SGL
Southern Golf League

PIN GOLF

SOUTHERN GOLF LEAGUE RULES 2027

OFFICIAL SOUTHERN GOLF LEAGUE COMPETITION RULES & REGULATIONS

1. LEAGUE GOVERNANCE

1.1 Purpose and Format	**Founded in 2025, the Southern Golf League (SGL) was established to provide high-quality, competitive match play for Men golfers across the South of England with Handicap Indexes between 5 and 15. By bringing clubs together in a structured league format, the SGL builds on traditional friendly matches while providing a clear framework and simplifying score administration. This allows clubs to focus on what matters most: great golf, strong competition and good company. Matches are played as four-ball better-ball, with a 90% handicap allowance and the lowest-handicapped player playing from zero.**
1.2 League Spirit	Clubs participating in the Southern Golf League (SGL) do so on the understanding that no participant will seek to manipulate the rules to gain an unfair advantage. Golf is founded on integrity, trust and self-regulation, and these values must be upheld by every club, captain and player in the league.
1.3 Divisions, Growth, Promotion and Relegation	The league operates a promotion and relegation system. Each division will normally comprise four clubs, and each club is responsible for arranging its matches against the other clubs in its allocated division. As the league continues to grow, additional clubs may be admitted before the start of a season. To support fixture planning and individual club calendar availability, no division will comprise more than five clubs. Any new club joining the league will enter through the most recently created division. At the end of the season, the top two clubs in each division will be promoted and the bottom two will be relegated, where applicable. The divisions are named Oak, Pine and Birch, with Maple to be introduced as the league expands. Final standings, promotion and relegation will be determined in accordance with Rules 2.2 and 2.3.

2. DEFINITIONS AND SCORING

2.1 DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Group	A collection of players sharing the same tee time. This will usually be a four-ball, but may also comprise a 2-v-1 four-ball or a singles match. World Handicap System (WHS) allowances will apply as appropriate to four-ball (2-v-2 or 2-v-1) and singles (1-v-1) formats.
Match format	Four-ball better-ball match play, with a 90% handicap allowance.
Match	The collection of groups played between two clubs on the day. A match will normally comprise six groups, with a minimum of five.
League score	The result of one group: 0 for a loss, 0.5 for a halved match and 1 for a win.

2.2 LEAGUE POINTS

Scoring basis	**League points are awarded according to the overall match result, determined by the team winning the most group points.**
Match result	**League points**
Win	**3**
Draw	**1**
Loss	**0**

2.3 Tie-breaker	**If two or more teams finish level on League points, their final positions will be determined in the following order: (1) the best overall group-points difference, calculated by subtracting total group points conceded from total group points won; (2) the highest total number of group points won; (3) the aggregate group score from the league matches played between the tied teams; and (4) the lowest total number of group points conceded. Where three or more teams remain tied, the head-to-head calculation will be made using a mini-table containing only the results between those tied teams. If the teams still cannot be separated, the League Committee will determine the outcome using a method announced before the start of the season. For these purposes, each group is recorded as 1 point for a win, 0.5 points for a halved match and 0 points for a loss.**
2.4 Result submission	Both captains must email the match and group scores to **matchcentre@southerngolfleague.com**.

3. TEAM SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION

Requirement	**Team selection rule**
3.1 Competitive fairness	The home team already benefits from playing on its own course and from the natural advantage of local course knowledge. To provide greater competitive fairness, the home captain must submit the home team's full selection and playing order to the away captain before the match. The away captain may then arrange the away team's pairings against that submitted order.
3.2 Submission deadline	The home team selection must be received by the away captain at least 48 hours before the match. For a Saturday match, the deadline is midnight on the preceding Wednesday. For a Sunday match, the deadline is midnight on the preceding Thursday.
3.3 Selections are final	Once submitted, neither the home team nor the away team may change its full team selection or playing order.
3.4 Player withdrawal	If a selected player becomes unavailable or is unable to play because of injury, that captain must notify the opposing captain as soon as possible. A substitute may replace only the player who has withdrawn.
3.5 No team reshuffle	A substitution does not permit either team to revise its wider selection, pairings or playing order in order to seek a potential handicap advantage.
3.6 Communication and appeals	Clear and timely communication between captains is essential. Any disagreement or appeal relating to team submission or substitution will be reviewed by a league official, the League Committee or the league owner, whose decision will be final.

