



WPGA COVID-19 PLAYER INFORMATION PACKET

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Conducting a Competition

The keys to safely conducting a golf competition are to maintain appropriate social distancing and to provide a “touchless” golf experience before, during and immediately after the tournament. These WPGA tournament guidelines follow closely the existing guidelines published by the United States Golf Association and are in alignment with those published for recreational golf. Until such time that restrictions on social gatherings are modified, certain elements of any WPGA competition, such as award ceremonies, scoreboard areas, group meals, social gatherings, and shotgun starts, are prohibited.

The objective of the WPGA is to effectively manage the movement of our players to maintain all social distancing space between them, volunteers and staff needed to conduct the competition. The outline below is an extensive, yet not exhaustive, guide of the protocols to be taken in order to conduct a tournament.

Arrival

1. Competitors will be assigned a time to arrive at the host site and prepare for their tournament round.

Warm Up

1. The number of competitors on the practice tee and putting green at any one time will be restricted as follows;
 - a. Competitors will have a window of time to warm up at the practice tee, short game and putting green areas that will **begin** 10 minutes after their assigned arrival time and **end** 10 minutes prior to their tee time.
2. Social distancing protocols must be followed in designated practice areas.

Starting Play

1. Starting tee times will be used, as “Shotgun” starts are prohibited.
2. The number of players at the starting hole is restricted to the players who are scheduled to tee off at that time and starting location (Rules officials, if necessary, are permitted to be at a tee and will follow Social Distancing guidelines).

3. All normally distributed paperwork (Hole location sheets, Local Rules, etc.) will be eliminated. Such information will be available to the players in digital/electronic form to read or print at home if desired. A player may bring from home a printed copy.
4. Other equipment that is normally provided for players – tees, pencils, marking pens will be eliminated.
5. All scoring will be done electronically through existing systems.

Playing the Competition Round

1. Players must follow proper social distancing protocols at all times.
2. Flagsticks are required to be left in hole. A “hole liner” that allows the ball to fall below the surface of the putting green but will limit the vertical drop (compared to traditional liners will be used). The hole liner used will allow the player to remove the ball with minimal, if any, touching of the hole.
3. All bunker rakes will be removed.
4. Limit of one rider per golf cart.
5. Caddies are prohibited.
6. Spectators are prohibited.
7. Officials and Volunteers will be required to wear PPE in circumstances where following social distancing practices is challenging. PPE (face masks, sanitizer) will be available for staff and volunteers, as needed. Any other equipment required by volunteers, such as walkie-talkies, golf carts, etc., will be sanitized prior to and after use.
8. Competitors will be given cell phone numbers for on-site staff if they need to reach out for assistance while on the course.

Conclusion of the Round

1. All scoring will be done electronically through existing systems.
2. Immediately upon completion of the round, the player will review his/her scores and submit them to tournament staff, all under proper social distancing protocols.
3. Electronic scoreboards, for example, TV or digital monitors, and traditional scoreboards will not be available, as they impair the ability to follow social distancing guidelines.
4. All results will be available online.
5. If food & beverage is available at the host facility, the players may pick up boxed food or order “to go” items from clubhouse.
6. Players should go directly to their vehicle and leave the host facility within a reasonable amount of time, following the submitting of scores.

7. Playoffs, if necessary, will be conducted either on the course using proper social distancing protocols or by using the recommended USGA method for a scorecard playoff.
 - a) USGA Method: Last 9 holes, Last 6 Holes, Last 3 Holes, Last 1 hole.
8. Awards ceremonies, such as a trophy presentations, are prohibited.
9. Gift certificates will be mailed directly to the player, or delivered to the host facility for distribution to winners at a later date.

WPGA COVID-19 Procedure & Policy

The guidelines that follow are being adopted by the Western Pennsylvania Golf Association. These guidelines are based on recommendations of WHO, CDC, and the Directive Health Measures from local, state, and federal governments. A player who intentionally disregards these guidelines may be subject to disqualification from the tournament and removal from the grounds of the host facility. These guidelines are subject to change pursuant to advisories from the CDC and/or executive orders from the Governor's Office of Pennsylvania.

1. **DO NOT** play if you feel sick or have been in contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 in the last two weeks.
2. Stay a minimum of 6 feet away from anyone at all times.
3. **DO NOT** touch or handle any tournament supplies or equipment that is not yours.

GENERAL PLAYER INFORMATION:

Arrival

1. The policy is that players are **NOT** allowed to arrive at the golf course more than 45 minutes prior to their starting time. If a player arrives to the facility prior to this time, he or she must stay in the immediate vicinity of one's vehicle. The player may use this time to change shoes, stretch, and/or golf bag ready and otherwise prepare for the tournament round.

