

## What is match play?

Match play can be played in a number of forms including singles and foursomes and can be played off-the-stick or using handicaps.

These are some match play basics (which are mostly covered in Rule 3.2):

- **Only two players are involved in a match (singles)** – As no one else is involved, a player can choose to overlook a breach of the Rules by an opponent, but players must not agree to waive a rule or a penalty.
- **If you or your opponent disagree** whether one of you has breached a rule, you may protect your rights by asking for a ruling from a referee, or if none is available, from a Committee member before the result of the match is declared – Rule 3.2d.
- **Scoring happens on a hole-by-hole basis (rather than the cumulative total in stroke play)** – Even if a player loses a hole by four strokes, they have only lost that one hole. A player wins a match when they lead by more holes than remain to be played.
- **Concessions** – A player can concede an opponent's next stroke (or even a hole or the entire match) at any time. A concession, once given, cannot be withdrawn.

## Handicap Match Play

If a match is played using handicaps, strokes are allotted per hole based on the hole's handicap rating found on the scorecard. If a match is "all square" after 18 holes and the Conditions of Competition say that the match must be played to a conclusion, handicap strokes are given in the same order as in the first 18 holes.

### Individual Handicap Match Play

In a singles match between two players off 12 and 20, the 12-handicapper gives the 20-handicapper eight strokes. These are taken on the holes with stroke indices 1-8. If the 20-handicapper bogeys one of those holes (net par) and the 12-handicapper pars it, the hole would be halved.

### Handicap Foursomes

The handicap is difference between half of the combined daily handicaps of opposing teams. For example:

- $A (25) \& B (18) = 43/2 = 21.5$  hcp (i.e. the average handicap between A & B)
- $C (49) \& D (33) = 82/2 = 41$  hcp (i.e. the average handicap between C & D)
- Difference between opposing teams =  $41 - 21.5 = 19.5$  (rounded up) = 20
- Therefore A & B will give C & D 20 shots in total - 2 shots on holes 1 and 2 on the match play index (i.e. 8th & 12th holes), and one shot on every other hole.

## The Spirit of the Game

Match play is played, for the most part, without the supervision of a referee. The game relies on the integrity of the individual to show consideration for other players and to abide by the rules. All players should conduct themselves in a disciplined manner, demonstrating courtesy and sportsmanship at all times, irrespective of how competitive they may be.

## General information

### Arranging your match

If your match has not been scheduled for you (like an interclub Pennant match), you and your opponent should mutually agree to a suitable date and time to play. If you are in a draw, the top named player in the draw is responsible for organising the match. When the date is agreed, it is useful to phone the Pro Shop to book the time and ask them to reserve the other two spots in the row so that the two of you can concentrate on your match.

### Indexes

Blackwood uses the universal match play index used around the world to ensure the card is evenly balanced. It is completely different from the stroke indexes which reflect the difficulty of the hole.

These indexes are displayed on the back of the cards issued by the Pro Shop.

Hole	Index		Hole	Index
1	18		6	6
2	8		7	10
3	12		8	1
4	3		9	16
5	14			

Hole	Index		Hole	Index
10	5		15	13
11	11		16	4
12	2		17	17
13	15		18	9
14	7			

### Scoring

- You may use a card to record the state of the match, but it does not have to be signed or returned at the end of the game. Only the final result is required.
- A match is won when one side leads by a number of holes greater than the number remaining to be played.
- The state of the match is expressed by the terms: so many “holes up” or “all square” and so many “to play”

### Start of the match

- Check the **match play indexes** to see if you are receiving or giving strokes and if so on which holes. These strokes are taken at different holes according to the **Match Index** of each hole on the course. (Note - this is **not** the same as the stroke rating used for Stableford). You are responsible for knowing on which hole you give or receive strokes.
- Mark your ball so that it is easily identifiable. Ask opponent what ball they are playing and what identifying marks they have on it.

