

HCLGA Rules & Handicaps

The Harbor Club Ladies Golf Association adheres to the Rules of Golf as governed by the United States Golf Association (USGA), with certain local exceptions outlined below. Members are expected to observe standard golf etiquette and the Harbor Club Dress Code at all times.

Dress Code

Appropriate golf attire is required on the golf course and driving range. Prohibited items include short shorts, warm-up suits made of sweatshirt material, tank or halter tops, clothing exposing midriffs, T-shirts, and denim.

Score Posting

Members are responsible for posting all scores to the GHIN system after every round, including partial rounds (e.g., 7 holes of a 9-hole round or 13 holes of an 18-hole round). The Pro Shop may post scores on your behalf. **On official Play Days, scores will be entered by the Pro Shop or the Play Day committee.**

Play of the Ball and Relief

The ball must be played as it lies, except under the following conditions:

Cart Path Only (CPO): Lift, clean, and place the ball.

Casual Water: temporary water such as a puddle from rain or sprinkler leak that isn't a normal hazard. See USGA for complete description and how to take free relief.

All par 3's and Hole #3 are designated Cart Path Only at all times.

Local Root Rule: If the ball rests on a root or the swing would contact a root, free relief is permitted (no penalty).

Free Relief: One club-length, no closer to the hole.

Penalty Relief: Two club-lengths, no closer to the hole.

2 x 2 Rule: The 2x2 rule (or 2+2 rule) is a local golf rule granting free relief from sprinkler heads or other immovable obstructions when they interfere with a player's line of play, stance or swing. Relief applies if the obstruction is within two club-lengths of the green and the ball is within two club-lengths of that obstruction.

There are three criterion that must be met to use the 2-by-2 rule.

1. First, the sprinkler head (or other immovable obstruction) must be on your intended line of play. And no, you can't exaggerate and say you "intend" to aim 10 feet right of the hole just to get relief. The rule states that you don't get a free drop if you choose a line of play that is "clearly unreasonable."
2. The obstruction must also be within two club-lengths of the putting green.
3. Your ball must be within two club-lengths of the obstruction. Hence, the 2-by-2 moniker.

Penalty Areas (Water Hazards)

Holes #7 and #17 (Tee Shots): The ball must carry the hazard from the tee box. If it does not, options include re-teeing or dropping in the designated drop zone (one-stroke penalty).

However, if the ball crosses the hazard and then rolls back into the hazard, your options include dropping at a point equidistant from the hole on the opposite side of the hazard (no closer to the hole), or replay from the original spot (re-tee).

Hole #18 (Local Rule): If the ball fails to carry the hazard, the next shot may be played from either side of the hazard with two club-lengths relief (one-stroke penalty).

Out of Bounds

All balls crossing the white stakes are and balls crossing the cart path on Holes 3, 5, 7, 9, and 18 are considered out of bounds.

There are two penalty options:

1. Replay from original spot with one stroke penalty.
If uncertain, play a provisional ball and notify the other players you are hitting a provisional. **This is only option during tournament play.**
2. players may opt to take a 2-stroke penalty for an out-of-bounds (OB) ball instead of returning to the previous spot (stroke and distance). You must estimate where the ball went OB and drop within a specific, large relief area near the fairway edge. The next shot taken is the 4th stroke. **This is a local rule that may be used during non-tournament play.**

A ball resting on the cart path is not out of bounds and can be brought to either side of the cart path no closer to the hole on a line back toward its original spot. Stance may be clear from cart path. On Holes 3, 5, 7, 9 and 18, the and may be brought back across the path no closer to the hole and on a line back toward its original spot.

Lost Ball

Search time is limited to three minutes (USGA rule).

If not found, the ball is lost; apply stroke-and-distance penalty.

Wrong Ball

Playing another player's ball incurs a two-stroke penalty.

Scoring (Non-Tournament Play Days)

Maximum score per hole is net double bogey (par + 2 + handicap strokes allocated to that hole).

Example: On a par 4 with 2 handicap strokes, maximum score is 8.

Once the maximum is reached, pick up the ball.

Tees

LGA members typically play from the Red Tees.

Pink Senior Tees are permitted, with handicap adjusted accordingly.

Handicaps

Handicaps ensure equitable competition by allowing players of varying skill levels to compete in net play (gross score minus allocated handicap strokes).

- All HCLGA members must maintain a valid USGA Handicap Index, established by posting at least three 18-hole rounds (or equivalent) in the GHIN system. The Pro Shop will assist with setup.
- Members are encouraged to download the GHIN mobile app (USGA or GSGA version) for score posting, handicap tracking, and determining course-specific strokes.
- Maximum handicaps for HCLGA Play Days: 36 (18 holes) or 18 (9 holes).
- Example: Handicap 36 → two strokes on every hole; Handicap 22 → one stroke on all 18 holes plus an additional stroke on the four hardest holes.
- Hole difficulty rankings (#1 hardest to #18 easiest) are determined by an independent rater based on posted scores and vary by tee color (indicated on the scorecard).
- For detailed explanations of handicap stroke allocation and related terminology, please refer to the separate “Handicap Strokes” section in the HCLGA Golf Terminology & Handicap Basics.

Both the USGA GHIN app and the GSGA GHIN app are available for mobile download on the Apple App Store or Google Play.