

Is Golf A Sport?

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1. Golf meets the definition of the word "sport" found in many dictionaries. Merriam-Webster defines sport as "physical activity engaged in for pleasure: a particular activity (as an athletic game)." [6] Dictionary.com says a sport is "an athletic activity requiring skill or physical prowess and often of a competitive nature, as racing, baseball, tennis, golf, bowling, wrestling, boxing, hunting, fishing, etc." [7] 2. Like all sports, golf requires physical exertion. Golfers who play a nine-hole course (2-2.5 miles [8]) without a cart while carrying their own clubs burn 721 calories (613 calories if a caddie carries the bag of clubs which weighs 30-50 pounds on average). [9] [10] Professional tournaments have four rounds of 18 holes, which would be 4,904 calories burned over four days. Golfing without a cart burns an average of 360 calories per hour (306 with a caddie), compared to about 364 per hour spent curling, 345 doing gymnastics, and 273 bowling. [11] [29] 3. Sports require coordinated muscle use, and the golf swing uses at least 17 muscle groups in the coordinated movement of the hands, wrists, arms, abdomen, and legs according to a study in the <i>BMJ (British Medical Journal)</i>. [13] Playing golf on a professional level requires athletic ability to walk long distances (4-5 miles per 18-hole course [8]) and hit long drives with consistent depth and aim. [14] 4. The Olympics are the ultimate worldwide sporting event, and golf was selected by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for inclusion starting in 2016. It had been included in two prior Olympics, 1900 and 1904. [2]	1. Golf better matches the definition of a game than a sport. Merriam-Webster defines a game as an "activity engaged in for diversion or amusement." [27] Dictionary.com says a game is "an amusement or pastime; a competitive activity involving skill, chance, or endurance on the part of two or more persons who play according to a set of rules, usually for their own amusement or for that of spectators." [28] 2. Unlike a sport, golf is not a rigorous physical activity. Burning 360 calories per hour playing golf without a cart or caddie is far less than the number of calories burned per hour in competitive sports: 900 in soccer, and 727 in football, basketball, and tennis. [9] [29] 3. Golfers are not athletes. Professional golfers are sometimes overweight, old, or out of shape, and their caddies carry the equipment for them. There is no running, jumping, or cardiovascular activity in golf. If an activity does not make you break a sweat, or if it can be done while drinking and smoking, then it is not a sport. 4. The fact that golf can be difficult and requires practice and skill to achieve proficiency does not mean it qualifies as a sport. Brain surgery, chess, and computer programming are difficult tasks that also require practice and mental acuity, but they are clearly not sports. 5. Golf involves competition, keeping score, and declaring a winner, but those qualities alone do not make it a sport. Spelling bees, poker, and darts are competitions with scores and winners, which are sometimes broadcast on the sports network ESPN, but one would not consider those activities to be sports. [30]

5. Golf falls under the purview of the athletic departments of colleges and universities, and is subject to the authority of the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). [15] Golf athletic scholarships are offered for men at 294 Division I schools and for women at 238 Division I schools. [16] 6. Professional golfers are considered athletes by mainstream media. The Associated Press has named a golfer as its Female Athlete of the Year 24 times since the award began in 1931, meaning golfers account for 30 percent of the honorees. The Associated Press Male Athlete of the Year has been a golfer nine times, or 11 percent of the honorees. [5]	6. Athletic experts agree that golf lacks the athletic rigor needed to be a real sport. Golf was ranked 51 out of 60 activities by a panel of sports scientists, athletes, and journalists assembled by ESPN. They ranked the athletic difficulty of 60 activities based on ten categories such as endurance, agility, and strength. The panel determined that the level of athleticism in golf ranked lower than ping pong and just ahead of roller skating. [31]
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