

2026-2027  
**JUNIOR GOLD  
TOURNAMENT  
GUIDE**

U12/U14/U16/U18 Divisions



Prepare your bowlers for the  
2027 Junior Gold Championships

# JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2026–2027 TOURNAMENT GUIDE

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# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

## PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP AND CHAMPIONSHIPS OVERVIEW

The Junior Gold Championships offers six divisions:

- U12 Boys, U12 Girls
- U14 Boys, U14 Girls
- U16 Boys, U16 Girls
- U18 Boys, U18 Girls

<b>Date of Birth</b>	<b>Division</b>
8/1/14 or later	U12
8/1/12 - 7/31/14	U14
8/1/10 - 7/31/12	U16
8/1/08 - 7/31/10	U18

The Junior Gold Championships serve USBC Youth Standard members who have a Junior Gold membership.

Helping youth bowlers progress and succeed in the sport through challenging competition, advanced training, skill development and coaching is the heart of the Junior Gold program.

Junior Gold membership and experiencing the challenges of Junior Gold competition help youth bowlers

learn all aspects of the sport and prepare them to continue to bowl competitively as they grow older. Junior Gold members regularly compete at the high school and collegiate level. Dedicated youth bowlers may participate in Junior Gold for several reasons:

- Learn the nuances of the more competitive game
- Earn college scholarships
- Prepare for bowling at the collegiate level
- Prepare for the ultimate goals of international or professional bowling
- **Earn a spot on JUNIOR TEAM USA!**

Events can be conducted any time from July 1, 2026 - May 2, 2027.

## JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

The pinnacle for Junior Gold members is competing at the annual Junior Gold Championships.

The Junior Gold Championships is open to Junior Gold members who have qualified throughout the season in Junior Gold events. At the national championships, male and female Junior Gold athletes compete for berths on USBC Junior Team USA, individual national titles and scholarships in their respective divisions.

## WHY OFFER A JUNIOR GOLD PROGRAM?



Helps retain Youth members and attract new members

Emphasizes advanced training and skill development, coaching and elite competition

Acts as a feeder to collegiate bowling, Team USA and professional bowling

Helps continue positive relationships with the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee

### **AND**

Scholarships awarded to tournament participants at national finals



# USBC JUNIOR GOLD MEMBERSHIP

## MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

### Junior Gold Approach

- Junior Gold Approach is the official monthly newsletter of Junior Gold, delivered directly to members via email. It features tips from some of the top coaches and provides news about upcoming qualifying tournaments, leagues and scholarship opportunities.

### Junior Gold membership card/gift

- Junior Gold members receive a membership card and a special gift.

### Increased Scholarship Opportunities

- Junior Gold members can compete in exclusive Junior Gold qualifying events with the opportunity to win scholarships throughout the season, plus additional scholarships at the Junior Gold Championships.

### Opportunity to become a member of Junior Team USA

- Members of Junior Team USA are chosen annually at the Junior Gold Championships. Team duties and activities begin Jan. 1 of the following year.

## MEMBERSHIP REQUIREMENTS

- USBC Youth Standard members, in good standing, can apply for Junior Gold membership at any time.
- Athlete must purchase a Junior Gold membership for \$25 for U12 bowlers, \$40 for U14 bowlers and \$50 for U16 and U18 bowlers prior to participating in Junior Gold Championships qualifying tournaments. The USBC Junior Gold membership fee is separate from the regular USBC Youth membership fee. Each membership is valid for the current bowling season only regardless of date of purchase.
- Once the Junior Gold membership is obtained, it remains valid for the current bowling season, July 1 - July 31, 2027.



## JUNIOR TEAM USA MEMBERS HAVE UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TO:

- Represent the United States in international competition
- Earn scholarship awards
- Train at the International Training and Research Center in Arlington, Texas
- Enjoy expense-paid national and international travel and competition
- Make appearances in Junior Team USA uniforms
- Access world-class coaching
- Be seeded into next year's Junior Gold Championships

## JOIN THE JUNIOR GOLD PROGRAM

- Purchase the Junior Gold membership upgrade online. | [BOWL.com/JuniorGold](http://BOWL.com/JuniorGold), select "Membership"
- Obtain a USBC Youth Standard membership online or through your league. | [BOWL.com/Join](http://BOWL.com/Join).