Paperwork

1. All tournament paperwork, including hole location and local rule sheets, will be provided electronically prior to the tournament. A player is encouraged to view and read these materials on their own before their round.
2. Links to these materials will be sent to tournament participants and always may be found on the event landing page on the WPGA website.
3. Player may print these documents at home and bring to the tournament round for personal use or access documents on smart phone during the round.

Scorecards

1. Group online scoring is mandatory through the use of the USGA Tournament Management app, if a player is unable to use online scoring, the player is encouraged to bring his or her own score-marking materials (i.e., paper and pencil) as paper scorecards will NOT be given to players.
 - a) A blank scorecard may be provided in a specific location (golf cart) for each player to keep their own score.

Golf Carts

1. When allowed in the competition mandates one player per cart, unless two players live in the same household.

Starting Format

1. All events will be Tee Time starts to reduce the number of people congregating in one area to comply with social distancing protocols.

Online Access

1. Players are expected to download the USGA Tournament Management app.
2. This allows a player to post scores and access online scoring.
3. A guide for scoring on the app will be provided in addition to this document.

TOURNAMENT OPERATIONS:

Practice Facilities

1. Players will be assigned a window to access to the practice facilities on a limited time, priority basis that **commences** 10 minutes after their assigned arrival time and **ends** 10 minutes before their starting tee time. The intent of the policy is to provide a flow through the practice tee, short game area (if available), and putting green. Every player should have a fair and equitable opportunity to warm up prior to play. Please be respectful of fellow players when preparing to play.
2. Players are first allowed on practice areas within 40 minutes of their tee time. The suggested flow should begin with the practice tee for 20 minutes, then to the short game area and/or putting green for the remainder of time before reporting to the tee. This will retain social distancing and prioritize access to each area.
3. The number of players allowed on the putting green or in short game area will be restricted to the number of holes that have been cut in the greens.
4. The sizes of and access to practice areas differs by host facility, this general policy may be adjusted for specific events. This will be communicated in the Notice to Competitors for each event.
5. Practice at the host facility after a player's round is complete is prohibited.

Starting Tees

1. Players should check in at their starting tee as soon as practical (generally immediately after the group in front of them has left the teeing area).
2. Pencils, scorecards, tees, sharpies, sunscreen and water bottles will **NOT** be available on the starting tees.

Caddies

1. Players are **NOT** permitted to use caddies.

Spectators

1. Spectators are **NOT** allowed on the golf course.

Scoring

1. After completing the round, ONE group will be allowed to enter the “scoring area” at a time. Players will maintain 6 feet of distance between them and verbally agree to their hole-by-hole scores with their group and the scoring official.
2. After verbally verifying one’s scores and leaving the scoring area, a player’s scorecard is deemed returned and the player will receive an email with his or her scorecard.
3. The only scoreboards will be through the USGA Tournament Management app or the WPGA website.
4. Once players leave the scoring area, they must return to their car and exit the property upon completion of the round.

Playoffs

1. Playoffs will not be conducted for Qualifying Rounds. The USGA Tie-Breaking Method will be used to determine the Qualifiers. Playoffs will be conducted to determine a winner in a WPGA Championship. If a player(s) is close to the lead or in contention, the player must wait in his or her vehicle.
2. Players will be contacted by cell phone (call or text) to inform them if a playoff is necessary.
3. USGA Tie-Breaking Method: Last 9 holes, Last 6 Holes, Last 3 Holes, Last 1 hole.

Awards

1. Award ceremonies will **NOT** be conducted. Awards will be shipped to players following the event. The final results with Gift Certificate amounts will be sent to the host facility. Players winning certificates should arrange with the facility to redeem the prizes.

Weather Delays

1. In the event of a single continuous horn blast indicating a discontinuance of play for a dangerous situation, all players must park their cart at the designated cart staging area and proceed directly to their vehicles.
2. Communication regarding resumption of play will be sent by text message.

PLAYING THE COURSE:

Social Distancing

1. Regardless of a player's position on the golf course, a player must maintain six (6) feet of distance between themselves and other players. This includes when preparing for a shot, walking down the fairway/rough, on the teeing ground, on the putting green, and all other locations.

Bunkers

1. All rakes will be removed from the golf course.
2. Players are encouraged to use their feet to smooth bunkers *after* making a stroke from one. Please reference the COVID-19 Local Rules for proper relief procedures.

Holing Out

1. To allow players to remove the ball without touching the hole, a hole insert will be used.

Flagsticks

1. Players must NOT deliberately touch the flagstick under any circumstance. Attending of the flagstick as outlined in the Rules of Golf is ***suspended*** until further notice. Please reference the COVID-19 Local Rules for penalty statements.

