



How to Establish a GSGA Associate Club

Thank you for inquiring about Georgia State Golf Association membership. The GSGA's Associate Membership is for "clubs without real estate." In other words, your group is not affiliated with a particular golf course but is interested in establishing a "golf club" so that your golfers can enjoy the benefits of being a GSGA member.

An Associate Club of GSGA is organized to pursue the game of golf with integrity and in accordance with the USGA Handicap System. An Associate club must

- Form a handicap committee to insure that these requirements are being met.
- The chairman of the handicap committee may not be a paid staff member of the golf club.
- The club's members must have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play golf with each other.
- The club must provide for "peer review" which is the opportunity for each member to review the scoring records of his fellow members.

The following pages include information and some decisions from the *USGA Handicap System* manual that further explain requirements for golf clubs interested in membership as a GSGA Associate Club. This information packet also provides you with samples to assist you in forming your Associate Golf Club. Please give us a call if you have a question about any of the materials.

In order to process your membership application, the GSGA must have the following:

- Completed membership application, including designation of "Type 2" or "Type 3" as defined in the attached information
- Copy of your club's by-laws or constitution and a list of its officers
- Name and contact information for your club's handicap chairman
- Copy of the year's tournaments/events scheduled for your group
- Copy of the roster of club members, including addresses
- Handicap Certification obtained through www.usga.org (instructions attached)
- Signed copy of the Handicap Compliance Checklist, verifying that your club is following the procedures required by the *USGA Handicap System*
- Check for a minimum of 10 members at \$25.00 per golfer (total \$250)

What to expect next...

- You will be contacted by the GSGA handicap department to arrange for directions on how to use the Internet-based handicap program.

Handicap Certification Through www.usga.org

Your Associate Club will become licensed to issue a USGA Handicap Index as a member club of GSGA, but it is still necessary for you to complete the handicap certification process as established by the USGA. This process may be completed online and is outlined below. This online certification will certify your club until a club member is able to attend a future seminar. Once a representative of your Associate Club takes and passes the online handicap quiz, your club will become certified and GSGA will be able to set your club up on the Internet-based handicap program.

Go to www.usga.org, click on Handicapping, scroll to the bottom and under EDUCATION, select **Online Handicap Seminar (click here: [online handicapping quiz](#))**. Enter in the required fields noting your status as a member club of a golf association.

Once you take and pass the online handicap quiz, sign the attached compliance checklist and return to GSGA either by fax to the attention of the Handicapping Department at 770.955.1156, or via email (mloggins@gsga.org).

All the material covered in the quiz is in the USGA Handicap System Manual, which can be accessed online at www.usga.org.

The certification process must be completed before your club may issue handicaps. The online seminar and quiz can be taken on any computer with high speed Internet access and will take approximately one to two hours to complete.

Please feel free to contact Linda Sommers at 1.800.949.4742x2340 or 678.324.5967 with any questions.



Club Compliance Checklist
Read and Sign confirming your club is in compliance.

• Meet the USGA definition of a golf club?
• Have a Handicap Committee composed mostly of members and chaired by a member? (Section 8-1)
• Make it possible for a player to record the correct USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating with each posted score from every set of tees? (Sections 5-2, 8-2b, and 8-4c)
• Require the posting of all acceptable scores? (Section 5-1)
• Require use of USGA procedures to adjust hole scores before posting? (Section 4)
• Require that nine-hole scores be posted? (Section 5-2c and 5-2d)
• Insist that the Rules of Golf be followed? (Section 5-1a)
• Follow the National Revision Schedule and posting season of the authorized golf association having jurisdiction in the region? (Section 8-3a and 8-3b)
• Have a representative from the golf club complete an annual club compliance and education assessment?
• Perform computations and adjustments in accordance with the USGA Handicap Formula? (Sections 8-4 and 10)
• Make current scoring records and a Handicap Index listing of all members readily available for inspection by others? (Section 6-3)
• Reduce or increase a Handicap Index of any player whose Handicap Index does not reflect the player's potential ability? (Section 8-4c)
• Notify an authorized golf association when permanent changes have been made to the golf course so that the association can issue a new USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating? (Section 14-5b)
• Include the letter "L" after local handicaps, which exceed the USGA maximum limits of 36.4 for men and 40.4 for women? (Section 3-4)
• Utilize the current USGA Course Rating and Slope Rating issued by an authorized golf association? (Section 14)
• Have a representative from all new golf clubs participate in a USGA Handicap System Seminar (whether conducted by the USGA or an authorized golf association) including passing a test exhibiting knowledge about the System?
• Have a signed license agreement in place with a local authorized golf association or USGA prior to issuing a Handicap Index?

