



**PGA**

New Jersey Section

*Junior Tour*

# **NJPGA Junior Tour Handbook**

The information in this handbook outlines material that every New Jersey PGA Junior Tour Member should know as they navigate through their time spent on the New Jersey PGA Junior Tour. The goal of the New Jersey PGA is to make sure that Junior Tour Members are equipped to better enjoy the game of golf, compete in accordance with the USGA Rules of Golf and uphold the traditions of the game.

New Jersey PGA Junior Tour Members are expected to fully understand the information presented below. Please read all sections and subsections of the handbook carefully.

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## **What to expect at a New Jersey PGA Junior Tour Event**

The New Jersey PGA Junior Tour provides competitive golf opportunities for beginner, intermediate and advanced junior golfers ages 11-18. All starting times and pairing information will be published on Tournament Information Pages and emailed to participants approximately 3-5 days before the start of each tournament. Registration dates are posted on the Junior Tour Schedule Page. Tournaments will always open at 10:00 AM on the morning of registration opening. All tournaments will open on a first come first serve basis. If you are waitlisted for one of our tournaments, please keep in mind that we will do our best to get as many additional players in as possible.

### **Divisions:**

**A player's division is determined based on their age as of July 31<sup>st</sup> during the current year. All Junior Tour Members are eligible to compete until the day they turn 19.**

**If a player turns 13 in August, they will have the option to register for the 13-15 division, and have access to the full tournament schedule, or they may register for the 11-12 division. A player is not permitted to switch from the 11-12 division to the 13-15 division once the season has started.**

**Boys and girls who turn 11 after July 31<sup>st</sup>, but during the month of August, will be able to register as a Future Tour Member and be able to participate in the 11-12 division throughout the summer season.**

### **The following applies to all players who are eligible to play in the Boys 11-12 & Girls 11-12 (NJPGA Junior Tour - Future Tour)**

Boys and Girls 11-12 will be required to sign up for their own separate membership. NJPGA Junior Tour - Future Tour is designed to help transition players to the next stage of tournament golf by providing course yardages that are age appropriate. Similar to the full NJPGA Junior Tour Membership, 11-12 year old members will be required to play without the use of a caddie, which includes not being able to receive advice from a parent or older sibling. They will also play without a max score per hole.

- Boys 11-12 and Girls 11-12 will have a limited schedule which can be found on the New Jersey PGA Junior Tour webpage.
- Boys 11-12 and Girls 11-12 will have their own Player of the Year Points Standings.
- Boys 11-12 and Girls 11-12 will not be eligible to register tournaments that are not listed on their own specific schedule.



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NJPGA Junior Tour - Future Tour Members will not have access to spring or fall events, due to limited field sizes, except for the Fall Team Championship at Concordia. More details will be available on the above-mentioned Tournament Information Page.

## **What you should bring to each tournament:**

- Golf clubs, Golf balls and tees
- Water, sports drinks, snacks, etc.
- Sunscreen
- A divot tool or pitch mark repair tool to fix ball marks
- A coin or ball marker
- A permanent marker to mark your golf ball.
- Rain jacket / umbrella

## **Dress Code:**

The dress code applies to players, parents, spectators and anyone else attending NJPGA Junior Tour Events. Players are expected to wear golf attire. Golf shirts with collars. Boys should keep their golf shirts tucked in. Hats should always be worn forward. Denim, jeans, sweatpants, and gym shorts are not considered appropriate attire. If a Junior Tour Member arrives in clothing that is not considered appropriate golf course attire, they may be asked to purchase golf clothes from the golf shop or asked not to participate that day.

## **Registration Table:**

Before you do anything else, check in at the registration table upon arrival. Please arrive with enough time to prepare for your round. Most players arrive about 45 minutes to an hour before their official starting time.

## **Scorecards:**

Official scorecards will be handed out on the first tee by the starter when tournaments are scheduled with starting times. For tournaments with shotgun starts, players are expected to receive their official scorecard at the registration table.

## **Staff:**

NJPGA Staff will be responsible for setting the official yardage. Staff will monitor and enforce pace of play. The lead tournament director will have the final say in any situations involving the USGA Rules of Golf or Supplementary Rules of Play.



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## **Yardage:**

Yardage information below is subject to change depending on a number of factors including course conditions, weather, total par for the course and course difficulty.

