

**HCER Senior Men's Golf League
Playing Rules and Policies for 2024**

Playing Rules (USGA Rules Apply to All Other Situations)

1. **Handicaps.** The details of the handicap system for 2024 are covered in a document available on the web site. It is a modification of a USGA method and is based on the lowest four of the latest eight "Handicap Differentials." Handicap differentials are carried over from the previous season.

2. **Scores.** Each player is responsible for ensuring that his hole-by-hole score is correct on the scoresheet. When a scoresheet is turned into the League Coordinator, or his designee, the scores are official. The only corrections that will be made are errors that affect prize distributions or clerical errors by the League Coordinator.

3. **Putting.** Putting is always a part of the competition for the League Prize Fund so in order to ensure fairness among playing groups all players must know and apply this rule.

(a) **Putts more than two feet from the hole can never be conceded by any playing partner.** If the ball comes to rest 2 feet or less from the hole, the player is considered holed-out and adds one-stroke to his score; otherwise, the ball must be putted. All golfers should place a 2-foot measuring mark on their putters, or other implement. The distance is measured from the edge of the hole to the edge of the ball closest to the hole. ***If in doubt, measure it!***

(b) **A missed putt that is still moving should never be dragged back into the hole.** Missed putts, especially on slopes, often roll more than 2 feet past the hole. For violation of this rule, the player is considered holed-out with a two-stroke penalty. ***Just don't do it!***

4. **Maximum Score per Hole.** For league play, the maximum score per hole is 4 over par. When the player reaches the maximum score, he must pick up his ball and proceed to the next hole. However, if a putting game is being played, the player should putt out and record the number of putts taken even though the maximum score is exceeded. If the player chooses not to putt out, record three putts. For team and special events, the maximum score per hole will be determined by the event organizer.

5. **Balls Lost, Hit Out-of-Bounds, or Hit into Hazards.** A lost ball search may not exceed **three** minutes, with Captains rigorously enforcing the time limit. If a ball is lost in the fairway or primary rough, and all playing partners agree, drop in the agreed-upon area with no penalty. A shot which is heard "hitting wood" by any member of the group does not qualify for the free drop. A free drop may not be taken if your ball is lost after striking a solitary natural object, such as a lone tree, bush or stone, in an open area of the course, such as the fairway or primary rough.

Otherwise, a player should come to an agreement with his playing partners on the location where a shot was lost, went out of bounds, or initially crossed into a hazard. The player then places the ball within two club lengths of the location, or anywhere on the line-of-flight to the location, not nearer to the hole or on the green, and takes a one-stroke penalty. If the ball crosses the hazard and then rolls back into the hazard, the ball is played from the spot where it initially landed. If the original shot was the drive, for example, the player is now hitting their third shot.

6. **Improving Lies.** A player may lift, clean, and place the ball within 6 inches of the original lie anywhere on the course except within a hazard (see Rule 7). In doing so, the player may improve the lie but not move the ball closer to the hole or from behind a natural obstacle, such as a tree. When moving a ball

located behind a natural object to avoid roots, rocks, etc., that could cause personal injury or damage clubs, move as far as necessary while keeping the object between the hole and your ball. You may not change the environment in which your ball resides (high rough, woods, etc.) If your ball lies clear of any natural obstacle but near roots, stones, etc., which may cause personal injury or damage clubs, you may take a free drop away from the problem, no closer to the hole, at the nearest point of relief in the same environment.

7. **Playing from a Sand Hazard.** If the course has not deployed rakes or the League Coordinator has declared “free drops,” you may take a free drop outside the trap, no closer to the hole. Otherwise, a player can play one of two options. (1) Play the ball from the sand trap. When playing from within the trap, you may lift the ball, smooth the sand, and place the ball at the original location. However, if the ball remains in the sand trap after one shot, you **MUST** take a free drop outside the trap no closer to the hole. (2) You may drop outside the trap along the line of the ball and hole, no closer to the hole, with a one-shot penalty. Accidentally touching the sand with your club in the hazard is not a penalty as long as you do not improve your lie. Practice swings touching the sand may not be taken. A one-stroke penalty is incurred.

(a) If a ball is imbedded in the sand, for example, in the steep side of a trap, it may be lifted but must be replaced at the same location to the minimum depth required so that the ball does not roll away.

(b) If your ball comes to rest in a water puddle within a sand hazard, the ball may be lifted from the puddle and placed outside the puddle but within the sand hazard with no penalty. If your ball comes to rest in a sand hazard full of water, a one-club length free drop outside the hazard, along the line of the ball and the hole, no closer to the hole, may be taken.

(c) If your ball comes to rest in a sand hazard containing a swarm of stinging insects, a one-club length free drop outside the hazard, along the line of the ball and the hole, no closer to the hole, may be taken.

8. **Unplayable Lies.** If your lie is under a bush or against a tree, or in any other position the player deems to be unplayable, take a one-stroke penalty and drop within two club lengths of the original lie, or anywhere on the line of flight, no closer to the hole or on the green.

