

# Alabama Golf Association Tournament Manual



**Championship and Tournament Regulations**

*Effective January 1, 2019*

## **Alabama Golf Association (AGA) Contact Information**

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# AGA Championship Regulations

*These regulations apply to AGA championships and supplements any rules or policies stated on an official AGA championship entry form or championship player information sheet.*

## **Current USGA Rules of Golf govern play.**

### **Automotive Transportation**

The AGA may require rental of (or rental and use of) automotive transportation at a championship or qualifying event. (Such a requirement does not imply that caddies are prohibited.) Such a requirement is stated on the championship entry form, letter to competitors and/or local rules sheet.

Automotive transportation by contestants and caddies is prohibited at junior events and other championships as specified in the championship entry form, letter to competitors and/or local rules sheet.

### **Caddies and Spectator Carts**

Caddies are permitted at AGA championships unless otherwise stated in the letter to competitors and/or the local rules sheet. A competitor should identify his/her caddie to an opponent or to the competitor's marker prior to the start of play. The competitor is responsible for the conduct of the caddie during an event.

At AGA junior events, caddies are permitted but must be **18 years of age or under**.

**CADDIE/SPECTATOR CART POLICY – (Non-Junior Championships):** During the play of a hole, either the player or his caddie may ride in a golf cart but not both at the same time. Spectators are not allowed to ride in a player's golf cart at any time. Non-club owned spectator carts are not allowed.

*Exception 1:* In consistency with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the AGA will grant an individual with a bona fide disability a spectator cart if the following conditions are met: 1. Requesting individual completes and submits a [Disabled Golf Cart Request Form](#) by the close of entries date for that championship; 2. Host club has a golf cart available; 3. Requesting individual pays host club the appropriate cart fee; 4. Requesting individual presents to the AGA staff or AGA representative a disability card issued by a government agency.

*Exception 2:* During the match play portion of an AGA individual match play championship, both the player and caddie may ride in the same golf cart if carts are available for all competitors.

**SPECTATOR CART POLICY (Junior Championships):** AGA defers to host club policy in regards to allowing spectator carts at junior championships. If spectator carts are allowed, they will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis. Individuals with a bona fide handicap issue may request a spectator cart by submitting a [Disabled Golf Cart Request Form](#) by the close of entries date.

### **Cellular Phones and Electronic Devices**

See Code of Conduct section.

### **Championships - Rules and Regulations**

The Alabama Golf Association Executive Committee is responsible for rules and regulations that govern AGA championships. AGA staff or committee members who attend an AGA championship are responsible to the Executive Committee for enforcing regulations. United States Golf Association (USGA) Rules of Golf and local rules govern play.

### **Classifications of Competitors**

**AMATEUR** is a male or female member of an AGA member club who maintains his or her amateur status as defined by the USGA.

**PROFESSIONAL** is a member of the golf professional staff of an AGA member club.

**JUNIOR** is an amateur dependent of a member of an AGA member club who has not reached their 19<sup>th</sup> birthday by the date listed on a junior entry form and has not started college.

**SENIOR MALE** is a male amateur member of an AGA member club who has reached his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday by the date listed on a senior entry form.

**SUPER SENIOR MALE** is a male amateur member of an AGA member club who has reached his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday by the date listed on a senior entry form.

**SENIOR FEMALE** is a female amateur member of an AGA member club who has reached her 50<sup>th</sup> birthday by the date listed on a senior entry form.

**SUPER SENIOR FEMALE** is a female amateur member of an AGA member club who has reached her 65<sup>th</sup> birthday by the date listed on a senior entry form.

**MID-AMATEUR** is an amateur member of an AGA member club who has reached their 25<sup>th</sup> birthday by the date listed on a mid-amateur entry form.

**PARENT-CHILD** is a team comprised of a father and a son, father and a daughter, stepfather-stepson, grandfather-grandson, mother-daughter, mother-son, stepfather-stepdaughter, stepmother-stepdaughter, stepmother-stepson, grandfather-granddaughter, grandmother-granddaughter or grandmother-grandson. In-laws are eligible. One member of each team must be an active member of an AGA member club or a member of the golf professional staff of an AGA member club.