## JUNIOR GOLD CONTACT INFORMATION:

**Junior Gold Program**  
**621 Six Flags Drive**  
**Arlington, TX 76011**  
**(817) 385-8426**  
**Email: [youthtournaments@bowl.com](mailto:youthtournaments@bowl.com)**



# JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

## QUALIFYING EVENT DETAILS: OVERVIEW

Junior Gold members who have already earned an entry in this season's Junior Gold Championships can still enter and participate in additional Junior Gold qualifying events.

**However, because an athlete can only earn one entry into the Junior Gold Championships, he/she must accept the berth from his/her earliest completed competition.**

If a Junior Gold member wins an entry but cannot attend the Junior Gold Championships, he/she is responsible for alerting the Junior Gold Championships qualifying event director so that the entry may be passed to the next qualified participant in that event. An athlete who gives up his/her spot or is unable to attend must requalify for the following year; individual berths are not carried over to the next year. If the Junior Gold member fails to alert the Junior Gold event director, he/she risks disqualification from that Junior Gold qualifier for the following year.

Tournaments may run U12-, U14-, U16- or U18-only qualifiers. Tournaments may also conduct a combination of any divisions. Athletes are only allowed to compete in a competition that includes their appropriate age division.

**DON'T BE LOCKED OUT.  
RESERVE YOUR SPOTS EARLY!  
EVENTS CAN BE CONDUCTED FROM  
JULY 1, 2026 – MAY 2, 2027**

### WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A REGULAR AND "PREMIER" EVENT?

- A regular event pays only the advancer's entry fee into the Junior Gold Championships.
- A "premier" event is an enhanced event that pays the winner's advancer entry fee plus any or all expenses at the Junior Gold Championships. There is no minimum stipend amount for the spot to qualify as a "premier" spot.
- If an athlete already has won an entry to the Junior Gold Championships and then wins another, he/she cannot take the second entry as a scholarship. The spot must go to the next-highest qualified Junior Gold member.
- Junior Gold Championships berths, stipend and scholarship money are considered separate awards. If the athlete already has won an entry and wins a second event, the athlete would be awarded the first-place scholarship money and/or stipend money, but the entry would be given to the next eligible Junior Gold athlete.



# JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

## QUALIFYING EVENT DETAILS: TOURNAMENTS

### Qualifying can be conducted as part of any USBC-certified event.

- Association championships
- State championships
- Local tournaments

### Qualifiers must consist of

- At least four (4) male Junior Gold members
- Or, at least four (4) female Junior Gold members
- Or, any combination of four (4) Junior Gold members regardless of gender

### Format must consist of at least three (3) games of scratch competition

### Basic Rules

- Bowlers are permitted to enter once per qualifying event.
- Reentries are not permitted.
- Bowlers must be Junior Gold members PRIOR to the start of qualifying.
  - Bowlers may sign up for membership on-site before qualifying starts.

**Event Organizers are required to check ALL Junior Gold memberships prior to start. A current list of members can be found at [BOWL.com/juniorgold](http://BOWL.com/juniorgold).**

\*Tournament information must be sent to USBC **BEFORE** your event takes place. Failure to submit the tournament application prior to the start of the event may result in refusal to accept those qualifiers.

### CHECKLIST FOR HOLDING A TOURNAMENT QUALIFYING EVENT

1. Download Junior Gold Championships qualifying materials, applications and report forms from BOWL.com on the Youth/Junior Gold pages.
2. Complete an application for USBC certification of your event through the USBC Online Tournament Certification Program, which can be found on BOWL.com. After you have certified your event(s) and have the USBC Certification number, you must still submit a Qualifying Event Application to Junior Gold PRIOR to the start of your competition.
3. Determine where and when the event(s) will be held.
4. Will the event be conducted on a Sport/Challenge lane condition?
5. Determine the format your event(s) will use.  
Tournament competition must be scratch and consist of a minimum of three (3) games.
6. Determine the rules for the event(s).

### The rules for your event MUST include the following:

- Event date, time and place
  - Cost of entry
  - Clear explanation of how advancers will be determined
  - Advancement ratio being used
  - Tiebreaking system based on the format of the tournament
  - Statement requiring Junior Gold membership to participate
7. Determine whether you want your Junior Gold Championships qualifier to be a "premier" event.
  8. In Junior Gold Championships qualifying tournament events, you can either advance the champion of your tournament or a ratio of the Junior Gold athletes between 1:4 and 1:10.
  9. Inform all participants that if they already have accepted a berth, they would still be eligible to receive any stipend money if applicable.

