

# RTP GOLF LEAGUE

## Procedural Rules

April 3, 2023

### Overview

This document describes the procedural rules for the RTP Golf League, hereafter referred to in this document as RTPGL. These rules discuss all aspects of the RTPGL (eligibility, scoring, handicapping, etc.) that does not involve rules of play. Rules of play, or more specifically where RTPGL golf rules differ from USGA rules, are covered in a separate document.

This document is a complete rewrite of previous rules. All references to multiple leagues have been removed as it is unlikely the RTPGL will ever return to playing on multiple nights or sponsor multiple different leagues. They have also been updated to reflect the current venue (Falls Village Golf Club) where we currently host the league.

### Procedural Rules

#### General League Information

RTPGL is hosted at Falls Village Golf Club in Durham on Monday night. Cost is determined by Falls Village prior to the beginning of the season and is typically around \$25/night which includes greens fees and cart fee. Walking is allowed. Prior to the 2023 season players who chose to walk were not required to pay the cart fee. Falls Village has notified us that has changed for the 2023 season. If a player chooses to walk, they will now be required to pay the full cost including cart fee. Updated information on any change to green and cart fees will be provided on the RTPGL website once it is provided to us for a new season.

First tee time each night is at 4:30PM. Play is conducted off both nines with half the groups going off the front and the other half going off the back.

The league is managed by a Nightly Coordinator. The nightly coordinator has many duties including creating the schedules, providing scorecards for every match, and computing and posting match results.

The nightly coordinator is also responsible for monitoring the weather on match nights and making a play/no play decision if weather becomes a concern. **NOTE:** Making a play/no play decision is one of the most difficult duties of the coordinator. Since some league members drive to the course from a distance, the call needs to be made based on weather information available around 3PM on league night. *Any league member that complains to the Nightly Coordinator about the play/no play decision made on any given league night, it will be taken as an offer by that league member to make all subsequent play/no play decisions for the remainder of the season.*

The name of the Nightly Coordinator is posted on the league website. As a courtesy, please check with your Nightly Coordinator as to the best time and method to contact them. Remember that he/she is a volunteer!

## Players/Teams

- 1) Teams will be made of 2 person teams. Eligibility to play in the RTPGL is open to everyone. Beginners as well as seasoned players are all welcome.
- 2) Single player teams will NOT be allowed to play in the league. The only exception to this rule is for any team that loses a regular team member during the season which is covered later in this section.
- 3) For all players, **including returning players from the previous year**, their initial handicap will be calculated after the first game of play. Handicapping is calculated automatically by the software package purchased by the RTPGL and is based on USGA standards. NOTE: We have upgraded the software we use to manage the league for the 2023 season. This software has allowed us to make some changes to the way handicaps are calculated that allows us to be more in conformance with current USGA standards.
- 4) It is not uncommon that a league player may need to drop out of the league during the regular season. New players may join a team as a full-time player during the regular season provided there are at least four (4) matches left in the regular season. The replacement player can be new player to the league or can be someone who had been playing as a substitute. If there are fewer than 4 matches remaining, a substitute can be used for the missing player.
- 5) Players joining a team during the regular season will not be eligible to play in the playoffs unless they have completed four (4) or more rounds of play. This can include four rounds as a replacement regular, or a combination of four rounds played as a substitute (prior to joining the team) and replacement regular after joining the team.
- 6) If an entire team drops out before the end of the season, the league will try to replace the team with a new team. If a new team is found, the new team will retain all previous points from the existing team. Any new player and/or a current league substitute can become permanent members of the new team. The intent is to be able to continue league play with as little change to the existing schedule as possible.
- 7) Replacement players are governed by all previously stated rules above. The replacement team will not be eligible to participate in the league playoffs unless both members of the team meet playoff eligibility (completed four rounds of play by conclusion of regular season).
- 8) If there are four or fewer matches left in the season, the dropped team will be treated as a ghost team for the remainder of the season unless a replacement team can be found who are willing to play the remaining matches while not being eligible for the playoffs.

