

Guidelines and Suggestions for Parents

I would like to encourage every parent to attend your son's or daughter's golf tournaments whenever you can. If you do, there are some very important rules that must be followed, as well as some rules of etiquette that should be followed. A violation of any of the mandatory rules could lead to a disqualification, and violations of the rules of etiquette can make it difficult for the players to perform their best.

Mandatory Rules

Do not give advice to your child during the round. Only the coaches can consult with the players during a round. This includes even seemingly innocent communications such as asking your child what club he used on a shot, because this might be misconstrued as giving advice. Do not purchase anything for anyone except your child during the entirety of any tournament or tournament trip.

Do not make rulings or advise the players on the rules during a round. Rulings should only be made by tournament officials. The players will follow USGA rules, with whatever local rules may be adopted by the tournament course or officials.

Never touch a player's ball while it is in play. A ball is in play from the moment it is hit from a tee until the moment the player "holes out" on the green for a particular hole.

Do not walk in the fairways during a round. Stay on the cart path or off of the fairway if there is no cart path. When the players have reached the green, you can approach the green to watch, but stay some distance away from the green.

Some courses allow parents to rent electric carts to follow the players. Usually players are not allowed to ride on the carts, and you should not offer them a ride. There will be exceptions at some tournaments if there is a long walk from one green to the next tee. Tournament volunteers or officials will either inform us in advance of when rides are permitted, or will be present at these places to offer the players rides and will tell you that you can help if you want to do so. Never allow rides without permission from some tournament official, however.

The players are responsible for keeping scores. If you keep track of scores, do not become involved in helping the players with that task. If a question arises about a score, the players need to consult with the tournament officials and coaches.

Coaches are only allowed to coach players between holes and at the turn. If parents actually hear other coaches violating that rule they should report it to me. Coaches are subject to the "no advice" rule and are not allowed to administer rulings in Varsity events. Junior Varsity events are much less stringent and we are more likely to allow coaches to issue rulings so as to teach players how to handle those situations themselves in Varsity events.

Etiquette

Polite clapping or encouraging comments, such as "Nice Shot" are always appreciated by the players and are welcome. Please be mindful of how loud you are, however, as you might disrupt play on nearby holes.

THIS IS REALLY IMPORTANT!! Turn off the volume of all cell phones and pagers. If you must use a cell phone on the course, make sure that you are out of hearing range of the players.

In almost every tournament, you can help spot balls. If a player hits a shot out of the fairway, parents can point the players in the right direction, or even help look for the ball, unless prohibited by local tournament rule. However, parents should not start looking for a ball until the players are present so that no one can be accused of any improper assistance.

Do not talk or make noise from the time a player begins his pre-shot routine until after he has played the shot.

Adhere to the course's dress code. Some courses do not allow blue jeans or T-shirts.

If you take a camera, do not use it in a way that interferes with the players. Digital cameras are quieter than standard film cameras. Try to use telephoto lenses so that you can maintain your distance.

Suggestions

Walking 18 holes as a spectator can be tiring. There are several types of spectator folding chairs or stools that can make viewing much more enjoyable.

Take a small backpack with a bottle or two of water, and perhaps an umbrella on really hot days.

Wear sunscreen and a hat.

Your Support

Finally, as parents you can help me by understanding the participation expected of a golf team member, and encouraging your son/daughter to fully participate. I have prepared a practice schedule for team members to follow, although different players may need to focus on different skills some times. Coaching a golf team presents unique challenges that other sports do not face. Unlike other sports, we do not have one place for the team to practice and the team is spread out over several courses. This makes it impossible for me to see each player per day, for it is just me and my assistant for all of the teams. Golf is considered an individual sport, and often players practice by themselves, not with other team members but we encourage them to practice together.

Out of necessity, I spend more time during the year with the varsity players getting them ready for the district, regional and state tournaments at the end of the year, and I explain this to the younger players so that they don't feel ignored. I know that the younger players especially have to rely on parents to take them to and from the course every day, and I know that this can be an inconvenience at times. However, as with every other sport, the only way the players will improve and play their best during tournaments is to diligently practice. This includes not only committing the time to practice, but practicing the way you need to practice to improve at golf. Please talk to your son/daughter about his/her golf practice frequently, not in a way that is overbearing or puts pressure on them, but in an encouraging way. With your support, I know that being a member of the golf team will be a great experience for your child.

Thanks for all of your support,

Coach Rick Nordstrom & Coach Jonathan Stone