

THE PGA OF AMERICA



FIRST SWING

GOLFER'S GUIDE



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CHAPTER
1

Welcome to Golf

Dear Golfer

Golf is a challenging and exciting game. The object of moving the ball from a starting point (the teeing ground) to an end point (in the hole) seems simple. But the task of propelling the ball can be complex. The game not only requires that you attempt to master the multiple skills of golf, but you must also gain knowledge and understanding about how to play the game.

While the game has evolved, the Rules and general nature of the game remain unspoiled and we continue to enjoy many of the early elements of the game. Some of us play golf as a profession. Most golfers play the game for fun. However, unlike other sports, golfers at all levels can share the same playing fields, Rules and equipment with the most talented players in the world.

Remember that instruction is the backbone of the game. Even the greatest players in the world go back to their teaching professionals for a check-up on their fundamentals. Which is why seeing your PGA Professional on a regular basis will help you get the most out of your game.




Annika Sorenstam

Dear Golfer

No experience in the world quite equals the exhilaration you feel when you hit a golf ball. Whether you're hitting from the tee, the fairway, the rough or a bunker – when you strike the ball and it goes airborne – it's the greatest feeling in the world.

Golf is a game that you will be able to play and enjoy throughout your lifetime. Rich in tradition and history, few sports have a heritage, like golf, that can be traced back hundreds of years.

Remember, there is more to the game than just hitting the ball. Learning how to hit the ball in the variety of situations you will face is a skill that can be developed, but it requires practice. Learning how to play the game, the on-course etiquette that is an important part of the game, and knowing the Rules of the game also require practice and understanding.

That's why your best source of knowledge on the game and how to play it is your PGA Professional. Tour professionals, like myself, rely on our instructors to keep us competitive and our games in tune. So should you. Your game will improve faster and you will really enjoy your time on the course.




Hal Sutton

History of Golf

Most historians agree that the Dutch appear to have the earliest ties to the game of golf. Thirteenth century Dutch literature contains references to “golf-like” games with medieval names like “spel mitten colve” (play with club) and “den bal mitta calven to slaen” (to hit ball with the club). Dutch master painters have depicted more than 450 paintings and drawings of subjects participating in a game similar to what we now know as the game of golf.

The game as we know it today began around 1744 in St. Andrews, Scotland. Golf in the United States began in 1888 with the establishment of the first

official registered club, the Golf Club of America, in Yonkers, N.Y. Golf, once a game of noblemen and kings, is now played by people of all ages. Today golf is played around the world and has numerous levels of competition. Anyone – men, women, young or old, amateur or professional, the physically challenged – can enjoy the game of golf. Golf is a sport where you don’t have to be big, strong or fast to be successful. Golf is a game where the traits of successful players are: patience, persistence, skilled practice and focused ability. Whether you play for fun or play competitively, golf is a complex game. To reach your fullest potential, ongoing practice and professional instruction is needed.

Competitive Golf

Competitive golf is played by professionals and amateurs. Amateur events are sponsored for men and women of every age. The major professional championships for men are the Masters, the United States Open, the British Open and the PGA Championship. In addition, the PGA Tour sponsors a full calendar of events. The Ladies Professional Golf

Association (LPGA) sponsors a similar tour for women. Their major championships are the McDonald’s LPGA Championship, the United States Open, the Weetabix Women’s British Open and the Kraft Nabisco Championship. Professional stroke-play tournaments consist of a designated series of rounds with the winner being the player with the lowest total score.

Governing Bodies of Golf

The United State Golf Association (USGA) governs the Rules of Golf and amateur status in the United States. This organization has been the primary governing body for golf since 1894. The USGA, in conjunction with The Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, is responsible for establishing the rules of play. The USGA conducts championships, maintains standards for equipment and provides a fair playing field for golfers of all levels through its handicap system. The USGA Handicap System has made it possible for golfers of differing abilities to enjoy fair competition.

Today, there are more than 5 million golfers who have established USGA Handicap Indexes. On average the score for a 24 handicapper would be 96 on a Par 72 course. A player can establish a handicap index by posting scores at a recognized USGA golf club. The handicap can be established after five rounds are played and recorded. The PGA of America, the PGA Tour and the LPGA govern professional golf.

