

Weather (and other cancellations). Who makes the decision?

By Marcia Whiting, Golf Events Director

I received an inquiry earlier this week regarding “why” I was delaying cancellation of the February 1 play date when the forecast was for heavy rain. Trust me, I don’t like playing in rain, wind, sleet or snow. (Many of you know I have not signed up to play in “winter season” for years precisely for this reason....the weather is unpredictable.)

I recall running a league several years ago. Back then, if the forecast looked unfavorable I would call the course and cancel Thursday for a Saturday event.

Fast forward to 2025 and the circumstances have changed significantly. Golf courses are a business. They sell tee times. One of the major benefits of playing with LPGA Amateurs – Sacramento Chapter is the opportunity to play many different courses, on the weekend, in “prime time”. Alternatively, joining a ladies club at a local golf course, you are playing the same course, each week, primarily on a weekday.

How did we get those tee times? In December and January, we contacted many of the local courses requesting dates and times for play. Since we are only booking one or two events at a course, we NEED them more than they NEED us.

At present, every course requires a contract confirming the “logistics” of our event. We are agreeing to tee times, number of players, green fees, along with conditions such as pace of play, dress code, **and cancellation criteria**. Gone are the days of simply “cancelling” based on an upcoming weather report.

In short, if the course is open and in condition for play, we are obligated to our tee time reservations. The idea that it “might” be windy, wet, hot, occasional showers, etc. is not a valid reason for cancelling an event.

We do have many hard core golfers who seem to enjoy a battle with the elements. In readiness for anything, they possess all the latest wet weather apparel and gear! That is great! (As the rain continued to fall, one golfer response to cancellation of the February 1 event was “Bummer”!) In the early golf season we have limited tee times to accommodate those dedicated golfers while not overcommitting to the course.

Regarding the event scheduled for today, February 1, the course policy for impending weather was for us to call the Pro Shop after 7:00 am. At that time, the course would determine if the course was playable and open for public play. If yes, our event was to proceed as contracted. This policy was implemented after years of events (not just us) cancelling prior to the date of play when the weather shifted and the course was open without any golfers. As I stated, golf courses are in the business of making money.

It seems like a reasonable agreement. We commit to players (\$\$) on the tee sheet and they commit to providing the tee times. They don't call us the day before to cancel if a better offer comes along, and neither do we. We each agree to very limited cancellations. Sometimes we are expected to show up in less than prime conditions. That is part of the deal.

Every golf course on our schedule has agreed to waive the pre-payment requirement for our group, except for shotgun events. (Those who will not agree are not included in our schedule—Diamond Oaks, Woodcreek, Dark Horse.) This is simply an effort to save members money. If we require pre-payment, we must increase the cost of each tee time to cover our banking fees. Unfortunately, without a pre-payment requirement, the exposure of paying for cancelled tee times falls to our Chapter. In general, event registration closes 10 days prior. When players cancel after the close of registration, we have already confirmed to the course our final player count. We face the consequence of the course potentially requiring payment for all confirmed tee times. If we had cancelled the Ancil Hoffman event prior to THEIR determination of course closure, we faced the potential of owing \$1920 to the course. This payment would come out of the Chapter event fund.

So, there is my explanation for WHY we waited until the morning of the event to cancel. And I would note it required an “atmospheric river” before the course agreed it was unplayable. I completely understand some cancellations are unforeseen and necessary. I also understand some are merely the result of choosing an alternate activity for the day. As we go forward into 2025, my hope is you will consider the commitment you are making, and the ramifications, when registering or cancelling play. Join us in our commitment to being a good golf partner with our local courses.