

North Shore Golf League

Rules (Revised May 2026)

PLAYERS:

1. League membership will be decided by the league officers. Current and former IRS employees are allowed to participate in the NSGL. Additionally, with the approval of the league officers, a league member can sponsor a non-IRS guest (guest member) to join.
2. The league is currently made up of one division. Should membership be sufficient in the future to make more than one division, at the beginning of each year the league members are divided into a number of divisions to be determined by the officer group based on the number of players committed for the current season. The Divisions are noted as Division I, Division II, and so on. The players will be assigned to divisions based on their handicap going into the league year.
3. Partners are usually determined by a blind draw. If there are multiple divisions, player will be paired with a partner within the same division. With the exception of the prior year winners, no player shall have the same partner two years in a row. A guest member and his/her sponsor will be permitted to be partners for the first year. Thereafter the general rules for partners apply. However, while the league officers believe it's in the best interest of the league to have players having a new partner each year, players may elect to choose their partner prior to the beginning of the year. In years where we have an uneven number of teams, the league will have a Phantom team which will be paired up against 1 team each week. At the end of the round, the Handicapper will have someone choose a team at random to match up against the team playing the Phantom team. All wins/losses and individual points will be counted vs. the Phantom Team.
4. The "#1" player on each team is the lower handicapped player. The "#1" player at the beginning of the year shall remain the "#1" player throughout the entire year. No change of lineup is allowed even if the "#2" player's handicap is lower than his partner's.

LEAGUE OFFICERS:

5. The League Officers are President, Treasurer, and Handicapper. The Officers are elected for a 1-year term at the year-end banquet. All nominations for election must be made at least one week prior to the banquet. Nominations cannot be made without the assent of the nominee. (See Elections below)
6. The League President is responsible for scheduling & running the league meetings and the preparation of the weekly newsletter and running the golf operations.
7. The League Treasurer is responsible for collecting all league dues, negotiating and paying all league bills and providing a year end update of the league account.
8. The League Handicapper is responsible for maintaining the leagues handicap records, insuring members are accurately and completely posting scores and preparing a weekly standings listing.
9. Ad hoc committees and people to assist the Officers will be appointed as needed.

North Shore Golf League
Rules (Revised May 2026)

RULES COMMITTEE:

10. League Officers will appoint members of the rules committee. The League Officers are the final arbiters of all disputes; the President shall give all decisions. USGA rules, accompanied by local and league rules, will prevail. Among the duties of the league officers is to propose changes to the current rules. Any rule changes will be decided by a vote of the rules committee. Should there be a tie among those participating in any vote, the President will make the final determination.

THE MATCHES:

11. The President will set the regular season schedule.

12. Each week there is a team match and an individual match among each foursome. The team match is four-ball match play. The team that wins the most holes is awarded the win and receives 2 points in the Team Standings. If the match results in a tie, the tie is recorded for both teams and both teams are awarded 1 point in the Team Standings. The individual match is singles match play. One point is awarded for each hole won, ½ point for each hole tied. The #1 player plays against the #1 player of the opposing team; #2 vs. #2.

13. Handicaps are used in all matches. All players in the foursome will stroke off the lowest handicap for the four-ball match. In the singles matches the higher handicap player will stroke off the lower handicap player. In all matches 100% of the difference between the higher and lower handicap equals the strokes allowed.

14. A completed scorecard must clearly note the winning team or note if the teams tied the match. There is no requirement to show the number of holes won or tied. For the individual matches the card should indicate the number of holes won by each player in the individual matches. The scorecard is considered official when it is submitted to the league handicapper. No late claim shall be considered after the card has been submitted unless the Rules Committee is satisfied the winner knew the scorecard was not accurate.

15. Matches will be scheduled so that all teams will play each team within their division at least once during the regular season, additional matches outside the division will be schedule at random. Any weather cancellations occurring while teams are playing their first set of matches against every divisional opponent will be made up. The match will replace the first available match where teams are competing against other teams that they have already competed against.