Club Name: _____ **Date:** _____

Signature of Club Official: _____ **Print Name:** _____

Please return by mail, fax or email to: Georgia State Golf Association, Attention: Michelle Loggins, 121 Village Parkway, Building 3, Marietta, Georgia 30067 * Fax (770) 955-1156 * mloggins@gsga.org

Source: The USGA Handicap System, 2016-2017

Golf Club

A "**golf club**" is an organization of at least ten individual members* that operates under bylaws with Committees (especially a **Handicap Committee**) to supervise golf activities, provide **peer review**, and maintain the integrity of the **USGA Handicap System** (see Club Compliance Checklist, Section **8-2m** and Decision **2I7**). A **golf club** must be licensed by the USGA to utilize the **USGA Handicap System**. A club can obtain a license directly from the USGA or in conjunction with its membership in an **authorized golf association** that is already licensed by the USGA and that has jurisdiction in the geographic area that includes the principal location of the **golf club**. (See Appendix F.)

*For administrative reasons, some **authorized golf associations** may require a **golf club** to have more than the USGA minimum of ten members in order for the **golf club** to be a member of the **authorized golf association**.

Members of a **golf club** must have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play golf with each other. They must be able to return scores personally, and these scores must be readily available for inspection by others, including, but not limited to, fellow members and the club's **Handicap Committee**.

A **golf club** is one of three (3) Types:

Type 1. The members of a Type 1 club are located at a single specific golf course with a valid **USGA Course Rating** and **Slope Rating** where a majority of the club's events are played and where the club's **scoring records** reside; or

Type 2. The members of a Type 2 club are affiliated, or known to one another, via a business, fraternal, ethnic, or social organization. The majority of the club members had an affiliation prior to organizing the club; or

Type 3. The members of a Type 3 club had no prior affiliation and a majority of the recruiting and sign up of the membership is done by solicitation to the public (e.g., newspaper, Internet).

Note : Within the context of the USGA Handicap System a member is defined as one who is affiliated with a licensed golf club for the purpose of obtaining a Handicap Index.

Section 2 DEFINITIONS

2/1. Clarification of Term "Golf Club"

Q: Membership in a golf organization is open to any player living within a large geographic area. In general, the members play at different golf facilities within the area, and do not normally play golf with one another. Is this organization a golf club within the meaning of the term in Section 2?

A: No. Section 2 states that in order for an organization to be considered a golf club, "members must have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play golf with each other." Also, the members of a golf club who are issued a Handicap Index must be from a small defined geographic area. For example: the residence or business address of each member of the golf club must generally be within approximately a 50 mile radius for Type 3 golf clubs (75 miles for Type 2 golf clubs) of the principal location of the golf club. (Applies to Type 2 and Type 3 only.)

[2/2. Reserved]

[2/3. Reserved]

2/4. Club Members at a Driving Range Issued Handicap Index

Q: May a driving range utilize the USGA Handicap System?

A: Yes. Hitting golf balls at the same driving range does not provide the opportunity to play golf together as required in the definition of a golf club. However, nothing prevents a driving range from being the principal location of a golf club. As long as its members have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play golf with each other, peer review is being performed, and all items on the Club Compliance Checklist are being met, this club is satisfying its requirements and is eligible to be licensed to issue a Handicap Index. (See Decision 2/7.)