4. TEAM COMPOSITION, ELIGIBILITY AND HANDICAPS

Rule	**Team composition, eligibility and handicap requirement**
4.1 Standard team size	Each club should aim to field a full team of 12 players, enabling six four-ball groups to be played. Teams may consist of male players aged 17 or over.
4.2 Minimum team size	Where either club is unable to field 12 players, the minimum team size is 10 players. This allows the match to proceed over five groups and is the minimum permitted reduction from the standard six-group format.
4.3 Handicap eligibility	Captains should select players with a Handicap Index between 5.0 and 15.0. A player with a Handicap Index above 15.0 may participate but must play from a maximum Handicap Index of 15.0 on the day. The Handicap Index recorded at team submission must be the player's current official index held through the World Handicap System

	(WHS), as administered by England Golf or the player's recognised club handicap system. No player with a Handicap Index of 4.9 or lower is eligible to compete, except as provided in Rule 4.4.
4.4 Post-submission handicap adjustment	A player's eligibility will be determined using their current official Handicap Index at the time the team is submitted. If an eligible player's Handicap Index subsequently falls below 5.0 before the match, the player will remain eligible for that match and must play using their current official Handicap Index on the day. No additional or compensating strokes will be awarded solely because the player's Handicap Index has changed after team submission.
4.5 Handicap calculation	The maximum Handicap Index permitted for four-ball better-ball matches is 15.0. Each player's Course Handicap will be determined using the applicable Course Rating and Slope Rating for the tees being played. Playing Handicaps will then be calculated automatically using the official league match scoresheet, configured in accordance with the SGL scoring and handicap rules.
4.6 Club representation	No player may represent more than one club in the same league season.
4.7 Unforeseen match-day shortage	The following provisions apply only where an unforeseen availability issue or injury on the day prevents either club from fielding its submitted team. Their purpose is to support the match being played, particularly where players have already travelled, while protecting competitive fairness.
4.7.1 Reduced group	A maximum of one of the usual six groups may be played with reduced numbers. This may be a 2-v-1 four-ball or a 1-v-1 singles match, with the appropriate World Handicap System allowance applied. Where one club is unable to field a side for a scheduled group and the opposing club has a pairing available to play, that group will be recorded as a 1–0 group win to the opposing club. Where neither club can field a side for the group, it will be recorded as void and no group points will be awarded. These provisions apply only after the reduced-team and reduced-group options permitted by Rules 4.2 and 4.7 have been considered.
4.7.2 Captains' decision and league review	The captains may jointly agree to continue, postpone or cancel the match without penalty. Fair and practical judgement should be used wherever possible to allow the match to proceed. Any concern or uncertainty must be referred to a league official or the league owner before play begins. If no league contact is available, the match may proceed under parameters agreed and recorded by both captains. The result will then be reviewed by league officials or the League Committee. If a fair conclusion cannot be reached, the match may be declared void and rescheduled.

5. MATCH SCHEDULING, POSTPONEMENT AND DISPUTES

5.1 RESCHEDULED AND UNPLAYED MATCHES

5.1.1 League season	**The SGL league season runs from 15 March to 30 September. Clubs must arrange and complete all scheduled league matches within this period. Fixtures may be played at any mutually agreed time during the season, subject to course availability and the course, handicap and Local Rule requirements contained in Section 6.**
5.1.2 Authorised out-of-season match	A match may be played after 30 September only where it is a rescheduled fixture and the revised date has been approved in advance by a league official or the league owner. Both clubs must agree the date and acknowledge that the host course may be operating under different seasonal conditions. Rules 6.5 and 6.6 will apply.
5.1.3 Forfeited match	If a match is not completed within the league season, or within any extension authorised under Rule 5.1.2, because a club cannot field the minimum number of players, the club at fault will lose the match by a group score of 3–0.
5.1.4 Circumstances beyond either club's control	If a match cannot be played or rescheduled because of adverse weather, a course closure or another circumstance outside either club's control, it will be recorded as a draw with a group score of 3–3, unless the league authorises a further rescheduled date.

5.2 DISPUTE RESOLUTION

5.2.1 Submission	**A dispute must be emailed to matchcentre@southerngolfleague.com, with the opposing team captain copied into the correspondence.**
5.2.2 Independent review	Two captains from clubs not involved in the dispute will be selected to consider the matter by email or telephone and determine the outcome.

