

Golf Basics 2: Step On the Course



Structure of a Course

In the USGA Rules book the course has **FIVE** defined areas:



Teeing Area



Hazards/Penalty Areas



Bunkers



Putting Green



General Area

The first four all have some specific rules or specifications related to them.
The General Area is **everything** on the course EXCEPT the first four.

What's A Par?

Back in the late 1800s/early 1900s they decided to determine what a good score on different length holes would be and refer to it as a "Par" which is derived from a stock trading name.

Hence began the modern way of golf scorekeeping **where most holes less than 250 yards are considered "Par-3", holes 250-450 are "Par-4", and over 450 as "Par-5"**. These are rough guidelines and actually change and modify based on the gender or age that is playing a tournament, and where tees are set for each hole.

Par = ideal score
Bogey = 1 more than Par
Birdie = 1 less than Par
Eagle = 2 less than Par
Double Bogey = 2 more than Par

In a typical PGA event, they may play an entire course measured closer to 7,000 yards, but an LPGA event may be 6,200-6,600 yards and Seniors and Youth adjusted down from there.

Managing Around the Course

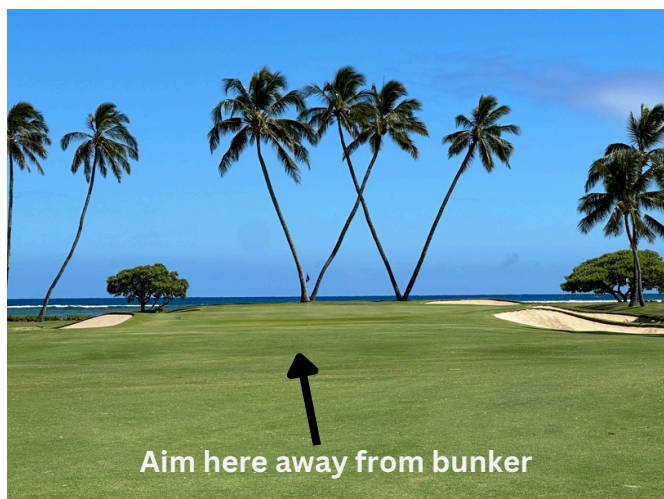
Armed with the above information about what Par, Bogie, Birdie is etc, your goal is to get around the course in as **few strokes as possible!**

Obviously, this can be easier the SHORTER you play a golf course. This is why **WHERE you play the tees on each hole is incredibly important**, especially when just starting out.

I highly recommend you play the most forward or shortest tees to begin, for both speed of play and to build your confidence. Only when you become more proficient at bogey / par golf should you move back another tee box.

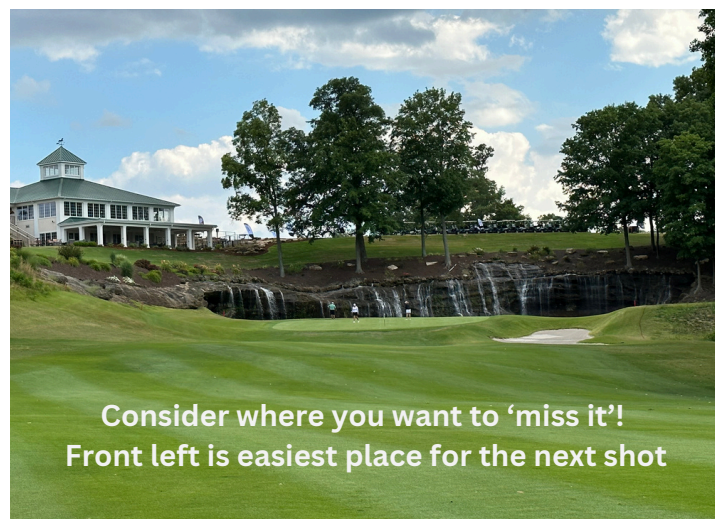
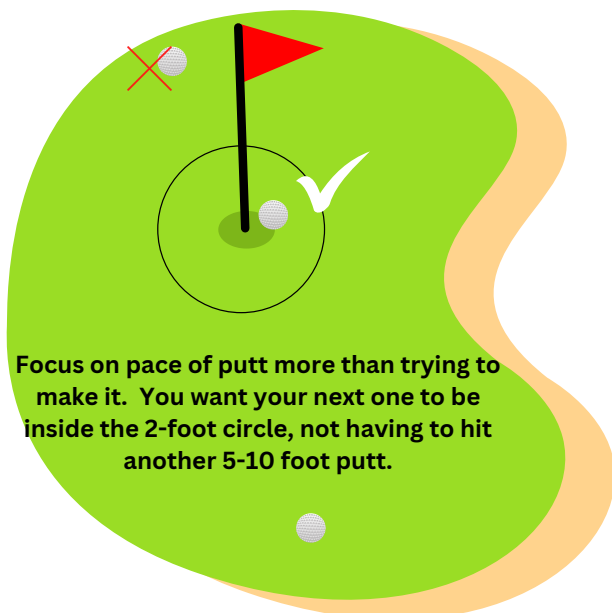
The USGA and other organizations have tried hard to get players to select the tee boxes most appropriate for their skill level, as a focus on speeding up play and enjoying the game more.