FOOD & BEVERAGE:

Clubhouse F&B

1. If food and beverage services are available at the host facility, players may order "to go" items.
2. Organized food banquets will **NOT** be conducted by the WPGA.
3. Boxed Lunches will be provided when applicable. Players will be notified if the lunches will not be available.

On-Course Water

1. Host facilities will be asked to remove all on-course coolers.
2. The WPGA will NOT provide water bottles to players. Golfers should bring an adequate supply of water for the round with them.

Snacks

1. Snacks will **NOT** be provided by the WPGA. However, the WPGA will encourage the host facility to have easy access to snacks, bottled water and other beverages at the clubhouse, and/or at the turn.

FACILITY EQUIPMENT:

Sand Buckets

1. Host facilities will be asked to remove all sand buckets from Par 3's.

Ball Washers & Benches

1. If the facility has not removed ball washers and benches from the golf course, players will be asked to refrain from using these items.

Starter Boxes

1. Starting tees will NOT have a starters box.
2. Players are encouraged to bring a writing utensil, paper, ball markers, and tees.

Hand Sanitizer

1. The WPGA will provide hand sanitizer for volunteers and staff.

Clubhouse

1. The WPGA will defer to the host facilities practices on whether the clubhouse is open to guests or not.
2. The WPGA will ensure that each host site has at least one (1) male and one (1) female bathroom available.

WPGA: Local Rules for COVID-19

Bunkers:

It is a normal part of the game to place a responsibility on all players to smooth sand in a bunker from which they have played. The WPGA has decided its best option is to remove all bunker rakes from the course. When this is done, it is possible for a player's ball to come to rest in an unmaintained area of sand. Players are encouraged to try their best to smooth the disturbed area with a foot or a club after playing their ball from a bunker.

The Flagstick:

The flagstick serves an important purpose in the game of golf –an indicator to a player as to where the hole is located on the putting green or a target for shots. The WPGA has elected to include in its Code of Conduct the prohibition for players to deliberately touch or remove the flagstick. As is authorized under Rule 1.2b, The WPGA has introduced the following Penalty Statement: First Offense: Warning, Second Offense: General Penalty; Third Offense: Disqualification.

Flagsticks will not have any attachments that would result in non-conformance with [Part 8, Section 1 of the Equipment Rules](#).

The Hole:

The WPGA will place inserts into the Hole such that when the ball is holed the ball will sit below the surface of the putting green and allow the ball to come to rest on the insert in the hole, either entirely or partially below the surface of the green. This meets the concept of the ball being Holed.

Scorecards & Scoring:

As part of the 2019 modernization of the Rules, the use of physical scorecards is no longer required. Everything can be done electronically, including the player and his or her marker certifying hole-by-hole scores and returning those scores to the Committee. The WPGA has adopted the following procedures:

1. Players will receive, electronically, their scorecard prior to the start of play.
(Alternatively, The WPGA may provide blank scorecards affixed to the Player's cart, prior

to the start of the round, the Player will need to write his/her name on the scorecard so it is identifiable to the Player).

2. At the conclusion of the round, the marker would ensure he or she has entered the player's hole-by-hole scores, sign the scorecard and set it down on a surface such that the player could visually inspect the hole-by-hole score to confirm their accuracy. Once this is done, rather than signing the scorecard, the player can verbally certify the accuracy of the scores in the presence of the marker and the scoring official. If there are any errors that need to be corrected, the marker can make changes before the player verbally certifies those changes are accurate.
3. The WPGA will also make available the option to keep their hole by hole score electronically. (Instructions follow on page 13 of this document.)

WPGA Code of Conduct Policy

The WPGA hereby establishes this Code of Conduct to complement Rule 1.2 in the Rules of Golf and the Terms of the Competition.

1. Cell Phones - The use of cell phones, smart phones and pagers during competitions is permitted so long as it is within the confines of Rule 4.3
2. No Play Zones - Entry into a No Play Zone that is prohibited by law
3. Willful damage of the golf course or golf course property
4. Club throwing or unnecessary club tossing
5. Offensive or unbecoming language
6. Public criticism of golf course or verbal abuse of WPGA staff, officials, volunteers, host club staff or other contestants
7. Potential endangerment of others Conduct deemed unbecoming
8. Failure to post scores for handicapping purposes
9. Manipulation of scores posted for handicapping purposes
10. Flagsticks – Player must not deliberately touch or remove the flagstick.