*Checklist continued on p. 7*

**If you plan to hold multiple Junior Gold Championships qualifying tournaments, please fill out one tournament application and attach a list of dates for your events. This saves confusion and lets athletes know there will be additional opportunities to try for spots.**



# JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

## QUALIFYING EVENT DETAILS: TOURNAMENTS (Continued)

### CHECKLIST FOR HOLDING A TOURNAMENT QUALIFYING EVENT

*(Continued from p. 6)*

10. One MONTH prior to your event, complete a Junior Gold Championships Qualifying Event Application through the online portal, and submit a payment.

The cost for a reserved spot from a U12-only qualifier will be \$150, a U14-only qualifier will be \$200, a U16/U18-only qualifier will be \$250. A combined event will cost the amount of the oldest competitor in the combined division

11. **Within 15 days of completion of your Junior Gold Championships event, you must complete your event in the Junior Gold Qualifying portal at [BOWL.com/juniorgold](http://BOWL.com/juniorgold).**

Junior Gold Championships finalist packets will be emailed directly to the advancers once your post-event information has been processed.

12. All scholarship prize awards must be forwarded to USBC Headquarters for deposit with the SMART program (Scholarship Management and Account Reporting for Tenpins) within 30 days after the end of the competition.

(USBC Rule 100c, Item 4)



*Junior Gold reserves the right to institute additional methods of entry into the Junior Gold Championships for those athletes who live in areas determined to be under-served by the current Junior Gold qualification process.*

**Additional spots may be purchased after completion of the qualifier, pending availability. An entry is not reserved until full payment of that entry fee is received.** Unused spots will not be refunded and may not be carried over to the next season.

\*Tournament information must be entered online **BEFORE** your event takes place. Failure to submit the tournament application prior to the start of the event may result in refusal to accept those qualifiers.



# JUNIOR GOLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

## ENHANCED ADVANCER RATIO POLICIES

The minimum ratio to advance players to the Junior Gold Championships is 1:4. What follows is an explanation of how this standard applies to various situations.

When stating an advancement ratio, event management will state that the ratio is either a "hard" number (1:4), which means they will only advance one player for every four entrants, or they will add the caveat in their rules stating "or a major fraction thereof," which would allow them to advance an additional player should they have additional entries in excess of 51% of their ratio number. When an event reaches this standard, an additional player is allowed to advance and the event is required to subsidize any shortfall in the entry fee to the Junior Gold Championships.

As an example, in an event having a 1:4 or major fraction thereof ratio, the event would need to have seven entrants to advance a second player. The event would bear the financial responsibility to fund any shortfall of the entry fee to the Junior Gold Championships. Six entrants does not meet the threshold of 51%, so a second player could not advance under that rule.

If the event has additional entries in excess of their ratio but does not meet the 51% threshold to advance an additional player, we have historically asked that the additional money be returned to the event as additional prize money. To address this issue and provide more players the opportunity to advance, a new policy has been adopted that could allow the next player in line to advance to the Junior Gold Championships. This policy is:

Once an event has met their initial ratio and has additional entries in excess of that ratio, the next player in line will have the option to claim that spot by paying any remaining shortfall between the money collected and the entry fee for the Junior Gold Championships. This option is available **only** to the next player in line. If that player declines to exercise this option, it ceases at that point and the option is **not available** to other finishers down the line in the standings.

### IF YOU DO NOT USE A MAJOR FRACTION THEREOF

Here is an example of how the new ratio policies will be applied to qualifying events for the Junior Gold Championships given a 1:4 advancement ratio **without** the "or a major fraction thereof" stipulation.

If the event has five, six or seven entrants, the tournament will advance the winner under their 1:4 ratio. The second-place finisher would now be given the opportunity to fund any remaining shortfall between the entry money collected and the appropriate division entry fee and claim a spot in the Junior Gold Championships. This option is available **only** to the next player in line. If that player declines to exercise this option, it ceases at that point and the option is **not available** to other finishers down the line in the standings.