Recreational Golf

Today in the U.S., 31.1 million participants play recreational golf. Approximately 6.6 million golfers play more than 24 rounds of golf each year. Play may occur at private or public golf establishments. Golf facilities can range from miniature golf courses, to Par-3 courses, to executive courses, to full 9- and

18-hole courses. The minimum number of holes of a golf course is nine with the standard of play being set at 18 holes. Reservations for play are required at many golf courses. It is suggested you call in advance to request a starting tee time.

Golf Course Layout

A golf course is different from other sport playing fields. Basketball courts and soccer fields are similar from arena to arena, yet every golf course has a different layout. A regulation golf course consists of 18 different holes.

Golf holes, however, do have common characteristics. Every hole starts from a teeing ground (mounded area where play begins) and ends at a putting green (a closely mowed surface) where the cup and flagstick are found. The area between the teeing ground and putting green is called through the green. Through the green consists of the whole area of the course except the teeing ground and the putting green of the hole being played and all hazards on the course. Holes range from less than 100 yards to more than 600 yards. Each hole may have obstacles and hazards (trees, water, bunkers).

At the beginning of play, each player should pick up a scorecard that provides information about each hole’s yardage and par. Par is the score set for a hole that represents a standard of excellence that golfers attempt to meet. Par is determined by the yardage on each specific hole. The USGA has set the following guidelines for computing par (please note chart):

PAR	MEN	WOMEN
3	Up to 250	Up to 210
4	251 to 470	211 to 400
5	471 to 690	401 to 590
6	More than 690	More than 590



Play Golf America

Playing the game of golf has never been easier, or more fun. Whether you are just learning to play, looking to improve your skills or looking for people to meet and events to play in, you will find it all at Play Golf

America. Log onto www.playgolfamerica.com and find a PGA Professional or a golf program that's right for you.

CHAPTER 2

Facility Orientation

There is more to playing golf than learning how to swing the club and keeping score. The game is based on long-held traditions of manners, respect for the course and a respect for other players/fellow competitors on the course.

Reservations - Call the Golf Course

Tee Times Policy

- How many days in advance
- Rates
- Cancellation policy
- Walk-on policy
- Single-player policy
- Golf car use policy (age requirements - rate)
- Walkers policy (time restrictions on walking)

Equipment Policy

- Rental clubs availability
- Rate
- Reservations
- Individual player bag / equipment policy

Dress Code

- Player requirement
- Shirts – shorts/ slacks
- Footwear requirements

Amenities Available

- Food and beverage service
- Golf shop
- Locker rooms
- Caddies
- Practice facilities

Directions and potential drive-time factor depending on your locale.

Arrival - 40 to 45 Minutes Prior to Your Starting Tee Time

Bag Drop

- Unload golf clubs
- Park vehicle

Golf Shop

- Check in
- Pay your fees
- Get a scorecard and any course information
- Acquire any equipment needs (clubs, balls, glove, etc.)

Meet Fellow Players

- Locate restroom and food and beverage facilities

Warm Up

- Stretching routine
- Practice facility and practice putting green

Starter - At the First Tee

Report to starting tee 10 minutes before your tee time to review the following:

- Course rules
- Information such as yardage plates
- Golf car rules
- Course markings
- Suggestions for tee choice or length of course to match your skill level
- Pace of play guidelines – keeping up with group in front of you.

During Play of the Round

Ranger

- Player assistance controls the pace of play (always maintain correct spacing with the group in front and help keep pace for everyone’s enjoyment).

On Course

- Use continuous putting to speed up play
- Repair all ball marks on the putting greens and replace or sand your divots
- Follow all golf car paths and signage accordingly
- Mark your scorecard at the next teeing ground.

It’s O.K. Rules

Your instructor may have suggested a set of rules for your level of play and the course.

Having fun is the most important factor, especially when first learning to play. Be patient and enjoy the experience. Scoring is not always the objective in the beginning.

Conclusion

- Return the golf car to the attendant if you ride during this round
- Handle and put your clubs away in the vehicle
- Post your score– follow U.S.G.A. Handicap Policy for posting
- Recap your round– enjoy the facilities with your group and plan your next round!

CHAPTER
3

Beginning to Play the Game

Safety

Golf, when compared to other sports, is very safe. However, golf injuries can and do occur.

FORE!

One safety hazard in golf is the risk of being struck with a club by a fellow player. The best rule to follow is to “Stop and Look” before you swing. Make sure that your surroundings are clear and only swing when all is clear. When others are playing make sure to stand quietly, either directly behind or to the side of the per-

son playing a shot. A second safety hazard in golf is the possibility of being struck with a golf ball. Golf is a game where the furthest ball from the hole is played first. When playing on the course make sure that you are positioned where the ball cannot strike you. On occasion a player not in your group might hit an errant shot that lands close to you.

