



Saturday Golf League – Match Play 2026 Details & Rules

1. The 2026 SGL Match Play Tournament is open to any current SGL member **or any other player** with an **established, verifiable World Handicap Index** (GHIN handicap).
2. Based on a maximum field of 32 (**first come first serve, so sign up early not to miss out!**), this will be a Single Elimination Match Play Event, with a group stage in the first 3 rounds. At the start of the tournament, assuming a full field of 32 players, there will be four groups of players, with each group consisting of eight players.
 - a. The first 3 rounds of matches will have the players in each group competing against each other.
 - b. If there is a tie in any of the matches in the first 3 rounds, there will be a putt-off to determine who advances to the next round. SGL will provide details for the putt-off at the time of the contest.
 - c. The winning player from each group after the 3rd round matches will then advance to the 4th round matches facing the other group winners.
 - d. The winners of the 4th round matches will then play each other in the 5th round to determine the 1st and 2nd place positions.
 - e. The losers of the 4th round matches will also play each other in the 5th round to determine the 3rd and 4th place positions.
 - f. If a match in the 4th or 5th rounds ends in a tie, the match will continue from the 1st tee until a winner is determined under standard match play rules, with shots falling as they fall per the scorecard.
3. **Entry fee of \$25.**
4. **Payouts, based on a full, 32-player field will be as follows: \$375 – 1st place, \$225 – 2nd place, \$150 – 3rd place and \$50 – 4th place.** If a 32-player field is not obtained, payouts will be adjusted accordingly but will remain in percentages consistent with the above payouts, but applied to the total entry fee pool, approximately 47%, 28%, 19% and 6%, respectively.
5. **Entry deadline 3/18/2026 at midnight.**
6. Group matches will be determined by **blind draw on 3/19/2026** and distributed to all participants by 6:00 P.M.
7. First week of match play will be at the Cave Creek Golf Course (3/21/2026). To provide flexibility and attract more players to this event – we will implement the following “**flexibility rules**”.
 - a. If you are unable to play your 1st round match on the scheduled tournament start date of 3/21/26 – **if agreed to by both players** – your match may be played on an alternative date and at an alternative course provided the match is completed no later than 4/2/26 – to establish matches for the 2nd round of play.
 - b. All 2nd round matches will be scheduled to be played on 4/4/26 at Aguila Golf Course. If you are unable to play your 2nd round match on the scheduled date of 4/4/26 – **if agreed to by both players** – your match may be played on an alternative date and at an alternative course provided the match is completed no later than 4/15/28 – to establish matches for the 3rd round of play.
 - c. All 3rd round matches will be scheduled to be played on 4/18/26 at Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club. (**Note** – this is also the date for the 4th round of the 2025/2026 Ringers Tournament – which will be played simultaneously with the 4th round of Match Play.) If you are unable to play your 3rd round match on the scheduled date of 4/18/26 – **if agreed to by both players** – your match may be played on an

alternative date and at an alternative course provided the match is completed no later than 4/29/28 – to establish matches for the 4th round of play.

- d. All 4th round matches will be scheduled to be played on 5/2/26 at Corte Bella Golf Club. If you are unable to play your 4th round match on the scheduled date of 5/2/26 – ***if agreed to by both players*** – your match may be played on an alternative date and at an alternative course provided the match is completed no later than 5/6/28 – to establish matches for the 5th (FINAL) round of play.

8. The 5th (FINAL) round of matches to determine the 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th place finishers will be scheduled to be played on 5/9/26 at Ak-Chin Southern Dunes Golf Club. (**Note** – this is also the date for the 5th (FINAL) round of the 2025/2026 Ringers Tournament – which will be played simultaneously with the 5th round of Match Play – so we will be ***CROWNING MULTIPLE CHAMPIONS*** on 5/9/26.) (**Note** - If any player competing in the 5th round matches is unable to play on the scheduled date of 5/9/26 and this is communicate prior to 5/7/26, there will be a discussion with Steve Park to determine an equitable solution to all players involved.)
9. USGA match play rules apply. In addition, the SGL “desert rule” will be in effect on all courses that are considered desert courses. Refer to SGL Desert Rule on the Saturday Golf League website. If anyone has any questions, please be sure to ask ahead of time to ensure consistent and fair play.
10. ***SGL tee box rules shall be applied to determine tee box to be played and handicap.*** Player’s match play handicaps will be adjusted accordingly by course and tees designated to each of the players. The tournament handicap difference between match players shall provide a stroke or strokes to the player with the higher handicap starting on the hole with lowest handicap.
11. ***If a player reaches the max score for a hole under SGL max score rules and a clear winner for that hole will not be decided by doing so, the player should continue playing until a clear winner for the hole.*** This is the only exception to the SGL max score rules. In all other situations, the SGL max score rules will continue to apply.
12. Determining course HDCP for a player:
Use the “Golf Genius” website to find a player’s course HDCP based on the tee box. On the website is a drop down to select the course that is to be played (the course may already be selected).