## **Code of Conduct**

The Alabama Golf Association (AGA) takes great pride in the quality of its players, host facilities and volunteer involvement at each tournament. In order to continue making the AGA experience enjoyable and rewarding for everyone, the AGA requires all tournament participants and their caddies to adhere to a set of guidelines known as the Code of Conduct.

### **Violations of Code of Conduct**

It is impossible to determine exactly the standard of conduct expected from players and caddies in AGA competitions. It is also impossible to make a list of all the acts in violation of the Code of Conduct. In most circumstances, any of the following actions by a player or their caddie at an AGA event constitutes a violation of the AGA Code of Conduct and could result in sanctions or penalties.

- Unsportsmanlike conduct, including: abusive language, cheating, club throwing, disrespect to volunteers, officials or fellow competitors, or abuse and theft of golf course property.
- Not adhering to the dress code at the host facility.
- Conduct not becoming of an AGA player, such as acting in anger or creating other distractions such as loudly playing music or listening to sporting events during a round.
- Failure to treat host golf course with respect by ignoring the responsibility of caring for the course, filling divots and fixing ball marks.
- Physical abuse, threat of physical abuse, verbal abuse, slander or libel towards other players, host golf course staff or members, AGA staff or volunteers in any medium.
- Incidents of wagering or gambling considered flagrant or excessive by the Committee.
- Use of cellular phones (except for emergencies, a ruling, entering hole-by-hole scores, viewing tournament leaderboard, viewing weather forecasts, or use as a distance measuring device), laptop and tablet computers, PDA's and the like.

### **Code of Conduct Violation Penalties**

The AGA Tournament Committee may assess any or all of the following penalties based on severity and frequency of the Code of Conduct violation(s):

- First breach = Warning or Committee sanction
- Second breach = One penalty stroke
- Third breach = General Penalty
- Fourth breach or any serious misconduct = Disqualification

Depending on the severity of the violation, a tournament disqualification may also result in disqualification from the next event(s) for which a player has been accepted. Violation of the Code of Conduct may affect a player's eligibility for team events and post-season honors.

The AGA reserves the right to suspend or revoke a player's ability to compete in AGA events for a major breach of the Code of Conduct. AGA members violating the Code of Conduct at non-AGA competitions may also be subject to the penalties above

based on severity. Entries are subject to rejection at any time, including during the event, by the AGA or the host club. The reason for rejection may include unbecoming conduct, “Did Not Start” (DNS) or “No Card” (NC).

### **Course Preparations**

The AGA staff, at the bidding of the championship committee, is responsible for marking a golf course and determining tee and hole locations. Special local rules, such as dropping zones, are listed on the Notice to Players.

### **Defending Champions**

A defending champion **must** complete an entry form for the next year’s championship and fulfill all eligibility and deadline requirements.

### **Discontinuing Play**

Competitors are permitted to discontinue play in accordance with Rule 5.7 (USGA Rules of Golf). The championship committee and the host club superintendent or club committee also may discontinue play.

Any interruption of play is noted by a siren blast. When play is discontinued, a competitor should mark and lift his/her ball.

When play is suspended for a dangerous situation, a competitor who is between the play of two holes must not resume play until the committee has ordered a resumption of play. A competitor in any event **must** discontinue play immediately upon announcement of a dangerous situation.

If conditions become so severe that play cannot be resumed the same day, the championship committee may suspend, postpone or cancel the round. When play is suspended, play will be resumed from where it was stopped, and all posted scores stand. When play is postponed, returned scores **may** be canceled at the discretion of the committee. A postponed round is rescheduled immediately for the following day if possible.

### **Dress Code**

The AGA defers to the dress code of a host club but also enforces its own requirements. Unsuitable attire at championships includes: shirts without collars (mock neck must be ½” minimum), pants or shorts made of denim, cargo shorts and cargo pants, shorts less than Bermuda length, tank tops, T-shirts and cut-offs.

A competitor who does not conform to a championship dress code will be asked to change attire prior to his/her starting time. The penalty for non-compliance is disqualification.

