

Orange County Senior Team Play (OCSTP)
ORCC TEAM
MATCH PLAY OVERVIEW & STRATEGY

The following is a brief guide that should help the team members navigate match play. The goal is have all the team players on the same page with a similar strategy.

First, each player **MUST** remember that there are three matches happening simultaneously:

- (1) the team match with you and your partner playing "together"**
- (2) your individual match against your opponent**
- (3) your partner's individual match against his opponent**

Therefore, all of your actions affect each of the three matches. Some of these are obvious, such as conceding putts, helping your partner make strategic decisions (e.g. lay-up decisions, club choice, etc. as well as reading putts, and deciding who should play first within the two man team). When playing this competitive format, each player has to stay aware and engaged in all three matches. That makes you a good partner and will help you win the match.

Experienced match play golfers will tell you there are these key points to keep in mind:

- **Conceding Putts:** Decide on your strategy for conceding putts to your opponent before the match starts (in consultation with your partner), but be prepared to adjust to your opponent's strategy and putting abilities. **Take the time to consult with your partner before ever conceding a putt.** Conceding a putt should always take in consideration your opponent's putting skills and difficulty of the putt. If your opponent is a good putter, then conceding those short putts is not worrisome. But if your opponent is a terrible putter, then the conceding should not be as generous (maybe none at all).
 - **Conceding a Hole:** Just because you are "out of the hole" does not mean you should give up. And do not concede anything to your opponent when the team match and your partner's match is still alive on a hole. For example, you could have a putt that helps your partner with his upcoming putt. So hit that putt to help your partner.
 - **Emotions & Poor Play:** Don't let your emotions get in the way. Just because you have played a hole poorly and will lose it, does not mean you can't be helpful to your partner.
 - **Think Ahead:** On each hole, you must always be aware of your standing within the match (BOTH individual and team) and consider the risk/reward of each shot. For example, a player who is leading in a match can play more conservatively, choosing the safer play, while the golfer who is trailing is often forced to play more aggressively and sometimes take riskier shots.
 - **Aggressive Putting:** If your opponent has already holed out and your putt is to halve the hole, you must be aggressive with the putt. If it runs 10 feet past, it doesn't matter. On the other hand, if your opponent has a short, easy putt remaining, you must try your best to make your putt. You should go into every match expecting to have to make every putt. Don't expect your opponent to concede anything, your mindset should be that you are prepared to hole out every putt you'll have during the match. Your opponent might, in fact, offer concessions at various points, but you must be mentally prepared if he does not. By the same token, you must decide how to approach offering concessions to your opponent. While conceding a putt to your opponent may increase the odds that he will concede some of your putts, you cannot bank on that.
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