Future Tour (Boys 11-12 & Girls 11-12)

- Boys will play approximately 5500 yards
- Girls will play approximately 4500 yards

One Day Tournaments (Boys 13-18 & Girls 13-18)

- Boys will play 6,000 - 6,200
- Girls will play 5,200 - 5,400

Multiple Round Championships: (36-hole or 54-hole)

- Boys will play 6,600 where applicable
- Girls will play 5,700 where applicable

**The yardages increase due to the events being ranked by the AJGA and JGS**

## **Cell Phones:**

Use of mobile devices during tournament play is prohibited and reserved for emergencies. Players are expected to refrain from texting, making calls or using their phone for any purpose except for using apps for distance measuring.

## **Distance Measuring Devices:**

Distance measuring devices are permitted. Devices capable of measuring slope or gradient are not permitted. First offense: 2 stroke penalty. Second offense: Disqualification.

## **Tobacco/Nicotine Use:**

Tobacco products and vaping are prohibited on site at New Jersey PGA Junior Tour events by players, parents, and spectators.

## **Pace of Play**

The goal of the New Jersey PGA Junior Tour Pace of Play Policy is to help players complete rounds in a timely manner and to make the game more enjoyable for everybody.

### **Time Par:**

Time par is the amount of time in which the New Jersey Section PGA Junior Tour expects all players to complete a round. This will be expressed on a per hole basis and an overall time for 18 holes which are as follows:

#### Per Hole Basis (Based on Threesomes)

- Par 3 – 13 minutes
- Par 4 – 15 minutes
- Par 5 – 17 minutes

#### Per Round Basis (Based on Threesomes)

- Par 70 – 4 hours 26 minutes
- Par 71 – 4 hours 28 minutes
- Par 72 – 4 hours 30 minutes

A group's time begins when a member of the group has played his/her 1st stroke from his/her starting teeing area.

**The New Jersey PGA Junior Tour may adjust time par during and between tournament rounds based on average group times or playing/course conditions.**

In addition:

- A group will be considered out of position if at any time during the round they exceed the time allotted to play a hole.
- Groups will also be considered out of position if a par 3 or par 4 is open ahead of them, or when the group ahead of them is on the putting green on a par 5.
- When a group is out of position, a warning may be issued and the group will be encouraged to get back into position. If the group remains out of position, all individuals in the group will be put on the clock and timed on each shot.
- The timing of a player's stroke will begin when it is his/her turn to play and he/she can play without interference or distraction.



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- A player is allowed up to 40-seconds to play a stroke. If a player exceeds the 40-second time limit on two consecutive occasions, they will receive a one-stroke penalty.
- Once a group has regained their proper position, all timing shall cease and all/any bad time shall be void.

### **Pace of Play Tips:**

- If your ball might be out of bounds or lost outside of a penalty area, play a provisional ball (Rule 18.3)
- If a situation arises and you do not know how to proceed, play a second ball under Rule 20.1c(3). You must report all facts to a Rules Official afterwards regardless of score.
- Place the golf bag off the putting green in a direction that is on the way to the next tee.
- Anyone can search for a lost ball. Parents and spectators are encouraged to follow one-shot ahead to spot errant shots.
- Identify your golf ball and show it to fellow competitors.
- Get your yardage before it is your turn to play.
- Read your putt before it is your turn to play.
- Be aware of who is away. If you are not sure, ask.
- Recognize when someone will need the flag tended or your ball marked.
- Get to your next shot without delay. What you do between shots is more important than during.
- If a ball is not found after a brief search the fellow competitors should go forward and play their shots to the green and let the player and spectators continue the search.
- Know where your group is in relation to the group in front of you.
- Take the appropriate amount of clubs for your shots around the green.



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## **Observations on Pace of Play:**

We all love to play golf, but nobody wants to be out there for 5-6 hours with waiting in between every shot. There are things you can all do to ensure a faster pace of play. The following are some suggestions.

- Be aware of your position on the golf course.
- If you can't see the group in front of you, your group is probably behind pace.
- It's ok to play ready golf to keep things moving.
  
- If you have a long pre-shot routine, make an effort to make it more succinct.
- Simply walk faster in between shots.
- Play a provisional ball if you think your ball may be lost in bounds or outside a penalty area.
- If you are asked to pick up the pace by a tournament official, take that seriously and find a way to catch up to the best of your ability.

## **Code of Conduct**

The NJPGA Junior Tour Code of Conduct has been put in place to ensure that proper course etiquette and sportsmanship are enforced. The NJPGA Junior Tour requires all members along with parents, guardians and spectators to adhere to and respect the following guidelines:

**Cheating and not knowing a rule are not the same thing. Blatant vs. ignorance to the rule.**

### **Cheating:**

The USGA Rules of Golf govern all play except as otherwise specified or modified by the New Jersey PGA Junior Tour Local Rules & Conditions of Competition.

