MARYLAND STATE GOLF ASSOCIATION
TOURNAMENT OPERATION GUIDELINES
COVID-19 RELATED

The following protocols are approved for the 2020 season as precautionary measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. These protocols are designed in a responsible manner for all players, volunteers, host facility staff, and MSGA staff. They are devised per the guidelines and recommendations outlined by the CDC and State Health officials and are subject to change.

Golf tournaments will not be conducted until Phase 2 of the re-open plans established by Maryland State Health officials, which is consistent with national CDC guidelines. The Allied Golf Association’s “Back2Golf” (approved by the CDC) also serves as a reference tool in determination of when to begin our tournament programs.

We anticipate minor adjustments and modifications in operational execution will be necessary as facility accommodations are different. Again, the priority for each event is to be responsible in our efforts to follow CDC guidelines and Back2Golf guidelines.

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PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) and OTHER SUPPLIES

- All tournament staff (MSGA staff, rules officials, volunteers) are required to wear a mask in any situation where they interact with or are near others and when handling items that others may come in contact with during their tournament experience. Gloves must be worn when handling items that others may come in contact with during their tournament experience.
  - Masks will be supplied to the tournament staff by MSGA.
- Tournament participants will be encouraged to bring their own masks and wear them when interacting with tournament staff and other individuals. MSGA will NOT provide masks to tournament participants.
- Hand sanitizer and/or sanitation wipes will be available at the following locations:
  - Practice Tee
  - Practice Putting Green
  - Starting Tent
  - Scoring Area
  - Players must use hand sanitizer/wipe upon arrival at scoring area
  - All Tournament Staff Golf Carts
- Players will need to bring their own water to the golf course.
- Food will not be provided as part of the event. Facilities may offer food separate from the tournament provided it is offered in compliance with CDC and Maryland Health Department guidelines and regulations.
- Tournament staff and players will have their temperature taken by a touchless thermometer upon arrival at the facility or before the start of their round.
  - Any player experiencing a temperature above 100.4 F and/or exhibiting symptoms that are consistent with COVID-19 is not permitted to participate in a MSGA event. Any player exhibiting any symptoms is encouraged to seek medical attention and doctor's recommendation as to a return to play. Players will receive a full entry fee refund.
  - Any player diagnosed with COVID-19, or that has a family member they have come in contact with that has been diagnosed with COVID-19, is not permitted to participate in any MSGA event for 14 days following a diagnosis, regardless of symptoms, and must present a note from a doctor clearing them to participate to the MSGA Board. Players will receive a full entry fee refund.
  - Any player found in violation of the above policies or found to have purposely hidden or not disclosed symptoms or diagnosis, will be banned from the MSGA for a length to be determined by the MSGA Board.
REGISTRATION

- Player registration will not occur on site and players are expected to be on the tee 10 minutes prior to their assigned starting time for the round.
- All players, caddies & spectators will be required to sign a Reaffirmation and Consent form before arriving on-site at any tournament. This form will be sent out via DocuSign the week prior to the event.
PRACTICE AREAS

- Participants are not permitted to arrive at the host facility more than 45 minutes prior to their starting time. If a player arrives at the facility prior to 45 minutes of their starting time, they must remain in their vehicle.
- Practice areas are only available to participants **45 minutes prior** to their tee time.
  - Following our 12-minute tee time intervals, this will limit the practice areas to no more than three groups at a time.
- Tournament staff will monitor the practice areas to ensure compliance of the 45-minute time allotment.
- All practice facilities are closed the remainder of the day to tournament participants following their final round of the day.
- Players should leave the facility upon completion of their round. Exception: if following the final round of the event, a player is in contention for first place, they will be permitted to remain on property. If they fall out of contention prior to completion of the championship, they should leave the premises at that time. Exception: Men’s and Women’s Amateur Championships, players who are in contention in the stroke play qualifying portion of the Championship may stay on property for the play-off.
STARTING PROCEDURES

- Tee time events only
- 12 minute tee time intervals between groups.
- The starting area is to be marked/roped off and posted with a sign restricting the area to the Starter and ONLY the players receiving instructions/teeing off.
  - NOTE: the first teeing area is not a part of and is outside the starting area
- Spots will be marked on the ground in the starting area for players to stand to maintain spacing while receiving instructions and other materials.
- Tournament information will be emailed out before arrival at the event site. This includes scorecards, Conditions of Competition, hole location sheets, etc. Exchanging of cards will not be necessary given the way information will be distributed (players will not be assigned their own cards). Players will be emailed a blank scorecard in which they will write down the name of and keep the score of another player in their group.
ON THE COURSE

- All players must play by the current USGA Rules of Golf and MSGA Conditions of Competition.
- Players should follow proper social distancing protocol and stay at least six feet away from other competitors, partners, and other individuals while on property.
- Prior to or following a round, players should refrain from shaking another player’s hand or contact of any kind with another individual.
- Players should not touch another player’s equipment.
- If golf cart use is permitted, Players will have two options:
  1.) Bring your own mask and ride together with another player participating in the event.