### **Eligibility**

General: Specific championship eligibility rules are listed on the respective AGA championship entry form. Participation in Alabama Golf Association championships and qualifiers is open to an individual who meets the following criteria:

1. Member of an AGA Member Club, and
2. Has an active GHIN® USGA Handicap Index® issued by an AGA Member Club, and
3. Complies fully with USGA Rules of Amateur Status, and
4. Must be a “resident” of Alabama (see “Legal Residency Criteria” below)

#### **Legal Residency Criteria**

Resident: An individual is considered to be a resident of Alabama when said individual (a) maintains his/her primary residence in Alabama or if (a) is in question, (b) the individual (i) is registered to vote in Alabama in local, state and national elections and/or (ii) possesses a valid Alabama driver’s license.

Juniors: An eligible junior is an 18-year-old or under who is a dependent of a member of an AGA member club who meets the “Resident” criteria and has not started college. An eligible junior is required to have a current USGA Handicap Index issued by an AGA member club unless otherwise stated on the championship entry form.

Military: Active duty members of the United States Military are eligible to participate in AGA Championships if they are stationed in Alabama as of the last scheduled day of the event and meet the “General” criteria 1, 2 and 3 items. The voting and driver’s license provisions are waived under the “Resident” criteria. He/she must meet all other eligibility requirements listed on the official tournament entry form.

College Students: A college student is considered a resident of their parent(s)/guardian(s)' "Resident" criteria unless said student (i) has no dependency on his/her parents; and (ii) fulfills the "Resident" criteria as stated above.

**Other Eligibility Criteria:**

Applicants for reinstatement to amateur status (A/R) are not eligible for AGA amateur championships. Professionals are eligible only for professional events (including divisions of the Father-Son and Parent-Child championships) and must conform to the **PROFESSIONAL** classification.

USGA Handicap Index® limitations are stated on each championship entry form if applicable.

Entrants who misrepresent their playing proficiency are subject to disqualification at any time and to rejection from future AGA events.

The AGA reserves the right to reject an entry if the entrant was a "No Card" (NC) or "Did Not Show/Start" (DNS) at that event the previous year.

**Entry Requirements and Deadlines**

Entry opening and closing deadlines are strictly observed. Championship entry forms received before the specified opening date are returned to the sender and must be re-submitted.

Every competitor must complete an online application at [www.alabamagolf.org](http://www.alabamagolf.org). No entry is accepted prior to a championship's opening date/time. Entries are accepted until 11:59 p.m. of the closing date listed on the form.

**Fax, e-mail, telephone, late or incomplete entry forms are not accepted.**

Refer to each championship entry form for registration instructions. The specified entry fee must be paid by Visa, MasterCard, American Express or Discover payments and are accepted for online applications only.

While the AGA is pleased to provide online championship applications, we stress that the Internet is an unstable environment. The AGA cannot and does not guarantee that this site or the ability to apply on-line will be available seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. The AGA does not make any guarantee that an entry submitted pursuant to this site will be received by the AGA or received in a timely fashion. The responsibility for ensuring that an application is received by the AGA by no later than the deadline set forth on the particular entry form, and the risk of delay and/or error in transmission lies solely with the applicant. The AGA shall have no liability with respect to any such delay and/or error and the consequences therefrom, including rejection of an entry. Please be advised that players who are minors upon the date of submission of an entry form in the state of Alabama must have parental consent to apply via the Internet.

The AGA is not responsible for errors or delays made by any internet service provider or credit card vendor. Confirmation of acceptance and lodging information are sent to competitors as soon as practicable.

Entry into an AGA championship is subject to approval by the AGA Championship Committee. By electronically filing a championship entry form, each entrant agrees to abide by all AGA and club regulations. Note: If necessary, AGA will file a blank entry form for a defending champion and for host club exemption(s) prior to the closing date. Defending champion should notify AGA at least seven days prior to the championship of their entry status. Host club should advise the AGA at least seven days prior to the championship of the selected player. Should the host club's exemption selection withdraw prior to the championship, the host club may substitute another player prior to that player's scheduled championship tee time with approval from the AGA.

**Entry Fees**

The entry fee and entry fee schedule for each championship is listed on that championship's official entry form.

**Field Size**

Field sizes are determined by the AGA.

**Exemption from Qualifying Events**

In championships which require sectional qualifying events, exemption categories are listed on the championship entry form. All other competitors must qualify.

*Medical Deferment for Exempt Players:* Players may defer their exemption into an event for one year if they are unable to compete due to a verifiable injury or other medical condition.

