



2023 SEASON SCRATCH LEAGUE MANUAL

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1. OVERVIEW

1.1 PURPOSE AND FORMAT

A. PURPOSE

SCGA Scratch League is a team-based league designed for teams representing their member clubs to compete against one another at scratch. Group winners will meet in the SCGA Scratch League Championship. Two teams will then advance, along with two teams from Northern California, to compete in the California Scratch League Championship.

B. FORMAT

Teams are paired into groups of three, four, or five, depending on the number of entries received. The teams within the group will play one competition at each of the courses within the group. All play is without handicaps except for determining the pairing order from low to high current Handicap Index. It is recommended Club Professionals will play against each other. Each player will accumulate points throughout each competition and will earn points for their team based on the position they finish within their pairing group.

1. Groups of Five:

The format of each competition for groups of five is a 25-point game within each pairing group of five players. After each hole, points will be distributed based on the result of the hole as follows:

Five tied for high score	Four tied for high score	Three tied for high score	Two tied for high score	One high score
5-5-5-5-5	6-6-6-6-1	7-7-7-2-2	8-8-3-3-3	9-4-4-4-4
		7-7-7-3-1	8-8-4-4-1	9-5-5-5-1
			8-8-5-2-2	9-5-5-3-3
			8-8-5-3-1	9-5-5-4-2
				9-7-3-3-3
				9-7-5-2-2
				9-7-5-3-1

These points are tallied for a point total at the end of the round.

At the conclusion of the round, the point winner within each pairing group receives 9 points for the team; 2nd place receives 7 points; 3rd place receives 5 points; 4th place receives 3 points; 5th place receives 1 point. Total point ties will be calculated with the same structure as a point total tie for each hole.

2. Groups of Four:

The format of each competition for groups of four is a 16-point game within each pairing group of four players. After each hole, points will be distributed based on the result of the hole as follows:

Four tied for high score	Three tied for high score	Two tied for high score	One high score
4-4-4-4	5-5-5-1	6-6-2-2	7-3-3-3
		6-6-3-1	7-4-4-1
			7-5-2-2
			7-5-3-1

These points are tallied for a point total at the end of the round.

The point winner within each pairing group at the end of the round receives 7 points for the team; 2nd place receives 5 points; 3rd place receives 3 points; 4th place receives 1 point. Total point ties will be calculated with the same structure as a point total tie for each hole.

3. Groups of Three:

The format of each competition for groups of three is a 9-point game within each pairing group of three players. After each hole, points will be distributed based on the result of the hole as follows:

Three tied for high score	Two tied for high score	One high score
3-3-3	4-4-1	5-2-2
		5-3-1

These points are tallied for a point total at the end of the round.

The point winner within each pairing group at the end of the round receives 5 points for the team; 2nd place receives 3 points; 3rd place receives 1 point. Total point ties will be calculated with the same structure as a point total tie for each hole.

4. FORFEITURES

Forfeitures shall be scored using the penalty for an absent player. Inability to field a full team is not an acceptable reason for forfeiture. Any circumstances causing forfeiture shall be subject to review by the SCGA Championships & Golf Operations Committee. This review may result in the team's ineligibility for the following Scratch League season. Additionally, it is unacceptable for a team to forfeit or withdraw from the last competition(s) of the season simply because they will not advance to the playoffs.

Penalty for an absent player: The absent player will receive the least amount of points possible on each hole from which he/she is absent. The same principle applies for a player that is absent for all 18-holes; the player receives the least amount of points possible toward the team's total. The absent player may occupy any position in the lineup that the captain chooses.

