



# CHICAGO WOMEN'S DISTRICT GOLF ASSOCIATION

## INSTRUCTIONS GOVERNING FOUR-BALL MATCH PLAY 2026

### POLICIES REGARDING FOUR-BALL MATCH PLAY

**General:** CWDGA conducts Four-Ball Match Play yearly in each of its five sections – Central, Northeast, Northwest, South and West. A member club is entitled to submit teams of eligible players to compete in one of the four divisions of the club's respective section. If a section is oversubscribed, the field will be reduced to 24 teams (96 players).

The form of play is Four-Ball Match Play (USGA Rule 23) with an eighteen-point system of scoring, which is played on five separate dates. The cumulative team points are available on the CWDGA website.

All team players compete to their current Course Handicap at the host-club. If handicaps are the same, they are placed in a position according to the Handicap Differential. If the Handicap Differential is the same, the players will be positioned alphabetically by last name. Note: If a regular or substitute player's Handicap Index exceeds 28.0, she must play to an index of 28.0.

Handicaps used for Four-Ball Match Play will be in accordance with the World Handicap System (WHS). The revision date utilized for our matches will be the one in effect as of the 36-hour substitute deadline.

**Team Selection:** Each member club is responsible for the selection of its team members. An "eligible player" must have golf privileges at a CWDGA member club, have amateur status and must maintain a current, valid USGA Handicap at that club. If a team captain wishes to submit a player for consideration with a Handicap Index higher than 28.0, she must receive the approval of the Team Match Chair. That player, if approved, must play to an index of 28.0.

A player who may be a member of more than one club shall select the club that she shall represent in all CWDGA competitions and shall not be permitted to make any change during the year unless permission is granted by the CWDGA Board of Directors. However, a player who has active CDGA memberships at clubs in different sections may qualify to be a substitute for a club that is not in her section.

Each team should have at least two reliable substitutes. A substitute whose Handicap Index exceeds 28.0 must be approved by the Sectional Handicap Chair and must play to a 28.0 Handicap Index.

**All regular members of a team must play at least three scheduled Four-Ball matches to be eligible for prizes.**

**Permanent Replacements** may be made up until April 6th. After this date, the Team Match Chair must approve all Permanent Player replacements. The original player may play as a substitute during the current season.

**Substitutes:** Substitute requests must be submitted no later than 36 hours in advance. Substitutes with a Handicap Index over 28.0 need approval from the Sectional Handicap Chair and play to a 28.0 index.

**A substitute may play in any division, however, if a club fields more than one team, and more than one of its teams require substitutes, the player with the lower Handicap Index must substitute in the lower handicap division.** A permanent team member

may not substitute or otherwise play on another team of the club without the approval of the Team Match Chair.

**No substitute appearing on the day of play without prior notice will be accepted regardless of circumstances.**

**Byes:** In the case of a bye, the team with the bye has the option of playing the course with the field. At least 2 regular players must be in attendance and any substitutes MUST have a Handicap Index of 28.0 or lower. The team players will play as a foursome. This does not count as a scheduled match for these players so they must play two of the other four play dates to be eligible for prizes. Thirty-six points are awarded for a team with a bye since each team in the division will also have one bye.

### POLICIES REGARDING THE DAY OF PLAY:

The Committee is made up of the CWDGA Sectional Handicap Chair and/or another CWDGA Board Member in attendance.

**This document shall be considered terms of the competition. Violation of any of the terms may result in disqualification under USGA Rule 1.2a.**

**Local Rules Governing Day of Play:** USGA Model Rule I-2, prohibition of practice on or near previous putting green and on or near any practice green between the play of two holes, is in effect for all CWDGA tournaments. The penalty for breach of this Rule is the General Penalty, disqualification of the player who was in breach, applied to the next hole. Her partner can defend the hole. In addition, all practice ranges and putting greens will close 30 minutes prior to start of the tournament. The penalty under Model Local Rule I-1 is a warning for the first breach, followed by the General Penalty for a second breach, and disqualification for the third breach. A breach is considered one stroke.

USGA Model Local Rule E-13 which allows players to remove an animal (other than an animal that is also a loose impediment such as a worm or insect) that is touching or near their ball without penalty will be in effect at all CWDGA tournaments. The player may move the animal in any way. If the player's ball moves while removing the animal, there is no penalty and the ball must be replaced on its original spot.

**Time of Starting:** Players should be prepared to **tee-off** at the time published on the schedule. If only one player of the side fails to report to the tee on schedule, Rule 5.3a applies. If both members of the side fail to report to the tee on schedule, but at least one does arrive, ready to play, within five minutes after the starting time, the **PENALTY** is loss of the first hole. If neither player reports to the tee within five minutes after the starting time, the side is disqualified from the match.

