2020 GOLF SEASON OVERVIEW

Golf Season Calendar

- Registration Deadlines
  - Qualifying Tournaments – July 8, 2020
  - Season Ending Tournament, Tournament of Champions –July 29, 2020
  - Golf Scorecards – August TBD (Date sent by Mass Golf Association)
- Qualifying Tournaments
  - Tekoa Country Club, Westfield July TBD
  - Indian Meadows Westborough, July TBD
  - North Shore, July TBD
- Season Ending State Tournaments
  - Tournament of Champions August 22 & 23, 2020

Registration

- Programs must abide by registration deadlines. Programs that do not meet registration deadlines will not be eligible to compete.
- In order to attend any event or practice all participants must have up to date forms and/or certifications on file with Special Olympics Massachusetts by published deadline.

Waivers

- In order to advance to a State level season ending tournament (tournament of champions) all participants must compete at and qualify through a regional qualifier. No team waivers will be granted.
  - An athlete who is sick or injured may be granted a waiver if Special Olympics MA is notified in advance or immediately after tournament and there is still space available at tournament of champions.
- Waivers will not be giving out for behavioral issues or athlete doesn’t feel like attending that day.

Sport Resources

A variety of coaching resources are available for download at the Special Olympics sport resource page (https://resources.specialolympics.org/sports-essentials). These include:

- Sport Essentials
  - Article One / Coaching S.O. Athlete / Sport Rules / Coaching Guides / Athlete & Coach Development Models
- Unified Sports
  - Online Certification Course / Unified Sport Models / Team Assessment Tools / Principles of Meaningful Involvement / Tutorial Videos / Unified Guidelines
Age Guidelines Team Sports
- 8-15
- 16-21
- 22+
  - These are guidelines athletes maybe bumped up in age group to make competitive divisions. But will not be bumped up an age group that spans two age groups. Divisioning comes down to ability being the determining factor.
  - Athletes age is determined by age of athlete at State Games
  - Age group is determined by oldest member of the team

Uniform Guidelines for Golf (Participants & Coaches)
- Polo shirt with proper Logo
- Matching Khaki pants or Khaki / cargo shorts
  - No jeans (shorts or pants), gym shorts or sweat pants

Website / Event Info
- All Events are posted to the calendar page Special Olympics MA website.
- Event pages will include:
  - Programs assigned to event
  - Event timelines
  - Event contact Information and On site leaders
  - Event Schedule with participation #’s by event
  - Weather policy
- Spring Season Resource Page
  - Links to events
  - Sport rules
  - Registration form

Levels of Competition
- Qualifying Tournament
  - In order to advance on to Tournament of Champions athletes must participate in a qualifying tournament
  - Ribbons will be awarded based on placement with in their division
  - Gold medal winners automatically advance. Silver – 6th place will advance by place until quota is full

- Season Ending State Tournaments
  - Tournament of Champions
    - Criteria to attend: must have competed at a qualifying tournament and received a pre-determined award. No waivers will be granted
    - Have attended all assigned competition events
    - Medals and ribbons will be awarded based on team’s placement.
Golf Advancement Criteria

- **Golfers are required** to attend a qualifying tournament.
- **All Golfers looking to advance to Tournament of Champions MUST:**
  - Submit predetermined # of scorecards by DEADLINE (*August ___th*)
  - Maintain an average score, per SOI rules, of the following by level:
    - 75 Level II or a handicap of under 30
    - 120 Level III or a handicap of under 40
    - 70 Level IV or a handicap of under 30
    - 120 Level V or a handicap of under 40
- Those golfers or teams that shoot above the max score will be bumped down a level

**Required Scorecard Submittal**

- Any new golfers to your program MUST complete the Level I skills assessment spelled out in the SOI Golf Rule book. Once athlete reaches the benchmarks outlined in the rule book they will be allowed to graduate to Level II or the level that matches their ability level.
  - Results of Level I skills test for new athletes must be submitted to Special Olympics Massachusetts before athlete can participate in Level II or beyond
- SOMA will division for Tournament of Champions using an athletes or teams USGA handicap. In order to receive or maintain an official team or individual USGA Handicap team / individual must
  - **New Handicap**
    - Teams submit six practices rounds of 9 holes (level 2 & 4) or 18 holes (level 3 & 5) by published deadline
    - Level 2 & 3 teams must submit scores in alternate shoot format
    - Those moving to another level must create a new handicap for that level
  - **Maintain current handicap**
    - Teams submit four practices rounds of 9 holes (level 2 & 4) or 18 holes (level 3 & 5) by published deadline
    - Level 2 & 3 teams must submit scores in alternate shoot format

**Tournament of Champions**

- **Level II & IV golfers will play 9 holes each day**
  - Lunch will not be provided at course
- **Level III & V golfers will play 18 holes each day**
  - Lunch will be provided at course
- All golfers will be assigned a tee time
SOMA Golf Rules

- **Lost Ball**
  - If a ball is lost or is out of bounds, **under penalty of one stroke**, as nearly as possible drop new ball at the spot from which the original ball was lost.

