

# 2026 ACAA Golf Championship

## Willow Brook Golf Course

### Tournament Rules

There will be adults with every group to keep each player's stroke count to verify with each scorecard. Golfers will keep each other's scores.

No golfer is allowed to ride on a cart unless going to bathroom or other emergency without golf clubs and must return to the point of pick up before continuing play.

Varsity Boys: Once your stroke count is 3 over par (+3), pick up your ball and that is your score for the hole. All other golfers: Once your stroke count is 4 over par (+4), pick up your ball and move on to the next hole.

\*Varsity Boys play from the **BLUE** tees

\*Varsity Girls play from the **RED** tees

\*Junior High Boys play from the **WHITE** tees

\*Junior High Girls play from the **RED** tees

## Equipment

### Clubs and balls

- **Clubs:** You can carry a maximum of 14 clubs. If you have a 15th, leave it in the car to avoid complications. The 14 clubs can be a combination of anything you like. You do not HAVE TO have 14 clubs - it's just the maximum and there is no minimum requirement besides 1.
  - **Ball:** If you lose a ball during a hole, you can use any other ball as the new ball in play. Look closely at your ball and identify it so that you may distinguish it from other golfer's balls during the round. **Make a marking (like initials) on the ball with a sharpie to help distinguish it as yours.**
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## Rules: Tee box/teeing ground



- You must tee the ball up **behind** the line created by the tee markers. You can tee it up anywhere between the two markers and you can tee it as far back as the length of two drivers. So if your driver is 45 inches, you can tee up to 90 inches behind the imaginary line - **Never in front of the tee markers.**
- **If the ball falls off the tee before you swing at it, it doesn't count as a stroke.**
- **If you take a practice swing while the ball is on the tee and hit the ball, you do not take a penalty** and you must put the ball back on the tee and play your shot, still playing shot number one. You have to attempt to make a stroke AT THE BALL for it to count as a shot. This only applies to the tee ball as it is not officially in play. Once it is in play, down the fairway or on the green, you will incur a penalty stroke for this.
- If you **swing at the ball and miss it completely**, that counts as one stroke. If it falls off the tee from the wind you generate, you must play it from **that** position without putting it back on the tee - that was your first stroke. You are now hitting number two. ***This counts if you make a genuine attempt to hit the ball.***
- Play **'ready golf'**. This is where whoever is ready first, hits the ball from the Tee Box regardless of their score on previous hole.
- Very important: On the tee, stand outside the teeing ground when others are hitting. Don't stand directly behind the ball, looking down the fairway watching your friend play. This is distracting for him. When your friend is

hitting, you should not be visible in his peripheral vision. DO NOT MOVE, until after he hits. Help watch where the ball goes.

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### Rules: During play of a hole

- **You must play the ball as it lies.** You're not allowed to kick it or move it to a better spot. You cannot use a tee to tee the ball up in the fairway. This is for the tee box only.
- You can't make the lie better so be sure not to press your club down very hard behind the ball to try flatten the ground. Also don't press behind the ball with your foot to make it easier to hit the ball! **You can only stamp your foot behind the ball on the tee for your first shot.**
- If your ball comes to rest on a sprinkler head, against a rock, or on a cart path you can place your ball within 1 foot of the position of the ball at the time, *but not closer to the green.*
- If your ball is plugged (embedded) in soft ground, you may lift, clean, and place ball on the ground.
- No breaking or bending branches to allow you to swing easier at the ball.
- In a water hazard (now known as penalty area marked by yellow stakes), sometimes there is no water and you can play out of it. You can ground your club in the water hazard.
- You can't place anything in front of your ball for aiming or have someone stand in front of you to aim at them. You can however, use leaves and stones and grass **that were already there** to line your club up to for alignment!
- You can pick up sticks, stones, leaves, rocks, boulders, feathers, dead grass, pine needles that are around your ball but make sure not to move your ball because then that's a penalty. Use your hands to move the impediments because dragging your feet and kicking and changing the surface is not allowed.
- You cannot break any growing thing to improve your lie. If you really have a big problem, better to take a penalty drop within 2 clubs from where the ball is (but no closer to the hole). You mark it, and pick it up and measure the 2 club lengths. Then you drop the ball and add one shot. Then you hit your shot from the new position.

## Practice shots

- You can take a practice swing at fresh air but you can't actually hit a ball before your shot.

## Order of play

- **We are playing “ready golf,” but if everyone is ready, the player furthest from the hole is supposed to play first.** When playing “ready golf,” make sure you don't play while someone else is playing. Establish who is going first if you are confused.

## Hitting the ball

- You need to hit the ball with one strike. **Scooping is not allowed.** Pushing the ball with extended contact like a hockey puck is not allowed.
- Only hit a ball that is standing still. **Don't hit moving balls** unless it's in the water. It gets very complicated counting shots and penalties.
- Identify your ball before you play it - if you hit any other ball but yours, you will get a 2-stroke penalty.
- An unintentional double-hit is not penalized but an intentional one is. If you hit a shot and fluff it, and your follow through catches the ball again by mistake, then you are not penalized.

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## Rules: On the greens

If any part of the ball is touching the green, it means you're on the green and can put a marker behind the ball and pick it up to clean.

## Putting & touching the green

- You can move away stones, sand, gravel, leaves and other loose impediments on your line. You can fix the putting line whether that's a ball mark, spike mark, and pretty much prepare your line to be as perfect as you like. Without delaying play of course.
- **Don't scrape or rub the surface of the green with your hand or club** to feel grain or texture of the green. You can't test the surface that way.
- Sometimes golfers will ask you to move your marker left or right of where it is because it interferes with their line. Place the heel of the putter head next to the marker and move the marker to the toe of the putter. Remember to replace the marker to the original position before you play!