- Blatant cheating will not be tolerated.
- Players who observe a violation of the Rules of Golf or the NJPGA Junior Tour Local Rules & Conditions of Competition are expected to notify fellow competitors within their group, reach an agreement concerning the facts of the incident, and then report the incident and the related facts to the NJPGA Junior Tour Tournament Director as soon as possible.
- If the NJPGA Junior Tour Tournament Director observes violations, they will notify the players that they are disqualified from the tournament and that a further review will occur.
- Incidents of cheating will be reviewed by the observing Junior Golf Director, and the Junior Golf Committee.



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Every golfer knows they are not supposed to cheat. That's obvious. Every golfer knows that golf is a game of integrity and sportsmanship. Even still, instances and accusations of cheating are being brought to our attention. In a tournament situation, a player has a responsibility to protect the field. Instances of cheating will impact every other player in your division. If you see something, say something. If you don't feel comfortable saying something directly to the players in your group, please notify our staff and let us handle the situation **BEFORE** scorecards are signed, attested and submitted at the scoring area.

Types of cheating that are commonly brought to our attention include:

- Dropping a ball when the original ball is lost.
- Deliberately improving your lie.
- Deliberately improving your area of intended swing (example: breaking or bending tree branches to address your ball).
- Lying to your marker about the number of strokes taken.
- Changing a score on your official scorecard.
- Moving your ball marker closer to the hole on the putting green.

**Depending on the severity of the violation, the Committee may assess the following penalties:**

1. A written letter of warning and reprimand
2. Disqualification from the next event entered by the player
3. Disqualification for the remainder of the season

## **Claims:**

Claims regarding rules or conduct, must be made by the players themselves. Claims must be made in a timely manner (ideally on site, when all parties are present, and before scorecards are signed). Claims made by parents or spectators will not be considered legitimate. In extreme situations, claims made by parents or spectators will be taken into consideration but ultimately it will be the player's responsibility to report rules infractions and scoring inaccuracies to the committee. We expect situations involving the Rules of Golf to be a learning experience for everyone involved. You have nothing to gain by cheating during any level of competition except a bad reputation and possible expulsion from our tournaments. We have plenty of players adhering to the rules and accepting the consequences of bad shots.

## **On-Course Behavior:**

- Abusive or inappropriate language; disrespectful behaviors towards officials, volunteers or golf professionals; throwing or breaking golf equipment; any form of





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cheating; leaving the golf course without properly notifying an official during a tournament round; and abuse of the golf course in any way will be considered Code of Conduct violations. A one-stroke penalty will be enforced by the NJPGA Junior Tour Tournament Staff for any behavior on the golf course it deems unsportsmanlike. A second offense will result in automatic disqualification from the tournament and possible suspensions from future events.

- Caddies are prohibited. Do not solicit advice from a spectator or coach.
- “Advice is any counsel or suggestion which could influence a player in determining your play, choice of club or method of making a stroke.”

Penalty for breach of this rule is two-strokes on the player (USGA Rule 10.2). Talking to spectators and coaches during tournament play is not allowed and can be construed as receiving advice.

### **Care for the Course:**

- All players are expected to maintain the golf course by repairing ball marks, raking bunkers, replacing divots, picking up and disposing of trash, etc.
- Deliberately neglecting to repair divots and replace ball marks is completely unacceptable and subject to a Code of Conduct Penalty of 2 strokes per offense.
- “Leave the course in better condition than you found it.”

We are **GUESTS** at the courses we host events at. **Leave the golf course in better condition than you found it.** It is embarrassing when a Golf Course Superintendent or Head Golf Professional calls or emails us saying that our players don’t replace their divots or repair ball marks. This is simple etiquette that every golfer, regardless of ability level, is expected to adhere to. If you see a ball mark, fix it. If you take a divot, put it back. Many of you would not neglect this at your home clubs, do not neglect this at the sites we host tournaments at.



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## **Code of Conduct Penalties:**

Any Code of Conduct violation will result in a written letter to the player and his or her parent/guardian. The NJPGA Junior Golf Committee may assess any or all of the following penalties based on the severity and frequency of the violation (s):

- Two stroke penalty for each act of unsportsmanlike behavior
- Immediate disqualification from the tournament at which the violation occurs.
- Depending on the severity of the violation, a tournament disqualification may also result in suspension from future events.
- The NJPGA Junior Tour reserves the right to suspend or revoke a player's membership for a major breach of the NJPGA Junior Tour Code of Conduct
- Violation of the NJPGA Junior Tour Code of Conduct may affect a player's eligibility for invitationals.