Determining strokes given to a player:

After players have selected their tee box and determined their HDCP, the player with the higher HDCP will receive strokes. The number of strokes given is based on the difference between the players HDCPs. Example: Player A has HDCP 7, Player B has HDCP 9. Player B gets 2 strokes. Those strokes will fall as designed by the course scorecard.

Determining holes that a player will be given strokes on the scorecard:

Once a player has determined the number of strokes received (if any), the strokes indicate the number of holes a player will receive a stroke. The hole the player will get a stroke is based on the course HDCP for each hole starting from the hardest hole (1 HDCP hole) to the easiest hole (18 HDCP hole). Example: A player that gets 2 strokes will get 1 stroke on HDCP hole 1 and 1 stroke on HDCP hole 2. If a player gets more than 18 strokes, then 2 strokes will be given to holes starting from hardest hole (1 HDCP hole) to the easiest hole (18 HDCP hole). Example: A player that gets 20 strokes will get 2 strokes on the #1 and #2 HDCP hole and 1 stroke on all remaining holes.

Determining HDCP holes to use based on gender:

Courses usually have to different ratings on hole HDCP based on gender which will be list on the scorecard as Men’s HDCP and Ladies HDCP. In a match between a male and female, the HDCP holes to use on the scorecard will be based on the player with the highest HDCP between the players. Example 1: Player A (female) has a course HDCP 8 and Player B (male) has a course HDCP 10.

Player B will use Men's HDCP holes on the scorecard to determine strokes per hole. Example 2: Player A (female) has a course HDCP 8 and Player B (male) has a course HDCP 7. Player A will use the Ladies HDCP holes on the scorecard to determine strokes per hole.

13. **Note - Any Match Play matches** played concurrently with the regularly scheduled SGL stroke play Tournaments **will NOT follow standard Match Play rules.** You will be paired up with your opponent for your match play match and you will play both events simultaneously (the regular SGL event and Match Play), however, **normal stroke play rules will be in effect, keeping in mind that you are playing in two events at the same time.** Therefore, you must hole out on each hole; no holes or putts may be conceded. This is a departure from standard Match Play rules, to allow play of both events at the same time.
14. You will not have to coordinate a tee time with your opponent, just sign up and play. You will have to keep an eye on the tournament brackets to find out exactly when you are scheduled to play. If you do not play when you are scheduled, you will forfeit that round to your opponent – unless agreed to play on an alternative date and course as defined above in the “***Flexibility Rules***”.
15. **For any match played at an alternative course**, the scorecard must be submitted to Steve Park to confirm the winner. In this situation, given there is no concurrent SGL stroke play event being played, players may concede putts as is allowed under standard match play rules.
16. The following will apply when a putt-off is required to determine a winner for a match. Players will putt their balls into the hole to provide a total score for each putt-off match. The player with the lowest score for the putt-off match wins the match. The first putt-off match will start 5 feet from the hole. The distance will keep incrementing by 3 feet until a winner is determined.
17. Matches should be played with fair play and good faith in mind, following USGA/AGA/SGL Rules at all times. **Order of play in all matches will follow standard order of play rules. Specifically, once on the putting green, if a match is being played in a foursome and the other players in the foursome are not part of a match play match, order of play will still follow standard foursome play, meaning the player furthest from the hole shall play first. Once that player starts putting, the player will have the option to continue putting until holed, provided they do not interfere with another player's line of play or follow-through line of play.**
18. Should changes to the schedule of SGL events and therefore matches be required due to weather, cancellations, course closures, etc., communication around those changes will be made to participants as soon as possible. All communications will come from, and all questions should be addressed to Steve Park (860) 990-1190.

Good luck to all players!

Steve Park
Match Play Tournament Coordinator