### IF YOU USE A MAJOR FRACTION THEREOF

Here is an example of how the new ratio policies will be applied to qualifying events for the Junior Gold Championships given a 1:4 advancement ratio **with** the "or a major fraction thereof" stipulation.

If the event has five or six entrants, the tournament will advance the winner under their 1:4 ratio. The second-place finisher would be given the opportunity to pay any remaining shortfall between the entry money collected and the entry fee and claim a spot in the Junior Gold Championships. This option is available **only** to the next player in line. If that player declines to exercise this option, it ceases at that point and the option is **not available** to other finishers down the line in the standings.

If the event has seven entrants, the tournament will advance the winner under their 1:4 ratio and an additional advancer under the "or a major fraction thereof" stipulation and the event is required to subsidize any shortfall in the entry fee to the Junior Gold Championships.

### MAJOR FRACTION THEREOF CHART

RATIO	ENTRIES NEEDED TO ADVANCE AN ADDITIONAL PLAYER
1:4	7
1:5	8
1:6	10
1:7	11
1:8	13
1:9	14
1:10	16



# FAQ

## GENERAL QUESTIONS

### Where can I obtain Junior Gold Championships information?

This handbook is available on BOWL.com. Simply click on the Tournaments tab and then on the Junior Gold link and proceed to the Qualifier section where you will see the Junior Gold Tournament Handbook tab. Here you will find the necessary materials to run your event. As always, the Junior Gold staff is available to assist and answer any questions. We can be reached at youthtournaments@bowl.com or by calling (817) 385-8426.

### What are the age divisions for the Junior Gold Championships and how much do we pay for memberships?

Division	Membership
U12	\$25
U14	\$40
U16	\$50
U18	\$50

### How much do spots cost for the Junior Gold Championships?

The cost for a reserved spot from a U12-only qualifier will be \$150, a U14-only qualifier will be \$200 and a U16- and U18-only qualifier will be \$250.

### What are the minimum average requirements for the divisions?

There are no minimum average requirements for participation. Any and all current USBC Youth Standard members are eligible to become a Junior Gold Member and bowl in a Junior Gold Championships qualifying event.

### How is it determined what division the advancer competes in?

Any eligible bowler who qualifies for the Junior Gold Championships will be placed in the appropriate division based on their date of birth.

### Can a U12 qualifier “play up” and participate in the U18 division instead of the U12 division at the Junior Gold Championships?

No, Junior Gold athletes must compete in the appropriate division based on their date of birth.

### If I don’t have enough entrants to have a separate U14 or U12 division but my advancers are under the age of 12, how much will my advancer spots cost?

The price of the Junior Gold Championships spot in a U14 combined event is not affected by the age of the winner. If there are not enough entrants for a separate event, all spots in a U14 combined event will cost \$200 and the player will compete in the appropriate age division at the Junior Gold Championships.

### How does the enhanced advancer policy work?

Once an event has met its minimum ratio and has entries in excess of that ratio, it has the opportunity to advance one additional entrant to the Junior Gold Championships. The next advancer only will be allowed to claim a spot by funding the balance of the money needed to pay for that spot. A detailed explanation of the policy can be found on the Junior Gold page of BOWL.com or Page 8 of this handbook.

### I have excess funds from the Junior Gold qualifier. What should I do with those excess funds?

All excess funds must go back to the athletes who entered the Junior Gold qualifying event. However, if you hold a series of Junior Gold Championships events through the season, you can keep those funds in a “Junior Gold” account to be used if there are any shortages in future events. If the event was not part of a series, you must return those funds through expenses for the advancer(s)

(from receipts the advancer(s) provides) or it can be returned to the Junior Gold bowlers as a scholarship.

### How can I award Junior Gold Championships spots? What are my options?

Tournament directors have many options when awarding spots. They can award based on a ratio (1:4, 1:5, 1:6, 1:7, 1:8, 1:9, or 1:10) or they can advance their tournament champion provided they have a sufficient number of entries. You can award your spots after the bowler’s three games of qualifying, or you can advance bowlers at the end of your tournament.

Please be very specific in the event rules on how the advancers to the Junior Gold Championships will be awarded. Include the words “with major fraction thereof” after the ratio if you intend on awarding two Junior Gold spots with a 1:4 ratio and seven bowlers.