## Substitutes

- 1) Substitute players are allowed for any match during the regular season. You are highly encouraged to procure a substitute for any match you will be unable to make. The alternative is using a Ghost player in your place which will make it more difficult to win points in that night's match.
- 2) Substitutes will be required to pay a one-time fee of \$6 to play in the league. This covers the cost of adding the substitute to the new software for the entire season. If a substitute plays but chooses not to pay the \$6 fee, their score will not be recorded and a Ghost Player will be substituted. If you procure a substitute on your own, please be sure to mention this \$6 fee to them.
- 3) Teams needing a substitute may obtain a substitute player by any means of their choosing. For the convenience of league members, a list of registered substitutes is maintained on the league website. However, you are not required to use a substitute from this list. Refer to the league website (<http://www.ntrtpgolf.org/substitutes.php>) for instructions on how to use the league sponsored substitute list.
- 4) Handicaps for league substitutes are handled in the same way as for league members. If a sub does not already have an RTPGL league handicap, one will be established using the same method used for full-time league players after their first night of play. All points won by the substitute will count for the total team points on which he/she is substituting for.
- 5) If you obtain a substitute for a match, you should provide the substitutes name and which player on the team they will be substituting for to the nightly coordinator. If the nightly coordinator is informed in a timely manner, they will often be able to have the substitutes name (and current handicap if relevant) on the scorecard for the match. If the substitutes name is not on the scorecard, **please clearly write their full name on the scorecard**. The nightly coordinator will secure the player's correct season handicap and apply it to the night's play. If a handicap does not exist for that substitute, then the substitute will establish one that night, and it will be utilized to determine the scoring points for that night.
- 6) The league provides a method where players who wish to substitute can register which will put them on an email list for league members to use to request a substitute. Please note, though, that registration as a substitute on the league website is not required in order to play. However, it is highly recommended to register as it will increase opportunities substitute.

## Play/No Play Decisions

- 1) **Holiday Weeks** - The league officers and nightly coordinators determine which weeks the league will not play due to holidays prior to the start of the season. This typically, but not always, results in the league not playing during Memorial Day, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, and Labor Day weeks. You will receive a communication from your nightly coordinator before the season starts indicating which weeks the league will not be playing.
- 2) **Course Closed** – If Falls Village closes the course for any reason on the night of a regularly scheduled match, the match will be made up using the standard league makeup policy described later. If the course is closed during a scheduled match, play will immediately be suspended and made up as determined by Nightly Coordinator in coordination with course management.
- 3) **Weather Cancellations** - USGA Rules apply as applicable (lightning, winds, etc.). However, the league nightly coordinator has the final say and makes all decisions on whether to suspend or cancel play due to weather. Player safety is the #1 priority when weather becomes an issue.

Please be respectful of the nightly coordinator's decision. On days when threatening weather is in the area leading up to the time league play would begin, they often need to make the call on whether to cancel play for the evening several hours before the first tee time based on information available at the time. It is often not evident at that point in time if dangerous weather will pass or hit. Please be aware that anyone who complains about a go/no go decision will have be considered as someone who has volunteered to make all future go/no go weather decisions for the remainder of the season.

- 4) If severe weather hits during league play all players should mark their balls and seek immediate shelter. The nightly coordinator will communicate the decision on whether play will resume when it is safe to do so or if the round is cancelled for that night.
- 5) If the nightly coordinator makes the decision to resume play once the inclement weather has passed, players should return to where they marked their balls and continue play. If any players leave the course during the suspension of play and do not return, the scores from the previous time they played the missed holes will be used to complete their rounds.

## Makeup Policy for Cancelled Events

- 1) When a full night's matches are cancelled due to weather or any other reason, the round will be made up at the following regularly scheduled league night. All remaining matches will then be moved out one week, extending the season by one calendar week.
- 2) When league play is suspended for the night after play has started, the nightly coordinator in conjunction with course management will determine how to complete

the match. The preferred option would be to replay the match in its entirety, but this may not be allowed by the course. In situations where replaying the match is not allowed by the course, the nightly coordinator will determine how the unfinished matches will be scored. The nightly coordinator can use any means available when making the decision including requesting feedback from the league officers and possibly the league members.

## Scoring

NOTE: The scoring system described below has been in effect for many years and is based on options offered in the software the league uses to manage the league.

Points won in a match are computer generated based on parameters that have been agreed upon by league officials many years ago and continue to be used as of this writing. For each match, the maximum points available to win are 49 points. These points awarded as follows:

- 4 team points for team low team net score per hole (36 total points)
- 1 team point for player with individual low net score per hole (9 total points)
- 2 points for winning the most holes
- 2 points for the lowest net score

The 4 point hole score is determined by adding the gross score for both golfers on each team to come up with a team gross score for both teams. If one of the teams is receiving handicap strokes on that hole, that team would then subtract the number of handicap strokes they received from their team gross score to obtain a team net score. The scorecards will show one or more 'x' symbols for the team that would be receiving strokes. That score is then compared with the other teams gross team score to determine which team had the lower team score for the hole and thus awarded the four points. If both scores are the same, each team will receive two points for the hole.