6. COURSE AND MATCH PLAY

Rule	Course and match-play requirement
6.1 Governing rules	All SGL matches will be played under the current Rules of Golf issued by The R&A and the USGA, together with the SGL rules and any authorised Local Rules in force at the host course. If a conflict arises, the Rules of Golf and any properly adopted Local Rule will apply unless an SGL rule is expressly permitted as a condition of the competition.
6.2 In-season teeing grounds	During the league season, men will normally play from the white tees. The host club must use a measured and officially rated tee set and provide the applicable Course Rating, Slope Rating and stroke index information. If the white tees are unavailable, the yellow tees or another designated men's rated tee set may be used, provided both captains are notified before play and the correct ratings are used.
6.3 Local rules and course information	All authorised Local Rules of the host course will apply. Before the match, the home captain must provide the away captain with the Local Rules, tee set, Course Rating, Slope Rating, temporary course features and any restrictions affecting play. These must be clearly communicated to all players. Home players are encouraged to offer reasonable guidance to visiting players on course-specific matters, without giving advice contrary to the Rules of Golf.
6.4 Course configuration	Where a club offers more than 18 holes or more than one 18-hole course configuration, including combinations of separate nine-hole courses or alternative holes, all home league matches within the same division must be played using the same nominated 18-hole configuration. This avoids an advantage or disadvantage arising from differences in Course Rating or Slope Rating. The club must notify all clubs in its division of its nominated course configuration before the season begins.
6.5 Approved out-of-season conditions	An out-of-season match authorised under Rule 5.1.2 may be played using the tee set and course setup available on the day, provided the setup is approved for play by the host club and both captains receive the relevant information before the match. Any temporary tees, temporary greens, shortened holes, closed holes, fairway mats or other material changes must be disclosed to the league and the away captain. The applicable Course Rating, Slope Rating and handicap calculation must reflect the approved course setup. If the course setup cannot support a fair and properly calculated match, the fixture must not proceed without further league approval.
6.6 Adverse weather and preferred lies	England operates an active World Handicap System season throughout the year, so there is no fixed national period for "winter rules". Where conditions require additional relief, only Local Rules formally introduced by the host club or the Committee will apply. Preferred lies may be used only when Model Local Rule E-3, or another authorised Local Rule, has been adopted. The host club must state the areas covered, the size of the relief area and the procedure to be followed. Model Local Rules must be used only where necessary and removed as soon as practicable when conditions improve.
6.7 Adverse weather, environmental conditions, suspension and player safety	**Player safety is paramount.** The host club or Committee retains authority over a delayed start, immediate or normal suspension, resumption of play and course closure. This includes, but is not limited to, lightning or thunderstorms; fog or poor visibility; heavy or persistent rain; flooding, standing water or waterlogged ground; snow, ice, frost or hail; high winds; extreme heat, direct sun or humidity; severe cold or wind chill; air-quality concerns, smoke or wildfire; fallen trees, unstable branches or debris; and any other weather, environmental or course condition that makes play dangerous, unfair or impracticable. Players must not start, or must stop immediately, when instructed by the host club or Committee. Where an immediate suspension is ordered because of danger, all players must stop at once and must not make another stroke until play is resumed. For a normal suspension, such as darkness, fog or an unplayable course, players must follow

	the Committee's instructions on whether the hole may be completed. A player who reasonably believes there is danger from lightning may stop play and must report the matter to the Committee as soon as possible. Suspensions and resumptions will otherwise be managed in accordance with Rule 5.7 of the Rules of Golf and the host club's emergency procedures. Where adverse conditions or an official delay may materially affect player health, player availability, daylight, the tee-time schedule, course condition or the fair completion of the match, the captains must contact a league official or the league owner before play begins or resumes. The match may start or restart later that day only where the host club or Committee confirms that the course is open and safe; any emergency or evacuation instructions have been observed; both captains agree that sufficient time, players and suitable course conditions remain; and the match can be completed fairly under the agreed team and handicap arrangements. No captain, official or player is required to continue where they reasonably consider conditions unsafe. Appropriate precautions must be taken for the conditions, including access to drinking water, shade or shelter, suitable clothing, rest breaks and emergency assistance where required. If a league official is unavailable, both captains may agree in writing to proceed in the spirit of the game, recording the revised start time, material conditions and agreed arrangements. That agreement cannot override a host-club closure, suspension or safety instruction. The result will remain subject to review by league officials or the League Committee. If safe, fair and proper completion is not reasonably possible, the match must be postponed or rescheduled under Section 5.
6.8 Conceded putts	A putt may be conceded only by an opponent.
6.9 Scorecards and match sheets	Before play begins, the host club must provide the away club with a scorecard for each group showing clear and accurate handicap and stroke-allocation information. This enables the away club to verify the official scorecard details before the match. At the end of the match, the match sheet must be completed, agreed and signed by both captains, then emailed to **matchcentre@southerngolfleague.com**. If a physical copy cannot be completed, the captains must submit a digital version to the same address, copying in the opposing club or captain. In all cases, both captains must confirm the final result either by signature or by email acknowledgement.
6.10 Teeing honour	The visiting club will have the honour on the first tee. Thereafter, the side that wins a hole will have the honour on the next tee. If a hole is halved, the existing order of play will continue.

