

Sierra Gold Match Play League Rules

Format

The format for the Sierra Gold Match Play League is four ball match play, using the better NET ball of the partners. Teams play all 18 holes as points continue to accrue even after the match is won.

Pairings

1. Each club shall have four (4) teams of two (2) players each, called "partners".
2. The A and B teams shall have course handicaps ranging from 0-21. The C and D teams shall have handicaps ranging from 18-36. (The overlap of handicaps is to help with index changes from course to course.)
3. Players shall be paired up by handicap from low to high in each range.
4. If a player's handicap does not fall within the team range in which she is playing the following rules apply:
 - a) A player whose handicap is greater than the maximum for her team category must play to the highest handicap available. For example, a 23 handicap playing on Team A or B must play to a 21 handicap for the day.
 - b) If a player's handicap is less than the minimum for the category, she must play her actual handicap. For example, a 17 handicap who plays on Team C or D will receive only 17 strokes during the match. All others will be allotted *strokes/pops* based upon the 17 handicap.

Scoring

1. Scorecards are to be picked up at the registration table by the Team Captain. The Captain will be responsible for checking the handicaps of their players listed on the scorecard for accuracy before the start of play.
5. Each foursome is to receive two (2) scorecards. Each scorecard will list all four (4) players with their associated handicap and number of strokes printed on the card. At the end of the match, each Captain will receive a scorecard from each team for her records.
6. At each hole the gross score from each player is recorded. Record the best NET ball of the twosome team. The best NET ball from each team will be used to accrue points. Points for the hole will be recorded as follows: Holes won are worth 1 point, a lost hole is worth 0 points, and tied holes will be awarded one-half (1/2) point to each team. **Note: the scoring decision made by the players at the end of each hole shall not be changed after the first person tees off at the next hole. All disputes of the hole score MUST be settled before the first person tees off at the next hole.**
7. Should a scoring disagreement arise regarding scores or rules affecting scores, your team has 3 minutes to settle the disagreement. If you cannot agree, halve the hole and move on to the next hole. When the match is complete, share the situation with your Captain. **The score will not be changed.**
8. When entering scores on the card, CIRCLE the score used by each team to determine points. The combined total number of points earned by each team shall equal 18.
9. All scorecards must be signed and attested before they are turned in to the scorekeeper. If there is an outside dispute that is not covered by the USGA Rules of Match Play, that dispute must be resolved prior to the scores being announced.
10. Scores will be announced at lunch and will be included on the information sheet that will be given to each Team Captain at the end of the luncheon.

11. The Team Captains shall verify that their team scores have been posted after each competition round.
12. At the final match of the season, the team with the highest number of NET points accumulated during the season will be declared the NET winner for the year.
13. If, at the end of the season, two teams are tied for the highest winning number of points, the tie will be broken as follows:
 - a) The winner will be the team scoring the highest number of points when the teams played "head to head".
 - b) If the tie remains after applying Scoring rule 10a, the scorecards from the head-to-head match will be used to break the tie according to the USGA formula of back nine, last 6, last 3, last hole.

Use of Distance Measuring Devices

USGA approved distance measuring devices may be used for Sierra Gold Match Play matches. A golfer can ONLY measure distance and no other course conditions such as wind speed, slope, direction, etc. It is permissible for players to exchange information relating to the distance between two objects. For example, a player may ask anyone, including her opponent or fellow competitor, the distance between her ball and the hole.

"Pops" or Strokes

"Pops" are determined by the lowest course handicap of the foursome. The low handicapper(s) receives "0" pops. The other players receive pops reflecting the difference between the lowest handicapper and their own handicap. Pops are noted on the scorecard in order of the hardest to the easiest hole.

Play

Here are common suggestions and rules for Match Play. These are not inclusive. Refer to your current USGA rule book for further information.

1. Rule 23-4. A side may be represented by one partner. If another partner is late, she will join the team between play of holes.
14. Use a thrown tee to determine the team that will tee off first from the first hole of the match. From then on, the side winning a hole takes honor on the next hole. If the hole is halved, honor from the previous hole applies.
15. To keep play moving, the league agrees to play honors from the tee and on the greens and READY GOLF in the fairway.
16. Rule 23-8. If the wrong ball is played, that player is out of the hole, but not the partner.
17. Rule 23-6. Balls belonging to the same side may be played in the order the side considers best, even on the green.
18. To keep play moving, pick up your ball once you are sure you cannot score for your team on any given hole. On the green, mark your ball but do not putt if you have no chance of scoring. Just record your Equitable Stroke Control (ESC), or the score you most likely would have made. Such score shall not exceed the limit of ESC for posting purposes. Place an "X" next to the score to indicate it was not completed.
19. Any team may concede a hole to its opponent. Once conceded, the hole is complete and scored accordingly. Match Play Rule 3-2b (2) states that "Concession of a stroke, hole or match may not be declined or withdrawn."
20. Rule 10-2. Do not ask for nor give advice to an opponent during the round.
2. Rule 10-2b (4). Do not stand on the line of a putt while your partner or opponent is making a stroke except when attending the flagstick.