The 1 point for low individual net is determined by each player taking their gross score for the hole, subtracting any individual handicap strokes (denoted by the 'o' symbols on the scorecard) to come up with a net score for the hole. The point is awarded to the team whose individual net score was the lowest. If a player on each team has the same low net score, each team is awarded ½ point

The team that wins the most holes is awarded the 2 points for most holes won. In the event both teams won the same number of holes, each team will be awarded one point. NOTE: The 1 point for individual low net is not used when determining which team won the hole.

Team low net scores are determined by taking each players gross score for the match, then subtracting their handicap to come up with their net score. The net scores for each team member are then added together to come up with a team net score. The two team net scores are then compared to determine which team had the low net score and thus awarded the final two points. In the event both teams have the same low net score, ½ point is awarded to each team.

Your Nightly Coordinator can answer more detailed questions should you have any.

Prior to moving to Falls Village we also awarded four points to each team member just for showing up to play. This was done to encourage making all your matches, or making the effort to get a substitute if you could not make it (substitutes also qualified for the 'showing up' points). We eliminated this when we moved to Falls Village as it was thought it would be more difficult to procure a substitute, and we didn't want to punish teams that made legitimate efforts to procure a substitute but were not able to. We reserve the right to reestablish this rule at any time. If we do, it will be done at the beginning of the season and not something that would be implemented after the season begins.

## Handicapping

Player handicaps are determined in conformance to USGA handicap calculations with one exception regarding when we establish an initial handicap. USGA handicaps are not calculated until 5 matches are available. But since we need handicaps after the first match, we start calculating handicaps after a player completes their first match. Your Nightly Coordinator can answer more detail questions should you have any.

Another area where we differ slightly from USGA rules is which scores we use to calculate a player's ongoing handicap. This is due to the length of our season combined with the fact we establish new handicaps for all league players at the beginning of each season. The following list shows how scores are used and dropped as the season progresses.

- All scores for a player's first six matches are used
- For matches 7 and 8, the player's highest score is dropped
- For matches 9 and 10, the player's two highest scores are dropped
- For matches 11 and 12, the player's three highest scores are dropped
- For matches 13 and 14, the player's four highest scores are dropped
- For matches 15 and 16, the player's five highest scores are dropped

We have made some changes to how we calculate handicaps for the 2023 season. The two primary changes are:

- The full score shot by the player will be used to determine handicap. This is a change from the 90% score used in the past.
- We are implementing a max gross double bogey on all holes when determining handicap. Previously, the full score shot on all holes were used.
- Slope and rating of the side being played will continue to be used for the final handicap calculation as used in the past.

The changes above are more in conformance with current USGA guidelines and are designed to prevent artificially high handicaps for players who have a few blowup holes each round.

Please note that slopes and ratings for front or back 9s at Falls Village are different. This can sometimes result in a player's handicap being slightly different when playing the front 9 vs. the back 9.

For the regular season and the playoffs, the maximum 9 hole handicap for male golfers is 18. The maximum 9 hole handicap for female golfers is 20.

Handicaps are frozen once the playoffs start. The final regular season handicap of all playoff eligible players will be used throughout the playoffs and will not be recalculated.

Handicaps for the RTPGL members will be calculated after their first night of play.

Substitutes will be treated the same as “regular” players for handicapping purposes. League players need to have a minimum of four completed league matches in order to be eligible for the playoffs. This typically only comes into play when a regular league member must leave the league for any reason and another player takes their place.

## Playing Procedure

Upon arrival at Falls Village, all players and substitutes need to check in at the clubhouse and play their green and cart fee. Warm up buckets of balls are also available at check in. One member of each team should also pick up a scorecard provided by the nightly coordinator if they are being provided. These cards are preprinted with player names and individual and team handicap information. You may use a Falls Village scorecard as well, but these cards will obviously not include any league or match related information. **NOTE:** The new software being used starting with the 2023 season allows the use of online scoring using a mobile app. We are hoping to move completely away from printed scorecards and using the mobile app for all score inputs.

Teams will be teeing off both the front nine and back nine each night. We typically have 20-24 teams in the league, meaning 5-6 matches each night off each nine, so it is imperative that you are at your tee and ready to go at your appointed time.