7. MATCH FEES AND HOST-CLUB SUPPORT

7.1 Match fees	**A match fee of £15 per player applies to every league match, whether or not the player chooses to receive food or refreshments. As green fees are reciprocal between participating clubs, the match fee is intended to generate revenue and support the host club. The host club must provide breakfast, lunch, or food and beverages of reasonable value as part of the fee. At its discretion, the host club may return any difference between the catering cost and the match fee to the away club by cash or bank transfer, allocate it to an agreed informal competition pot—such as nearest the pin, best score of the day or another agreed contest—or retain the remaining amount as additional club revenue. The £15 fee remains payable in all circumstances and supports the league and its participating clubs.**

8. CONDUCT, ACCESSIBILITY AND EQUIPMENT

Rule	Conduct, accessibility and equipment requirement
8.1 Pace and spirit of play	Players must play without undue delay. All matches should be played to a result and in the spirit of the game.
8.2 Respect, dignity, equality and inclusion	The Southern Golf League is committed to treating every individual with dignity, fairness and respect in all circumstances. This standard applies to all players, captains, officials, volunteers, supporters, guests and representatives of participating clubs, both on and off the course at any SGL-related activity. Everyone must respect individual differences, personal circumstances, disabilities, health conditions and access

	requirements. Reasonable adjustments should be considered and supported wherever practicable so that disabled participants and those with additional needs can take part safely, fairly and with dignity. Discrimination, harassment, bullying, victimisation, intimidation, threats, abusive or offensive language, racism, aggression, violence, assault, humiliation or any other degrading, hostile or unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated. Differences of opinion must be handled calmly, respectfully and without personal abuse. Any incident or concern must be reported promptly to a league official or the League Committee. Reports will be considered seriously, impartially and, where appropriate, confidentially, with all parties given a fair opportunity to provide relevant information. Proven misconduct may result in proportionate action, including a formal warning, removal from a match or event, suspension, or a permanent ban from the league. Where behaviour, an allegation or credible evidence may indicate a criminal offence, safeguarding concern, threat, violence, harassment, discrimination or a serious risk to any person, the SGL will not delay in contacting the police, emergency services, the host club, relevant safeguarding body or any other appropriate authority. The safety and protection of those affected will take priority, and league action may proceed alongside any external investigation. Upholding human dignity, equal treatment, inclusion and the safety of every person is a fundamental condition of participation in the SGL.
8.3 Motorised buggies	Players and supporters are expected to walk the course during a competitive round. A player may use a motorised golf buggy where its use is required for medical reasons and has been authorised by the Tournament Referee. The player may be asked to provide appropriate supporting evidence of the medical need. Any authorisation remains subject to the host club's own policies, course conditions and final authority over buggy use on its premises.
8.4 Caddies	Caddies, as defined in the Rules of Golf, are permitted.
8.5 Distance-measuring devices	During a match, players may use devices that measure distance only. A smartphone may be used provided the player does not access any feature prohibited under the Rules of Golf. The penalty is loss of hole for a first offence and disqualification for any subsequent offence. Any suspected breach must be raised as a valid claim during the match; retrospective claims will not be considered.

9. OFFICIAL AUTHORISATION AND SIGNATORY

This document is officially authorised, signed and confirmed by the Southern Golf League, part of Pin Group under Pin Golf. The undersigned confirms approval of these rules and regulations on behalf of the organisation.

Signed by	**Rhys Matthews**
Position	Director of Pin Group Ltd
For and on behalf of	Southern Golf League, part of Pin Group under Pin Golf
Signature	
League Year	2027