Penalties for breach of Code of Conduct

1st Offense: Warning

2nd Offense: General Penalty

3rd Offense: Disqualification

Mobile App Instructions

1. Go to your app store on your Android or iPhone. Search “USGA Tournament Management”. Download the app (blue icon).
2. Enter the GGID provided to you by the WPGA. (Do not enter your email or any password).
3. Click on your name.
4. Enter the correct GROSS score for all of the players.
5. After scores are entered for a hole, click “Save Scores”. You will be directed to the next hole.
6. To view the leaderboard, click on “Leaderboard” on the top right.

2020 Championships & Events; FAQ

Q1: Can the WPGA modify the *Rules of Golf* to conduct its events given COVID-19 pandemic?

A: The WPGA has been conducting its events under the Rules of Golf since 1899. No Committee running a Championship or Tournament can modify the Rules of Golf if it desires to consider the results of that event to be “official”. However, the Rules of Golf do permit the Committee (i.e., WPGA) some discretion to introduce *Local Rules* to its events to maintain the integrity of the competition, in consideration of special circumstances that will impact the playing of the competition. The USGA and R&A provide guidance to the Committee through the publication of *Model Local Rules*.

Q2: Why is the WPGA allowing the use of carts for all competitions?

A: Given government and CDC/WHO restrictions and guidelines with respect to Social Distancing, the use of carts assists the WPGA in protecting the health and safety of its competitors and volunteers in the event of inclement and/or dangerous weather conditions that require the golf course to be evacuated.

Q3: Why are the sizes of the field being reduced from the Amateur and the Open?

A: Government and CDC/WHO restrictions and guidelines on Social Distancing has resulted in an increase in the intervals between tee time to prevent the congregation of competitors on the first tee. Given the number of hours of daylight available, this results in the need for a reduced field compared to historical practice. The actual size of the field will be announced at a TBD date. The size of the field will be a factor in assessing the need for the number of qualifiers and spots available to the Championship proper.

Q4: What will be the condition of *Bunkers*?

A: The WPGA has looked at all of its options with regards to the maintenance of *Bunkers*. Since leaving rakes on the golf course is inconsistent with governmental or CDC/WHO best practices and the WPGA does not have a volunteer staff large enough to provide each hole with a dedicated “raker”, the WPGA is requesting that the *Players* maintain the condition of the *Bunkers* by smoothing irregularities of surface, as best they can in consideration of the field of competitors. The Rules of Golf define a *Bunker* as a prepared area, the Rules do not say the *Bunker* has to be perfectly prepared.

Q5: Is touching the *Flagstick* contrary to governmental or CDC/WHO best practices?

A: Yes, but touching the *Flagstick* is instinctive to most golfers. Therefore, the WPGA has introduced into its *Code of Conduct*, as permitted by Rule 1.2b the prohibition for a player to **deliberately** touch the *Flagstick*. Compliance will be monitored by our Rules Officials and a Player may be subject to penalty, if Warnings on compliance are ignored by the Player.

Q6: Ball Holed:

A: A ball must be holed under the *Rules*, the WPGA is currently evaluating ways to minimize inadvertent touching of the *Flagstick* when a *Player* retrieves the ball after it has been holed. The Equipment Rules do not permit an attachment to the *Flagstick* to facilitate the retrieval of a ball that has been holed.

Q7: How were exemptions for the Amateur and Open determined?

A: Exemptions were determined using the following methodology: [1] both the Amateur and the Open had certain Players who had qualified for an exemption for the 2020 Championship, these exemptions are being honored; [2] the WPGA looked at the performance results (Top 20) of all Players who competed in the 2019 and 2018 Championships, these players were granted an exemption for 2020; [3] lastly the results of the 2019 and 2018 WPGA Points lists were reviewed and, if not otherwise exempt, these Player were deemed exempt for 2020.

Q8: How will Scoring be handled in governmental and CDC/WHO compliant manner?

A: Group online scoring is mandatory through the use of the USGA Tournament Management app, if a player is unable to use online scoring, the player is encouraged to bring his or her own score-marking materials (i.e., paper and pencil) as paper scorecards will NOT be given to players. Two Options for Scoring are under consideration.

- a) A blank scorecard is provided in a specific location (golf cart) for each player to keep their own score.

Q9: Will there be other *Local Rules* be adopted by the WPGA?

A: It is likely that other approved *Model Local Rules* will be adopted with respect to the accidental/inadvertent touching of a *Player's* ball and the need for the *Player* to clean that ball to be compliant with applicable regulations and best practices.

Q10: How do I keep informed of the WPGA plans and implementation of Local Rules?

A: Please access Championship Central on wpga.org for updates to the FAQ's and Terms of Competition.