## Order of play

- The player/team winning the toss, or the player whose name appears on the top of the draw sheet tees off first.
- For other holes, the honour goes to the winner of the previous hole or status quo for halved (tied) holes.
- During play of the hole, the ball further from the hole is played first. This is important because if you play out of turn, your opponent can ask you to replay the shot. There is no penalty in match play for playing out of turn, however it is always wise to check whose turn it is for all shots. Never tell an opponent it is her turn but always ask.

## Etiquette

- Always **announce your intention** to take either a free drop such as relief from GUR, temporary water or a path, or a penalty drop as for lost ball, penalty area or unplayable lie, before taking any action.
- When asked, you must always **inform your opponent of the number of strokes** you have taken.
- It is a good idea to **confirm the two scores when you both reach the green** e.g. ‘You are 4 and I am 5’, or ‘we are both 3’. This can avoid potential confusion or arguments.
- This is a judgement call and no one can tell you to give a putt. There are considerations on your part, for example, the slope of the green, the length of the putt; whether you believe the opponent is capable of getting the putt. As a guide, **if the ball is very close to the hole, say for example, a putter head, always give the putt.** As a general guide any putt under 20cms is a ‘gimmie’ putt. Consider the way you word your instructions. For example you may say – I will give you that putt, or you can pick up your ball – and then state – that makes you (whatever is the score – 4, 5, 6) in the hole so that you and your opponent are clear on the state of play.
- The **choice to concede a hole belongs to the player.** Once a hole has been conceded the concession cannot be withdrawn. The decision of when to concede a hole can cause confusion to a player new to match play and can be difficult to explain. If your opponent is already on the green and reasonably close to the hole – say in two/three putt zone and you have already had two/three shots more than she has and you are still not on the green then consider conceding the hole and move on. Remember it’s only one hole in match play and you may be less frustrated. Always remember that match play is as much about your state of mind as it is about the game. To keep going when the hole is obviously lost does nothing for your state of mind. It is far better mentally to pick up, concede the hole graciously and move on.

## Match play rules and penalties

### Loss of Hole

- Playing wrong ball – Rule 6.3c
- Improving lie or area of intended swing – Rule 8.1
- Ball **deliberately** deflected or stopped by flagstick – Rule 13.2
- Testing conditions in bunker except in preventing a fall or caring for the course – Rule 12.2
- Playing from a wrong place after incorrect drop – Rule 14.3
- Playing from a wrong place after ball moved by natural forces – Rule 9.3

- Caddie **deliberately** standing on the line of play behind ball – Rule 10.2

## **One Stroke Penalty**

- Ball at rest moved by player, caddie or equipment – ball must be replaced – Rule 9.4
- Ball moved when removing loose impediments (except on putting green) – ball must be replaced – Rule 15.1
- Ball moved by opponent or opponent's caddie, except during a search – ball must be replaced and opponent receives penalty – Rule 9.5
- Lost or Out of Bounds ball – 3 minutes search and Stroke and Distance penalty – Rule 18.2
- Unplayable ball – Rule 19
- Relief for ball in a penalty area – Rule 17.1
- Unplayable ball in a bunker – + one extra stroke for relief outside the bunker – Rule 19.3

## **No Penalty**

- Ball played from outside the teeing area (Opponent may cancel stroke) – Rule 6.1b
- Ball played out of turn (Opponent may cancel stroke) – Rule 6.4
- Ball accidentally deflected by you, your equipment or your opponent – Rule 11.1
- Ball moved during search – Rule 7.4

## **Consideration for other players**

- Players should always show consideration for other players on the course and should not disturb their fellow players by moving, talking or making unnecessary noise.
- Turn off mobile phones.
- Be ready to play.
- Stand to the side of an opponent – not too close to or directly behind them.
- Avoid standing on another player's line of putt.
- Play at a good pace – keep up with the group in front if possible.
- If you do fall well behind play due to a lost ball, consider calling up the group behind.
- If you believe a ball may be lost or out of bounds, play a provisional ball, making certain that you state that it is a provisional ball.
- Take good care of the course – rake bunkers, repair pitch marks and repair divots.
- Always check and read the local rules of the club.