**Communication and Distance Measuring Devices:** In addition to distance measuring devices that conform to USGA specifications, players may use cell phones and smart watches as distance measuring devices and may use all functions of golf apps in accordance with Rule 4.3(3). Cell phones may be used to access the USGA Rules of Golf and CWDGA Tournament Rules. In addition, players may use a cell phone to request a ruling. A telephone number will be included on the Notice to Competitors. Players and



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their caddies are prohibited from making and receiving telephone calls, texting, checking email, and listening to audio. If CWDGA determines this policy has been violated, the player will receive a warning. A second violation at any CWDGA event will result in disqualification under a code of conduct violation (1.2b). A third violation will result in disqualification from all CWDGA events for the remainder of the current playing season.

**Caddies/Carts:** If a host club has provided caddies and caddies are available, a contestant must use a caddie or a cart with a caddie. Contestants may not provide their own caddies. Reserved caddies must be used. A player wishing to change her cart/caddie request must have her Team Captain inform the Sectional Handicap Chair of the change before the 36-hour deadline. On the day of play only the Sectional Handicap Chair can authorize changes.

**Attire:** Players and caddies must be properly attired on both the golf course and the premises of the club. Jeans of any color, T-shirts and tank tops are prohibited. Collared shirts are strongly suggested. Shorts and golf skirts must be mid-thigh in length. Any additional dress code restrictions of the club hosting the event are in effect. It is always advisable to consult the host-club for clarification of policies. If the Committee determines there has been a violation of this policy the player will receive a warning. A second violation at any CWDGA event will result in disqualification for the remainder of the current playing season.

**Returning Scorecards:** A player from one side shall sign and a player from the opposing side shall attest one scorecard, immediately upon completion of the match. The scorecard must show a team score, indicating points won by each team totaling 18. The team's score for each hole must be credited to the correct player. The points won by each team should be clearly marked and must total 18. **No changes will be made after the scorecard has been accepted at the scoring table.** Each week's match results will be posted on the website.

**Weather:** Regardless of weather, players, including substitutes, must appear at the host-club to receive points, unless the course is declared closed and the match officially canceled prior to start of the matches. If a team is not present, it shall be disqualified from Four-Ball Match Play for the current season and all points earned by and against the team for the season shall be null and void. The individual team members involved will forfeit their right to play in all CWDGA events for that current season and in Four-Ball Match Play for the following season.

Play will start as scheduled and continue unless the course is declared unplayable. Play will be resumed unless the course is declared closed. Players are expected to wait at least one hour if the course is declared unplayable to determine if the course will be closed.

If the course is declared closed before Four-Ball Match Play has begun and the matches cannot be rescheduled, the points will be divided equally. If the course is declared closed after play has begun, the points for the holes played stand as earned and the points for any holes not played will be divided equally.

In an electrical storm, players shall discontinue play and take shelter. Balls may be marked and lifted or left on the course. The Committee (Sectional Handicap Chair and/or another CWDGA Board Member) will determine when and if play continues or discontinues.

**Stopping Play:** Regarding breach of Rule 5.7a, in addition to disqualification, the individual team members involved will forfeit their right to play in all CWDGA events for that current season and in Four-Ball Match Play for the following season. If an entire team or a side fails to play or discontinues play for any reason, whether a breach of Rule 5.7a or not, all points earned by and against the team for the season shall be null and void. Discontinuance of play is communicated by a CWDGA official only.

**Disqualification of Side:** If a side is disqualified for any USGA Rule OR CWDGA Rule, the penalty of which is disqualification of side, the side which breached the Rule will receive zero points and the opponents will receive 11 points for the day.

**Ties:** If two teams that are tied have previously played each other during regular Four-Ball Match Play, the winner of the original match is the winner. If the tie is for first place, the loser is the second-place winner.

If the two teams that are tied have played each other and the original match was a tie, A scorecard playoff will be determined in the following order:

- The winner of the back nine of the original match
- If tied, the winner of the last six holes on the back
- If tied, the winner of the last three holes on the back
- If tied, the winner of the eighteenth hole

If the two teams that are tied did not play each other during regular Four-Ball Match Play, an eighteen-hole playoff will take place at a neutral club selected by the Sectional Team Chair. If this playoff results in a tie, a scorecard playoff will determine the winner.

**Prompt Pace of Play:** Pursuant to USGA Rule 5.6b the CWDGA has established the following pace of play guidelines. A group of four players is expected to take no more than 15 minutes per hole – 4 hours and 30 minutes per round to play. Any group that fails to hold its position on the course will be alerted and requested to play at a faster pace. After being warned, the group will be monitored. The time each player takes to play each stroke will be recorded. Any player in a group out of position that takes more than 40 seconds to play a stroke will be assessed a one stroke penalty. The second occurrence will result in the general penalty, and a third breach will result in disqualification, as provided in Rule 5.6a.

**Etiquette:** Players are expected to conduct themselves in a disciplined manner, demonstrating courtesy and sportsmanship at all times. This includes being considerate of other players, caring for the course and treating all opponents, staff, and CWDGA members with respect. The Committee has the power to revoke the playing privileges of any player for etiquette violations under Rule 1.2b.

**Tipping:** The CWDGA tips at each play date. Players may use their discretion in handling extraordinary services received.