- Always replace the ball as close to the identical position it was in before you marked it.
- If your putt stops just on the edge of the hole, you can wait 10 seconds to see if it goes in. If it takes longer than 10 seconds to drop in, you count that drop into the hole as a stroke.
- **VERY IMPORTANT: Notice where the other players balls are on the green. People get very sensitive about standing on the line that their ball will roll on. Take note of where everyone's ball is and then be careful to stand where the balls are probably not going to roll.**

### **The flag stick**

- If your ball hits the pin when you're off the green, that's no problem as long as no one is touching the flag at the time. You can putt with the flag in and leave it in. There is no longer a penalty stroke for leaving the flag in while on the green. A real time saver! You can take the pin out whenever you feel like it and you can play with it in whenever you feel like it.

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### **Ball moves by accident or by God**

- If you move the ball while searching for it, there is no penalty. You have 3 minutes to find the ball, otherwise you have to drop or go back and re-hit the shot with a penalty stroke added.
- If someone else or an animal moves your ball, there's no penalty. You must replace it then carry on as usual.
- If water or wind moves your ball (as long as you didn't ground the club behind the ball) you play it from the new position! Don't put it back! **NO PENALTY.**

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### **Rules: Dropping and marking balls not on the green**

#### **Penalty drops**

- When you drop a ball, stand up straight and drop the ball from **KNEE HEIGHT**. The ball mustn't touch your body or equipment in the act of dropping the ball.

- If your ball rolls into the hazard after a drop, make sure you retrieve it and drop it again. You must take full relief from obstacles or trouble so your stance mustn't be hindered by the thing you're dropping away from. If after 2 drops, the ball still rolls into the hazard or area you dropped from, place the ball on the spot it landed on when you dropped it last.
- Make sure you watch where the ball crosses the water hazard and drop at that point or behind that point in line with the flag as far back as you like. There's nothing that grinds golfers more than a guy who cheats with his drops! Always ask your partners if they agree that the ball crossed the hazard where you intend to drop.
- Do not apply spin on the ball or try to make it drop softer. You can select a lovely piece of turf that is to your advantage if it is in the area you need to drop but you must make a clean drop of the ball and allow nature to take its course.

### **Free drops**

- You may drop away from temporary water that breaks the surface of the ground and is not marked as a hazard. Stand on the ground if it's squidgy and see if water comes up through the surface. No penalty.
- You **MUST** drop away from areas marked GUR - Ground Under Repair. No penalty.
- You're allowed to drop away from burrowing animal holes. No penalty.
- If you land on the wrong green, you must drop it off the green 1 club length from the edge and play from there, but not closer to the green to which you are hitting. No penalty. If you hit a ball from a green, you'll leave a hole in the green and cost the course considerable money to repair it.

### **Marking a ball not on the green**

- If another ball is in your way or interfering with your swing, you can ask the person playing it to mark and lift it.
- If someone asks you to mark and lift the ball not on a green, mark it with a coin or a tee peg and pick the ball up. You're not allowed to clean it so just hold it and replace when he's done.
- If you can't see if the ball you've found is yours, you can mark it and lift it to

identify it then put it back in the original position and play on.

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### **Rules: Obstructions**

Man-made objects not part of the earth such as bottles, cans, rakes, stakes etc., are movable obstructions. Sprinkler heads, shelters, cart paths, etc., are immovable obstructions. You can take a free drop from sprinklers and cart paths if your stance is interfered with. You generally cannot take a free drop from buildings, but that is up to the club.

- You can move the movable obstructions but make sure your ball doesn't move!
  - If an immovable obstruction is hindering your stand or swing, you can mark the ball, pick it up and drop it away so your swing is unimpeded at the nearest point of full relief. There is no penalty unless a rule of the specific golf courses forbids it.
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### **Rules: Ball in the water, lost, out of bounds or unplayable**

Water hazards

- Water hazard (now known as penalty areas) are defined by yellow stakes or painted lines. Lateral water hazards are identified by red stakes or painted lines.
  - You can play the ball inside the hazard if you like or you can:
    1. Drop a ball where you played the last shot and add one additional penalty shot.
    2. Drop a ball in line with the hole and the place you crossed the hazard and go as far back as you like.
    3. If it's a lateral (red staked) hazard you can drop within 2 club lengths of where your ball crossed the line of the hazard.
  - Very important! You must drop where the ball last crossed a red stake hazard. Many people will cheat and drop in line with where the ball finished. If the water is right in front of the tee box, and that's the last place it crossed, you must drop it on the front of the tee box.
  - **In a water hazard, sometimes there is no water and you can play out of it.**
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## Lost & out of bounds

Definition of lost ball: you can't find it in under 3 minutes or you declare the ball lost. You can also declare a ball lost while you're standing where you hit the bad shot from. Then the next ball you put down in the same spot is the ball in play and you add one penalty stroke.

- Definition of out of bounds (OB): When the entire ball lies outside the white line or stake line signifying the out of bounds border. This Tournament will treat Out of Bounds as a Hazard.
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## Unplayable

- If you see your ball and you think you can't play it because it's under a bush or stuck in a tree, you can deem it unplayable, take a penalty shot and:
  1. Drop a ball on the line that runs from the hole to where your ball was lying. You can drop as far back as you want on that line.
  2. Hit a shot from the same place you hit the last shot.
  3. Measure 2 club lengths from where the ball is lying and drop it there.
- Varsity Boys: Once your stroke count is 3 over par (+3), pick up your ball and that is your score for the hole. All other golfers: Once your stroke count is 4 over par (+4), pick up your ball and move on to the next hole.

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