1.2 SCHEDULE OF COMPETITIONS

- A. Group play may begin on September 1 and must conclude by October 31. Group Winners will advance to the SCGA Scratch League Wild Card Playoff or directly to the SCGA Scratch League Championship.
- B. 2022 Playoff Schedule
 - 1. SCGA Scratch League Championship: Journey at Pechanga, November 16
 - 2. California Scratch League Championship: Poppy Hills GC, November 27

1.3 TEAMS

Teams are comprised of 5-7 players. Professionals who are employed by the club/facility may participate, **but teams are not required to use a Professional**. Prior to the start of the Regular Season, groups must agree to a set number of players that will be used for the Regular Season. For example, teams cannot play with 5 players for the first match and 7 for the second. Upon reaching the postseason, teams will be required to play with seven players, as stated within the Rules.

Each team will submit a lineup for each of the competitions and is expected to compete as scheduled in accordance with the guidelines established in the Scratch League Manual.

A team that withdraws at any time after the entry deadline may be ineligible to compete in Scratch League the following year.

There is no permanent roster required for each team and no limit as to the number of players who may be used during the season. All players that may potentially play in a Scratch League competition should be included on the team's roster on the Entry Form.

Definition of an eligible Amateur: An amateur golfer that is listed on the member club's active GHIN roster at the time of the team's first competition.

Definition of an eligible Professional: A Professional is defined as a member of the club's staff, including its teaching staff, who is not an amateur. Professionals must be employed at and paid by the club/facility they are representing. An independent instructor who is not on the club/facility payroll will not be considered eligible to participate.

1.4 ELIGIBILITY

A. CLUB ELIGIBILITY

Each club submitting an entry application must be identified as the "club of record" at its facility and must maintain at least one 18-hole (5,000 yards or more in length) golf course. Each club must be certified to use the World Handicap System (WHS). Certification can be obtained by completing a WHS Certification class and quiz (please visit [scga.org](https://www.scga.org) for more information). Without WHS certification, the club will not be eligible to participate in SCGA Scratch League.

B. PLAYER ELIGIBILITY

1. Players must be 21 years of age or older as of the date of the competition they participate in. All players must be amateur golfers in good standing with the SCGA and have a current Handicap Index issued through the club they represent. Players must be listed on the member club's active GHIN roster at the time of the team's first competition.
2. Players may represent multiple clubs during the regular season of SCGA Scratch League, provided each team they represent is in a different group. If both teams reach the playoffs, the player will only be eligible to compete for one team.

Penalty for playing an ineligible player:

The ineligible player will receive the least amount of points possible on each hole, thus receiving the least amount of points possible toward the team's total.

It is the responsibility of the captains involved to ensure that their lineups are set in accordance with SCGA Scratch League eligibility criteria. When it becomes suspected

or known that an ineligible player may have participated, it is the responsibility of an opposing team to request a ruling.

- If a player is determined to be ineligible and it is discovered before the result of a competition is final (i.e. when SCGA staff posts scores to GHIN), the ineligible player will receive the least amount of points possible on each hole, thus receiving the least amount of points possible toward the team's total.
- If a player is determined to be ineligible and it is discovered after the result of a competition is final (i.e. when SCGA staff posts scores to GHIN), the result of the competition will stand, provided the ineligible player was not played purposefully. If a team knowingly plays an ineligible player, the ineligible player will receive the least amount of points possible on each hole, thus receiving the least amount of points possible toward the team's total. There is no time limit on enforcing this penalty.

2. PLAYING A COMPETITION

2.1 COURSE USAGE POLICY & HOME TEAM REQUIREMENTS

Each team will host one regular season competition for their group. Competitions may be played on any day of the week. All arrangements such as green fees (if applicable), practice rounds (if applicable), food and beverage, golf carts and caddies are to be made by the host team and communicated with the other teams in the group in advance of the season.

A. PRACTICE ROUNDS

1. Practice rounds are neither mandatory nor required. Practice round availability (if any) and costs (if any) should be relayed to all captains in the group prior to the start of the season.
2. Practice will not be allowed on the host course on the day of a competition prior to the beginning of the round (Local Rule I-1.1).
3. Host clubs should ensure that there are no scheduling conflicts with other club or SCGA events. If a club or SCGA event subsequently conflicts, the club must notify the group captains to schedule a makeup date, if necessary.

