



Special Olympics Golf Supported by:



**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **SPECIAL OLYMPICS OKLAHOMA GOLFERS WILL COMPETE AT THE 2010 SPECIAL OLYMPICS USA NATIONAL GAMES**

### ***GAMES TO BE HELD JULY 18-23, IN LINCOLN, NEBRASKA***

*TULSA, Oklahoma* –Four golfers and one coach from Oklahoma will join nearly 200 golfers from 39 states to compete in the 2010 Special Olympics USA National Games in Lincoln, Neb., July 18-23. Golf is one of 13 competitive sports at the USA National Games where nearly 3,000 Special Olympics athletes from across the United States will compete in the largest multi-sport event in the history of Nebraska and one of the largest multi-sport events in the United States during 2010.

Special Olympics Oklahoma golfers at the USA National Games are:

Kevin Maples, 51, Level V, Oklahoma City, OK

Jeffrey McDonald, 31, Level V, Edmond, OK

Joseph Pankonin, 27, Level II, Enid, OK

George Pankonin\*, Joseph's Father, Level II, Enid, OK

Dennis Story, Special Olympics Oklahoma Coach, Ada, OK

*\*Unified Partner Playing with Special Olympics Athlete*

*For athlete profiles visit <http://www.specialolympicsoklahoma.org/Pdf/2010NationalGames/Golf.pdf>*

*Profiles for all Oklahoma athletes competing at National Games (organized alphabetically, by sport and by city), visit <http://www.specialolympicsoklahoma.org/NationalGames.html>*

Special Olympics golf is part of the worldwide Special Olympics sports movement for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Special Olympics golfers and their Unified partners (for team play) will compete in one of five levels of competition. Level I is an individual skills contest, where six golf skills are tested. Level II is an alternate shot team play, where a Special Olympics athlete is paired with a non-Special Olympics partner of more advanced skill for a 9-hole competition. Level III is Unified Sports team play, pairing Special Olympics and Unified partners of similar ability for an 18-hole competition. Levels IV and V are individual stroke-play 9-hole and 18-hole competitions, respectively. Competition for Levels I, III & V will take place at Highlands Golf Course, while Level II & IV competitors will play at Mahoney Golf Course. Both golf competition venues are located in Lincoln.

Olympic-style Opening Ceremonies will be held July 18 with three competitive golf rounds played July 19-21. Awards ceremonies for the golf competition will take place immediately following the final round on July 21.

The PGA of America and USGA are supporting the golf competition at the Games and have provided support vital to the growth and development of the Special Olympics Golf program since it began in 1988. Additionally, the associations have been integral to the conduct of the annual National Invitational Tournament since its inception in 1999, providing assistance with rules education, tournament administration, and course setup, in addition to financial contributions. This spring, Special Olympics announced that professional golfer Padraig Harrington became a Special Olympics Global Ambassador.

(more)

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About the 2010 Special Olympics USA National Games

The 2010 Special Olympics USA National Games in Lincoln, Neb. will showcase and celebrate the Special Olympics movement and athletes from across the United States, while illustrating the power of sports to educate and inform about the true abilities and achievements of people with intellectual disabilities. From July 18-23, 2010, nearly 3,000 athletes will compete in 13 Olympic-style sports, with the support of 1,000 coaches, 8,000 volunteers and an estimated 15,000 family and friends. In addition to sports, the USA National Games will offer various programs in health, wellness and education. To learn more, please visit [www.2010specialolympics.org](http://www.2010specialolympics.org).

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is an international organization that changes lives by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities, promoting acceptance for all, and fostering communities of understanding and respect worldwide. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to nearly 3.5 million athletes in over 170 countries in all regions of the world, providing year-round sports training, athletic competition and other related programs. Special Olympics now takes place every day, changing the lives of people with intellectual disabilities in places like China and from regions like the Middle East to the community playgrounds and ball fields in every small neighborhood's backyard. Special Olympics provides people with intellectual disabilities continuing opportunities to realize their potential, develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage and experience joy and friendship. Visit Special Olympics at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org).

About Special Olympics Oklahoma

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide a year-round program of sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Today 9,500 Special Olympics Oklahoma athletes participate in more than 120 sports competitions and training clinic opportunities every year. Competition is offered in 15 official sports. There are more than 1,700 trained coaches and thousands of volunteer opportunities. Visit Special Olympics Oklahoma at [www.sook.org](http://www.sook.org) or call 918-481-1234 for more information.

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*(Editor's Note: The PGA of America will share advance venue and player information; event photographs and daily golf results at [www.PGAMediaCenter.com](http://www.PGAMediaCenter.com). PGA media contact for golf venue is Sherry Major, [sherrymajor@verizon.net](mailto:sherrymajor@verizon.net).)*