### When can I hold Junior Gold Championships qualifying events?

Events can be held any time from July 1, 2026 - May 2, 2027 (during a regular season). In the case of a sold-out national event, Junior Gold will consider permitting qualifying events earlier. This is on a per-year basis.

*FAQ continued on p. 10*



# FAQ

## GENERAL QUESTIONS *(Continued)*

### **How long do I have to submit my post-event reports?**

Junior Gold Finalist and post-event information regarding your Junior Gold qualifying event are to be submitted to Junior Gold via the online portal within 15 days after the end of the event. Holding on to this information longer than this affects the accuracy of our records and can cause eligibility issues for players who may have paid their Junior Gold membership dues at your event.

### **What benefits are included with the USBC Junior Gold membership?**

- Junior Gold membership card
- Member gift
- Junior Gold Approach E-blasts
- Reduced prices for coaching at ITRC

### **In the Junior Gold Championships, can an individual opt to cross over to the other gender division?**

No. Girls may only compete in the girls' divisions and boys may only compete in the boys' divisions.

### **Can we hold a Junior Gold Championships qualifying event during our association championship event?**

You can easily incorporate a Junior Gold qualifying event into your local or state association championship events. Since you only need three games for a qualifying event, you can use the scores from any designated event or events from your championship tournament as a Junior Gold qualifier.

## TOURNAMENT QUESTIONS

### **What is the minimum number of games that must be bowled in a Junior Gold Championships qualifying event?**

All Junior Gold qualifying done during tournaments must have a minimum of three games in the tournament.

### **I want to run a Junior Gold qualifying event. What are the steps I must take?**

Certify your tournament online at BOWL.com.

Submit a copy of your proposed rules and the completed JUNIOR GOLD TOURNAMENT APPLICATION to Junior Gold. At least ONE MONTH prior to your event, complete the Junior Gold Championships Qualifying Event Application, submit your rules and make the required spot deposit using the online portal at BOWL.com/juniorgold.

Submit the entry fee for all spots reserved within 15 days following the end of the event. The POST-EVENT REPORT and the FINALIST REPORT both must be submitted to Junior Gold. Compliance with this requirement is key to Junior Gold maintaining an accurate database of advancers, alternates and Junior Gold memberships.

### **I run multiple Junior Gold Championships events throughout the year. Is there a streamlined procedure I can follow to get them all covered at once?**

When you go to certify your tournament, you will choose the option for "Comprehensive Tournament." This will allow you to enter all your events under one certification number. When you certify your tournament with the Junior Gold Qualifying Portal at BOWL.com/juniorgold, you will need to create new events for each scheduled tournament date.

### **I have a tournament that has multiple squads. How can I run Junior Gold Championships qualifying in this type of event?**

There are two ways of running qualifying for "squad" events. The first is to make each squad a separate qualifying event. Bowlers would pay to enter a squad, and each squad must meet the minimum of four Junior Gold boys or four Junior Gold girls or four Junior Gold athletes of either gender. You can then award your ratio based on the number of entries per

squad. Junior Gold athletes would then have the opportunity to enter various squads. If you would prefer to award your ratio/champion after all of your squads have bowled, bowlers may only enter a Junior Gold qualifying event once prior to their squad. For example, John is bowling in Squads 1, 2 and 3. He decided to participate in Junior Gold during the second Squad. In that case, only his score from squad 2 would count towards Junior Gold even if Squads 1 and 3 were higher scores. Scores are counted immediately after the athlete pays the Junior Gold fee (if applicable).

### **Can a bowler enter a Junior Gold qualifying event multiple times and use his/her highest score to qualify?**

No. A player can enter a specific Junior Gold qualifying event only once. Multiple participation is NOT allowed in Junior Gold qualifying events.

### **I had a tie for my advancer, and I'm only able to send one bowler based on my ratio. What do I do?**

As with any tie advancing to the next level, you must hold a roll-off (USBC 326a, Item 2b) of at least one frame.

*FAQ continued on p. 11*



# FAQ

(Continued)

**At the end of my event, I found that one of the advancers did not have a current Junior Gold membership. How should I handle this?**

The first mistake was letting the player initially participate. Junior Gold rules require ALL participants to have a current Junior Gold membership BEFORE they begin the qualifying event. In this case, the player is not eligible to advance and should be replaced with the next eligible player in line.