B. STARTING TIMES

1. Starting times are to be determined by the host club.

C. GOLF CARTS, CADDIES AND COURSE INFORMATION

1. Golf carts should be permitted subject to the rules and regulations of the host club. A club may prohibit the use of carts in which case the rules and regulations of the club will apply.
2. In the event caddies are made available by the host club, an equal number of caddies must be made available for each team. If club policy requires the use of a caddie, the opposing teams must abide by club policy.
3. Caddies are not permitted in the playoffs.

D. GOLF COURSE SETUP

1. Competitions are played from the tees decided by each home club. The SCGA recommends that a yardage of approximately 6,500 – 7,000 yards be used for Scratch League competitions.

2. When both men and women compete, female participants will play from the set of women's tees with the most similar Course Rating as the set of tees that the men are playing from.

E. FACILITIES WITH MORE THAN 18 HOLES

Facilities with more than 18 holes may utilize any slope-rated regulation length course at their club. Such clubs must inform opponents as to which course will be used well in advance of the scheduled competition to provide ample opportunity for practice rounds.

Violations are subject to review by the SCGA Championships & Golf Operations Committee and may result in forfeiture of said competition and the team's ineligibility for the following season.

2.2 HANDICAPS AND POSTING OF INDIVIDUAL SCORES

A. HANDICAPS

1. SCRATCH LEAGUE COMPETITIONS

All play will be without handicaps.

2. CLUB'S HANDICAP COMMITTEE

The club's Handicap Committee must ensure that all member scores are being posted in compliance with the World Handicap System, including peer review. The Handicap Committee must make certain that individuals whose Index is not reflective of their playing potential are dealt with at the club level before the SCGA must get involved. All clubs are reminded that it is within the purview of the club's Handicap Committee to modify the Index of a player who fails to turn in proper scores or a player whose Index is not reflective of his/her current playing potential. Handicap Committees and/or captains should contact the SCGA if they have knowledge of a player that has been reduced for club events or has a Handicap Index that is not reflective of their playing ability.

3. HANDICAP CORRECTIONS

If, at any time during the Scratch League season, the SCGA needs to make a Handicap Index correction (e.g. wrong score posted), that player or his/her captain must notify the SCGA. This will ensure the adjustment is made in the Scratch League Portal.

B. POSTING OF INDIVIDUAL SCORES

1. The game of golf is based on the premise that a golfer will play as well as he/she can.

Under the World Handicap System, a player is required to record a score for any hole not finished or not played under the Rules of Golf, and to adjust any hole score when it is higher than Net Double Bogey.

2. Each player who participates in Scratch League must record a score for the round played. Scores shall be posted in accordance with the procedures outlined in the World Handicap System. All scores will be posted as **Competition** scores by the SCGA.
 - a. **Incomplete Holes** – If a player starts a hole but does not complete it, the player **must** record, for handicap purposes, the score they most likely would have made.
3. It is the responsibility of each captain to ensure that each team member's hole-by-hole gross scores are entered in the Golf Genius mobile app using the GGID scoring code provided for each pairing group. Players may enter live scores during the competition or enter all scores into the app at the conclusion of the competition.
4. Scores made during practice rounds played in accordance with the Rules of Golf must be posted for handicap purposes.

2.3 PAIRING ORDER AND ALTERNATE SUBSTITUTIONS

A. PAIRING ORDER

Beginning in 2023, captains will be able to sort their lineup at their choosing. The SCGA recommends and encourages all Club Professionals to be paired together for Regular Season matches. For all postseason matches, Club Professionals and/or lowest indexed amateurs will be paired together.

B. ORDER OF GROUPS

The order of groups shall be decided upon by the captains prior to the competition. If the captains cannot mutually agree upon the order of groups, the order will be at the discretion of the host club. Alternate groups should tee off last so that they remain eligible in case of a last-minute substitution.