2/5. Golf Club Composed of Company Employees

Q: A group of 52 employees from a company formed a golf club. The members work at the same office and play in a weekly league after work. The club has bylaws based on the USGA's sample bylaws with officers and meetings. A Handicap Committee has been formed and handicap reports are posted on a bulletin board for all to see. Scores are personally posted by members and reviewed by the Handicap Committee. All other requirements of the USGA Handicap System are followed. Is this group eligible to be licensed to utilize the USGA Handicap System?

A: Yes. Peer review standards are being met as members have a reasonable and regular opportunity to play golf with each other, as well as to review scores posted, and the Handicap Committee has the reasonable opportunity to satisfy the peer review oversight requirements set forth in Section 8.

2/6. Organization Recruiting Members through Advertisement

Q: An organization places an advertisement in a public newspaper or on a Web site inviting players to join a group that it calls a golf club. The player is asked to sign up, at the Web site or by mail, and pay via the Web site or by mail. Members are invited to play in tournaments held frequently and handicap reports and scoring records are displayed on a Web site or mailed to each member on revision dates. Members generally post scores via the Internet. In return, the player will receive a Handicap Index. Can this organization meet the USGA Handicap System definition of a golf club and utilize the USGA Handicap System?

A: Yes. See the definition of a golf club (Section 2), specifically Type 3. It is understood that Type 3 clubs organize by advertising for members. But, in addition all portions of the golf club definition must be met, the golf club must follow all aspects of the Club Compliance Checklist (see Section 8-2m), and the club must comply with all sections of the USGA Handicap System, including the clarifications listed in Decision 2/7.

2/6.5. Effect of Advertising on Golf Club Category

Q: Can a golf club that currently exists as a Type 1 or Type 2 club advertise for the purposes of adding unaffiliated players? If so, could this action cause the club to become a Type 3 golf club?

A: Nothing prohibits any golf club from advertising for members. As long as only a relatively small minority of the club members join because of advertising, the club Type would not be affected.

2/6.7. Third Party Involvement in Membership Process

Q: A group of golf clubs gets together and advertises membership openings. A third party becomes involved and signs up individuals to become members of these clubs. Is this acceptable?

A: Each golf club's bylaws may provide how new members are approved. A third party may inform a player about the possibility of becoming a member of a particular golf club, but each individual player must complete the membership application process and be approved by the club. A proposed candidate for membership may not become a member of a club until these requirements are met.

2/7. Clarification of Compliance/License Issues for Golf Club Categories Described in the Golf Club Definition

"Principal Location" (applies to Type 2 and Type 3 only)

The principal location of a golf club must be the physical address in the city or town which the club first identified in its application for a license to utilize the USGA Handicap System. So long as the golf club is in existence, the principal location must not be changed without the prior written consent of the authorized golf association of which the golf club is a member, or if the club is not a member of a golf association, of the USGA. Members of a golf club who are issued a Handicap Index must be from a small-defined geographic area, e.g., the residence or business address of each member of a Type 3 golf club generally must be within approximately a 50 mile radius of the principal location of the golf club. For a Type 2 golf club, members generally must be within approximately a 75 mile radius of the principal location of the golf club.

"Identification" (applies to Type 3 only)

Each individual must provide proof of identification and residence to the golf club in order to be a member of the club.

"Playing Requirements and Club Size" (applies to Type 3 only)

The USGA will consider the playing requirement met if each member returns at least three scores played with other club members during the season, and at least one of those rounds is played in a club-sponsored event. Anyone not meeting this minimum requirement should be dropped from the handicap roster.

A golf club's size is limited: If membership in a club exceeds the number of available tee times offered in club-sponsored events, the playing requirements are not being met. For example, if a club has 200 members and conducts only eight organized events with a maximum of 15 players each, not all members will have played in a club sponsored event ($8 \times 15 = 120$, not 200 or greater).