  OR;

  2.) Alternate who rides on which hole, one rider max in the cart at a time without masks. Both golf bags may be on the cart for the entire round.

- Flagsticks MUST NOT be removed from the hole at any time. Players should not touch or move the flagstick for any reason during the competition.
- All cups will be placed in the ground for competition rounds per USGA Rules of Golf to allow the ball to properly drop in the hole. A device will be used so that the player can lift the ball from the hole with a lever that is attached to the flagstick.
- All bunker rakes will be removed for the entire competition. A local rule will be in place allowing competitors (whose ball lays in a bunker in a disturbed area) to lift the ball, take up to 1 club length relief area in the bunker and drop a ball. This will be at no penalty to the player. Please smooth footprints following play from the bunker.
- All individuals must maintain recommended social distancing when assisting players with ball searches, directional messaging and all other possible interaction points.
SCORING PROCEDURE

• All players will be assigned a paper scorecard (official scorecard) and their designated marker will populate the scorecard for each hole played. Since the scorecard will be assigned, exchanging of the scorecards is not necessary. Players will be required to print the blank scorecard and bring with them to the event.

• Once the round is complete, players will be assisted by an official scorekeeper to verify all hole by hole scores are correct. The scorekeeper will be located in a separate and safe space (MSGA Scoring Tent). The scoring area is for players and officials only.
  o All players will be positioned at an acceptable social distance from each other.

• Once all scores have been reported and verified by players and the scorer, each player will twice sign the scorecard in their possession – once on the “Scorer” line and once on the “Attest” line of the same scorecard.
  o The signature on the “Scorer” line is standard, and the signature on the “Attest” line will signify that the player signing approves his or her own score that was read aloud and verified by the scorer, the player and the scoring official.
  o This process will ensure that every player has signed twice – once as a scorer and once to attest their own score – without having to exchange scorecards

• The scorecard will then be placed in a box by the marker. These scorecards will be collected at the end of the competition round and kept for review if necessary.

• Players must remain in the designated scoring area until verification is complete. When the player leaves the scoring area, the score for that player is official. The player may not return to the scoring area once he/she has departed.

• The use of public monitors or digital scoreboards for viewing scores and/or summaries is prohibited. Players may view leaderboards on their personal electronic devices.
AWARDS PRESENTATION

- All award presentations will be conducted immediately following conclusion of the tournament at a location near the 18th hole.
  - If the tournament has multiple divisions, division awards will be presented immediately following conclusion of that division’s competition.
    - Following the awards presentation for that division, players of that division should depart the premises.
- MSGA Staff will wear proper PPE, sanitize the awards, and lay them out in an organized fashion on the awards table.
- The award ceremony will be conducted by the MSGA Staff and include recognition of host facility staff, and champion(s). When a player’s name is announced, they will proceed to the awards table and accept their respective award.
- Gift certificates will not be handed out, we will either leave a list in the pro-shop or mail all gift certificates.
- Photos will be taken following conclusion of the awards presentation and will be taken individually.
INCLEMENT WEATHER & COURSE EVACUATION

- Every effort will be made to provide advance notice of inclement weather systems approaching the tournament site in enough time for players to return to their vehicles. If a suspension of play is announced, players are strongly encouraged to return to the vehicles or designated safety area. However, we all know storms can pop-up quickly during summer months. In the event the facility has on-course safety shelters, players will be reminded that while congregating in these areas, they must follow CDC guidelines (social distancing) and avoid congregating groups of more than 50. The shelter may not provide adequate space for players to maintain CDC guidelines, thus the reason for returning to their vehicles.

- Players must follow the prescribed procedure as outlined in the USGA Rules of Golf, Rule 5.7b, when play is suspended for a dangerous weather situation such as lightning.

- All golf cart use policies remain in effect during this procedure. If two players are sharing a cart, they must both be wearing a mask. If a player who is walking needs to ride back to the clubhouse, that player will be required to wear a mask.

