



# PLAYER HANDBOOK

## MiniTour Policy

### HAPPY TO HELP

Please contact us:

If you have any questions or need any assistance.

Zack King – [zack@vcjga.com](mailto:zack@vcjga.com)



Tour Operations Director

Sean King – [kingsean7@gmail.com](mailto:kingsean7@gmail.com)



Mini Tour Operations & Tour Assistant

**The VCJGA** is a non-profit organization established in 1967. We promote the traditions of the game and the lifetime rewards the game delivers. Please contact us if you do not understand anything listed in this handbook. It is vital that we all work through the process together...

### Membership

VCJGA MiniTour Membership is required to participate. The best way to improve at golf is to play regularly, with that in mind, we need participants to be actively involved keep moving forward.

Membership is subject to approval. If you are unsure of which division to register for, please contact us.

Membership fees is good for 12-months from the date you register and are NON-REFUNDABLE once you join.

The MiniTour is ran year round. September to May will be played on weekends. June to August during our summer series will be played on weekdays and some weekends.

The VCJGA is a web-based program and all business is conducted online. Please take time to navigate [vcjga.org](http://vcjga.org) (especially the Players/Spectators tab) as this information is useful and will answer most of your questions.

Please note that everything we do and the way in which we do it has a specific purpose. We want every player to be confident in moving through the various age divisions.

## Tournament Overview

All tournaments are played at scratch (no handicaps); and **NO Caddies or motorized carts**. Hand carts are recommended but not required.



All tournament play is governed by **Rules of Golf** published by **United States Golf Association**. Other important policies that require your attention are:

- VCJGA Tour Policy – MiniTour Player Handbook
- VCJGA Code of Conduct & Character (Must be reviewed, signed and delivered before first tournament is played)
- Spectator Code of Conduct is vital to our tournament program
- Pace of Play Policy

GOLF IS FUN! Although many players find reading the Rules of Golf a tedious chore, players **MUST** begin the process early in order to prevent unnecessary penalties and of course to avoid disqualification.

The purpose of **Rule 1** is very telling. It immediately informs players of the purpose of the game, Player Conduct and Rules. Finally places the responsibility of upholding the Rules of Golf squarely in your hands...

1. Two Great Principles - Play the course as you find it and play the ball as it lies.
  2. Play by the Rules and in the spirit of the game.
- **You are responsible** for applying your own penalties if you breach a Rule, so that you cannot gain any potential advantage over your opponent in match play or all the other players in the tournament in stroke play. Players are expected to recognize when they have breached a Rule and to be honest in applying their own penalties.

Golf can be a complex game, and we must anticipate that the Rules will reflect this. If you have any questions about the **USGA** Rules of Golf, we encourage you to ask because ignorance of any rule will not change the penalty. Always, always, contact a Rules Official when a player doesn't know what to do or how to proceed. Above all, the player should learn the phrase, "what are my options?". When the Rules Official arrives to help, this phrase will begin help the process so that we can move forward without delays. Also, because of the nature of the Rules, it is vitally important that parents don't get involved in any part of play. Be in your junior golfer's corner by watching from the sidelines. As a spectator, the parent has no standing in the competition and should let the process unfold.

## Player Responsibilities

When players arrive to the golf facility before each tournament, IT IS PLAYER RESPONSIBILITY to follow the following routine upon arrival to a tournament:

1. Arrive at the golf facility 1-hour early and Check-In
2. Warm Up: Use the range, chipping area and putting green
3. Arrive on your starting hole 5-minutes early for final instructions
4. Play, keep pace with the group ahead and record scores
5. Immediately report to the Scoring Area and follow instructions carefully.

## Junior Golfer Playing Ability

It is important that a tournament player is ready to participate. Yes, they will learn and gain the kind of experience that can only be gained by playing tournament golf. A VCJGA MiniTour Member is expected to have the basic knowledge and ability and to play a round of golf under the following guidelines:

- Play and navigate the course without any assistance
- Maintain a proper Pace of Play by being ready to play when safe and clear
- Have a basic understanding of the USGA Rules and etiquette of the game
- Uphold the VCJGA Code of Conduct & Character

The VCJGA is a great place to play your first tournament round. With that said...

**The VCJGA is not the place for a Junior Golfer to play their FIRST EVER ROUND OF GOLF. Working with a reputable swing coach will help you to better prepare your physical ability to advance your ball and then play tournament golf.**

To be prepared for tournament play, it is highly advisable that a minimum of ten (10) 9-hole rounds have been played on the forward tees of a regulation course prior to registering for tournament play. This will greatly assist your first tournament golf success and enjoyment.

Tournament golf is challenging, but the experience gained in the VCJGA will make you a better player and over-prepare you for the next step in the process.

## Assumption of Risk and Release from Liability

### When you registered to join the VCJGA, you agreed to the following with the VCJGA:

*The following will need to be agreed to before moving through the payment process...*

The undersigned hereby agrees to defend, indemnify and hold harmless the Ventura County Junior Golf Association and its officers, employees and agents against any and all loss, liability charges and expenses (including attorney fees) and costs whatsoever character which may arise by reason of participation in any program. (The Association does not provide accident, medical, liability, workers' compensation insurance or any other insurance for program participants.)