If you chose to use printed scorecards for your match, after the completion of the round, scorecards should be checked carefully for accuracy before being submitted. If there is any disagreement regarding any incidents that happened during the playing of the round it should be brought to the attention of the nightly coordinator prior to signing and submitting the scorecard for the match. **Once a scorecard with two signatures has been turned in, the scores are considered final and cannot be changed. The only person who can override this rule is the nightly coordinator after evaluation any extenuating circumstances as to why a score needed to be corrected.**

If you use the mobile app, your scorecard is automatically submitted at the completion of the match. There is no way to ‘sign’ the online scorecard. Therefore, if there was any dispute during the match, the following procedure should be followed:

- A member from each team needs to send an email to the nightly coordinator providing a description of the dispute and their side of the story. This email needs to be sent within 24 hours of the match being completed. It is preferred that the email is sent on Monday evening.
- You may alternately provide this information directly to the nightly coordinator if he is still at the course when you complete your round.
- The nightly coordinator will evaluate the dispute and make a decision. The coordinator can make the decision on his/her own, or may also consult with the league officers to determine a ruling.

**NOTE:** Failure to turn in scores either on time or improperly compiled can, at the discretion of the league committee, result in the deduction of points and/or the loss/forfeit of matches. The “league committee” consists of a majority consensus of the RTPGL Officers and Nightly Coordinators.

### **ABSENT PLAYERS**

When a member must play without his/her partner or a substitute, it is called playing “BLIND”. Just enter the name “BLIND” in place of the absent partner’s name on the scorecard and draw a line through the scores for the “BLIND” section.

When a team member is playing “BLIND”, his partner becomes the course, also referred to as a Ghost Player. A Ghost Player shoots Par plus six (6) strokes and has a zero handicap. Any points won by the Ghost Player will be added to the total team’s points. **The Ghost Player does not earn show up points if they are being used for the season.**

If a member of a team is not available to play on their scheduled night, they are encouraged to get a substitute. **Please do not wait until the last moment to get in touch with subs.** It is in your best interest to obtain a substitute (if possible) because it is very difficult to win points when using a Ghost Player and you will always cost your team the four ‘show up’ points (if they are being used) for the absent player.

If a team is unable to play the regularly scheduled night of play, the match will be treated as a forfeit (described below). To avoid this you may procure substitutes for one or both missing players.

**If the nightly coordinator agrees,** both teams can arrange to play their match on a different night with the following conditions:

- Both teams must still play together in a foursome – i.e. there will be no matching of cards permitted.
- While it would be desired to play the match on the originally schedule nine (back or front), either nine can be used pending availability if the nightly coordinator agrees.
- Someone from one of the teams will be responsible for making arrangements with Falls Village for the day and time they wish to play. Play at any other course will not be allowed. Normal course green fee and cart rental charges may apply as the amount paid to the course for regular league play may not be honored at the discretion of course management
- The match must be completed and the scores submitted to the nightly coordinator no less than 24 hours before the next regularly scheduled league matches. The preferred method for submitted scorecards is sending an image of the signed card via text or email to the nightly coordinator.

**FORFEITS:** If a team doesn’t show up for a scheduled match and has no substitutes, the match will be treated as a forfeit. For all RTPGL leagues, a forfeit is treated as described below



- Both members of the missing team will be required to use Ghost Players. Ghost Players shoot par plus 6 strokes and have a handicap of zero (0).
- The missing team will forfeit all eight 'show up' points for that match (if applicable).
- The team that does show up will play against the course (the two Ghost Players).
- Points won by either team using the above guidelines will be recorded for each team. Please note that this means the missing team may earn points for the match even though they were not present

**LATE ARRIVING PLAYERS or TEAMS** - If a team or team member arrives after the scheduled tee time, the opposing team **must** begin play on time without them. The only exception to this is if all members of the group with a later tee time are a) present and b) agree to switch, you may swap tee times with that group.

If the late arriving player(s) do subsequently show up, they should drive out to their group and join play in progress. At the conclusion of the match, the late arriving team member(s), with approval from the opposing team, can continue play on the missed holes with the following restrictions:

- At least one member of the opposing team must accompany them during this make-up play.
- The course is available for play.
- The course is still playable taking into consideration weather or light.

If the opposing team (at least one member) can not accompany the late arriving player(s) for whatever reason, or the conditions (rain or light) make it such that the hole make up is not feasible, then the late arriving team member(s) will take a 'handicap bogey' for each missed hole. A handicap bogey is defined as par, plus any individual handicap stroke the player is given for that particular hole, plus one additional stroke.

### **GHOST TEAM SCORING**

In the event that a nightly league has an uneven number of teams, A "Ghost Team" will be used as the last team in the league. The following method will be utilized for scoring the Ghost Team on a weekly basis:

- Two regular league players, chosen at random, will be used as the opponents of the team that is playing the ghost team.
- The random players will be chosen from those league regulars who are scheduled to play the same 9 holes (front or back) as the team scheduled to play the ghost team.
- The random player's current handicaps, as well as the score they shoot that night, will be used to determine the outcome of the match for the team playing the ghost team.
- If either of the random players does not show up for that nights match, but has arranged for a sub, then the substitutes handicap and round results will be used.