C. ALTERNATE SUBSTITUTIONS

In the event a team needs to use an alternate in place of one of its previously scheduled players, the substitution(s) should be made as soon as possible. The following procedure must be used when placing an alternate into the lineup:

1. **All Competitions:** In the event a substitution is required before any of the pairing groups have teed off, an eligible alternate may be placed into the lineup. This may require captains to “shuffle” the lineup to accommodate the change. **In the event a substitution is required after any of the pairing groups have teed off**, an eligible alternate may take the place of the withdrawn player if they have an equivalent or higher current Handicap Index.

Penalty for an absent player: The absent player will receive the least amount of points possible on each hole from which he/she is absent. The same principle applies for a player that is absent for all 18-holes; the player receives the least amount of points possible toward the team’s total. The absent player may occupy any position in the lineup that the captain chooses.

2.4 SUSPENSIONS DUE TO INCLEMENT WEATHER OR DARKNESS, AND POSTPONEMENTS

All Scratch League competitions are to be played as scheduled. However, captains can mutually agree to postpone the competition in advance of the start of play or during the competition (due to bad weather or other legitimate reasons). One captain cannot make a unilateral decision to suspend or postpone a competition, unless the course is closed.

A. SUSPENSIONS

In the event captains agree to suspend play after the competition has begun, the provisions of Rule 5.7 under the Rules of Golf apply.

1. If captains mutually agree not to resume play that day, the following applies:
 - a. If all pairing groups have completed at least nine holes, captains will verify the status of each competition through the number of holes completed and those statuses will be considered final.
 - b. If all pairing groups have not completed at least nine holes, the entire competition must be replayed. It is not required that the same players participate in the make-up competition.

B. POSTPONEMENTS

In the event captains agree to postpone an entire competition before it begins, captains must reschedule the competition at the earliest date that is mutually agreed upon by the captains on the course that was originally intended to be played.

1. All competitions must be completed in accordance with the schedule of competition. Any competition not completed by this date will be treated as “no competition” for all teams in determining the final group standings.
2. The SCGA must be notified of the schedule change as soon as possible.

2.5 RULES OF PLAY

- A.** The Rules of Golf, effective January 2023, and the [SCGA Hard Card](#) will govern all competitions. Stroke Play rules apply with the following exceptions:
 1. In certain circumstances, at the consensus of the group, the result of the hole may be determined without holing out.
 2. An absent player may join their group between the play of two holes provided no one in the group has started play of the hole. The absent player must take the highest score possible for all holes that he or she did not play.
- B.** An understanding of Rules 3.3 (Stroke Play) and 24 (Team Competitions) is essential to comprehending the format of Scratch League. The Rules of Golf must NOT be waived at any time. The penalty for waiving the Rules of Golf is disqualification for the player or team in violation. There is no time limit on applying this penalty (Interpretation 1.3b(1)/1-2.).
- C.** Local Rules must conform with the Rules of Golf. Any Local Rules which are to be in effect during Scratch League must be published and distributed to all players in advance of the competition.
- D.** The use of mobile phones and handheld devices is subject to the policies of the host club.
- E.** The players in a competition should protect their own rights and interests under the Rules:

If a player knows or believes that another player has breached a Rule that has a penalty, the player may act on the breach or choose to ignore it. But if the player and other player deliberately agree to ignore a breach or penalty they know applies, both players are disqualified under Rule 1.3b. If the player and other player disagree whether one of them has breached a Rule, either player may protect his or her rights by asking for a ruling under Rule 20.1b. Teams are encouraged to resolve disputes and disagreements by consensus among the teams affected.

2.6 ADVICE

The following reflects how the Rules of Golf (specifically information related to giving advice in team competitions) applies to SCGA Scratch League.