As a parent/guardian, I hereby consent to EMERGENCY TREATMENT of my minor child as a result of accident or injury. I further agree to pay any and all cost incurred as a result of said treatment.

I agree to carefully inspect and satisfy for myself that the facilities provided are reasonably safe for their intended use.

Once having conducted the inspection, I agree to expressly assume the risk of participation at the premises. I understand the Association retains the right to use photos taken during activities, for publicity purposes.

I ALSO AGREE TO ABIDE BY VCJGA:

1. Tour Policy
2. Code of Conduct & Character
3. Spectator Code of Conduct
4. USGA Rules of Golf; including Pace of Play Policy.

It is up to each member and their parent/guardian to both review and UPHOLD the VCJGA policies and agreements with the AJGA & SCPGA and to understand these agreements can change each January.

Breach of any rule may cause adjustment of division, disqualification from a tournament; up to and including suspension or expulsion from the VCJGA.

Membership is for the current SEASON (September to August).

## Tournament Registration

Because playing in a VCJGA tournament is not guaranteed, it is vitally important that each VCJGA member registers as early as possible to secure a spot in a given tournament. Registration is handled on our [vcjga.org](http://vcjga.org) website (see Tournament Registration below for instructions).

- Tournament entry deadlines range from 8 to 10 days in advance of each tournament depending on the golf course requirements. Advance entry is required.
- Sometimes a tournament will sell out (the maximum number of players for a particular tournament is met in advance of the posted registration deadline).

Make a plan in advance and don't delay, register today early to avoid being left out.

## Tours and Age Divisions

We have four divisions on the **MiniTour** with some overlap because players begin at different ages.

Tournament golf is a process. Your first concern is to build confidence by advancing through the process of playing tournaments. This is the best way to know what skills you need to improve..

Because of the vitally importance of building confidence, please do not play-up in an older division without advance approval. The process begins by requesting the Director of Tour Operations in writing via e-mail to get Board approval.

- Girls 8-10 (9-holes)
- Boys 8-10 (9-holes)
- Girls 10-12 (18-holes)
- Boys 10-12 (18-holes)

The MiniTour typically plays one Sunday afternoon tournament each month in three separate Series:

- Fall Series: September-October-November
- Spring Series: March-April-May
- Summer Series: June-July-August

Courses play approximately 2,000-2,500 yards (9-holes); and 4,100-5,500 yards (18-holes). The MiniTour is an early start to the tournament process with our goal being to build good habits, confidence, responsibility, tournament experience; and preparation for the next step, Boys & Girls 11-14 divisions.

## Registration Instructions

Please plan ahead making certain that you register well in advance of the entry deadline with the following procedure:

1. Sign-In to your Player's Club account using your ID and PWD.
2. Select the tournament from the schedule (See only events that start with the title. "MiniTour?"); and click. This will take you to the **TIP** (Tournament Information Page). Please review the TIP as each tournament will vary in details.

3. Located to the bottom right of the TIP, click on the registration icon. The system will walk you through registration step by step. Each entry is individually reviewed by the Tournament Director within 48-hours.
4. It is the registrant's responsibility to verify (see Players on the TIP) that your entry has been accepted.
5. Once your entry fee has been processed, you are now an official competitor.

## Starting Times and Pairings

Starting Times/Pairings are posted on-line (see the TIP) typically four days in advance of the round for preliminary purposes. Times and pairings become OFFICIAL once they are e-mailed to the field (limited circumstances could be cause for a revision of starting times).

### **NO REQUESTS WILL BE ACCEPTED TO PLAY WITH SPECIFIC COMPETITORS.**

We can only make special tee time consideration based on car pool purposes, however, you **MUST** communicate this need in advance of times being e-mailed.

**Send Communication to:** [kingsean7@gmail.com](mailto:kingsean7@gmail.com) or [zack@vcjga.org](mailto:zack@vcjga.org)

Just like other sports, the players and teams have no say regarding who they will compete against. Sometimes they will play with those they may or may not know, those with more or less skill, etc. One thing is for certain, they will gain the experience needed to advance as a player.

Before each round (unless an official communication is released), players are required to Check-In 45-minutes prior to their scheduled Starting Time; and report to their starting hole 5-minutes prior to their Starting Time.

## Cancellation Policy

The **Cancellation deadline is eight (8) days in advance** of the first round (i.e. by 12 noon on Friday, June 1st to Cancel for a tournament being held on Sunday, June 9).

- If you cancel before the posted deadline, you are entitled to a refund of the entire entry fee, minus **a \$25 administration/e-commerce fee**.
- Be certain to e-mail the Director of Tour Operations before the deadline in order to receive the above refund.
- If you cancel after the posted deadline, you are not entitled to a refund or transfer for any reason. See Refund Policy below.

