



9 & Under, 10-11, and 12-13 Players and Parents,

We hope that everyone has read our new policies on parental involvement in our SDGA Junior Tour events and understands what we are trying to accomplish. We knew there would be some questions about the program, so here is some additional information on the program and an attempt to answer some common questions.

Here is a brief recap of the progression of parental involvement as juniors advance on the Tour.

**Age 9 & Under - Caddies Strongly Encouraged**

**Age 10-11 - Caddies as Needed**

**Age 12-13 - No Caddies, Very Limited Parental Involvement**

**Age 14+ - Spectate Only**

Our goal is to make our juniors self-sufficient on the course as soon as possible. Almost all 9 & Under players will benefit from having an adult (parent, other) helping them. This is why we have moved to our policy of strongly encouraging a caddie and have created these caddie expectations and guidelines. If you have a younger player who you think is ready and does not need a caddie, you are welcome to let them play on their own but know you can always step in to help if needed.

This applies as we move from the 9 hole divisions (9 & Under, 10-11) to the 12-13 age group where we are now playing 18 holes. Many of these players will be new to the 18 hole experience and may need some occasional help and support. The new policy allows a parent to step in if they feel it will help their player through a difficult situation or to help the group with pace of play. Some examples are moving their clubs for them if they have left them on the wrong side of the green, stepping in to walk with them to help with pace of play, or to give the occasional word of support.

**Our golden rule is to give as much help as necessary, but as little as possible.** The main purpose is to facilitate a good pace of play, lend emotional support and encouragement, help with course management decisions, rake bunkers, and help keep score. Let the kids play on their own as much as possible. For example, even when being a full time caddie in the 9U and 10-11 divisions, let the players push or carry their clubs as much as they can. Take over on long stretches between holes or if they leave their clubs in a bad spot.

The program is not designed to turn the round into a long playing lesson, with instruction and analysis on each shot. There is plenty of time for that after the round on the way home or on the driving range. Help them get the right club in their hand and a quick plan if you want, but avoid turning every poor shot into an opportunity for analysis and a lesson. To reiterate, the main purpose of the program is to help

the kids learn how to do things on their own. If things are working well, you will find that you will be doing less and less and the player is taking more and more responsibility for their own game.

By the time we get to age 12-13, parental contact should be very rare. Continue to help with pace issues if the group is behind (rake bunkers, move clubs into position, help them walk a little faster, etc.. Be there to lend some emotional support if your player is having a tough time.

Below are some frequent Q&A's we have received.

- I don't know anything about golf and am uncomfortable caddying.
  - We are counting on experienced parents to help you out! Just walking along is helpful to keep the pace going. Start with small things like raking bunkers, and putting clubs in the right position when the kids get up by the green. Give them their putter and you can move to the side of the green where the next tee is located (follow the experienced parent!).
  - But in the end if you are just absolutely uncomfortable caddying, you do not have to participate.
- I have multiple children in the younger age groups and can't caddy for all of them!
  - Whenever possible, you can bring another person to caddie. It does not have to be a parent. But if you aren't able, you can make the decision based on what works best for you. You could bounce back and forth between groups, or decide to caddie for one child at one tournament and the other at the next. In some cases we could have both in the same group and you can help either one as needed. We are willing to be flexible when it comes to these special circumstances.
- I think another parent is causing a problem or not operating within the spirit of the program.
  - You can TEXT 605-546-7775 and we can come out to observe and look for a good opportunity to discuss any problems we observe.

Please review the following information that was sent out last week. TEXT 605-546-7775 with any questions or requests for a call-back.

Thank you so much for exposing your young children to golf through the SDGA Junior Tour. We really want to make the experience enjoyable for players, caddies and spectators

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## Player and Parent/Spectator Guidelines

With golfers from under 9 to 18 years old on the Junior Tour, we have a wide range of age and experience, so our guidelines will change based on the age group. As players get older and gain more experience, they will assume increasing responsibility and require less help from parents, spectators, and staff.

Here are our policies and expectations for each age group.

### Age 9 & Under - Caddie Policy

We will be experimenting with a new policy for our youngest age group and it is based on the successful USKidsGolf program. Whenever possible, each player will have an adult caddie who will help the young player get around the course. Here are some of the things that a caddie will do for the player.

- Carry your player's bag and enjoy your time walking with them.
- Get to know all of the players and caddies in your group.
- You may help players look for their golf ball, determine distance to the hole, rake bunkers, fix divots in fairways, repair ball marks on greens, and remove/replace the flagstick on the green.
- After every hole, write down the scores of your player and the player he/she is keeping score for.
- Help your player with making strategies and decisions in a timely manner.
- Encourage your player after both good and bad shots, and make sure he/she is having fun.

The success of this program will depend highly on caddies strictly following the above guidelines. **Our rule of thumb is to give as much help as necessary, but as little as possible.** If you think that a caddie is not following the guidelines, just let a staff member know and we will discuss it with them.