"Group Cohesion/Activities" (applies to all Types)

In order to be able to utilize the USGA Handicap System, the golf club must have group cohesion. Group activities should go beyond playing in tournaments. There should be a group orientation policy and other functions, such as group meetings, award banquets and the like.

"Contact Information" (applies to all Types)

Contact information about each member of the golf club must be made readily available to all members.

2/7.5. Club-Sponsored Event

Q: What constitutes a club-sponsored event, as referenced in the playing requirements portion of Decision [2/7](#)?

A: A club-sponsored event is one that is organized and conducted by the golf club, the majority of participants are members of the club, and its contestants are playing the same golf course during a single round. The format of the competition must result in an acceptable score for handicap purposes and its conduct must be under the Rules of Golf. Providing club-sponsored events allows for interaction among members including some that may not normally play golf with one another, which increases the likelihood of peer review taking place. A club with 150 members that conducts a four-person event is deemed not to be fulfilling the intent of the club-sponsored event requirement.

2/8. Clarification of Reasonable and Regular Opportunity to Play Golf with Each Other

Q: Parts of the definitions of a Golf Club and Peer Review state, providing a reasonable and regular opportunity for members of a golf club to play golf with each other. Would this requirement be satisfied by being on the same golf course, but not together within groups?

A: No. In order to gain an understanding of a player's potential ability and to form a reasonable basis for supporting or disputing a score that has been posted, a player needs to have played in the group with a fellow member. Merely being on the same golf course on the same day is not considered adequate for peer review to take place, as stated in the definitions of "peer review" and "golf club."

SAMPLE

VILLAGE LINKS GOLF ASSOCIATION

2016 TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

April 1	Handicap Stroke Play	Fields Ferry G.C.
May 3	Flag Tournament	Cobblestone G.C.
June 5	Point Tournament	City Club Marietta
July 10	Fewest Putts	North Fulton G.C.
August 2	Four Ball Stroke Play	RiverPines Golf
September 20	Club Championship	Fields Ferry G.C.

* USGA Rules Govern All Play

SAMPLE
**[CLUB NAME] GOLF CLUB
CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS**

Article I – NAME

The name of this golf club shall be the **Sample Golf Club**.

Article II – PURPOSE

FIRST: To stimulate interest in golf at the **Sample Golf Club** by bringing together a group of golfers desirous of forming a golfing organization.

SECOND: To increase the enjoyment, skill, knowledge of and respect for the game of golf.

THIRD: To promote amateur golf.

FOURTH: To encourage conformance to the USGA Rules of Golf by creating a representative authority.

FIFTH: To maintain a uniform system of handicapping as set forth in the USGA Handicap System and issue USGA Handicap Indexes to the members.

SIXTH: To provide an authoritative body to govern and conduct club competitions.

Article III – MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Membership shall be available to all **men/women** 18 years of age or older. There shall be at least 10 members with a maximum membership of **400**.

Section 2. Memberships in the club are individual and non-transferable. Dues are payable on or before January 31st of each year. The Board of Directors may at their discretion waive the age limitation to allow membership of younger golfers.

Section 3. Membership confers no voice in the operation of the golf course, clubhouse, nor any facilities of the course.

Section 4. Membership confers no special privileges in connection with the golf course.

Section 5. Memberships in the club are for a calendar year only, with all memberships expiring on December 31st.

Section 6. The fiscal year for the club will be January 1st through December 31st.

Section 7. The Board of Directors may confer honorary memberships upon those whom they feel have contributed to the advancement of golf. The unanimous affirmative vote of the Board shall be required to approve such action.

Section 8. In the event that any member of the association shall commit any act which reflects discredit or disrepute thereon or shall refuse or neglect to comply with any rules and regulations adapted by the Board of Directors or the duly appointed officers, such member shall be subject to suspension or expulsion after ten days written notice and the right to be heard, by a vote of two-thirds of the Board of Directors at any regular meeting or special meeting called for such purpose.

