and departure along with registration procedures for everyone



SECURING THE USE OF A FACILITY

Confirm with facility golf professional or club director:

- Clubhouse Accessibility
- Food and Beverage/Cooler Policy (*Many facilities do not allow food and beverage to be brought onto property.*)
- Golf Car policy for Coaches and Volunteers, single rider golf car availability



SECURING THE USE OF A FACILITY

Confirm with facility golf professional or club director:

- Access to the Golf Course: Tee time and registration procedures
- A scoring area for any competition or on course play that might be part of the program
- Exchange contact information: telephone, e-mail addresses



THE GOLF COURSE: YOUR PLAY OR PRACTICE FIELD

In golf every hole has different boundaries and is made up of either 9 or 18 holes. All are designed differently; however, every hole does have things in common:

- Starts from a **tee** (a raised area of grass to begin play)
- Finishes on a **green** (a closely mowed area that contains a cup and a flagstick)
- The closely mowed grass lying between the tee and the green is called the **fairway**.



THE GOLF COURSE: YOUR PLAY OR PRACTICE FIELD

- Holes can range from under 100 to over 500 yards in length with certain obstacles and penalty areas.
- The hole yardage for each level of ability will depend on the Athlete.
- Modify the course as needed.
- Your Athletes will need to develop skills in order to make the different shots necessary to score and have fun on the course.
- As Athletes develop these skills, they will become better golfers as they progress to on-course play.



THE GOLF COURSE: YOUR PLAY OR PRACTICE FIELD

When assessing or selecting a golf course for your program the following factors should be recognized:

- total yardage,
- tee to green accessibility,
- location, and
- accessibility of inclement weather shelters and restroom facilities



DESIGN YOUR OWN GOLF COURSE

Suppose you do not have access to a golf course. This does not mean you cannot start your program. You can introduce the game with a little imagination and creativity. A challenging and fun golf course can be created:

- on the school athletic field,
- playground,
- at a driving range, or
- in a gymnasium.

The key is effectively utilizing existing space and equipment to create golf shot or course situations.



DESIGN YOUR OWN GOLF COURSE

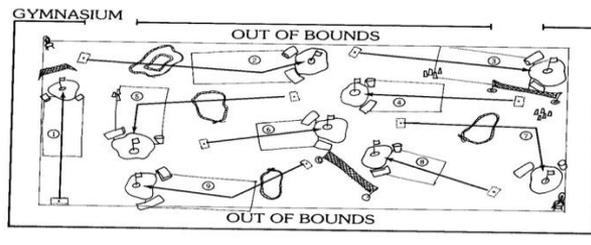
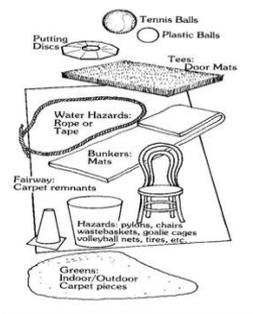
Planning a Golf Training and Competition Season The Golf Course



Indoor Course Options

The modifications for construction of a golf course in a gymnasium or large indoor area as follows:

- The use of a plastic ball or soft ball such as a tennis ball is mandatory in an indoor setting.
- The use of protective material for the floor is essential, Brush mats can be used to protect the teeing areas and small carpet remnants can be used to protect the floor during the fairway shots.
- The green can be a commercial-style putting strip or can be improvised from suitable indoor-outdoor carpeting.
- The ball can be putted into a putting disc or metal cup.
- Use a tape or rope on the floor, mark indoor golf course similar to an outdoor course.
- As a creative indoor golf designer, add variety to your gym layout: use mats for bunkers, chairs for trees, mark water hazards on the floor, and so on.



http://digitalguides.specialolympics.org/golf/index.php?_ga=2.170199904.1104900566.1601582176-1902235938.1601582176#/p/13



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DESIGN YOUR OWN GOLF COURSE

The course should contain all elements of a regular course, except for a putting green.

You may use alternative equipment and targets as mentioned before.



DESIGN YOUR OWN GOLF COURSE

The following suggestions are listed for consideration in planning a limited space golf play area:

- **Teeing areas** can be easily established by using any kind of markers, such as paper cups, small stakes, flags or pylons;



DESIGN YOUR OWN GOLF COURSE

- **Hazards** of a golf course, including bunkers, lateral water and a sign and an outline of tape, paint or rope can design regular water hazards.
- If the ball comes to lie within the area, the appropriate golf rule is in effect and the student must play accordingly.



DESIGN YOUR OWN GOLF COURSE

- **Greens** can be marked with a sign, cone or flagstick and varied in size and shape.
 - Use tape or paint to mark two concentric circles for the "green."
 - Balls landing in the larger circle call for 2 additional strokes in lieu of putting, if only a flagstick is used with no markings, ball is considered holed when within 1 club length from the flagstick.
 - Balls must come to rest within the circle to be considered holed out.



DESIGN YOUR OWN GOLF COURSE

- To construct a **putting course** on grass, use cones or paper cups with flags. Balls hitting the cups or cones are scored as holed putts.
- **Boundary lines** should be established and marked with small stakes, paint, rope or cones; The use of natural or manmade objects in outside courses, such as trees, bushes, fences and walks can add variety and challenge to your short course.