- **Immoveable Objects & Free Relief**
  - Sprinkler head, cart path, ground under repair or immovable object. Relief is granted from object only if your ball, intended stance, or swing is interfered with. Line of play is not covered. Take your stance, player will receive one club length of relief. The new spot has to be without interference from what caused drop. If new spot after relief is still unplayable, then player must follow unplayable ball rule

- **Unplayable Ball**
  - The player may deem his ball unplayable at any place on the course except when the ball is in a water hazard. The player is the sole judge as to whether his ball is unplayable. If the player deems his ball to be unplayable, he must, **under penalty of one stroke:**
    - Play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was lost/deemed unplayable or
    - Drop a ball behind the point where the ball lay, keeping that point directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit to how far behind that point the ball may be dropped; or
    - Drop a ball within two club-lengths of the spot where the ball lay, but not nearer the hole.
  - Repair all ball marks and divots

- **Alternate Strokes Level II & III**
  - The players will play **alternately** from the teeing grounds and then alternate strokes until the ball is holed or **max # of shots allowed is reached (next bullet)**
  - **SWING AND MISS COUNTS AS A STROKE**

- **Ball falls off tee**
  - Prior to stroke taken (**swing & miss does not count**): allowed to re-tee up. No plenty
  - Swing & Miss: **COUNTS AS A STROKE**. Next player hits ball as it lies.

- **Max # of Strokes Allowed Per Hole**
  - The maximum score on a hole will be a **double par**. If the double par is played without holing the shot, the team shall record a score of double par X and circle the score and proceed to the next hole.

- **Local Rules & Official Golf Rules**
  - All local course rules, hazards and out of bounds will be followed
  - All official golf rules set forth by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews and the USGA shall govern competition except when in conflict with official Special Olympics Rules.
Best Practices of a Safe Coach

The following bullets are simple best practices of a safe coach and reminders for all Special Olympic Massachusetts coach:

- Limit 1 to 1 interaction with athletes
  - always be within the sight line or ear shot of others
- Always submit an incident report after an injury
- Follow injury and concussion return to play policy
- Never distribute any medication that is not in its original container
- Mandated reporter
  - SOMA coaches are not mandated reporters,
  - you know your athletes and if you suspect that they are subject to any abuse or in immediate danger do not hesitate to notify the police and Special Olympics staff
- Before any trip, event or overnight
  - review code of conduct
  - clearly explain rules and behavior expectations for all (athletes, chaperones, partners)
- Create a session long training plan that sets goals that focus on athlete development and skill improvement

Smoking, Drinking, Illegal Substances

- Special Olympics Massachusetts has established that all competition venues, housing facilities, ceremonies venues, and Olympic Towns will be alcohol, tobacco, cannabis (of any form), non-control substances & vaping free. Any coach, chaperone, volunteer, family member or athlete in violation of the Policy will face disciplinary action from SOMA, which could result in the violating individual(s) being sent home and suspended from future participation. SOMA Coaches, Chaperones, Volunteers, Family Members or Athletes must agree to abstain from the consumption of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, cannabis, and vaping during the entire course of all Special Olympics Massachusetts competition events.

- No concealed weapons, firearms are allowed at any Special Olympics Massachusetts event!
Coach Education Criteria

Below is the most current version of the United States Coaches Education system that is required of all Special Olympics coaches as outlined by Special Olympics North America. This progression chart was approved by the Special Olympics United States Leadership Committee in Fall of 2018.

Sport Assistant Coach
- Valid Class A Form
- Special Olympics MA General Orientation
- Concussion Certification
- Protective Behaviors

Level 1 - Certified Coach (*core coach knowledge*)

Traditional Special Olympics Coach
- All Sport Assistant Coach Requirements
- Coaching Special Olympics Athlete
  - Online course via Human Kinetics Coach Education
  - Or in person training conducted by a Chapter approved trainer

Unified Sports
- All Sport Assistant Coach Requirements
- Coaching Unified Sports
  - online Unified Sports course via NFHS
  - Or in person training conducted by a Chapter approved trainer

Level 2 - Certified Coach (*Sports Specific Knowledge*)

Traditional Special Olympics and Unified Sports
- All Level 1 requirements
- Sports Specific Course
  - Online for those sports where online courses have been developed
  - or in person sport specific training

** NOTE- Level required of Head Coaches attending a USA Games in specific sport being coached

Level 3 - Certified Coach (*Advanced Coaching Knowledge*)
- All Level 2 requirements
- Principles of Coaching
  - or in person training conducted by a Chapter approved trainer

** NOTE- Level required of Head Coaches attending a World Games in specific sport being coached

If you have any questions about your certification status or certification status of the coaches in your program please contact your Business Operations contact.

March 26, 2020
Match Play
To create more competition opportunities for golfers, SOMA is planning for a match play series. This is how it would work

- Programs arrange to send two – three golf teams to compete against each other at a predetermined site
- Programs compete against each other in head to head Unified matches in 9 hole matches
- Programs do not have to send same unified teams to each match and can choose which teams go to which match
- SOMA will cover green fees
- Teams earn point for each hole they win. Team with most points at end of match wins the match
- End of season program with the most points wins is named Match Play Champion

Pitch & Putt Series

- Special Olympics MA is exploring in setting up pitch & put skills series across the state. This would be a skills-based competition for golfers of all levels and be a feeder system in the golf program for new athletes.
- Not only would this be a fun competition but a clinic where golfers can get hands on tips from MA golf pro’s.
- Golfers may attend as many pitch & putt events as they want and they accumulate points throughout the season by competing in the different skills. Prizes will be awarded based on the total of points a golfer earns throughout the year.