

To all match play competitors,

A reminder that your matches need to be completed by the date designated on the match play bracket and that both players are responsible for arranging for the match location, date, time and current handicap to be used. If you are having trouble scheduling your match, notify Gary Adkins and he will try to assist you in getting things set up.

Understanding that some of the competitors in the HTGA match play championship may be unfamiliar with the format, and to be sure everyone knows how the competition is to be conducted, we put together some instructions on **1)** how to determine the handicap to be used for your match, **2)** the major rule differences between match play and stroke play, and **3)** scorekeeping in match play.

How to determine the handicap...

Check the HTGA web site for the current handicap index revision. Player handicap indexes are updated on the 1st and 15th of each month and can change, so be sure to use the one that is in effect for the date of your match. GHIN index revisions can be found at: <http://www.htga.info/page5.html>

Once you have each player's index, you then calculate each player's course handicap based on the slope rating of the golf course and tees selected for the match. For example, a course/tee slope rating of 125 for someone with a 10.2 GHIN index would calculate to an 11 course handicap. Calculate course handicap at: http://www.usga.org/playing/handicaps/calculator/course_handicap_calculator.asp

Then determine the difference, multiply by .8 (80%), and round to the nearest whole number (.5 rounds up, .49 rounds down) as outlined in our competition rules. The resulting whole number will be the number of strokes to be applied in scoring the match. For example, if player A has an 11 course handicap and player B has a 15 course handicap, the difference is $4 \times .8$ or 3.2 which rounds down to 3. Player B would receive 3 strokes, one on each of the three most difficult holes on the course. For those three holes, Player B's score would be reduced by one on each of them to compare with Player A's gross score to determine the winner of the hole. All other holes would be gross score for both players.

Here is a second scenario between Player C and Player D to show how to calculate the handicap differential. To start out the players looked on the HTGA website to determine their handicaps. Player C is a 17.3 and Player D is a 23.8. They are playing their match at Greatwood GC from the White tees which have a slope of 132. The calculator gives Player C a course handicap of 20 vs. Player D's 28 for a difference of 6 ($8 \times .8 = 6.4$ rounded down).

The handicap difference is applied on the six most difficult holes on the golf course. That is determined on the scorecard where each hole is ranked with 1 being the most difficult and 18 being the easiest. If the two players both shoot 5 on the hole that is ranked the most difficult on the course, the player getting strokes would actually win the hole because it is one of the five on which he would get a stroke from his competitor.

Match Play Basic Rules & Guidelines...

Match Play rules are significantly different from Stroke Play and the two forms can never be combined. They differ in key ways, the most basic being the very way the two types of golf are played. Some of the differences are major, some are minor and some involve a different type of penalty when rules are broken.

Here is a rundown of some of the most important differences in the Rules of Golf for match play:

The Way It's Played

In this sense, match play is a whole different game than stroke play. In stroke play, golfers accumulate strokes over the course of 18 holes. The golfer with the fewest strokes at the completion of the round wins. In match play, each hole is a separate competition. The player with the fewest strokes on an individual hole wins that hole; the player winning the most holes wins the match.

The stroke total for 18 holes simply doesn't matter in match play. Stroke play is more a player vs. the course approach; match play is directly player vs. player, or side vs. side. There is one opponent you must beat, and that's the opponent you're facing in the match you're playing right now.

Conceded Putts

In friendly rounds of golf, golfers often ask for and give "gimmies," very short putts that one simply picks up rather than holing out. Gimmies, needless to say, are illegal under the Rules of Golf, but many recreational golfers use them anyway. In match play, however, conceded putts are perfectly legal. Your opponent can concede a putt to you at any point, whether it's six inches from the cup or 60 feet. But conceded putts almost always come, of course, on very short putts.

Conceded putts should only be offered, they should never be requested. That's why in some match play matches you'll notice a golfer lingering over a very short putt - the golfer is hoping his opponent will tell him to just pick it up.

Fellow-Competitor vs. Opponent

This is a semantic difference. In stroke play, the golfers you are playing against are your "fellow-competitors." In match play, the golfer you are playing against is your "opponent."

Hit That One Again

There are several scenarios in match play where a transgression might result in your opponent canceling your shot and requiring you to replay it; whereas in stroke play, the same transgression would result in a 2-stroke penalty or no penalty at all.

A few examples:

- Playing out of turn: In stroke play, order of play is a matter of etiquette. If you hit out of turn, it's a breach of etiquette, but there is no penalty. In match play, if you hit out of turn your opponent can require you to replay the shot in the proper order. And if your first shot was a great one, you can bet that you'll be replaying.
- Hitting from outside the teeing ground: In stroke play, teeing off from outside the teeing ground (the teeing ground is between the tee markers and up to two club lengths behind the tee markers) results in a 2-stroke penalty. In match play, there is no stroke penalty, but your opponent can cancel your shot and require you to replay it.
- Hitting an opponent: In stroke play, if your ball hits a fellow-competitor or his equipment (if it is accidentally stopped or deflected by same), it's rub of the green. In match play, you have the option to replay the shot.
- Hitting a ball at rest on the green: In stroke play, if your putt strikes another ball on the green, you get a 2-stroke penalty. In match play, there is no penalty.

The Big Penalty

In the rule book, just about every section concludes with a warning: "Penalty for Breach of Rule." If a golfer fails to follow the proper procedures set forth in the rules, he will incur a penalty in addition to any penalties set forth in that rule.

That penalty in stroke play is usually 2 strokes, and in match play is usually loss of hole.