A. ADVICE GIVER

Prior to each competition, each team may name one person to be an “Advice Giver” – that is, someone who may give advice and other help as allowed under the Rules to players on the team during a round and who may be asked for advice by players on the team. The Advice Giver may be the captain or any other person (including a team member playing in the competition). The Advice Giver must be identified to the opposing teams before giving advice.

1. A non-playing Advice Giver may give advice and other help as outlined above at any time during the competition.
2. A playing Advice Giver may not give advice and other help to anyone while his/her pairing group is still playing. Once his/her pairing group has finished, the Advice Giver may give advice or other help to others on the team.



3. POSTSEASON

3.1 DETERMINING GROUP WINNERS

- A. The points won by each team are accumulated throughout the regular season competitions. The group's overall point winner advances to the SCGA Scratch League Wild Card Playoff or directly to the SCGA Scratch League Championship.
- B. In the case of a tie between **two teams** at the end of the final group competition, the teams tied will each select two players to play a sudden-death aggregate playoff immediately following the conclusion of play. Play will be in one group of four using the 16-point game format. After completion of the first playoff hole, the highest point total of both teammates will determine who moves on. If still tied, all players will continue to an additional sudden-death playoff hole(s).
- C. In the case of a tie between **three teams** at the end of the final group competition, the teams tied will each select three players to play a sudden-death aggregate playoff immediately following the conclusion of play. Play will be in three groups of three using the 9-point game format. After completion of the first playoff hole, the highest point total of all three teammates will determine who moves on. If all teams are still tied after the first playoff hole, all players from those teams will continue to an additional sudden-death playoff hole(s). If two teams are still tied after the first playoff hole (or additional playoff holes), the teams tied will select two players to play the next playoff hole(s) using the 16-point game format.
- D. In the case of a tie between **four teams** at the end of the final group competition, the teams tied will each select two players to play a sudden-death aggregate playoff immediately following the conclusion of play. Play will be in two groups of four using the 16-point game format. After completion of the first playoff hole, the highest point total of both teammates will determine who moves on. If all teams are still tied after the first playoff hole, all players from those teams will continue to an additional sudden-death playoff hole(s). If three teams are still tied after the first playoff hole (or additional playoff holes), the teams tied will select three players to play the next playoff hole(s) in three groups using the 9-point game format. If two teams are still tied after the first playoff hole (or additional playoff holes), the teams tied will select two players to play the next playoff hole(s) using the 16-point game format.

3.2 PLAYOFF COMPETITIONS

A. WILD CARD PLAYOFF

Depending on the total number of groups in SCGA Scratch League, the SCGA will conduct a Wild Card Playoff to determine the final team(s) that will advance to the SCGA Scratch League Championship. Priority for exemption from the Wild Card Playoff, as well as seeding in the playoffs, will be based upon the win percentage of total possible points in the regular season.

1. Ties will be broken by the win percentage of total possible points in the club's away competitions in the regular season. If still tied, ties will be broken by the win percentage of total possible points in the club's final two away competitions. If still tied, ties will be broken by the win percentage of total possible points in the club's final away competition. If still tied, ties will be broken by lot.

B. SCGA SCRATCH LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

Top group winners and winners from the Wild Card Playoff will make up the teams that will advance to the SCGA Scratch League Championship. Teams will be divided into two groups of four and will use the 16-point game format.

*The total number of teams that participate in the SCGA Scratch League Championship is subject to change based upon the number of groups that register for the league.

C. CALIFORNIA SCRATCH LEAGUE CHAMPIONSHIP

The top two teams from the NCGA and SCGA Scratch League Championships will advance to the California Scratch League Championship. At this championship, the 16-point game format will be used.

D. ADDITIONAL PLAYOFF RULES

1. The lowest (best) seed shall have the honor at each competition.
2. Players need not have participated in a regular season competition to be eligible for the playoffs so long as they meet all other eligibility requirements.