Section 9. The annual meeting of the **Sample Golf Club** shall be held on the **third Wednesday in the month of October**. The Board of Directors shall provide for the holding of such other meetings as may be deemed necessary or desirable, and they shall call special meetings upon written petition signed by not less than **ten percent** of the membership.

Section 10. A legal quorum at any meeting shall be **twenty** members present in person or by proxy. Each active member in good standing shall be entitled to one vote.

Section 11. All membership fees and dues shall be established by the Board of Directors from time to time in such amounts as they deem to be adequate to operate and maintain the club. Members shall be liable for dues until their written resignation has been received and accepted. All monies collected shall accrue to the benefit of the membership.

Article IV – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall consist of **five** members in good standing of the **Sample Golf Club** and they shall exercise all powers of management of the club not specifically excepted by these By-Laws. The Board of Directors shall include the Golf Professional of the golf course or his nominee.

Section 2. At least five weeks prior to the Annual Meeting, the Board of Directors shall appoint a nominating committee consisting of five members of the club. At least four weeks prior to the Annual Meeting, this committee shall submit to the Board and shall post upon the club bulletin board a list of nominees to fill any vacancies for the term of office beginning on the date of the meeting. Names of other members in good standing may be nominated by petition signed by at least **ten** members and submitted to the Board of Directors at least two weeks prior to the Annual Meeting. At least one week prior to the Annual Meeting, a list of all candidates nominated shall be posted upon the club bulletin board.

Section 3. Voting shall be by written ballot and those names receiving the greatest number of votes cast shall be declared to be elected. The Board shall appoint a committee of three judges who are not members of the Board or candidates for election to supervise the election.

Section 4. The Board of Directors shall meet at such times and places as they may select and a majority of the Board shall constitute a quorum at any meeting.

Section 5. In the case of any vacancy through death, resignation, disqualification or other cause, the remaining directors, even though less than a quorum, may elect a successor by majority vote to hold office for the unexpired term of the director whose place shall be vacant, and until the election of his successor.

Article V – OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Section 1. Within **ten** days after the annual meeting and election, the Board of Directors shall meet and elect the officers.

Section 2. The officers shall consist of president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer, and their duties shall be such as their titles would indicate or such as may be assigned to them respectively from time to time.

Section 3. The Board of Directors shall authorize and define the powers and duties of all committees. Chairmen and members of all committees shall be appointed by the president, and the president shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee.

Section 4. The following committees shall be appointed each year, with such other committees as the president may deem necessary or advisable:

Tournament Committee to arrange and schedule with the management of the golf course as necessary, and conduct all intra-club and inter-club competitions.

Handicap Committee composed primarily of members with the responsibility to establish a fair and proper system of handicaps in accordance with procedures set forth in the USGA Handicap System Manual.

Membership Committee to investigate and act upon all applications for membership and to recommend appropriate action to the Board of Directors.

Article VI – AMENDMENTS TO BY-LAWS

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall have the power to repeal or amend any of these By-Laws provided that such action shall not be effective until approved by a majority vote of the members of the **Sample Golf Association** at a meeting held in accordance with the provisions contained herein.



ASSOCIATE CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Club Name _____

Date Organized _____

Mailing Address _____

Physical Address _____

City, Zip _____ County _____

Telephone Number _____ Fax Number _____

Website _____ Email Address _____

CLUB INFORMATION

Type 2 Type 3

President	Email
Vice President	_____
Treasurer	_____
Secretary	_____
GSGA Contact	_____
Contact Email	_____
Contact Phone	_____

We certify all information on this form to be correct and that our club is eligible for GSGA membership. We further agree to the provisions of the Georgia State Golf Association By-Laws. We understand that our club dues are based on the total number of individual USGA Handicap Indexes issued at our club even if we choose not to use the GSGA/GHIN Handicapping Service offered as a benefit of our GSGA membership.

Signed _____ Title _____ Date _____