

# **SIR Back to Golf Protocol During COVID-19 Pandemic (revised 01/22/2021)**

The following protocol will be in effect for all SIR Golf events until an update is published. Realizing each golf course has different capabilities of service, SIR golf program chairs should work with the golf courses to create safe playing opportunities for our members. Players failing to adhere to the following protocol should be removed from the event, asked to leave the property and maybe be restricted from participating in future golf events. This protocol must be reviewed and accepted by the Branch BEC and Golf Chairs prior to any golf events being held. Acceptance shall be recorded in the Branch BEC minutes.

## **General Sanitation and Safety Protocols all SIR Golf Events**

- Adhere to your County “Stay At Home” orders, these orders should be continually monitored because the order is can be constantly changing week to week one way or another which will effect the suggested safety of the golf event.
- If a player believes they have a fever, have a recurring cough or other COVID-19 symptoms they should stay home. Do not come to the course.
- Once on course with your mask removed, golfers should avoid touching their mouth, nose, lips or eyes.
- When possible use a hand sanitizer during and after your round, consider bringing one to the course
- Mask/facial coverings must be worn until the group is on the 1<sup>st</sup> except while at the Driving Range or Putting green and only when the minimum six-foot distance can be maintained. If that distance can not be maintained then Mask should be warn.
- Players are not to touch the flagstick and are to leave in in the hole. A blatant disregard for breaking this safety protocol may result in disqualification.
- Foam inserts or a similar device shall be used in the holes.
- Bunker rakes should be removed from the course, if available, do not use them.
- Do not pick up a fellow golfer’s equipment or golf ball to return it to them.
- Do not use the golf club or shoe cleaning equipment that maybe available at the golf course or on the golf cart.
- Do not drink any water provided on course.

## **General Guidelines for Golf Events**

- Do not hold any golf event if your County has a “Stay At Home” order in effect.
- It is highly recommend that the same foursome play together at tournaments when possible to reduce the risk of extended contact with other SIR members.

- There will be no gathering anywhere on the property before or after a round. This would include the parking lot of the property.
- Players must always maintain at least a minimum six-foot distance from other golfers (except for household members) while at the event.
- Players are required to leave the property as soon as possible after completing their round after verifying scores and submitting their scorecard. There will not be any awards ceremony.
- Spectators are not permitted, no exceptions.
- Adhere to Social Distancing Policies for Practice/Warm-Up on the Driving Range and Putting Green, availability of these facilities should be included in each golf event's announcement Information.
- No social events should be conducted in association with a Golf event.
- Shotgun starts are suspended until further notice, only tee times are permitted.
- Closest-to-the-hole contests are suspended until further notice.

### **Groupings**

- Groups are required to stay away from the starting area until the previous group has cleared the 1st tee,
- The number of groups in the event will be determined by the number of carts available at the golf course. Only one rider per cart is very strongly recommended. However, if a course allows two riders per cart with a divider the golf chair may approve this if each player in the cart agrees. Golfers who are members of the same household may also share a cart. Golfers using pull carts will be permitted.

### **Signing Up and Payments**

- Players shall sign up for each golf event either online (preferred method) by send a payment and indicating which event it is for or by signing up directly by calling the appropriate member of the golf committee. No signups for golf events shall be conducted at the golf course or at any other SIR event.
- If a player is paying the Golf Committee to participate in the future golf event they must make payment prior to the event either by check or credit card. No payments should be taken at the course for future golf events.
- If a player is not paying the Golf Committee for the golf event but instead will be paying the golf course the preferred method of payment should be credit card.
- If the Golf Committee is collecting prize monies for the golf event they shall collect this money prior to the event, no monies should be collected at the golf course.

### **Practice/Warm-Up (When available)**

Availability of practice facilities such as driving range, chipping area and putting green will be subject to individual course and county policies and may not be available. Specific information regarding availability should be listed in the event Information.

