

INFORMATION FOR A FIRST TIME PLAYER IN WMGA TEAM MATCHES

what to expect, how to be prepared and a few helpful pointers

Welcome to the WMGA Team Matches. We hope this will be the first of many great days of competition. Here are some tips from the WMGA to help you navigate this new experience:

1. Your Team Captain is your best source of information. She works very hard to put a team together and commitment is the key to success. Each and every member of the team is important, so never underestimate your worth to the team. You will play in the order of your handicap index as of the final revision from the previous fall, the November 15th revision. It is a good idea to know the line up from your captain in advance so you know the position that you will be playing.
2. Tee times usually start at 8:30 am. The host team will play in the first match. The players tee off in 7 minute intervals. The second group of teams tees off at 9:05 and the last group of teams tees off at 9:40. Be sure to arrive at least a half hour to an hour before your team tees off. By arriving early, you have time to find your way at the club in case of traffic and your team will not be worried about you. You should be at the tee 5 or 10 minutes prior to your individual tee time.
3. Your team captain will let you know everything you need to know about the host clubs, such as whether the locker room will be available, if there is a driving range, and any other restrictions/requirements.
4. Your captain should know if you will be using carts and/or caddies. She will tell you whether you need cash or a credit card to pay for the cart or whether it will be charged back to your club. She will also let you know the fee for a caddie. Plan on \$60 - \$120 caddie fees, depending on the club and if using a forecaddie or walking caddie. Caddies are paid in cash directly after the round.
5. The clubs prepare lunch for all, so everyone will be charged for lunch. Lunches will range from \$35 - \$45, and they will either be charged to your club account or your Captain might tell you to be prepared with cash.
6. There will be a bulletin board near the first tee or pro shop that has the players listed in the order of play with their tee times. The team listed on the left has the honor on the first tee based on the final team results from the previous season. There will be a Notice to Players posted with the caddie fee, the tees being played, and any local rules, such as preferred lies, ground under repair, etc. The team matches are played under USGA rules.
7. The match consists of one point for the front 9, one point for the back 9 and one point for the overall match with a maximum of 3 points. If there is a tie, then each player receives 1/2 pt.
8. Players must abide by USGA match play rules, so you should familiarize yourself with USGA Rules of Golf for match play. The player winning the hole has the honor on the next hole.
9. There are no handicap strokes used in the WMGA Team Matches.
10. Remember to check the weather forecast since matches are played in all conditions. Bad weather is not of itself a good reason for discontinuing play. Your captain will contact you if the match is canceled because the course is closed.

Advice for the WMGA Team Matches and Tournament Play

For those of us accustomed to team matches and tournament play, we forget what it was like to tee it up at our first team match or tournament. So we thought we would share a few essential pointers that will help us all and make us more fun to be with on the course!

Tee Times: Arrive at the course early. You want to be there with plenty of time to check in, hit the range, roll a few putts and then leisurely make your way to the first tee. Dashing to the tee is never a good way to start a round of golf!

On Course Positioning: Be aware of where you are standing in terms of other players. Step away from a player's peripheral vision and be as quiet as you can be. On the green, don't stand behind a player when she is putting or beyond the flag stick on her line. Also, be aware of other players' lines on the green and stay away from them. We all like our space and quiet on the course!

Pace of Play: Start thinking about your next shot as soon as you have hit your last one. Be ready to hit when it is your turn. By the time you have arrived at your shot, you should be debating between two clubs, not the whole bag! Playing without delay will help you keep pace. Always remember that you have to keep up with the group ahead of you. Whatever is happening behind you is irrelevant!

Scorekeeping: At the end of each hole, check the score of that hole. For match play, check the status of the match every few holes. This avoids problems later.

On Course Commentary: Resist commenting on your own shots while playing. The other players are not interested in hearing your play-by-play! And who knows, if you stop editorializing about each shot, you might even help your own game by focusing on the next shot!

Guest Etiquette: The WMGA, its Board, and Met Reps work very hard to secure clubs for tournaments. In addition, all of our member clubs with WMGA teams give up their courses one morning for matches. Therefore, it is important for us to show our appreciation. Before you arrive at the club, find out about its dress code and cell phone policies. Always remember that we are guests of the club. If there is an issue, please share it quietly with your Team Captain, Met Rep or the WMGA.

Match Play Rules Review 2024

To help you prepare for Team Matches, please read these helpful tips on rules of Match Play:

Players may not give or ask for advice in either stroke play or match play (except for partner or caddie). However, information on the rules is NOT advice. It is permissible (and good sportsmanship) to prevent an opponent from breaching a Rule.

Example: You may not ask your opponent, nor can your opponent suggest, that you take or not take relief from a situation or if you should declare a ball unplayable, but you may ask or give information on how to proceed under the Rules.

Important differences between match play and stroke play:

- ***Pursuant to Rule 1.3b, “Players must not agree to exclude the operation of any Rule or to waive any penalty incurred”***

-Unlike stroke play, which obligates players to report every breach of a Rule witnessed, in match play, a player MAY overlook an opponent’s breach of a Rule provided that you do not say anything to your opponent. If you are concerned that your opponent may repeat the offense you may acknowledge the error but only after teeing-off at the next hole. To acknowledge the error any earlier would constitute an agreement to waive the rules. Note: You can also choose to simply remain silent.

[This assumes the opponent does not know a breach has occurred-see Rule 3.2d below]

- ***Pursuant to Rule 6.4a -Order of Play - After both players have started play of hole, the ball farther from the hole is played first.***

-While there is no penalty in stroke play for playing out of order, in match play if an opponent plays out of order her opponent may immediately require her to cancel the stroke and replay in the correct order. So, if a putt is not conceded, mark it and wait your turn.