21. Rule 1-3(b). You cannot agree to waive rules without disqualification.
22. You may practice putting or chipping on a hole after the hole is completed. However, please be mindful of pace of play.
23. Match Play Rule 23-8(a) states "The penalty for breach of a Rule in Match Play is loss of hole (for the player, not the partner) except when otherwise provided."
24. **PACE OF PLAY:** Host team will marshal the field to monitor pace of play. If a group is one hole or more behind the group in front of them, the Host Marshal will give them WARNING #1 and ask them to pick up play. If that same team continues with slow play, they will receive WARNING #2. They will be allowed to finish the hole on which they are playing. At the end of that hole, they will pick up their balls and skip one hole. Each team will receive 1/2 points for the hole skipped. They will continue play on the next hole.

Always carry a USGA rule book when playing a match. Review Sierra Gold Match Play rules, USGA rules, and any local rules with your team.

Coordinating Team Captain Responsibilities

Responsibility for coordinating the Team Captains will be rotated among the participating teams each year. Rotation will be determined by alpha order of the Team Name (i.e., Catta Verdera, Granite Bay, Northridge, Serrano, and Winchester.)

The Coordinator will be responsible for:

- Preparing and distributing a list with names of all Team Captains with current email addresses and phone numbers.
- Updating and distributing the calendar for the season.
- Updating and distributing the Round Robin Team Match Ups
- Updating and distributing any changes needed to the League Rules
- Distribute overall standings following each match

In addition, the current year's coordinator will hold a planning meeting at the end of the season to discuss changes needed/proposed to the League Rules and dates for clubs to host the Sierra Gold League teams for the upcoming year. To avoid conflicts and to determine dates workable for all clubs, team play captains attending the meeting should have a calendar of their club's events for the upcoming year, or at a minimum, have knowledge of the schedule of their major tournaments for the upcoming year. It is recommended that several dates be offered, and these dates should be approved by the upcoming Captain and Pro Shop-- and any other person responsible for scheduling club events--prior to the planning meeting.

Voting Guidelines

Issues may require a vote from each league team in a competition year. The voting shall be conducted at the year-end meeting unless deemed urgent. The League Coordinator will take the lead in deciding the urgency of the issue, manage the vote, and communicate results. Ex: if a new country club asks to join the Sierra Gold League, the Coordinator would send an announcement at the end of the competition year detailing the request. The vote can be held via email or a Zoom meeting, should a discussion be required. The League Coordinator will ensure that all participating teams vote. Once the vote has been finalized and all league participants have been notified, the League Coordinator will notify the requesting team of the results and -if approved - invite a representative from the new team to attend the year-end meeting to create next year's calendar.

Host Captain Responsibilities

Each season consists of five matches. Each team plays every other team on different courses. When hosting other teams, a home-course Team Captain's responsibilities include:

1. Approximately 3-4 weeks before your host match is scheduled, send out an invitation to the other Team Captains. Include the date of the match, course address, the time the practice facility will be open, breakfast time, tee time, which tee box will be used, and the corresponding course rating, slope, and par. Include a blank Team Roster that will be completed by the visiting Team Captain. The roster includes player name, GHIN, current index, hosting course handicap, and the date the roster must be submitted.
25. Coordinate with your club management to ensure adequate golf bag handling support as well as breakfast and lunch for the field of 48 players. On the day a team is hosting a Sierra Gold match play day, the Host Team will not field a team; this eliminates home-course advantage.
26. Determine hole assignments and prepare scorecards with time for pace of play and corresponding pops.
27. Collect fees from each Team Captain or assigned banker on the day of the match.
28. Assign at least one trained course marshal on each nine holes to ensure pace of play and assist with navigating the course to get teams to the appropriate tee box on time.
29. Provide results from the match to each participating team's Captain(s).

Team Captain Responsibilities

Club courses will assign a Team Captain each year. Team Captain responsibilities:

1. Field a team of 8 players whose course handicaps meet the requirements of the match as defined in the invitation received from the Host Captain and forward the necessary information to the Host Captain on or before the date required.
2. Collect the team playing fees for each match and pay the Host Captain.
3. Ensure that scorecards are accurate on the day of the match.
4. Verify their team scores have been posted after each competition round.
5. Be available to settle any disputes that arise during the course of play.
6. Attend the year-end meeting and be prepared to offer at least two workable dates for the subsequent year's League calendar.