- When these areas are available, arrive no earlier than **1 hour** prior to starting time and limit driving range time to **20 minutes** to allow others the opportunity to warmup. Any stretching or other warm-up activities should be done conducted beforehand at your car.
- When available, practice on the putting green time shall be limited to **10 minutes** prior to the group's starting tee time.

### **Carts**

- Cart sanitation policies are subject to county ordinance and will be maintained by host facilities. The Golf Chair should assure these policies are followed prior to the start of the event.
- There should be a single rider per cart. However, carts may have two riders when they are from the same household or If a course allows two riders per cart with a divider between them. The golf chair may approve this if each player in the cart agrees.
- Golfers will be permitted to use their own pull cart. Pull carts supplied by the course are also permitted if they have been sanitized prior to use. The Golf Chair is responsible to verify this is being done.
- Groups will be limited to only four motor or pull carts per group.

### **Scorecard and After Round Scoring Procedures**

- At least one player in each group will be designated to keep the score of all golfers. This player will be responsible for depositing the scorecard in a secure storage receptacle.
- Scorecards should be supplied to the either the course pro shop or the course starter who will in turn give the scorecard to a member of each group. Scorecards should be placed in some type of storage receptacle by a member of the group after the round. A member of the golf committee will collect the scorecards and sanitize them prior to processing them.

### **Flagstick and Hole**

- The flagstick must not be removed or deliberately touched by hand during the round, including with a gloved hand or a towel wrapped around the flagstick. Any player who deliberately ignores this code of conduct policy will be considered guilty of Serious Misconduct, the penalty for which is disqualification.
- Working in concert with each individual facility, a device will be used to ensure players can retrieve the ball from the hole without touching the flagstick or hole. This may include:
  - A foam insert allowing the ball to fall only part way into the hole,
  - A hole with the liner turned upside down so the ball can fall only part way into the hole; or

- An approved flagstick attachment that allows a player to lift the ball from the hole with their club.
- When a device that does not allow the ball to fall fully into the hole is used, the device is treated as being attached to the flagstick and thus is part of the flagstick. Per Rule 13.2c and the Definition of Holed, if any part of the ball is below the surface of the putting green and is leaning/resting on that device the ball is treated as holed. A ball that hits the device and does not come to rest with any part of the ball within the hole is not holed.

## **Bunkers and Rakes**

- Bunker Rakes will be removed from the course. Players are encouraged to smooth the surface of the bunker with their foot or club before exiting the bunker.
- The condition and specific policies regarding bunker maintenance at a facility will be reviewed by staff.
  - When it is not possible to provide consistent conditions to all players, the golf committee will implement the following Local Rule:
    - **Preferred Lies in Bunker:** When a player's ball lies in a bunker, the player may take free relief once by placing the original ball or another ball in and playing it from this relief area:
      - Reference Point: Spot of the original ball
      - Limits on Location of Relief Area:
        - Must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and
        - Must be in the same bunker.
  - In proceeding under this Local Rule, a player may also have the option to remove the ball from the bunker and play it from a spot no closer to the hole, a 1 stroke penalty will be assessed.

## **Food and Beverage, Drinking Water Availability**

Golfers should bring their own food and beverages to the course. Since the player is required to leave the course immediately after the completion of the round if the course is offering food and beverage players should still leave the course. If the course is offering drinking water, do not drink it. Again, golfers should be reminded prior to the event to bring their own food and beverages to the course.

## **Notification of Illness**

If a golfer who has participated in a SIR Golf event becomes ill and tests positive for COVID-19 they must immediately contact the SIR Golf Chair of their event and inform him. The SIR Golf Chair should in turn inform all participants of the event of this issue. Those members who were in the group with the ill member should be contacted directly. To assure privacy no names should be mentioned. The SIR Golf Chair should also inform the following individuals, Branch Big Sir and Activities Chair, Area Governor and Golf Chair.

## **Enforcement and Monitoring**

Violations will be addressed immediately and remedies may include revocation of a branch conditional approval to restart their golf programs. Enforcement decisions after referral by Area Governors will be reviewed and administrated by RD Dave Gonzales Restart Protocol committee.