

# **MEMBER'S HANDBOOK**



## **SENIOR MEN'S GOLF ASSOCIATION Of HILTON HEAD ISLAND**

Revised April 2025

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## I. INTRODUCTION

Dear SMGA Member:

This Handbook is intended to give you all the information you need to maximize your membership in the SMGA. We encourage you to take a moment to review the information in the document, familiarizing yourself with how the SMGA operates and understanding the Rules and Regulations that govern us.

Our website ([www.smgahhi.com](http://www.smgahhi.com)) contains a tremendous amount of helpful information. We encourage you to use this asset as your primary reference for SMGA information. This site includes the following information, documents, and links:

- SMGA Website User Manual: <http://www.smgahhi.com/tutorials.htm>
- SMGA Golf Genius-TM Online User Manual: <http://www.smgahhi.com/tutorials.htm>
- Golf Genius Scoring Tutorial: <http://www.smgahhi.com/tutorials.htm>
- Board Members and Club Representatives are listed on the drop-down menu under General Information. <http://www.smgahhi.com/>
- Club Representatives: [http://www.smgahhi.com/Pages/club\\_reps.htm](http://www.smgahhi.com/Pages/club_reps.htm)

## II. MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear SMGA Member,

Welcome to the Senior Men's Golf Association for 2025! We have an exciting season planned for you on top-tier courses in the Lowcountry.

How about this to kick off the new year? – Hilton Head National, Harbour Town, Heron Point, Palmetto Dunes Arthur Hills, Robert Trent Jones, Riverton Pointe, Hidden Cypress, Moss Creek, Fripp Island Ocean Point and PH Arthur Hills. And that's just our schedule through March! Additionally, we're returning to Savannah Quarters, Oldfield, Berkeley Hall, The Landings for Frequent Players Tournament, Cat Island, and Haig Point after a long layoff.

For the most part, we will focus on Better Ball of Partners and 2 Best Balls of 4 formats, our most popular formats, with a couple of change-ups thrown in.

Your Board diligently controls our costs to keep dues and tournament fees as low as possible as we focus on higher-end clubs. SMGA's revenue is derived from our Registration Fee and Event Fee from which \$15 is returned as prize money. The remaining amount is used for our Frequent Players Tournament and administrative fees.

Text messages, emails, and website announcements have worked exceptionally well, so we will continue using these communication methods. If you have experienced any issues with this type of communication or have made changes to your contact information, please notify your Club Representative. The Club Representative listing is available on our website, [www.smgahhi.com](http://www.smgahhi.com), under the General Information tab.

Our website—[www.smgahhi.com](http://www.smgahhi.com)—contains helpful information. Regarding the Golf Genius TM system, please review the tutorials to guide you through our event registration procedures.

You can help us out:

1. Our Board experiences openings every year as terms expire. We are always looking for members interested in joining the SMGA Board. If you are interested, please get in touch with me directly at [SMGA.president@gmail.com](mailto:SMGA.president@gmail.com). I will be happy to provide details.
2. Lastly, our members are our best marketing source to increase yearly memberships. Please tell your golfing buddies what a great organization you belong to and ask them to join you in 2025.

Remember, the SMGA is designed for YOU; it's YOUR organization, and we want to make YOUR experience the best possible. If you have suggestions, critiques, or questions, each club has an SMGA Club Representative who can help you—please get to know him if you don't already. You may also contact me directly through the EMAIL US tab on the website. 2025 is going to be another exciting year for SMGA. I look forward to seeing you on the links.

**JOE**

Joe Macchia  
2025 SMGA President

### III. SMGA MEMBERSHIPS

A. Membership requirements:

- Reached your 50th birthday.
- Have a USGA Handicap Index of 24.0 or lower.
- Must be a member of a recognized Club listed at [http://www.smgahhi.com/Pages/club\\_reps.htm](http://www.smgahhi.com/Pages/club_reps.htm) with active GHIN handicap maintained at your club.

B. Membership dues:

1. Paid from the registration opening to July 31st will cover the current year. Any new members joining on August 1st or later in the calendar year will receive credit for the remaining time in the current calendar year and the following year.