- ***Rule 2-4 : A player may concede a match, a hole or her opponent’s next stroke. A concession may not be declined or withdrawn.***

-Unlike stroke play which requires one to finish the hole [“hole out”], in match play, a player may concede a stroke to his opponent so that she can pick-up without holing out. Note, if you concede the putt and your opponent decides to practice and then misses, your opponent still gets the concession.

- ***Rule 20.1b. Rules Issues in Match Play***

-If unsure of rule or procedure, in match play the Rules do not permit you to play a second ball [different from provisional], as they do in stroke play. You and your opponent must try and resolve the issue. If you can’t agree, a request for a Ruling has to be made before teeing-off at the next hole. You must notify your opponent that you’re requesting a Ruling, agree to the facts of the situation and make it clear that you’ll be asking for a Committee ruling.

• **Rule 3.2d- Telling Opponent about Number of Strokes Taken**

-In stroke play, scores need only be correctly ascertained prior to submitting scorecards. In match play, however, a player has the right to ascertain from her opponent the number of strokes taken during and after play of hole. If a player incurs a penalty that was not observed by her opponent she must inform her opponent as soon as practicable. If she fails to do so before then she loses the hole [Rule 3-2d]. Loss of hole also applies if a player gives incorrect information during play of a hole regarding the number of strokes taken and does not correct the mistake before her opponent makes her next stroke. Remember - golf is a game of HONOR, if you know that you breached a rule, announce the breach in case it was not noticed by the other player!

Practice Note: Rule 7-2: "...[a player] may practice putting or chipping on or near:

-the putting green of the hole last played,

-any practice putting green, or

-teeing ground of the next hole....,

provided a practice stroke is not made from a hazard and does not unduly delay play (Rule 5.6)."

**This informative summary was prepared with the help of Board
Member and Rules Official Wendy Dominick (March 2023)**

Match Play vs. Stroke Play Rules of Golf

The general penalty in **Stroke Play** is 2 strokes. The general penalty in **Match Play** is loss of hole.

Match Play - a stroke, a hole, and even a match, can be conceded to your opponent. It is therefore not always necessary to hole out or finish a round. In **Stroke Play** the ball must always be holed and all holes played.

Holes played out of order - In **Stroke Play** this mistake must be corrected before teeing off on the next hole or players are disqualified. In **Match Play** there is no penalty for accidentally playing a wrong hole.

Strokes taken and penalties incurred - In **Match Play** you must tell your opponent of any penalties as soon as practicable and must tell the correct score whenever asked. Penalty for failure to do so is loss of hole. In **Stroke Play** you only need to get scores correct at the end before signing your card and leaving the scoring area.

In **Match Play** you can overlook an opponent's breach of a Rule as long as you don't agree to ignore any known penalty. In **Stroke Play** you have an obligation to the field to be sure all penalties are applied.

Practice on day of play before a round - permitted in **Match Play**, not in **Stroke Play**. A Local Rule can amend this.

Teeing area - In **Stroke Play** you must begin play of a hole from within the teeing area; In **Match Play** an opponent can overlook or recall stroke with no penalty.

Order of play - Order of play is important in **Match Play**. An opponent can recall a stroke and have you play in the correct order (no penalty). In **Stroke Play** playing out of turn to save time is encouraged. However, players cannot agree to play out of turn for the purpose of giving one of them an advantage.

In **Match Play** a ball played from the putting green that strikes another ball on putting the green incurs no penalty. In **Stroke Play** the player who putted is penalized 2 strokes.

Deciding rules issues by agreement: no penalty in **Match Play** if players are doing their best to get it right, even if it turns out to be wrong. In **Stroke Play** penalties apply, even if the players didn't know the Rule.

In **Stroke Play** when you're uncertain what to do, you may play out the hole with 2 balls and report to the Committee at the end of the round. This is not permitted in **Match Play**. Opponents can either agree on what to do (and the outcome is conclusive even if wrong) or either player may request a ruling.

This Match Play vs. Stroke Play Rules comparison was prepared for the WMGA by our Team Match Chair and USGA Certified Rules Official, Wendy Dominick.

MATCH PLAY REMINDERS

In Match Play, what to do, when:

- **My opponent is late or missing**

You need to wait 5 minutes. If she shows up within 5 minutes she loses the first hole and you go directly to the second hole to begin your match. If she isn't at the tee within 5 minutes she is DQ(yes, even if she arrives within 6 minutes). You will instead now play the next player on the opposing team and all players on your team also slide down a tee time. The #5 position is won by default and the #5 player on your team does not have a match. She can leave, play alone, or, if the late player finally arrives, they can play together casually.

- **We disagree on score for a hole**

This can be very difficult and awkward. You will have to settle it between yourselves. Each should take a turn recounting the strokes and hope that an agreement is reached. If you still can't agree, one of you will need to give in to the other.

- **We need a ruling**

You may not delay play to get a ruling. If you cannot agree or can't find the relevant rule, you must play on and announce/agree(before teeing off on the next hole) that you will seek a ruling after the match.

- **We played the wrong hole!**

Good news! No penalty to anyone. Go on to the correct hole. The score for the wrong hole counts and when you come around to that hole again, just skip it.

- **One or both of us wants to quit!**

If just one of you wants to quit the other player gets any unearned points. If both of you want to quit you cannot agree to split any unearned points. Any points already won, however, are kept. Be sure to explain to the series captain why the total points don't add up to 3.

A few reminders

- Spectators are not permitted.
- You may not carry your own bag or use a pull cart.
- Info on carts and caddies will be provided by the host club to the series captain/team captains. Individual players should not call ahead to make any requests.
- All players are expected to stay for lunch or take it "to go".
- Post scores to GHIN.