- MSGA Staff will use the current policy when determining the need to suspend play. The current three phase system is in effect but modified in the following way:
  - When a dangerous weather system is encroaching on the event site, a minimum of 15 miles is used to determine when suspension of play will be signaled (current policy is 10 miles).
  - MSGA Staff may increase the minimum mile requirement based on variable conditions that may affect the weather system and the removal of players from the course; including wind speed, rain amount forecasts, size of golf course (acreage of property), and field size of players on the golf course.

- All precautions must be taken to adhere to the current social distancing guidelines including clubhouse capacity, use of personal vehicles during delays, alternate buildings on property, etc.

- Resumption of play must also comply with the golf cart policy. Players must be given a sufficient amount to time to return to their playing positions before play is to resume.

- All practice facilities will be closed during inclement weather. Players returning to the course will not be permitted to practice before resuming play. Players who have not started their round are subject to the same protocols provided in the “Practice Facilities” section of this document.
LOCAL RULES

- MSGA will provide updated information and clarifications concerning suggested modifications to the USGA Rules of Golf affected by CDC guidelines and governmental regulations.
- As these changes occur and when they affect any of the tournament events or championships, the changes will be added to the Conditions of Competition.
- Currently flagsticks, bunkers and bunker rakes, scorecards, scoring and holing out are addressed by the USGA.
TOURNAMENT STAFF

• The Tournament Staff will provide a responsible effort to ensure execution of all protocols while at all tournament sites and environments.
• All tournament staff members must wear protective equipment when engaging with players.
• Masks are required for use when in the presence of other persons or when handling items others may come in contact with during their tournament experience. The wearing of gloves is required when handling materials that other persons may be handling as well.
• MSGA Staff will assign individuals to place signage for directional needs, CDC signage, time clocks, branded items, and starting and scoring tents and tables.
• Starters and scorers must use their best judgment when complying with social distancing and the need for verbal interaction with the players and others.
• All individuals must maintain recommended social distancing when assisting players with ball searches, directional messaging and all other possible interaction points.
• Rules Officials must maintain recommended social distancing when assisting players with rules assistance. They must not assist the players with any situation where the official would deliberately need to touch either personal equipment of the player or golf course equipment.
SPECTATORS

• Spectators are restricted from all areas of the golf course during the scheduled time of
  the event. (Exception of junior championships, where 1 parent/guardian per child is
  permitted). This exception also applies to all events where a junior is present, each
  junior may have 1 parent/guardian attend as a spectator. Anyone who is 18 or
  younger at the time of the event will qualify as a junior.
**HOST FACILITY CORRESPONDENCE**

MSGA will work with the Host Facility to offer the following guidelines for the 2020 season. This is in effort to be responsible in conducting our tournament programming for participants. The guidelines are consistent with CDC, State Health Organization’s protocols, and Back2Golf for social distancing, and have been approved by the MSGA Board of Directors.

Guidelines:

- The clubhouse must be open and follow the sanitation requirements put forth by the CDC and Back2Golf (Phase 2).
- Restrooms must be open and available to players and tournament staff and must follow the sanitation requirements put forth by the CDC and State Health Organization.
- Host facilities must provide PPE to staff members that may come in contact with individuals or handle items that others may come in contact with during their time on property.
- There should be no handling of any participant’s equipment by either the tournament staff or host facility staff.
- All golf carts must follow the sanitation requirements put forth by the CDC and State Health Organization.
- All flags on the practice green must be removed by the host facility, if not removed already. This does not apply if clubs are using raised holes or have other measures in place to eliminate the need for players to touch the hole or flagstick to retrieve their golf ball.
- An appropriate supply of practice balls should be provided per player and must be cleaned and left in the hitting area for use. Players should not have to reach into a common area to acquire practice balls.
- All practice balls must be cleaned before each use by the host facility.
- Devices used to clear balls from the short game area should be removed, if not already removed.
- All practice balls around the practice green must be removed by the host facility, if not removed already.
- If possible, please remove all flagsticks the night prior to the event to avoid points of contact by tournament staff.
- Cup liners must be placed in accordance with USGA Rules of Golf. The tournament flagsticks will have a device or object left in the hole that meets CDC and State Health Organization guidelines that will eliminate the need for the player to place their hand in the hole to retrieve a ball.
- All bunker rakes must be removed from the course by the Host Facility, if not removed already.
- Non-essential, removable items (benches, ball washers, etc.) must be removed from the course and practice areas, if not removed already.
- Food provided as a component of the event will be coordinated in advance between MSGA and the facility. Since food is not offered through the event, the facility may offer food per CDC and Maryland State Health Department guidelines.