

Jacksonville Summer Team

Match Play Primer - 2026

In Match Play the golfers you are playing against are your opponents.

1. Know your index and course handicap for the day you are playing your match. (note Golf Genius calculates the 90% differently than the GHIN App. Golf Genius is correct.)
2. Check your scorecard for accuracy BEFORE you begin to ensure strokes are allocated correctly and YOU know where you receive your strokes
3. Count Your Clubs – 14 MAX.
4. Put an identifying mark on your ball – AND when playing a “Provisional Ball”, make sure you have an identifying mark that differentiates it from your “original ball.”

Order of Play

Start of the Match: The “home team” goes 1st on the 1st tee.

Balls belonging to the same **side** may be played in the order the **side** considers best.

In match play the player or side who won the last hole as “honors”.

Scoring: Each hole stands alone. Scoring is done on a hole by hole basis. The “side” with the best ball net score wins that hole. (Points: 1-Win, 0-Loss, ½ pt. each side for ties.)

Concession of Next Stroke, Hole or Match

A player may concede a hole or a match at any time prior to the conclusion of the hole or the match. **Conceded putts** are perfectly legal, they are part of the game. If a putt is conceded it is wise to pick up your ball. Refusing to pick up your ball and putting to show your partner the line of putt is a loss of hole for your partner and your score on the hole is the score that counts.



Concession of a stroke, hole or match **may not be declined or withdrawn.**

When someone concedes your putt it is wise to pick your ball up. The reason: depending on the circumstances of the concession, putting after the concession (which might give your partner information about her putt) will result in the score for the hole standing at whatever your score would be with that conceded stroke. **Example:** Sue & Betty are partners. Sue is lying 2 and 6 feet from the hole. Betty is on the same line as her partner putting for 4 but farther away. Their opponents concede Betty’s putt. Betty says “I’m going to putt anyway” and does showing her partner the line. Once Betty did that, the score for the hole for Sue & Betty is 5, Sue is disqualified from the hole and must pick up her ball.

Note: Rule 3 Concessions If the opponent lifts her ball because of a reasonable misunderstanding that the player’s statement of action was a concession of the next stroke, a hole or the match, there is *no penalty* and the ball must be replaced on its original spot (which if not known must be estimated).

Representation of a Side

A side may be represented by one **partner** for all or any part of a match; all partners need not be present. An absent **partner** may join a match between holes but not during the play of a hole. **Summer Team Local Rule:** In the event that A or B Team is running late, C Team can tee off first.

Rules Disputes/In Match play you can't play a 2nd ball. In match play if a doubt or dispute arises between sides, a player may say that that she wants a ruling. She must ask before beginning the play of the next hole. (**Disputes** should be settled on the course between the opponents to the best of your ability.) If not, the team then must continue the match without delay and bring the question/challenge to the attention of the Committee or PGA professional immediately following play.

Helpful Hint: try to reach an agreement with your opponent and play. There is no penalty if neither side knows the rule and proceeds incorrectly providing you both have agreed to what you “believe” to be the rule or “fair” in any given situation. In that situation, the status of the hole remains as is even if you later learn you proceeded incorrectly.

Provisional Ball: Announce you are hitting a “provisional ball”

Hit if:

- You believe the ball just hit may be out of bounds or
- Lost outside of the playing area
- TEEING GROUND: Play provisional ball is after everyone has teed off

Known or “virtually certain: This is a decision made by the player and opponents that there is no other place the ball could have gone (where it is out of bounds – or went into a penalty area)

Unplayable Ball – A player may take relief under the Unplayable Rule anywhere on the course except in a Penalty Area. If you don't like the lie you have in a penalty area then proceed under the relief allowed under Penalty Area relief. EXCEPTION: Bunkers have option for relief

Wrong Ball

If a player incurs a loss of hole penalty for making a stroke at a **wrong ball**, she is disqualified for that hole, but her partner incurs no penalty even if the **wrong ball** belongs to her. If the **wrong ball** belongs to another player, its owner must place a ball on the spot from which the **wrong ball** was first played.

Handicap Strokes “Dotted” on Wrong Holes: If scorecards are marked incorrectly and it is discovered after the play of those holes, the results of those holes (or entire match) shall stand. If the mistake is discovered immediately after play of that hole and before the next hole begins, they may correct the match score before teeing off on the next hole.

Advice: Giving distance measurements is permissible.

Information as to Strokes Taken: Players must provide to each other the number of strokes taken if requested. *Good practice to ask what everyone is lying once all players are on the green.*

Playing outside or from wrong Teeing Ground in Match play: if a player when starting a hole plays from the wrong tee ground or outside the teeing ground, the opponent may immediately request that the player replay the stroke (no penalty). If not, the player must play the stroke.

Rule 11: Under Rule 11.1, for all accidental deflections, including when the ball hits the player or opponent or their equipment or caddies:

- There is no penalty and the ball is played as it lies (with limited exceptions).
- To address any concern that a player might deliberately position equipment to act as a backstop and potentially deflect his or her ball, there is a penalty if the ball hits equipment that was positioned for that purpose (Rule 11.2a).

In Match Play Once You Are On The Putting Green: If you make a stroke at your ball, (at rest on the green) and it hits another ball that was also on the green before you made your stroke there is NO PENALTY and the ball you hit must be replaced to its original position.

If You Make a Stroke off the green and it hits a Ball at rest on the green, the ball struck is replaced as closely as possible to its original position and you play your ball where it comes to rest.

It's OKAY to Ground your club in a Penalty Area. (red and yellow stakes).

Remember these new rules from 2019:

1. Dropping a Ball: from knee height in the relief area
2. Time for Search: 3 MINUTES is the maximum to search for a ball.
3. You may repair spike marks
4. Relaxed rules in Penalty Area: You may ground your club.

New in 2023:

Ball Moved By Natural Forces: when your ball is at rest after taking relief and then rolls into another area of the course due to natural causes the ball MUST be replaced no penalty.

Simplified Back on the Line Relief: you are required to drop your ball on the line and it may roll up to one club length in any direction.

Summer Team Scorecard Rule: Each match will have 2 scorecards signed and attested to certify: the points of the match AND the gross scores of all 4 players. The gross scores on all cards MUST match.

Do Not Agree on the 1st Hole to Play Ready Golf. Instead, be READY when it's your turn to play!

Where Does The Ball Lie? The hierarchy of parts on and off the course in order:

The General Area – the area of the course that includes all of the course except:

- Penalty Area
- Bunker
- Putting Green
- Tee Area
- General Area
- Out of Bounds

Embedded Ball: A ball does not have to break ground and be in dirt to be embedded

Ground Under Repair – may be marked or may be “obvious” – Important in Match Play, if unmarked and obviously ground under repair – you and your opponent can deem it GUR and take relief.

For more information, please visit the [USGA.org](https://www.usga.org). Read and watch the instructional videos