- If either of the random players do not show up, and did not get a sub, either a Ghost Player or another randomly selected player will be used for the opponent at the discretion of the nightly coordinator.

**NOTE:** This rule applies only when a ghost team is required due to an uneven number of teams in a league. This rule does NOT apply in a forfeit situation when a team fails to show up for a match. It was put into place several seasons ago to make things fair for everyone. It is very easy to score a high number of points when playing a team with two ghost players due to the zero (0) handicap the ghost team would have. When the number of league teams exceeds the number of regular season league matches, not everyone gets the opportunity to play the ghost team and therefore have a (somewhat) guaranteed high scoring night. This would give teams with the Ghost Team on their schedule an unfair advantage to those who do not.

## REGULAR SEASON SCHEDULE

The RTP Golf League regular season consists of 16 matches. The regular season match schedule is automatically generated by the league software. Players should take note that when there are more than 16 teams in a league it is not possible for every team to play every other team during a 16 match season. This can sometimes mean a team you were hoping to play during the season is not on your team's schedule.

The league software will usually create a schedule where most teams will play an even number of matches on each course (front 9 and back 9) and have a fairly even distribution of tee times, though this is not guaranteed.

The league nightly coordinator may provide pre-printed scorecards in the clubhouse each league night that will contain player names and handicap strokes applicable for that night's match. When a substitute plays in a match, their name would not appear on the pre-printed scorecard unless someone from that team had previously notified the nightly coordinator about the substitute. In those cases, the substitute's ***full name*** should be clearly written on the score sheet above the name of the player they are substituting for, and the regular players name should be crossed out. You do not need to know or write the substitutes handicap or figure out handicap strokes. The nightly coordinator will apply the correct handicap when entering the match scores in the league software. In most cases, if you let the nightly coordinator know in advance

If pre-printed scorecards are not available, and you choose not to use the mobile app to record your scores, you should use a regular course score card to record the match results. When this happens, ***please remember to write all players' first and last names clearly on the card.*** You do not need to know or record player handicaps.

Match results are posted to the appropriate nightly league page on the league website. Results are typically posted within 24 hours, but this can sometimes vary. Please keep in mind that the nightly coordinators are volunteers and have other commitments for their time.

In the event a match is postponed due to weather, the league schedule is shifted out one week. This means the season will be extended an additional week, and the team you will be

playing in the following week's match will be the same team you were scheduled to play in the match that was postponed. The course (front or back 9) and tee time will also remain the same.

### **FINAL NIGHT MATCH**

New for the 2023 season we will be implementing a 'Position Round' for the final regularly season matches. This means the first place team will play the second place team, the third place team will play the fourth place team, etc. This is being done to make the end of season races for regular season champion and playoff position more interesting and fair to everyone. Using this format for the final night gives teams fighting for these positions the ability to control their own destiny and not have to rely on other teams to help them out.

Trophies are awarded to the team with the most points in the standings at the conclusion of the regular season.

### **LEAGUE PLAYOFFS**

Playoffs are held beginning the week following the completion of the regular season. The number of teams that will be eligible to make the playoffs is determined by the league officers and nightly coordinators before the regular season begins. This is typically the top 12 teams in the league standings at the conclusion of the regular season. If any teams are not able to play in the playoffs, they will be replaced by the next highest team in the standings. Playoff seeding will be based on final standings position after all 12 teams have been determined. While we have used the top 12 teams during more regular seasons, we reserve the right to change this.

Substitutes are not allowed during the league playoffs. Any absent players in a playoff match will be scored as a Ghost Player. It is not possible to predict the number of rainouts that may occur during the season and thus when the playoff weeks will actually begin. This should be kept in mind when scheduling vacations in late August or September.

Handicaps used for the playoffs will be the player's final handicap at the end of the regular season. Handicaps are then frozen at this value throughout the playoffs.

Playoff matches are 9-hole matches and use the same match scoring rules as used during the regular season. The nightly coordinator will determine which course (front or back 9) each round of the playoffs will be contested on.

If you know both players on your team will not be available during the playoffs you may, but are not required, give up your spot in the playoffs and allow the next team in the standings to replace your team.

Players who have not completed at least six (4) rounds of play in the league during the regular season are not eligible to play in the playoffs. If either player on a team does not meet this criterion, the team is not eligible to play in the playoffs. This will typically only apply to teams who needed to replace players during the season.

All players are required to pay green fees and cart fee for each playoff round they participate in. These fees have traditionally been the same as the fees charged by course management during the regular season.

Trophies are awarded to the playoff winners.