C. Types of club memberships recognized:

1. Annual memberships at an SMGA Member Club offering unrestricted daily golf and have active GHIN handicap services from January 1 to December 31.
2. Annual memberships at an SMGA non-member club offer unrestricted daily golf and have active GHIN handicap services from January 1 to December 31. This type of membership requires a 2/3 majority vote of the SMGA Board. This includes The Legends at Parris Island and Savannah Harbor, among others.
3. Seasonal Memberships offer unrestricted golf for a set period, have an active GHIN handicap service at their Home Club, and require a 2/3 SMGA Board vote for approval. The SMGA will track membership dates and end privileges on the final approved day. Members are given a four-digit number. Lapsed memberships result in suspension from SMGA events until privileges are restored.
4. Out-of-area memberships provide unrestricted golf access at clubs located outside Beaufort, Jasper, or Chatham counties, with active GHIN handicap services. Approval requires a 2/3 vote from the SMGA Board, and members are given a four-digit number. If either expires, the member is suspended from SMGA events until the expiration is restored. Changes must be reported in writing to the Membership Chairman.

D. Not Recognized for Membership:

1. Multiple Play Rounds/Cards: Purchased from a local golf club, these rounds or cards grant a limited number of rounds for a specific dollar amount and do not offer unlimited daily golf privileges, nor are they an annual pass membership.
2. Daily Golf Card (Punch Card): Local golf clubs offer these cards to their golfers. The golfer pays for each round that day and punches the card. Typically, there are 10 punches per card, and some courses provide a

free round after all 10 are used. These cards do not offer unlimited annual golf privileges, are not yearly memberships, and are not eligible for SMGA membership.

3. Member or Non-Member Club employees are not eligible for Membership in the SMGA. They must have a valid Club Membership as recognized in Section II.C.

E. Non-Member Clubs

1. Non-Member Clubs that do not offer unrestricted daily golf memberships from Jan 1 to December 31 but have agreed to host an SMGA Event (e.g., Club, Club at Savannah Harbor, Legends at Parris Island, Hilton Head National, Old South, Pinecrest) or for which SMGA would like to develop a relationship (Colleton River and Chechessee Creek).

#### IV. ENTRY REGISTRATION / ACCESS TO TOURNAMENT MANAGER (TM)

##### A. Using TM

1. To use TM, a member must create an account with the TM system. This is a **one-time** registration, and it is initiated when a member receives an email from the TM system and clicks on the link in that email.

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***NOTE: Your email address will be your “username” for the TM system.***

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2. A member accesses TM by selecting the **“GOLF BALL”** on the home page at <http://www.smgahhi.com/index.html>. You will leave the website and be transferred to the SMGA Event Registration Portal, part of the TM system.
  - Click the “Sign In” link and enter your email address and password.
  - After signing in, hover over the SMGA Event Schedule menu item at the top of the page and select the 20XX Current Month and Future Events link.
  - Click on any open event to view its description, which includes details about the format and cost.
  - If you decide to enter the event, follow the prompts to complete your registration,
  - Once your registration is completed and confirmed, you will be added to the event's pending list.
  - Your registration will be confirmed through an automated email at [noreply@golfgenius.com](mailto:noreply@golfgenius.com), notifying you that you have successfully registered for the event.
3. For 4-man events, members will sign up individually and be paired with other members to form a 4-man team.
4. For 2-man partner events, **both** members must enter the event separately and provide their partner's name in the appropriate box to complete the registration. You can always change your partner or status during registration, but not after registration closes.
  - If your Partner withdraws from the Event and you still wish to participate, you must contact the Event Chairmen.
5. If you don't have a partner, SMGA can assign one to you by indicating 'ANYONE' in the partner box. You will be paired with another single registrant, with a maximum handicap difference of 10 strokes.
6. If you are selected to participate in the event, you will receive an automated email confirming your entry. The event fees will be charged to your credit card prior to the event. If you do not receive an email, you are an alternate. Please verify your status by checking the pairings

posted on the website.

7. All players will be charged the "Event Fee" as indicated in the event registration description. If the event occurs at the member's "Home Club," your Home Club will determine the appropriate cart charge, which will be added to your club account. Please note that the discount may not equal the full amount shown as the "Event Cart Fee," especially for events that include food as part of the non-entry fee.

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***"Home Club" is defined as the club that maintains the member's USGA Handicap Index.***

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## **V. HOW A MEMBER GETS SELECTED TO PARTICIPATE IN AN EVENT**

### **A. General:**

1. Initial selection into an event to be based on a first-come, first-served basis, with some exceptions for Board priority. Registration will open at 5:00 pm on Thursday, eleven (11) days before the event, and close at 11:59 pm the following Wednesday. An Entry Number will be assigned based on the order in which a member completes his registration.
2. SMGA Board members are given priority in events for the duration of their term and one year after leaving the Board. This recognizes the time and effort they put into the SMGA events.