**I only have three bowlers who have not yet qualified for the Junior Gold Championships. Can I pay for a bowler who has already qualified to make my required four bowlers?**

No. There cannot be a “phantom” bowler included to reach the minimum requirement. If a bowler already has obtained a berth to the Junior Gold Championships, he/she may enter another tournament provided the bowler pays for his/her entry and does so by his/her own choice. This means the bowler must consent to enter the tournament and is not allowed to be “entered into an event without his/her knowledge.”

**Are there any tournament formats that are not allowed to be used for Junior Gold Championships qualifying events?**

Currently, the only tournament formats that are not allowed for Junior Gold would be the handicap events, Baker format, 40-frame game, moonlight bowling tournaments, Mail-O-Graphic tournaments and no-tap tournaments. All of the Junior Gold tournaments must be USBC certified and Junior Gold approved and must follow all USBC rules. If your event is not a typical tenpin format, please contact us directly so that we can assist.

**I run an adult/youth tournament. Is this allowed as a Junior Gold Championships event?**

Yes. As long as your adult/youth bowlers compete for a minimum of three individual games in a scratch format, you can take the youth bowler’s score and use that as a qualifier. With the youth bowler’s score, you can award a spot based on your advancement ratio. You can award any scholarship money based on the total adult/youth score.

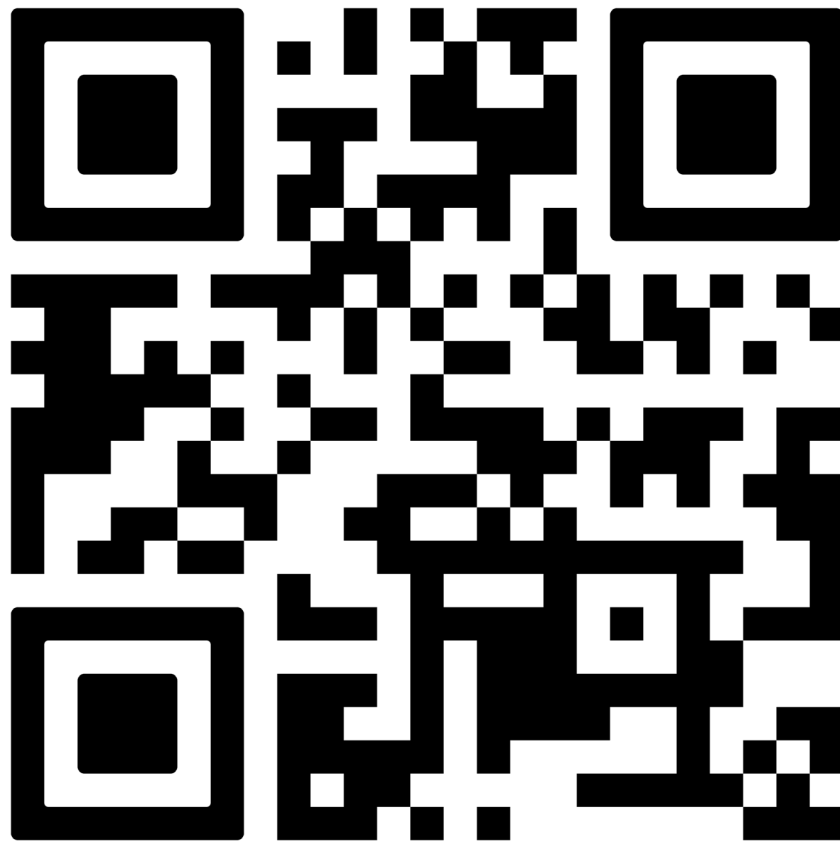
**I run a handicap and scratch tournament. The book says it must be scratch competition. Can I allow my handicap bowlers to participate in Junior Gold if they are members?**

Yes, they can participate as long as you are using only their scratch scores in the Junior Gold portion of the event. Please be very specific in your tournament rules as to the eligibility of your Junior Gold qualifier.

**What is the final day I can replace an individual who declines the invitation?**

The final day Junior Gold will accept replacements for individuals who decline is May 15, 2027.





**Purchase your Junior Gold  
Membership online now**





## **JUNIOR GOLD PROGRAM**

**621 Six Flags Drive  
Arlington, TX 76011**

**(817) 385-8426  
Email: [youthtournaments@bowl.com](mailto:youthtournaments@bowl.com)**