DESIGN YOUR OWN GOLF COURSE

- **The distance of the holes** can vary in length depending on the type of ball used and the space available. Students should begin with a plastic or soft ball, such as a tennis ball. As they become more skilled, a golf ball can be introduced in outdoor settings. (Short distance golf balls may be used in Outdoor settings).



DESIGN YOUR OWN GOLF COURSE

- **Scorecards** for the course should be designed so that students can experience the thrill of on-course play and competition.
- Modify the scoring system or scorecard.



INDOOR COURSE OPTIONS

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INDOOR COURSE OPTIONS

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- The ball can be putted into a putting disc or metal cup.



INDOOR COURSE OPTIONS

- Use a tape or rope on the floor, mark indoor golf course similar to an outdoor course.
- As a creative indoor golf designer, add variety to your gym layout: use mats for bunkers, chairs for trees, mark water hazards on the floor, and so on.



OUTDOOR COURSE OPTIONS

- If an unimproved area is used, you may consider designing some actual golf holes.
- We recommend **using a cup hole twice the size of a normal cup**. These larger holes would have an 8 1/2-inch diameter and be 4 inches deep (or about the size of a #10 can). Insert a dowel rod with a flag attached, and you have a golf hole!



OUTDOOR COURSE OPTIONS

- The enlarged cup will **accommodate the use of a lofted club** in getting the ball into the cup. This is more effective than attempting to use a putter on ungroomed surfaces. Be sure that the holes are marked so that they do not become a hazard when your course is not in use.



OUTDOOR COURSE OPTIONS

- If mowing equipment is available, **cut the grass to a height of 1/2 inch**. Sand will help smooth the surface. Although this putting area will not be maintained in the same condition as a green, it will allow for students to get the feel and experience of putting.



OUTDOOR COURSE OPTIONS

- **Short-distance golf balls** can create a more realistic round of golf by requiring the use of a greater variety of clubs. These balls are not designed to substitute for plastic balls or whiffle balls in an indoor situation.



OUTDOOR COURSE OPTIONS

- When laying out an open area golf course, **arrange the holes in a counterclockwise pattern** regarding **safety**. Most players will be right-handed, and their tendency will be to hit to the right.



CONFIRMING YOUR PRACTICE SCHEDULE

Once your venue has been determined and assessed, you are now ready to confirm your training and competition schedules.



CONFIRMING YOUR PRACTICE SCHEDULE

It is important to publish training and competition schedules to submit to:

- Facility Representatives
- Local Volunteer Coaches
- Program participants and Families
- Media
- Management Team members
- Officials for competition



CONFIRMING YOUR PRACTICE SCHEDULE

The Training and Competition schedules might include:

- Dates
- Start Times
- Registration or Meeting area
- End Times
- Designated Pick-up area
- Contact phone number at the facility
- Coaches phone number



SAMPLE LESSON TOPICS

Example Week 1: Putting

- Equipment needs: Putter (you may use alternative putters such as SNAG, Short Golf etc.)
- Course or Practice Facility Rules
- Start short distances from hole or target and progress to longer distances



SAMPLE LESSON TOPICS



SAMPLE LESSON TOPICS

Example Week 2: Chip

- Equipment needs: 7 iron or chipper of appropriate size (you may use alternative equipment as noted above)
- Like putting, start with short distances and progress to longer distances



SAMPLE LESSON TOPICS



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SAMPLE LESSON TOPICS

Example Week 3: Pitching (you may use alternative equipment as noted above)

- Equipment needs: 9 iron or wedge of appropriate size
- Like prior sessions, start with short distances and progress to longer distances. Consider pitching over a target



SAMPLE LESSON TOPICS



SAMPLE LESSON TOPICS

Example Week 4 and beyond: Full irons and woods
(you may use alternative equipment as noted above)

- Weeks 4 and beyond will be dictated by the ability progression of the Athlete



PRACTICE COMPETITIONS

The strategic plan of golf is that **competition, league or casual play should be the goal of program development**, ability permitting.

Competition, league or casual play motivates individuals, coaches and volunteers to participate and train.

But at the same time, **keep it fun!**



PRACTICE COMPETITIONS

Expand your program and schedule to expose your Athletes to as many opportunities to play as possible. A few suggestions:

- Review the Special Olympics Level 1 through 5 in the Special Olympics Golf Rules for each level rules, requirements and program and course criteria.
- Competition or play can be part of every lesson plan, such as a putting competition.



PRACTICE COMPETITIONS

- **Organize a Unified Golf League** where a Athlete is paired with an individual without a disability in an alternate shot format. This could be a peer or family member or even the coach.
- Depending on ability progression, **encourage Athletes that are eligible and have the ability level, to compete in local events and tournaments.** In many areas there are junior events targeting the age group of Athletes.



PRACTICE COMPETITIONS

Host a competition at an alternative golf facility:

- Top Golf,
- Drive Shack, Miniature putting course,
- Par three course; or
- Pitch and Putt





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MORE INFORMATION

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