### **B. Undersubscribed Events:**

1. When an event is undersubscribed, all registered members are typically accepted, except in the following cases:
  - a) **Partner Events:**
    - A member registering as an individual to be paired with another may not participate if no available partner is available.
    - If a member names a partner who fails to register, the registering member is disqualified.
    - Disqualified members may participate at the discretion of the Event Chairs:

If:

- A registered individual is available to be paired and
- The disqualified member is willing to be paired with that individual, and
- The handicaps of the two players are within 10 strokes.

### **C. Oversubscribed Events**

1. When an event is oversubscribed within the first 15 minutes of open registration, all fully registered participants, including partners, will be



entered into a random drawing for participation. Those not chosen will be placed on the Alternates list in the order they registered.

2. The Event Chairs will strive to select the first alternate who can appropriately fill a vacancy or "qualify" for the open position. The time of registration is based on the first-come, first-served sign-up policy.

D. Alternate Selection Procedures

1. An alternate list will be maintained when an event is oversubscribed. This list will be used to fill vacancies when a member who was previously selected to participate in an event must withdraw.
2. When choosing alternates to fill vacancies, the Event Chairs will attempt to prioritize the First-Come/First-Served (FCFS) order of entry.
3. In Individual events, the Event Chairs will call the first alternate based on the first-come/first-served time of entry, ensuring a transparent and fair selection process.
4. The Event Chairs will use the following guidelines in a **TWO-MAN** and **FOUR-MEN** events.

2-Man, Partner Events	
IF	THEN (EC)
A team needs to be replaced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will reach out to the first team on the paired alternate list.</li></ul>
One individual needs to be replaced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Will select the first individual player on the alternates list.</li></ul>

<b>2-Man, Partner Events</b>	
<b>IF</b>	<b>THEN (EC)</b>
A team needs to be replaced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will reach out to the first team on the paired alternate list.</li> </ul>
One individual needs to be replaced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will select the first alternate with an HI within 10 strokes of the remaining partner will be selected</li> </ul>
Two individuals need to be replaced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will select two individuals (instead of a team). Their Handicap Indexes (HI's) must be within 10 strokes of each other.</li> </ul>

<b>4-Man, Team Events (Before Pairings Completed)</b>	
<b>IF</b>	<b>THEN (EC)</b>
Individual needs to be replaced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will reach out to the first alternate on the list.</li> </ul>

4-Man, Team Events (After Pairings Completed)	
IF	THEN (EC)
The individual needs to be replaced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will select the first alternate whose Handicap Index approximates that of the A, B, C, or D player who has withdrawn.</li> <li><i>Note: The goal is to maintain team balance in terms of low, middle, and high Handicap Index players,</i></li> </ul>

## VI. EVENT RULES AND REGULATIONS

### A. USGA Rules

1. USGA Rules govern all play, except when the SMGA and Event Chairs post special local rules.

### B. Ties

1. SMGA uses the Golf Genius USGA Countback method to break ties (Last 9,6,3,1 holes): This tie-breaking method uses the last 9,6,3, and the final hole. The hole-handicap allocation (strokes on the scorecard) is used rather than a fraction of the Playing Handicap.

### C. SMGA Local Rules

1. Immovable Obstructions around the Green.
  - a) Please click on the links for a short video on the rule:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xHYqm-r4S24>
2. Balls lost or out of bounds.
  - a) Please click on the link for a short video on the rule:  
<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rules-modernization/major-changes/golfs-new-rules-stroke-and-distance.html>

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*Note: A player must decide whether to invoke this local rule before leaving the spot where he played the shot in question. If a player chooses to hit a provisional ball, he forfeits his right to invoke this local rule. Conversely, a decision not to hit a provisional ball is a decision to invoke this local rule.*

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### 3. Exposed Root Rule

- a) This root rule has been established to prevent personal injury from tree roots that are exposed from the regular trunk of a tree. This rule is for swing relief only and not for stance relief.
  - Notify you're playing opponent(s) or playing partners.
  - Take relief by placing the ball in a spot that ensures complete swing relief from the exposed root and no closer to the hole.
  - Exposed root relief does not apply within a marked penalty area. you must declare an unplayable and then take the appropriate relief, along with your one-stroke penalty.

#### 4. Additional Rules

- a) **Scorecards** After play completion, cards shall be initialed, attested, and delivered to the scoring area. Your initials on the scorecard indicate that you agree with the Golf Genius score app, which will be used as your official score. You and your team will be disqualified if the scorecard is not turned in with initials.
- b) **DISTANCE-MEASURING DEVICES**—The SMGA has adopted a Local Rule for all SMGA events stating that a player may use a distance-measuring device to obtain distance information only.

