



## ***PLAYER and PARENT / SPECTATOR GUIDELINES***

We are so grateful to the parents and other spectators who take the time to transport juniors to the events and follow along to watch. We want the experience to be enjoyable for all the participants, so please remember that the focus should always be on the player's enjoyment and development.

### **SPECTATOR POLICIES**

A spectator is any individual who is not a player or a caddie. SDGA Junior Tour events follow the SD High School Activities Association for golf spectators.

- Please keep at least 50 feet from players during play, except when assisting the search for a lost ball. When players reach the green, please move to the side of the green as a courtesy to the players behind.
- Communication with your own player and others in the group should be limited to general encouragement at all times. Between 9's you can talk with your player to give encouragement and to make sure they have what they need in terms of nourishment and/or golf supplies.
- Spectators can help look for balls and assist with pace of play issues. For example, if a player loses a ball and needs to return to where they last played, a spectator with a cart can assist.

Regardless of the age or experience of the participant, we expect all parents and spectators to maintain the highest standard of behavior, sportsmanship, and decorum. If an issue should arise, it must be confronted in a respectful manner and away from the players. Please reach out to SDGA staff through the **SDGA TEXT ONLY NUMBER (605-546-7775)** if you need assistance resolving a conflict issue. Our goal is to teach junior tour players conflict resolution in a way that honors the values inherent to the game of golf.

Please understand that each season we welcome new junior players to the SDGA Junior Tour and also new parents. Everyone working together to integrate a quality experience for the tour will make the events more enjoyable for all.

With players ranging from under 9 to 18 years old, we have a wide range of experience. Our Junior Tour guidelines will dynamically change with each age group. As players get older and gain more experience, they will assume increasing responsibility and require less assistance from parents, spectators, and tour staff.

## **AGE GROUP POLICIES AND EXPECTATIONS**

### **Age 9 and Under - Caddie Policy**

In 2021 we instituted a successful new policy for our youngest age group and it is based on the successful **USKidsGolf program**. Each player is required to have an adult caddie who will help the Junior Tour player get around the course. Below are responsibilities of the Adult Caddie:

- Carry your player's bag and enjoy your time walking with them.
- Get to know all of the players and caddies in your group.
- Help players search for their golf ball, determine distances, rake bunkers, repair divots in fairways and ball marks on greens, and remove/replace the flagstick on the green.
- After each hole, record the scores of your player and the player he/she is responsible to keep score for.
- Help your player with playing strategies and game decisions in a timely manner.
- Encourage your player after good and bad shots, and make sure he/she is having fun.

The success of this program depends 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.

The 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 allow caddies. However, if the player is experienced and can navigate their way around the course, we suggest that you allow them to play with less assistance 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 that is needed but as little as possible.**

The 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. At this age group, caddies are not permitted and parental/spectator interaction should be very limited. However, because these players are still young, we will allow some limited interaction for parents to step in if a player is in distress or in danger of disrupting the event.

The 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 and have some experience they should be well-versed in the most common rules and procedures. There may be some new players who are not as familiar with the rules, but at age 12-13 they should be able to learn them quickly with the help of other players and parents.

### **14-15 and 16-18 - No Parental Involvement (Spectators 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.

## **PLAYER POLICIES (All Age Divisions)**

### ***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. At this age group, we want the players to develop the skills to handle these issues on their own. If there is a discrepancy that cannot be resolved, use the **SDGA TEXT ONLY NUMBER (605-546-7775)**. At that time, staff can ask any 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 is not 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.

### ***SPORTSMANSHIP AND ETIQUETTE***

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.

## ***RULES 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 use the **SDGA TEXT ONLY NUMBER (605-546-7775)** and we will get there as soon as we can. It is always better to let us know about an issue when resolving an issue or conflict. Our SDGA event staff is on site to help with these situations.

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.

SDGA Junior Tour Staff  
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