16. The final week of the regular season may be a position week, weather permitting. The matches within the division(s) will be: 1st vs. 2nd, 3rd vs. 4th, and so on. Recently, there have been 9 or 10 league teams. Since it is necessary to get to 8 teams for the 3 playoff weeks, in order to get to 8 teams, the position night may be used as the first round of the playoffs. For example, in 2025, since there were 10 teams, there were 4 teams needing to play a playoff match on position week in order to reduce the number of teams making it to the final 3 rounds of the playoffs. This resulted in the top 6 teams plus the 2 winners on position night making it to the first of 3 playoff rounds. In this example, the 7th place team played against the 10th place team, with the winner

North Shore Golf League

Rules (Revised May 2026)

being seeded as the 7th place team in the playoffs. The 8th place team played the 9th place team in the playoffs, with the winner being seeded as the 8th place team in the playoffs. If position night includes playoff matches and it is cancelled, it will be postponed to the following league week and the playoffs will be delayed accordingly. If position night is not needed to be used for the playoffs, and if position night is cancelled, position night will not be rescheduled and the following weeks matches will begin the playoffs.

17. If league matches are stopped due to inclement weather (or for any other reason), play will continue once the course allows players back onto the course. However, after a reasonable period of time has elapsed, the rules committee can determine that play should be cancelled for the day. During the regular season, if play has started but is cancelled due to inclement weather (or any other reason), each match will be made up in its entirety if both of the following requirements happen with respect to your match: The course issues a rain check to the league for your match, and neither team has won 5 of the possible 9 points available in the match. Therefore, if no rain check is issued, the team with the lead will be considered the winner of the match. If a rain check is issued, but one team has won 5 points, the team with 5 points will be considered to be the winner of the match. If both requirements above are met, and it is possible to reschedule the match, the rescheduled match will be started anew. For the playoffs, the match must be completed until a team has won the match, whether or not a rain check is issued. If play is stopped, and the match has not been completed to the point that one team has won 5 of the 9 available points (or 9 ½ points of 18 available points in the Finals), then the match must be continued prior to the start of the next week's matches. It is up to the participants to agree on when the match is to be completed. If they cannot agree, the match will be completed at 11:00 am of the following week's matches (provided the league can obtain tee times at the course). In this case, one of the teams may concede the match to the other team.
18. The player with the most points in each division is the individual division winner. The tiebreaker will be a coin flip.
19. The team with the most points in each division is the regular season division winner. If the team standings result in a tie for any position, the 1st tiebreaker will be total wins in that team's division. The 2nd tiebreaker will be the first head-to-head match between the teams. The 3rd tiebreaker will be a coin flip. The number of teams or individuals that will receive NSGL shirts will be determined by the Officers prior to the start of each season and based on the number of Divisions established for each particular year.

PLAYOFFS:

20. All teams qualify for the league playoffs. There will be 3 rounds of playoffs, including the finals. As discussed in item 16 above, the position night may be used as part of the playoffs to get to 8 teams making it to the final 3 rounds. Cancellation of position night is also discussed in item 16 above.
21. All halved playoff matches are continued into a sudden-death tiebreaker starting at the first hole of the match just completed. If such hole is unavailable, whichever hole is made available by the course will be used.

North Shore Golf League
Rules (Revised May 2026)

22. The playoff final is an 18-hole match. If such match is not completed due to course closure, and enough holes are played such that the course will not provide a “rain check”, then the team winning the most holes will be deemed League Champions. If there is a tie, the higher seeded team will be deemed League Champion. If a rain check is provided, the match will continue from the point at which the match was stopped. If play was stopped prior to the completion of any hole, that hole will be started from the tee box.
23. Playoff matches that cannot be completed, such as for rain, darkness, or lightning must be completed before the next match scheduled start date. See item 17 above for more detailed information on the completion of a playoff match.

HANDICAPS:

24. Handicaps are maintained using the Massachusetts Golf Association GHIN system.
25. Failing to post your scores will result in the Handicap Committee posting a penalty score equal to your lowest handicap differential.
26. League scores will be automatically posted each week by the League Handicapper.
27. Each player is responsible for ensuring that the card and handicap stroke allocation is correct. Any errors or disputes, in order to be considered by the Rules Committee, must be brought up by the claimant to their competitors before any player in the match plays from the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole, before all players in the match leave the putting green. No late claim will be considered unless it is based on facts previously unknown to the player making the claim.
28. **Senior Tee Rule:** A player aged 70+ may elect to hit off the white tees. This decision must be made prior to the start of the league season and is irrevocable for that year. An annual election is required.