## Gambling

The AGA discourages any form of gambling in connection with any AGA event. Incidents of wagering or gambling considered flagrant or excessive by the committee may result in disqualification of those involved and rejection of entry in subsequent AGA championships.

## Local Rules

The AGA Championship Committee is responsible for preparing and distributing the "Notice to Players," including all local rules. These are distributed at the starting tees and are available at the starter's table.

Unless otherwise noted, the following local rules are in effect at AGA championships:

*The "One-Ball Rule" is not in effect.*

**Yellow penalty areas** are **identified** by yellow stakes and **defined** by yellow lines. Stakes and lines are deemed to be in a penalty area.

**Red penalty areas** are **identified** by red stakes and **defined** by red lines. Stakes and lines are deemed to be in a penalty area..

**Ground under repair** is defined by white lines. White-lined areas tying into a cart path are deemed to be part of that obstruction.

**Out of bounds** is defined by the **inside points** of white stakes **at ground level** and other items as defined in the Notice to Players.

At clubs that have shoe and **spike restrictions**, the penalty for non-compliance of the club rule is **disqualification**. All club **dress codes** will be observed. The penalty for non-compliance is **disqualification**.

## Official Starting Time

Tee Times - The clock at the tee (1st or 10th) where the player begins his/her stipulated round is the official time of starting. Starters will not page players in advance of their starting time. Players should report to the tee at least five minutes prior to their starting time.

Shotgun or Simultaneous Start - A player is responsible for being at the assigned tee promptly to begin play on time. The assigned starting time for shotgun events is when a) a horn or siren is sounded, b) if no horn or siren is used, when the group can play without interference or c) if the player is in the second group to start on an assigned hole, when that group can play without interference.

## Pace of Play

The AGA wants all players to enjoy competing in our events. Pace of play may differ depending upon the venue, weather and course conditions. Every player is accountable for playing at an acceptable pace, therefore we need your help. Please observe the following guidelines to help ensure a pleasant tournament experience for all:

- Make sure to keep pace with the group in FRONT of you. The group behind should keep pace with your group and so forth.
- Go directly to your ball. If sharing a golf cart, drop-off the player farthest from the hole then proceed to the other ball.
- Be ready to play when it is your turn.
- Keep practice strokes and time taken to read putts to a minimum.
- Play a provisional ball if your original ball may be lost or out of bounds.
- Keep time taken at the snack bar or between nines to a minimum.

If everyone does their part, then 4½ hours should be the maximum time taken to play a round of golf at an AGA tournament. Following the lead of the USGA, the AGA has developed a pace of play policy, based on Rule 5.6b and Model Local Rule 8K that is fair to every competitor.

\*Note: a group may receive a "friendly reminder" of their position regardless of pace of play guidelines.

## Maximum Allowable Time

The maximum allowable time is the maximum time considered necessary by the Committee for a group to complete its round. This is expressed in a per-hole and aggregate time format and includes all time associated with playing the game,

e.g., for rulings and walking times between holes.

Both the specific maximum time allotted per hole and for the completion of 18 holes at AGA championships will be denoted on each player's AGA issued scorecard. The following procedure applies only if a group is "out of position."

### **Definition of "Out of Position"**

The first group to start will be considered "out of position" if at any time during the round, the group's cumulative time exceeds the time allowed for the number of holes played. Any following group will be considered out of position if it is more than 15 minutes behind the group in front of them and has exceeded the time allowed for the number of holes played.

### **Procedure for When Group is "Out of Position"**

1. Referees will monitor pace of play and decide whether a group that is "out of position" should be timed. An assessment of whether there is any recent mitigating circumstances, e.g. a lengthy ruling, lost ball, unplayable ball, etc. will be considered.

If the decision is made to time the group, each player in the group will be subject to individual timing. The referee will advise each player in the group that they are "out of position" and being timed.

In exceptional circumstances, an individual player, or two players within a group of three or four, may be timed instead of the entire group.

2. The maximum time allocated per stroke is 40 seconds. 10 extra seconds are allowed for the first player to play: a) a tee shot on a par 3 hole; b) an approach shot to the green; and c) a chip or putt.