Golf uses its own safety warning, calling “Fore,” to warn other golfers that a ball in flight has the potential for reaching another group.

 Lightning can pose another serious danger on the golf course. Always move into a safe area when you see or hear thunder or lightning.

Speed of Play

The time it takes to play a round of golf depends on several conditions: the difficulty of the golf course, the number of players on the golf course and your skill level. On average an 18-hole round of golf should be approximately four to four-and-a-half hours. This breaks down to about 15 minutes per hole. To speed up play several strategies should be used:

1.

Be ready to play: Make sure you have tees, an extra ball, ball markers and a divot repair tool in your pocket during play.
2.

Limit your practice swings to one before it’s your turn to play.
3.

Watch your ball land and select a spot in the distance to use as a visual marker when looking for your ball. Have others in your group watch each player’s shots. This helps speed up the time to find a ball that is not in the fairway.
4.

Search for a lost ball for 5 minutes or less.
5.

Carry your bag, roll your pull cart or park your golf car on the side of the putting green closest to the next hole. When carrying a bag or pulling a cart always move your equipment forward to avoid walking back to get your clubs.
6.

Putt out. Play is faster if you finish putting rather than marking your ball on the putting green.
7.

Record your score on the next tee, not on the putting green.
8.

Keep up. You are playing too slow if the group in front of you is one hole ahead.
9.

Let faster groups play through.

Golf Etiquette

Behavior on the course has easy rules to follow. A code of etiquette was established when golf originated as a game. According to the USGA the etiquette of golf is a series of suggestions that point out certain standards of behavior for play on the golf course. A few rules of etiquette include:

1. Safety first – Don’t play until others in front of you are out of range.
2. A player who has the honor (low score from previous hole) should be allowed to play first from the teeing ground.
3. Do not talk, move or stand directly behind someone when they are playing.

4. Play without delay.
5. Allow others to play through when searching for a lost ball.
6. Take care of the golf course and repair any divots that your club makes on the teeing ground, fairway and ball marks on the putting green.
7. Before leaving a bunker, rake and smooth over all holes and footprints. When finished, lay rake with teeth down.

First Tee

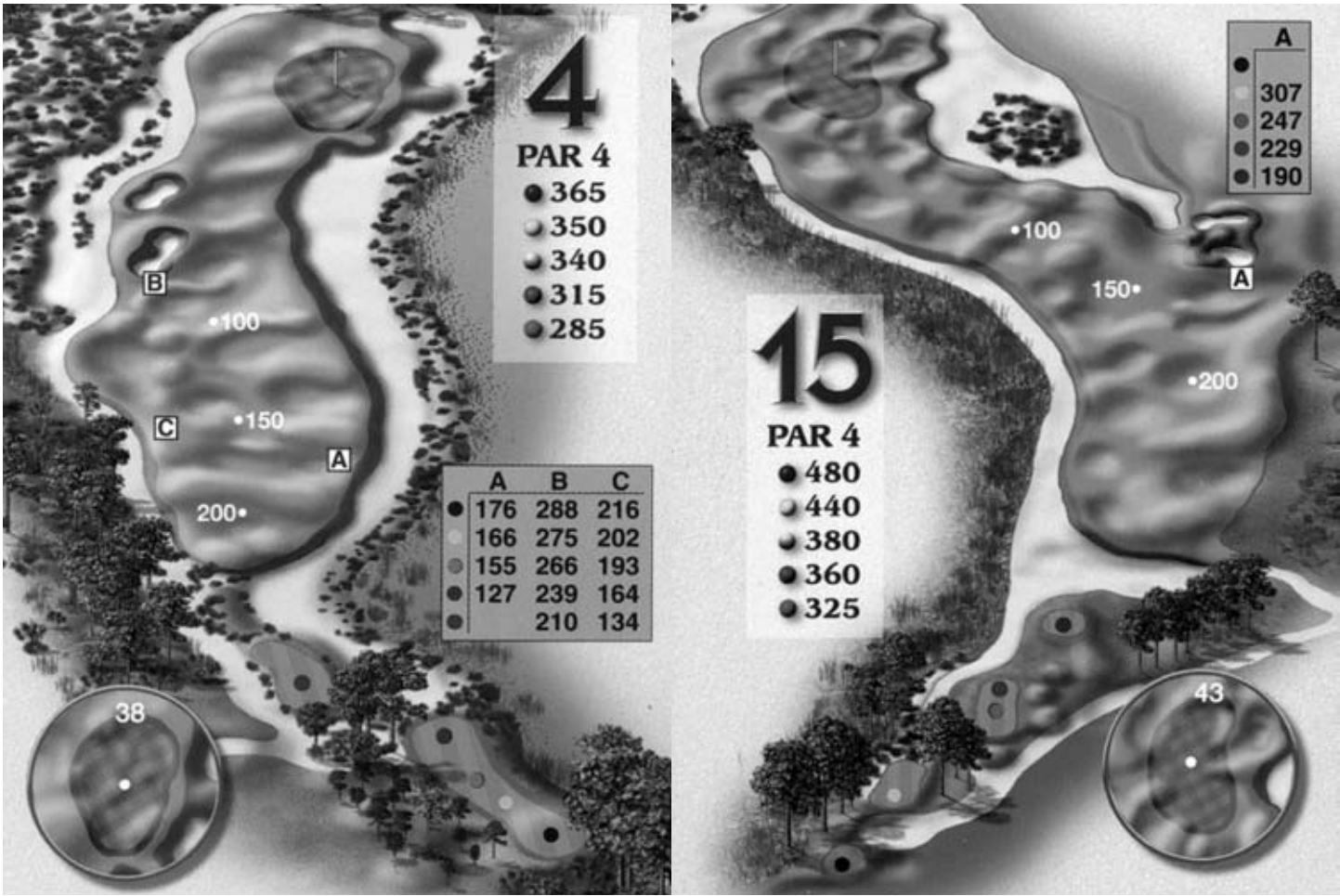
Determine the tee markers appropriate for your skill level. Golf courses use different colored tee markers to represent course yardage. The forward tees are designated for beginners and players with a high handicap. The longest yardage tees are designated for low handicap or professional players.