NO-SHOWS, ABSENT and DELINQUENT PLAYERS:

29. The following rules within this section apply to what is considered to be the regular season. For any match considered to be a playoff match, there will be no substitutes (under section b below) allowed nor will there be any matching of cards. For the playoffs, failure to show by one team will result in the team that has at least one player present being considered the winner of the match. If both teams fail to show, the winner of the match will be the higher seeded team.
- (a) If a player fails to show, his partner plays both the team and individual matches - 2 players vs 1 (or 1 vs. 1 if a player on each team fails to show). The player(s) that failed to show is awarded the points earned by his partner, limited to 4.5 points. All absent players are limited to a maximum of 4.5 points per individual match up to maximum of 3 weeks absent. After 3 no-shows an absent player earns zero points. If a substitute (as outlined in section 29(b)) takes the place of an absent player, the substitute, rather than the absent player’s partner, earns points on behalf of the absent player.

North Shore Golf League
Rules (Revised May 2026)

(b) **SUBSTITUTES**. Any golfer with a valid USGA handicap maintained through the Golf Handicap and Information Network (GHIN) can substitute for an absent golfer. The substitute's score will count towards the individual and team match results (limits apply). A substitute is allowed during the regular season only. A greens fee of an amount to be determined by the league treasurer will be paid to the league treasurer (not to the golf course). The substitute will choose which absent player he or she would like to replace.

(c) If **both players on one team fail to show**. If no substitutes are replacing them, then their opponents match cards against a blind-draw team from the division they were scheduled to play. The team that showed will be granted 1 point with the opportunity to earn the 2nd point should they beat the matched card. The team that failed to show earns the points earned by the matched card, limited to 1 point. Under any circumstance the no-show team can only earn 1 point. If the absent team is replaced by one or two substitute players, then the same rules applicable to matching cards apply; the team that showed will be granted 1 point and the opportunity to earn the 2nd point, and the team that failed to show receives the points earned by the substitute(s), limited to 1 point. With respect to the individual matches, the players on the team that showed up will earn no fewer than 4 ½ points, and the members of the team that does not show up will earn no more than 4 ½ points.

(d) If **both players on a team in 2 separate matches fail to show, and no substitutes are available to replace any of these players**, at the discretion of the league officers, the players available in each of these matches will compete against each other, rather than matching cards against another team. The rules in section (c) above will apply as if they were matching cards. The missing opponents of one match will be represented by the players from the other match, and vice versa. Example: team 1 is scheduled to play team 2, and team 3 is scheduled to play team 4, but teams 2 and 4 are missing, then team 1 will play team 3. Both teams 1 and 3 will each earn at least one point for showing and the opportunity to win the match for a second point. Team 1 will represent team 4 and team 3 will represent team 2. The playing teams earned points are awarded to the team they represent but limited to 1 point. So, in the example, if team 1 wins the match, they are awarded 2 points, team 3 is awarded 1 point and team 4 is awarded 1 point and team 2 does not win any points. For individual match purposes, the players on teams that show up will earn no fewer than 4 ½ points and players on teams that do not show up will earn no more than 4 ½ points.

(e) If **only one player in a foursome shows**, he/(she) matches their card against a blind-draw team from the division he/(she) was scheduled to play; he/she plays for both the team and the individual matches. The player matches against the player number that he/she is in their team (if only one player shows up on the blind draw team, the player will play against that player). Similar to (c) above, the team represented by the player who shows up is awarded at least one point, and competition against the blind-draw team member is for a possible second point. If a substitute plays for the absent team, the substitute takes the place of the blind-draw matching card. For individual match purposes, the players on the team that the one individual showed up for will earn no fewer than 4 ½ points and the players on the team that did not show up will earn no more than 4 ½ points.

30. A delinquent player is allowed to join the match from the tee on any hole where no player in the group has hit a second shot. Holes missed are scored using the rule for no-shows. You are considered delinquent after everyone has started play.

North Shore Golf League
Rules (Revised May 2026)

31. If, for any reason, a player is not able to continue participation in the league, the League Officers will have final approval over any available replacement. The replacement member will be responsible to prepay to the league the greens fees and other league fees for the remaining weeks in the season. The greens fees obtained by the league will then be paid to the member that dropped out of the league.