In the teeing area, general area, a penalty area or bunker - Timing will begin when a player has had sufficient time to reach the ball, it is his or her turn to play and he or she is able to play without interference or distraction. Time taken to determine distance and select a club will count as time taken for the next stroke.

On the putting green, timing will begin when the player has had a reasonable amount of time to lift, clean and replace the ball, repair damage that interferes with the line of play and move loose impediments on the line of play. Time spent looking at the line of play from beyond the hole and/or behind the ball will count as part of the time taken for the next stroke.

Timing ceases when a group regains position and players will be advised accordingly.

### **Procedure for Subsequent "Out of Position" Situations During the Same Round**

If a group is "out of position" more than once during a round, the timing procedure protocol applies to each situation. Individual bad times and penalties aggregate until the round is completed.

### **Penalty for Breach of Pace of Play Policy**

- Penalty for first breach: Verbal warning from referee
- Penalty for second breach: One-stroke penalty
- Penalty for third breach: General Penalty in addition to the one-stroke penalty for the second breach
- Penalty for fourth breach: Disqualification

### **Pairings and Starting Times**

The AGA is responsible for creating pairings and starting times, for making these available to competitors and for conducting championships.

Preferences for starting times and pairings may be requested but are not guaranteed. Tee times and pairings cannot be altered after released publicly.

Pairings and starting times are posted at each host club prior to the last practice-round day, are available at the AGA office and on the AGA website.



Competitors are responsible for ascertaining starting times and should be ready to play at the assigned tee at least five minutes prior to the starting time.

### **Practice Rounds**

Practice rounds before a championship generally are scheduled the day(s) before the event at the discretion of the host club. Competitors generally are granted one complimentary practice round before a championship (Exception: Men's State Amateur). Use of golf carts may be required.

Multiple shots are not permitted during a practice round except from the teeing ground and on a putting green, provided play is not delayed.

### **Prizes**

- All prizes are determined by the AGA Championship Committee or by the duly-appointed AGA representative. Prizes in AGA amateur championships comply with USGA Rules of Amateur Status (see USGA Rules of Golf).
- Prize money for professional events or divisions is determined by field size. Prizes in junior championships comply with state high school athletic and otherwise applicable regulations.
- In a championship featuring a permanent trophy, the current champion has custody of the trophy until the scheduled date of the championship the following year. The champion has the responsibility to assure that the permanent trophy arrives, in due time, at the next championship site. If this is not possible, he/she must notify the AGA office in advance of the championship dates.
- The AGA is not responsible for any unclaimed or unredeemed merchandise certificates after a tournament play date. It is the player's responsibility to claim or redeem a certificate or golf shop credit prior to leaving a tournament site. The AGA will not replace any lost or unclaimed merchandise certificates/gift cards after a tournament is played.
- High School or collegiate players should check with their institution compliance department regarding High School or NCAA regulations relating to accepting prizes or merchandise.

### **Qualifying Events**

Qualifying events are held for AGA championships which attract far more entries than can be accommodated in the championship starting field.

Sectional qualifying is 18 holes of stroke play. The number of qualifiers' places at each site is determined by the AGA after entries close, based on the size of the field. All ties for the final qualifying position will qualify for the championship. Alternate positions will be decided by a scorecard playoff using the USGA recommended procedure located in Appendix 1 of the Rules of Golf. **Qualifying site assignments cannot be changed after entries close.**

If a qualifying site is full at the time of registration, a player may opt to be placed on that site's alternate wait list or register at another qualifying site. A player may only register for one qualifying site. Wait list alternates and on-site alternates are ranked according to date/time an entry is received and processed.

\*Note: Qualifying sites may be cancelled due to a lack of participation.

**Rain-Out Policy.** In the event a qualifying round cannot be rescheduled, the AGA reserves the right to choose competitors for the championship as follows:

1. From eligible competitors who played in the specific championship proper the previous year event was contested.
2. From eligible competitors who successfully qualified for USGA Championships during the previous 24 months.
3. \*From eligible competitors in ranking order on the respective Alabama player rankings as of the last update.  
From the remaining competitors with the lowest handicap indexes up to the total number of available qualifying spots determined in advance by the Committee.