Rules of Golf are important and it is our goal to improve our players' knowledge of the rules over time. In the younger age divisions, we ask that the players and parents do their best to follow the rules and procedures but not let it interfere with the playing of the round. If there are rules questions, do your best and then bring them up to staff when you see them or after the round. We use rules situations as coachable moments at this age. Players and parents should review the list of most common rules and procedures and work to become comfortable with them.

### Age 10-11 - Caddie as Needed

We assume that many players in this age group will still be new players and so we will allow caddies in this age group. But if your player has experience and can navigate their way on their own, we suggest that you allow them to play with less and less help and supervision. If you are not an official caddie, you can still do many of the things on the list above like helping look for balls, help transport to the next tee, rake bunkers, scoring, etc. **Our rule of thumb is to give as much help as necessary, but as little as possible.**

Rules of Golf are important and it is our goal to improve our players' knowledge of the rules over time. But at the younger ages, we ask that the players and parents do their best to follow the rules and procedures but not let it interfere with the playing of the round. If there are rules questions, do your best and then bring them up to staff when you see them or after the round. We use rules situations as coachable moments at this age. Players and parents should review the list of most common rules and procedures and work to become comfortable with them.

### **Age 12-13 - Very Limited Parental Involvement**

By the time players are in this age group, experienced players will not have any difficulty getting around the course on their own, and new players are old enough to learn these skills without much difficulty. So at this age group, caddies are not allowed and parental/spectator interaction should be very limited. But because these players are still young, we will allow some leeway for parents to step in if necessary if a player is in distress or in danger of disrupting the event.

Rules of Golf are important and it is our goal to improve our players' knowledge of the rules over time. By the time players are in the 12-13 age group, if they have experience they should be well-versed in the common rules and procedures. There may be some new players who are not, but at age 12-13 should be able to learn them quickly with the help of other players and parents.

### **14-15 and 16-18 - Spectate Only**

While there may be some new players in these age groups, by the time players reach these age groups they are expected to be able to make their way around the golf course without supervision. This includes keeping score, pace of play, sportsmanship, etiquette, and the basic rules of golf. Players in this age group who are new to competitive golf are given some time and latitude to learn these basic requirements.

### **All Players**

**Keeping Score** - Each player will have a scorecard to keep their own score as well as act as a "marker" for another player and record their score at the end of every hole. It is the player's responsibility to pay close enough attention to be able to verify the score from the player that he is marking. If there are discrepancies they are resolved between the players at that time. We want the players to develop the skills to handle these issues on their own. If there is a discrepancy that cannot be resolved, **TEXT 605-546-7775** to reach the SDGA staff. At that time, staff may ask parents or spectators for input.

**Pace of Play** - All players are expected to maintain the proper pace of play in their group. When possible, players should be able to play 9 holes in 2 hours or less. In larger events, especially shotgun events, it may not be possible to meet this time requirement. The more important measure is to always make sure your group is keeping up with the group in front and take immediate measures to regain your proper position on the course if your group falls behind. We expect all groups to be self-monitoring in this regard and to respond if asked by tournament officials to speed up.

**Etiquette and Sportsmanship** - Players are expected to abide by the high standards of behavior that the Rules of Golf demand. This includes taking care of the course, replacing divots, repairing ball

marks, and raking bunkers. It also includes how we treat other players and making sure that we are respectful of them while they are playing.

**Rule of Golf** - We do not expect players to be Rules experts, but all players are responsible to learn the basic rules and procedures that we encounter in normal rounds of golf. We will have rule books available for any player who does not already have one. Here is a list of the “must know” rules and procedures. If you don’t understand any of them, please take time to learn them. And always remember that unless the Rules allow otherwise, play the course as you find it and play the ball as it lies.

- Taking Free Relief (Rules 15-16) - Loose Impediments, Moveable Obstructions, Cart Paths (and other immovable obstructions), Ground Under Repair
- Penalty Relief (Rules 17-19) - Penalty Areas, Unplayable Ball, Lost Ball, Out of Bounds
- Procedures for Dropping/Replacing a Ball (Rule 14)
- Provisional Ball (Rule 18.3)
- Wrong Ball (Rule 6.3)
- Ball at Rest Moved (Rule 9), Ball in Motion Deflected (Rule 11)
- Playing Two Balls When Uncertain What To Do (Rule 20.1c(3))

If there is an issue with play in your group or with another group, please **TEXT 605-546-7775** and we will get there as soon as we can. As a rule, it is better to let us know about an issue than it is to try to resolve it between parents. We cannot be everywhere, but we do have staff on site to help with issues that arise.

Thanks again for everything you do to support your junior golfer. We are looking forward to another fun season on the SDGA Junior Tour! Please reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns.

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