Once you have selected the tees that you will be playing and the starter has given you the go-ahead to begin play, determine who will play first. And, “Play Away.” The first player should tee his/her ball between or no further than two club lengths behind the tee markers.

Determine the shape of the golf hole and aim toward

a target in the fairway. A helpful strategy is to tee your ball on the side of the tee box closest to any trouble such as water hazards, trees, or bunkers. This allows you to have a wider target area and to hit away from the trouble. Take no more than one practice swing, line up and play your ball, watch it land. This will allow you to find your ball easily as you move from the tee to the fairway.

Once the hole has been completed, the order of play remains the same as on the first hole unless another player in the group earns a lower score. This is called “having the honor.” Honor establishes the order of play on each successive tee.



The Dye Course
PGA Golf Club, Port St. Lucie, FL

Approach Shots

Approach shots are those shots that are played between the teeing ground and the putting green. Ideally, an approach shot is played from the fairway. At times a golfer’s tee shot misses the fairway and the ball must be played from the rough or natural areas that line the fairway.

The ball furthest from the hole is the ball that is played first. The order of play continues to the next closest ball and so on until play on the hole for everyone is completed.

Two factors contribute to successful approach shots: distance and direction. Depending on the flagstick location, a golfer will aim to a target on or near the putting green. Distance is important for advancing the ball to the target. What club should you hit? Before you select a golf club, it is important to know the distance to the center of the putting green. All golf courses provide a scorecard with hole yardages and some type of yardage markers, usually found in the center of the fairway. Typical marking locations are 200, 150 and 100 yards from the center of the putting green. Before you play it is important to determine how far, on average, your ball travels.

All golfers should be prepared to play ready golf!

Bunker Play

Often a putting green will be surrounded by green-side bunkers filled with sand or grass. These bunkers are designed to catch errant shots or force players to hit shots that carry onto the putting green. Several rules and etiquette need to be applied when a ball lands in the bunker. A bunker is a hazard. While in a hazard, a player is not allowed to ground his/her club (touch sand) before attempting to play the ball. Each practice swing in a bunker that touches the sand would result in a 2-stroke penalty. A player is not allowed to remove any loose impediments, such as: stones, leaves or twigs around a ball in the sand. Once the ball has been cleared of the bunker, the sand should be smoothed or raked clean of footprints and divots. The rakes are provided, usually on the golf car or on the ground just outside and near the bunkers.