\*Respective Player Rankings: Men=Alabama Men's Rankings; Senior Men=Alabama Senior Men's Rankings; Junior Boys=Alabama Junior Boys Rankings.

Note: If there are more eligible players than qualifying spots available for any of the above eligibility criteria, then a "blind draw" will be used to determine those players advancing to the championship proper. Competitors who have "Withdrawn" from the qualifier are not eligible under this policy. The AGA reserves the right to adjust the number of qualifying spots.

## Refund Policy

Entry fee refund policy schedule:

**Withdrawal:** If an accepted player/side withdraws before the close of registration for any reason, the entry fee will be refunded, subject to a \$30.00 service fee.

If an accepted player/side withdraws after the close of registration, please see the relevant deadline for a 50% refund on the specific [Championship Entry Form](#). No refunds will be made after that deadline.

\*Note: Refund policy and schedule applies to each entry fee stage of a championship with qualifiers.

**No Shows:** Players/Sides that fail to notify the AGA of their withdrawal and “No Show” their starting time will not receive a refund for any reason. “No Show” sides may be subject to suspension from future AGA events.

**Alternates:** Full refund if player/side does not gain entry into the championship.

All dates and time refer to date and time of receipt at the AGA office.

\*Note: AGA will process your withdrawal and applicable refund within 72 hours.

Players/teams who withdraw from a championship or qualifier may re-enter the event prior to the closing date as long as space is available in the tournament field and pay the full entry fee (unless a refund of the original entry fee has not yet been processed). If the championship or qualifier field is full, the player/team will be placed at the end of the alternate wait list.

Players/teams who withdraw from a championship or qualifier after the closing date may “Un-withdraw” as long as space is available in the tournament field and pay the full entry fee (unless a refund of the original entry fee has not yet been processed). If the championship or qualifier field is full, the player/team will be placed at the end of the alternate wait list.

Refunds are not made for any reason after the qualifying round for qualifying competitors (in championships which have qualifying events).

Credit card registration refunds are credited to the account from which payment was made.

## Scorecards (Paper or Electronic)

Each competitor is responsible for the accuracy of the score recorded for each hole but not for the addition of those scores.

In AGA competitions, a scorecard is deemed returned to the committee when the player exits the scoring area. In AGA conducted USGA qualifying, a scorecard is deemed returned when the player has exited the scoring area. No alteration may be made on a scorecard by a competitor after it is returned to the committee. Competitors are encouraged to remain in the scoring area until their scores are verified and posted.

A competitor who fails to certify their hole scores within 20 minutes of completion of the stipulated round is deemed to have failed to return a score for the round and may be listed on the scoreboard as a "Disqualification" (DQ under Rule 3.3b(2)).

Competitors that fail to return a scorecard without informing the AGA are denoted as a “No Card” (NC).

In match play championships, scorecards are not required. The winner of a match must report the result of that match to an AGA official immediately after completion of the match. Competitors are urged to check the scoreboard to see that match play results are posted properly and to determine the starting time of the next-scheduled round.

The AGA reserves the right to reject an entry if the entrant was a “No Card” (NC) or “Did Not Show/Start” (DNS) the previous year.

## Television, Radio, Motion Picture, Video and Photographic Rights

Competitors in AGA championships grant and assign to the AGA, without limitation, their individual television, radio, motion picture, video, photographic and all other similar rights with respect to participating in AGA events that may be used online, in print and social media.

Competitors also agree to refrain from any action which might interfere with the AGA’s ownership of the rights granted

and assigned to the AGA. All such rights are the property of and expressly reserved for, by and to the AGA. Any use thereof, without the expressed and written consent of the AGA, is forbidden.

### **Ties and Playoffs**

Resolution of ties and playoff information are listed on the applicable entry form, AGA Notice to Players and Local Rules sheets. As a general rule, these include:

- A tie for first place in a stroke play championship is resolved by a hole-by-hole playoff beginning at a hole to be determined by the Committee. Exception: Men's State Amateur utilizes a three-hole aggregate playoff. If a playoff involves more than two competitors, those other than the champion are deemed to tie for second place.
- In all other cases involving ties, prizes are split.
- In a match play championship, the stipulated round will be extended until a winner is determined.
- Competitors or teams finishing at the same level in a match play championship (such as semifinalists) receive identical prizes.