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## **Parent & Spectator Guidelines**

Parents and spectators must refrain from offering assistance to players on the golf course. This information is listed on every tournament page and in every tournament email, yet we still have issues. Wrongful conduct includes, helping with club selection, strategy, reading greens, and anything else that could help a player gain a competitive advantage. This also falls under our no caddie policy. Caddying does not only refer to the transportation of a player's clubs, it also refers to offering assistance.

Parents and spectators **MUST** also remember to observe dress codes. Jeans are not acceptable on the golf course. We are all guests at the golf courses we host tournaments at, and we must adhere to club policies. When in doubt, wear golf attire.

## **Caddie Policy**

- Caddies are strictly prohibited during New Jersey PGA Junior Tour events.
- Players are not permitted to have someone carry their clubs or receive advice regarding club selection, hole strategy, reading greens, etc.
- Players receiving or asking for advice/assistance, which could result in an unfair advantage, are subject to a first offense penalty of 2-strokes and a second offense penalty of disqualification.
- Parents and spectators are required to refrain from on-course conversation with Junior Tour Members during a round. This includes rulings and general conversation which could be misinterpreted as giving advice.
- During a stipulated round, parents or spectators may provide drinks, snacks, clothing, and umbrellas to Junior Tour Members. The transfer must take place in between the play of holes, not during the play of a hole.

## **Stopping Play During a Dangerous Situation**

When play is stopped due to a dangerous situation, all play must be discontinued immediately, and play shall not resume until the Committee has ordered a resumption of play. NOTE: A suspension for a dangerous situation will be signaled by **1** prolonged siren or horn blast. All other types of suspension will be signaled by **3 (three)** intermittent siren or horn blasts. Resumption of play will be signaled by **2 (two)** intermittent siren or horn blasts.



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## Penalty:

Penalty for breach of this condition is Disqualification. The breach is identified by individuals who continue to play, or start to practice, after a suspension of play or before play resumes. The NJPGA Junior Tour reserves the right to shorten 18-hole stroke play events to 9-holes, or the minimum number of holes played by each contestant in a division, if all players in a division complete at least 9 holes and it is not feasible to resume play after play is suspended.

## Rules of Golf

There are resources available to help golfers better understand the USGA Rules of Golf. At every tournament we run, we hand out a Supplementary Rules Sheet. These sheets are specific to the golf course being played and are additions to the Rules of Golf set forth by the USGA.

**Read them before you start your round, they are meant to help you.** We also provide a quick reference card to the Rules of Golf that cover a variety of rules situations. Always keep a copy of this in your golf bag and learn how to use it.

We are not expecting our tour members to be experts in the Rules of Golf, **BUT**, if you do not know what to do if you find yourself in any of the following situations, **NOW** is the time to learn before your next tournament.

Common rules situations that take place at almost every tournament: You **MUST** know what to do in the following situations:

- Lost Ball
- Unplayable Lie
- Ball Out of Bounds
- Red vs. Yellow Penalty Areas
- Proceeding under a rule without virtual certainty (assuming a ball is in a Penalty Area without any certainty)
- When and where you can ground your club
- Starting from outside the teeing area (accidentally playing a wrong hole)
- Playing a wrong ball
- Signing an incorrect scorecard
- Asking for or Offering Advice
- Placing a ball when it should be dropped
- Knowing how to drop a ball properly in accordance with the rules
- Taking relief from an embedded ball
- Taking relief from obstructions (moveable and immovable) Ground Under Repair, Cart Paths, Drains, Sprinkler Heads, Abnormal Ground Conditions and Burrowing Animal Holes
- Playing a second ball when there is doubt as to procedure
- Playing or practicing after a suspension due to a dangerous situation (lightning within 10 miles)
- Agreeing to waive a rule



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- Improving Conditions Affecting the Stroke (C.A.T.S.) include the lie of the ball and area of intended swing

Please use [www.usga.org](http://www.usga.org) as a reference and try some of their rules quizzes. They will help you. If it's easier to Google or YouTube what the rules listed above mean, do that. Anything you can do to learn and apply the rules will help you as a tournament golfer and often help you in certain situations on the golf course. It may seem overwhelming, but it will get easier as you read and watch videos explaining these rules.