Example: Let's say a player violates one of the tenets of Rule 19. There will likely be a penalty spelled out for that violation. But the golfer compounds his error by failing to follow the proper procedure for continuing play (maybe he doesn't assess himself the proper penalty; maybe he drops incorrectly; etc.) spelled out in that rule. The big penalty kicks in: 2 strokes in stroke play, loss of hole in match play.

Better Late than Never

In stroke play, disqualification is the result if you miss your tee time. In match play, you can show up late and still play... as long as you make your match by at least the second tee. You'll have forfeited the first hole, but you can pick up the match on No. 2. If you fail to make it by the No. 2 tee, you're disqualified.

The differences between match play and stroke play, where they exist, are elucidated in the Rules of Golf. If there is a difference, that difference will be spelled out in the applicable section. So browse through the rule book to learn more about match play rules.

Basics of Match Play Scorekeeping...

Simple: Win a hole, that's one for you; lose a hole, that's one for your opponent. Ties on individual holes (called halves) essentially don't count; they aren't kept track of in the scorekeeping.

The score of a match play match is rendered relationally. Here's what we mean: Let's say you've won 5 holes and your opponent has won 4. The score is not shown as 5 to 4; rather, it's rendered as 1-up for you, or 1-down for your opponent. If you have won 6 holes and your opponent 3, then you are leading 3-up, and your opponent is trailing 3-down.

Essentially, match play scoring tells golfers and spectators not how many holes each golfer has won, but how many more holes than his opponent the golfer in the lead has won. If the match is tied, it is said to be "all square."

Match play matches do not have to go the full 18 holes. They often do, but just as frequently one player will achieve an insurmountable lead and the match will end early. Say you reach a score of 6-up with 5 holes to play - you've clinched the victory, and the match is over.

Someone unfamiliar with match play scoring might be confused to see a score of "1-up" or "4 and 3" for a match. What does it mean? Here are the different types of scores you might see in match play:

- 1-up: As a final score, 1-up means that the match went the full 18 holes with the winner finishing with one more hole won than the runner-up. If the match goes 18 holes and you won 6 holes while I won 5 holes (the other holes being halved, or tied), then you beat me 1-up.
- 2 and 1: When you see a match play score that is rendered in this way - 2 and 1, 3 and 2, 4 and 3, and so on - it means that the winner clinched the victory before reaching the 18th hole and the match ended early.

The first number in such a score tells you the number of holes by which the winner is victorious, and the second number tells you the hole on which the match ended. So "2 and 1" means that the winner was 2 holes ahead with 1 hole to play (the match ended after No. 17), "3 and 2" means 3 holes ahead with 2 holes to play (the match ended after No. 16), and so on.

- 2-up: OK, so "1-up" means the match went the full 18 holes, and a score such as "2 and 1" means it ended early. So why do we sometimes see scores of "2-up" as a final score? If the leader was two holes up, why didn't the match end on No. 17?

A score of "2-up" means that the player in the lead took the match "dormie" on the 17th hole. "Dormie" means that the leader leads by the same number of holes that remain; for example, 2-up with 2 holes to play. If you are two holes up with two holes to play, you cannot lose the match in regulation. A score of "2-up" means that the match went dormie with one hole to play - the leader was 1-up with one hole to play - and then the leader won the 18th hole.

- 5 and 3: Here's the same situation. If Player A was ahead by 5 holes, then why didn't the match end with 4 holes to play instead of 3? Because the leader took the match dormie with 4 holes to play (4 up with 4 holes to go), then won the next hole for a final score of 5 and 3. Similar scores are 4 and 2 and 3 and 1.

More Match Play Basic Rules & Guidelines...

Match Play rules are significantly different from Stroke Play and the two forms can never be combined

Some match play rules include the following:

- The player may concede a match any time prior to start or conclusion of match.
- The player may concede a hole at any time prior to start or conclusion of that hole.
- The player may concede his opponents next stroke at any time, provided the opponent's ball is at rest.
- A concession may not be declined or withdrawn.
- There is not a 3-3 rule in Match Play (playing a second ball), but Rule 2-5 allows players to make a claim if there is a dispute between two players. If a committee representative is not available, the players must continue the match without delay.

Three steps are needed to make a claim:

1. notify opponent that you wish to make a claim
2. state the facts
3. state that you want a ruling

The claim must be announced before playing from the next teeing ground or in the case of the last hole; before you leave the putting green (the claim will be resolved by referring the matter to the committee in charge of the competition).

- The general penalty in Match Play is loss of hole except when otherwise provided (i.e. one stroke for ball at rest moved). There is not a 2-stroke penalty in Match Play.
- Honor goes to the player who won the last hole.
- Players may not add or change clubs after the stipulated round (i.e. a playoff) but may after 18 holes in a 36 hole match play – i.e. 2- stipulated rounds..
- A player can not knowingly give wrong information (i.e. the opponent is entitled to know the number of strokes you have made when requested). Penalty strokes must be reported to opponent unless it is obvious that you are proceeding under a rule requiring a penalty- i.e. Water or lateral hazard.
- Practice on the competitive course is permitted prior to round.
- The player whose ball is furthest from the hole should play first or the opposing player may recall the stroke.
- Touching or moving the opponent's ball (except in searching) without permission is a 1-stroke penalty.
- If your ball strikes the opponent's ball when both players are on the putting green there is no penalty.
- A ball in motion if deflected or stopped by opponent or caddie or his equipment there is not a penalty and the stroke may be cancelled and replayed or the ball played as it lies.