Policies

1. **Code of Conduct.** League members represent the Hudson Community because we are sponsored by the Hudson Community Education and Recreation Department (HCER). We play golf in the presence of the public. We play golf as respected friends and colleagues of other League members. As such, each League member has a responsibility to demonstrate good sportsmanship and etiquette, including avoiding profanity and angry outbursts of temper, distracting fellow players, and by following all League and posted course rules.

As a participant in the HCER Senior Men’s Golf League, you are expected to behave in a manner that reflects a positive image of the League and HCER. Failure to uphold this Code will result in disciplinary action by the Leadership Team and the Director of HCER including a warning, suspension from League play, or expulsion from the League. At the beginning of each season, each player will be required to verify that they have read, understand, and are committed to upholding this Code.

2. **Tee Selection.** The “League” tee for each regular season round will be determined by the League Coordinator using a guideline of 5,500 yards. The League Coordinator may “mix and match” tees.

“Forward” tee players will always play from the most-forward tees. In order to be eligible for prizes, players must play from their designated tees. The hole par and handicap ratings will be based on the “League” tee. Under special circumstances, the League Coordinator may modify the par/tee ratings. For team and special events, the organizer will determine the tees.

3. **Official Round.** To qualify as an official round and have prize money paid from the Prize Fund, a minimum of 16 players must complete 18 holes; otherwise, the round is canceled.

4. **Scoring and Prizes in Incomplete Rounds.** The following are the policies for scoring and awarding prize money for players who do not complete 18 holes.

(a) In an official round, any player not completing Holes 1-9 will have their round canceled. They are eligible to win single-hole prizes on holes completed by all other players. They are ineligible to win front-nine or whole-round prizes.

(b) In an official round, any player not completing Holes 10-15 will have their round canceled. They are eligible to win single-hole prizes on holes completed by all other players, and front-nine playing prizes. They are ineligible to win back-nine or whole-round prizes.

(c) In an official round, any player completing 15-17 holes will have their unplayed holes scored as par plus one for the purpose of scoring and handicapping. They are eligible to win single-hole prizes on holes completed by all other players, and front-nine playing prizes. They are ineligible to win back-nine or whole-round prizes.

5. **Lightning Policy.** At the first sound of thunder, all golfers should go to the clubhouse or a suitable shelter. At the first sight of lightning, all golfers must go to the clubhouse or a suitable shelter.

6. **League Participation.** A “Regular” is a player who has completed all registration requirements and is entitled to play in all League events. An “Alternate” is a player who has completed all registration requirements and can play in all League events if there is space available. Regular and Alternate players from the previous season will be given priority in signing up. Alternate players must play a minimum of 4 rounds each season to maintain their priority status for the following season. After a specified date, registration will be open to all men age 60 and over as of the first round of the season. Those who cannot be granted Regular status, or wish to play occasionally, may register as Alternates.

Generally, there will be 32 spaces available for each League round. Alternate players may claim available space on a “first-come, first-served” basis by contacting the League Coordinator using the website form. However, the Coordinator reserves the right to schedule available Alternates so that all have an equal opportunity to play during the season. Additional tee times may be added at the discretion of the Coordinator.

If the maximum number of playing spots have been assigned and published on the website, and then Player A informs the League Coordinator that he cannot play resulting in Player B on the waiting list being assigned to that spot, Player A cannot reclaim his spot due to a change in plans. As long as spots remain open, the League Coordinator will attempt to accommodate all players wanting to play, even on the day of the round.

7. **The Prize Fund.** Regular golfers contribute \$35 and Alternates contribute \$20 to the Prize Fund. If an Alternate plays 10 rounds or more (League plus Team events), on the day of the 10th round he must contribute an additional \$15 to the Prize Fund to continue remaining eligible for prizes. The League

Coordinator will post the results on the website following each round so that all participants know who won prizes. The League Prize Fund Champion shall be the golfer winning the most money from the Prize Fund. Only individual winnings from the Prize Fund and not winnings from team/special events will be counted toward the championship winnings. Winnings from the Prize Fund will be paid at the final event of the year. Actual amounts paid may be rounded to the nearest dollar at the discretion of the League Coordinator. Any player not playing at least four rounds may forfeit their prize winnings at the discretion of the League Coordinator. Forfeited winnings will be placed in the Prize Fund for the following season.

8. **League Awards.** The following awards are given by the League.

- (a) ***League Prize Fund Champion Award:*** the player who wins the most money from the Prize Fund, not including team events.
- (b) ***Sim Lee Most Improved Golfer Award:*** the player who has lowered his average gross score the most since the end of the previous season (10 rounds, not including team events, required in both seasons unless special circumstances occur (COVID, for example). The League Coordinator will then determine eligibility. For 2024, 8 rounds in 2023 and 2024 are required.
- (c) ***The Founder's Award:*** at the discretion of the Leadership Team, this award may be given to a League member who has made special contributions to the success of the League.

9. **The Appeal Process.** If any issues arise in which a League member wishes to appeal a League decision, the League member must file a written appeal with the Leadership Team. After a decision is rendered by the Leadership Team, the League member may file a further written appeal to the Director of HCER. The decision of the Director of HCER is final.

The 2024 Leadership Team

Alan Barry
Al Fernandez
Gary Finseth
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HCER Leadership

Meredith Zaffrann, Director