DUES:

32. The amount of dues is determined by the League Officers and includes regular season greens fees, playoff greens fees, prizes, and other miscellaneous league expenses. Dues are collected by the League Treasurer on a schedule decided by him/her. The league enters into a contract with the course to guarantee a certain number of players for a certain number of weeks. Therefore, it is important that dues are paid timely so that the league knows how many players have guaranteed that they are participating. Consequently, it is important that dues are received by the Treasurer by the date set by the Treasurer. Failure to pay timely may result in a penalty as determined by the rules committee. Furthermore, no refunds of fees are to be given unless the rules committee determines that a refund can be made as outlined in item 31 above.

LEAGUE EXCEPTIONS TO USGA RULES:

33. All matches are played following USGA rules with the exceptions noted below.
34. Preferred lies are allowed on your own fairway only. The ball may be rolled no closer to the hole and within the grip length of the club being used. This exception does not allow a lift, clean and place. The penalty for a violation is one stroke.
35. In the event of previous inclement weather and/or poor ground conditions the league officers will make a ruling prior to league play allowing lift, clean and place within one club length, no closer to the hole, on your own fairway. The penalty for a violation is one stroke.
36. The embedded ball rule shall be in effect. That is, a ball resting in its own ball mark through the green may be lifted, cleaned, and placed.
37. In sand bunkers, if a ball lies in an un-raked area the ball may be lifted, the sand smoothed, and the ball replaced.
38. In order to speed-up play, for a ball lost or out of bounds, either play a 2nd ball from the tee with a stroke penalty, thus shooting 3 on that shot or utilize the new out of bounds rule as established by the USGA revised rules in 2019. Using the revised rules, under penalty of two-strokes, estimate where the ball was lost or went out of bounds, then find the nearest fairway edge that is no closer to the hole than the estimated spot. You can drop a new ball within two club-lengths of that fairway edge point, still being no closer to the hole than where the ball went out of bounds or was lost. If the ball was lost or went out of bounds prior to reaching the fairway, the ball may be placed at the beginning of the fairway on the side closest to where the ball was lost or went out of bounds. If both the original and a provisional ball are lost this option is allowed for the provisional ball only.

North Shore Golf League
Rules (Revised May 2026)

39. There is a ten (10) stroke maximum score per hole during the regular season. You may pick up at any time at your handicap maximum if your opponent has already won the hole.
40. Per USGA rules, the scheduled league matches must be played out to completion. Concession of matches in advance and agreements to half matches are not allowed. Penalty for violation is zero points for both teams. Therefore, despite it being known that one team will not be showing up for a match, the other team must have at least one member show up to have the rules outlined in item 29 apply if it occurs in the regular season, or if it occurs in the playoffs, to win the match.
41. Additional local rules are noted on the course scorecard.
42. There are no places on the course that the ball may be moved to another location other than those based on course rules. Thus, the former “uncut rough” rule is eliminated. However, there are several hazards that have areas outside the hazard that are often difficult to find the ball, making it virtually impossible to determine if the ball is in the hazard or outside the hazard. Examples of this situation include the hazard between the 2nd and 12th holes and the hazard towards the green on the right side approaching the 7th hole. Should a ball go into these areas and the ball not be found, you can conclude with reasonable certainty that the ball is in the hazard, and apply the applicable hazard rule.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

43. The golf course will determine if there will be a cancellation due to inclement weather. However, as per item 17 above, the league may also be involved in this determination. Additionally, prior to the beginning of the round, the officers may determine that despite the course being open, it is in the best interest of league members that league play be cancelled for that day.

PACE OF PLAY:

44. If a match fails to keep pace on the course and loses one clear hole on the group in front, the slow match must invite the group following to play through.

ELECTIONS:

45. In the event that any of the three League officers have multiple candidates, the following rules apply:
46. Voting will take place at the year-end banquet. The existing League officers will appoint a two-member election committee.
47. Absentee ballots will be mailed but must be returned before the banquet.
48. In the event of a tie:
- a) If one candidate is the incumbent, he/she wins.
 - b) In the event that neither candidate is the incumbent there will be a coin flip.