#### D. Pace of Play

1. The SMGA Board has adopted several local rules to address pace of play issues, trying to complete the round in 4 hours and 15 Minutes. The SMGA is a "Ready Golf" organization and promotes "ready golf," not "rushed golf".
  - a) When you will not factor in the hole, we strongly encourage players to pick up. To facilitate a faster pace of play, the USGA has set scoring guidelines in this situation. They are:
    - 5 feet or closer to the pin, take one stroke.
    - 5 feet and 20 yards from the hole, take 2 or 3 strokes based on what you deem appropriate.
    - Beyond 20 yards from the hole, take 3 or 4 strokes as appropriate.
2. If a group falls two holes behind, the Event Chairs will issue a warning. If the group has not noticeably improved its position on the course, the Event Chairs may instruct it to pick up, skip a hole, and record a score of net double bogey on the skipped hole(s) for tournament scoring purposes. The TM system will adjust the score to net par for handicap purposes.
3. The Event Chairs can disqualify any team or group that fails to submit a scorecard.

#### E. Handicaps

1. All handicaps must be based on Indexes per the current USGA

Handicap System. The maximum handicap allowed in any event is 36.

2. All members with a Handicap Index of 20.0 or higher will be required to play from the Senior Tees or the Super Senior Tees if they meet the Super Senior criteria of 75 years of age or older and the sum of their age and Handicap Index to be 90 or higher. This determination will be made before the beginning of our season (early January) or when the member joins the SMGA,
3. All handicaps used in an Event will be based on the current USGA Handicap Index on the day of the pairings (typically four days before the event) and as applied to the specific course being played.

F. Course Handicaps

1. Course Handicaps will be calculated using procedures of the World Handicap System.
1. Course Handicap is your complete handicap for the specific course and tees utilized in an event, and the Playing Handicap incorporates the USGA's suggested adjustment (generally 85%) for competitive play.
2. When recording scores for individuals or teams, there is no maximum score for each hole. The TM scoring system automatically makes the necessary adjustments when entering scores into GHIN.
3. All SMGA event scores will be posted as Competition.

G. Event Credits

1. For each event you play in, you receive "Player Credits. These credits are used to determine your eligibility to play in the Frequent Player Tournament (FPT) at the end of the season. The more events you participate in, the more credits you earn. The top 72 players get an invitation to the FPT.

## **VII. DISTRIBUTION OF ENTRY FEES**

### **A. Entry fees:**

1. They are used to cover administrative and amenity costs, as well as provide prize money.
  - Administrative actions.
  - Frequent Players Tournament.
  - Bag Handlers.
2. The entry fees collected for each event will be distributed as prizes determined by the Event Chairman. After deducting amenities and administrative fees, this amount is typically around \$15. Prize money will be awarded to approximately 20% to 25% of the players at the course.
3. If an event starts but is canceled before completion, the Event Chairmen will decide how and if prizes will be awarded.

## **VIII. CHANGES TO YOUR EVENT REGISTRATION & COST INCURRED**

### **A. Withdraws**

1. A player who withdraws from an event before registration closes will not incur any charges for the event.
2. A player who withdraws after the event registration has closed but before noon on the Friday before the event will be charged an entry fee but will not incur a golf fee. They will not receive any credit for the event, even if it is subsequently canceled.
3. Any player who notifies the Event Chairs of their withdrawal after Noon on the Friday before the event will be charged both an entry fee and golf fee and will receive no credit for the event

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***NOTE THAT THE TIME OF WITHDRAWAL IS DETERMINED BY WHEN THE EVENT CHAIR IS NOTIFIED. PLEASE CONTACT THEM DIRECTLY***

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4. When teammates register for an event as a two and one decides to withdraw, the withdrawing member will not earn any credit. An entry fee will be applied if they cancel after registration closes but before noon on the Friday preceding the event. After noon on that Friday, withdrawing members will also be charged the golf fee. If the remaining teammate still wants to participate and lets the event chairs know, they will do their best to find a partner from the alternates list within 10 handicap strokes. If event chairs cannot find a partner, the player will be removed from the event but will still receive credit. Both the golf and event fees will be refunded. The team will then be replaced by the next one on the alternates list.