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
V Madroal South	360	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346
IV Jack Neville	360	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346
III Legacy	360	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346
Max's Handicap	4	14	12	6	10	8	18	16	2		13	1	5	7	11	3	15	9	17		
CALI																					
Par	4	4	3	4	5	3	5	3	4	35	5	4	4	3	4	4	5	3	4	5	36
Score																					
Attn																					
Date																					
II William Wines	360	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346
I John "Pop" Smith	360	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346	346
Later Handicap	6	10	14	12	4	16	2	18	8		1	7	11	15	9	5	17	13	3		



Learning how to look at the easiest path to the hole, angles, and where and what club to hit on various holes is part of the learning of the game and comes with a lot of play and time.

When I play with most amateurs, this part of the game - **course management** - is where I see most **players losing a lot of shots** that could be avoided with a little more consideration and care for where they are aiming, chipping, and speed on putting.



Keeping Score and Handicaps

The golf course as a rule is set up **contemplating 2 putts on the green for a par**. A par 4 would be a tee shot with the second shot on the green and then 2 putts. A par 3 is for hitting the green from the tee box and then 2 putts. A par 5 sets up to take 3 shots to get to the green and then 2 putts.

Many times, we miss the green and have to hit a chip shot or a bunker shot. In this case the goal is to hit it close and make 1 putt and then you have achieved your par. **An average good golfer rarely makes all pars**, bogies are a normal part of the game and par is just a measurement we use to track your progress.

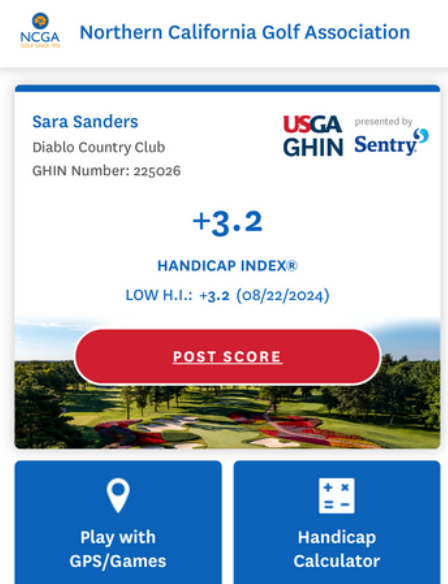
The USGA Handicap system is one of the best things about golf!

It is one of the few sports that allows a wide range of ability to play a sport together and compete against one another.

You can sign up with any local public course, your private club, or an e-club on the GHIN / USGA app. When you start to enter scores (don't feel the pressure to do this right away!) after a certain number of scores the system will give you a 'handicap' number. **This number allows you to play against another golfer where you give, or they give you 'strokes.'** For example:

Suzy is a 15 handicap and Betty is a 25 handicap. If they play the same tees, Suzy will give Betty 10 strokes. Depending on what type of game you are playing those strokes would either get subtracted from the total at the end (stroke play), or in match play you would look at the scorecard at the rating system and find the 10 toughest holes and on each of those Betty would get a stroke against Suzy. If Betty made a 5 and Suzy a 4 then they tie the hole.

This is getting into some golf complexity, but once you get the hang of it you will soon be in the deep in the land of course ratings, slopes, handicaps and all the fun things that are unique to each golf course and match.



We made a Par!



Ready to take the
next step?

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