4. TEAM CAPTAIN

4.1 TEAM CAPTAIN DUTIES

A. ARRANGEMENTS

Captains should communicate to each other well in advance of any competition to be played at their club the following:

- How to schedule practice rounds (dates, fees, and times)
- Starting times
- Tees/yardages to be played
- Carts and caddies – whether or not they will be hosted
- Dress code
- Club policies
- Acceptable forms of payment (cash, credit cards, reciprocal charge) for carts, food and beverage, etc.

It is at the sole discretion of each group participating in Scratch League to determine the financial arrangements involved with Scratch League. Captains must understand the duties of hosting their group, which may include hosting green fees for Scratch League competitions (unless other arrangements are made by clubs within a group). Some clubs will choose to host the other teams to beverages or a meal before or after a competition.

The SCGA strongly recommends that all captains in a group meet prior to the start of the season to discuss these types of arrangements in order to help eliminate confusion and conflicts during the season.

B. PLAYER & TEAM CODE OF CONDUCT

By submitting an entry for any SCGA-administered competition, the teams and participants understand that their participation is at the sole discretion of the SCGA. A team or player may be removed from any competition at the discretion of the SCGA staff or Championships & Golf Operations Committee at any time before or during the competition. Incidents of unbecoming conduct or actions deemed to be detrimental to the image of the SCGA or the “Spirit of the Game” are grounds for such removal and suspension from future SCGA-administered competitions. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Willful damage of the golf course or golf course property
- Club throwing or unnecessary club tossing
- Offensive or unbecoming language
- Public criticism of golf course or verbal abuse of SCGA staff, officials, volunteers, host club staff or other contestants
- Potential endangerment of others
- Conduct deemed unbecoming
- Failure to post scores for handicapping purposes
- Manipulation of scores posted for handicapping purposes

C. DISPUTES AND DECISIONS

If a dispute arises during a competition, the captains and/or professionals of the teams involved are the Committee within the meaning of the Rules of Golf. The group should come to a resolution in any dispute. If the dispute cannot be resolved by captains in the group, the dispute can be referred to the SCGA Championships & Golf Operations Committee in writing at champs@scga.org.

The SCGA Championships & Golf Operations Committee will conduct a thorough review of the dispute. After the review is completed, the Committee will issue a decision. **The decision of the Committee is final and will be communicated to the captains involved in the dispute.**

4.2 SCRATCH LEAGUE PORTAL

A. SUBMITTING LINEUPS

Captains will be the point of contact for SCGA staff and will be responsible for submitting a lineup to SCGA staff via email no less than 24 hours in advance of each competition. The SCGA recommends that this is done as soon as practicable as a courtesy to other captains (i.e., a few days prior to the competition). Captains are responsible for ensuring the eligibility of each player. The SCGA will create the pairings within Golf Genius. Lineups should be emailed to champs@scga.org. Captains should be mindful when submitting their lineups to the SCGA as to the order they wish their players to play. For example, if a player is listed 4th in the listing, they will be placed in the 4th pairing group.

B. PRINTED MATERIALS

The SCGA will email all captains PDFs of scorecards, pairings and Golf Genius mobile

app GGID scoring codes prior to each competition. Captains should ensure that scorecards and other printed materials are accurate and printed out. The SCGA will also provide the Round GGID for any live scoring and/or score adjustments.

C. ENTERING SCORES AND POSTING SCORES TO GHIN

All hole by hole scores must be entered into the Golf Genius mobile app by using the GGID scoring code for each pairing group. This should be done immediately following the round so SCGA staff can post scores to GHIN on the same day as the competition. This deadline must be met for WHS handicap purposes.

Captains should agree prior to the start of the competition how the scores will be entered to avoid any potential problems. It is the duty of each captain to ensure that their team's scores have been entered accurately.

Once scores have been entered into the Golf Genius mobile app, the SCGA will post all scores to GHIN as "Competition" scores.

Any questions or problems related to the Golf Genius mobile app or SCGA Scratch League in general may be submitted to the SCGA Championships & Golf Operations Department at champs@scga.org.