5. If a player on a four-person team must withdraw and no alternate is available, or if the match has already started, the Event Chairman will assign a blind-draw partner. This partner will be selected based on having an equal or similar handicap from the foursome playing in the same Flight as the withdrawing player's team. The blind-draw partner's score will be counted for all 18 holes. If this partner wins two team prizes, they may only accept the one with the higher value.
6. In the case of two-person teams, if one partner withdraws just before the start of play, and the remaining team would have to play alone, that player will be allowed to continue. A blind draw will then be assigned from the other team in the flight. As with the four-person teams, the blind-draw partner can only receive one prize. Two-person teams that utilize a blind draw will still be eligible for prize awards.

**B. Late and No Show**

1. If a player is late for the scheduled starting time, they will be disqualified from participating in the event, charged both the entry fee and the golf fee, and no credit will be given for the event.
2. Any player who fails to appear for their scheduled tee time without notifying the Event Chairs of their cancellation or withdrawal will be considered a No-Show. He will be charged both an entry fee and a golf fee and will receive no credit for the event. He will also receive a written reprimand for the first infraction and be advised that membership cancellation will be considered for the second infraction within the next 12 months. This applies even when the event is subsequently canceled.

**C. Withdraw during round**

1. If a player appears for an Event and withdraws because of an injury immediately before play or because of a change in playing conditions (walking or cart path only), the Event Chairs may request permission from the Board to refund the golf fee, so long as the Host Club has not been paid for the participant but will be charged the event fee. If the Host Club has been paid, the Event Chairs may assist the member in securing a playing credit. No SMGA credit will be given.
2. If a player withdraws or fails to complete the event on the scheduled day due to a non-medical or non-emergency issue, both the entry fee and golf fee will be charged, and no credit will be given.

**D. Event Canceled**

1. If the event is canceled, all members will be refunded both the golf and entry fee.

**IX. FREQUENT PLAYERS' TOURNAMENT**

1. At the end of each year, SMGA holds an Individual Stroke Play "Frequent Players' Tournament," now known as the Richard Robertson Memorial Championship, to reward players with the most

playing credits. Credits are awarded to players for every tournament they participate in. The Board has limited the field size of this event to 72 players. You will only be charged the entry fee for the prize pool.

## **X. TYPES OF FORMATS PLAYED**

1. **Better Ball of 4** - Teams comprise 4 players; the two best net scores on each hole are the team's scores. The team with the lowest net score within a flight will be declared the winner(s). Ties are decided using USGA Countback method in Golf Genius.
2. **4-Man 1-2-3** - The net score of each team will be calculated using the best net score on the Par 3 holes, the two best net scores on the Par 4 holes, and the three best net scores on the Par 5 holes. The team with the lowest net score within a flight will be declared the winner(s).
3. **4-Man 3-2-1** - The net score of each team will be calculated using the three best net scores on the Par 3 holes, the two best net scores on the Par 4 holes, and the one best net score on the Par 5 holes. The team with the lowest net score within a flight will be declared the winner(s).
4. **4-Man Scramble** - All players tee off, the preferred tee shot is chosen, and all players play from within one club length of that location in the general area and 6" on the green (within the same condition – e.g., fairway/ rough/ penalty area, etc.), continuing until the ball is holed. The gross score is recorded for each hole and then adjusted by the assigned handicap when calculating the total score.
5. **4-Man Step Aside** - The exact format and scoring as the four-man scramble are used, except that the player who struck the preferred shot is excluded from the rotation for the next shot
6. **4-Man Shamble** – All players tee off, choose their preferred tee shot, and play their own ball from that location into the hole. The two best net balls serve as the team score.
7. **Better Ball Partner** - Stroke play: an event where teams consist of 2 players, each playing their own ball, and the team's score is the best net score on each hole.
8. **Better Ball Partner Shamble** - Both players tee off, choose their preferred tee shot, and play their own ball from that location into the hole, with the best net ball serving as the team score.
9. **Better Ball Partner Stableford** - The net score of each team member is calculated for each hole, and that score is compared to par for that hole to determine the Stableford points for each player. The higher of the two players' points on the hole will be their team score. The Stableford points for the net score compared to par are as follows: Double Bogey or worse, 0; Bogey, 1; Par, 2; Birdie, 4; Eagle, 6; and Double Eagle, 8. The highest team score/points within a flight will determine the winner(s)



10. **Individual Stroke Play** - An event in which players maintain their individual scores and their net score on each hole.
11. **Individual Stableford** - An event in which players maintain their individual scores, and their net score on each hole is converted to a point value. The Stableford points for the net score compared to par are as follows: Double Bogey or worse, 0; Bogey, 1; Par, 2; Birdie, 4; Eagle, 6; and Double Eagle, 8. The highest score/points within a flight will determine the winner(s).