## Refund Policy

**TOURNAMENT ENTRY FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE or TRANSFERABLE FOR ANY REASON, ONE-WEEK PRIOR TO THE FIRST ROUND TOURNAMENT DATE.**

This policy is due to contractual obligations that the VCJGA has made on behalf of the membership - Here's how it works:

- Each golf course is in business to sell tee times; and they are limited in the number that they can sell.
- We sign a contract and make a deposit to hold our times at the golf course. Eight (8) days prior to the tournament we confirm the number of players and make the final payment for the number of players we have registered to play.
- The VCJGA forecasts how many start times we will need based upon prior year history of registration, how popular the course is, etc.

## Withdrawal Policy

Once a tournament is inside of eight (8) days of being played, the cancellation period has ended and a player that cannot play for a legitimate reason may Withdraw (WD) from the field. It cannot be emphasized enough, how important it is that players, parents/guardians understand how important it is to Withdraw in a reputable manner. Withdrawing from a tournament should be rare for any player. A No Show (NS) should never happen.

## Player Conduct

The VCJGA Code of Conduct & Character along with the **USGA** Rules of Golf have a lot to say about how we conduct ourselves.

- **Conduct Unbecoming:** while participating in any VCJGA tournament; and the player AND their parent/guardian will need to review, print, sign and return to the VCJGA Director of Tour Operations.

When you arrive at the golf course you are expected not only to act like a golfer, but to look like one as well (see Code of Conduct & Character).



## Player's Must Protect the Field...

- **Protect the Field:** Golf is a game of honor. Players are expected to call penalties on themselves. Competitors in a tournament "protect the field" by monitoring each other in a group and, at the end, place an attesting signature on a scorecard. This peer review is the method (same as the PGA Tours) by which players monitor play and attesting scores before they are posted.

The game's code of honor means that even a hint of cheating or dishonesty can tarnish an individual's reputation. Every player has experienced the uncomfortable moment of asking, or being asked, whether a ruling was administered properly or the right score was reported for a hole. Marking scores on your Official Scorecard as the round progresses is a big part of the game.

- **Pace of Play:** **USGA Rule 5.6** states, in part: *"The player should play at a prompt pace throughout the round"*.

Each player in each group SHALL maintain proper pace as a GROUP and WORK TOGETHER to keep up with the group ahead!

Players that have difficulty keeping pace within the VCJGA standards may be suspended from tournament play until such time that they improve their ability to keep up the pace.

**IT IS UP TO ALL THE PLAYERS TO PLAY WITHOUT UNDUE DELAY AT ALL TIMES AND TO KEEP UP WITH THE GROUP AHEAD. ANY COMMON DELAYS, SUCH AS LOOKING FOR A LOST BALL, OR**

**GETTING A RULING WILL REQUIRE THE ENTIRE GROUP TO MAKE THAT TIME UP OVER THE NEXT COUPLE OF HOLES.**

VCJGA Pace of Play Policy is posted on the first tee at each tournament.

**When you arrive to the scoring table, it is imperative that you follow the instructions of the Scoring Official and respectfully complete the due diligence process to ensure true and accurate scores have been recorded, signed and attested.**

- **Scoring:** Because most disqualifications actually happen at the scoring table, it is vital that each player pays attention to take this responsibility seriously by taking care to handle due diligence. It does not matter if you had a good day or a bad day, others are counting on you to do the right thing. Review **USGA** Rule 3.3b.

**Failure to follow this policy will be cause for disqualification from a tournament and disciplinary action, up to and including suspension.**

- **Use of Distance Measuring Devices:** A Competitor may use a device that measures or gauges distance. The device cannot be used to measure conditions that might affect a player's play such as gradient, wind speed, temperature, etc. **USGA Rules** - The use of a distance-measuring device would constitute a breach of the Rules if:
  - You are using the device to gauge or measure other conditions that might affect play (e.g., wind speed, gradient, temperature, etc.), or;
  - The device has some other non-conforming feature, including but not limited to, recommendations that might assist the player in making a stroke or in his play, such as club selection, type of shot to be played (e.g., punch shot, pitch and run, etc.), or green reading (i.e., a recommended line of put), or other advice-related matters.
  - The device has the capability to assist in calculating the effective distance between two points (i.e., distance after considering gradient, wind speed and/or direction, temperature or other environmental factors).
  - **Penalty for Breach is Disqualification**
- **Cell/Smart Phones and other Electronic Devices:** Gaming devices; i-pod and the like are not permitted in VCJGA Tournament play.  
**A cell phone may be used by competitors ONLY in case of an Emergency (911) or to contact a VCJGA Rules Official by calling 805-207-4653.**

Players that use an Electronic Device that is not approved will be disqualified.

## **Awards and Point Distribution**

Tournament scores are posted immediately onto the website and the recap and points are normally posted within 48-hours of event completion. Player of the Series for each event are posted in the entry detail.

The VCJGA believes that the reward for playing in tournaments include, experience, courage, perseverance, etc. Only top finishers are Awarded a trophy or medal based upon each division entry size:

- **1<sup>st</sup> Place** - Must have at minimum of 2 competitors
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Place** - Division must have a minimum of 4 players
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Place** - Division must have a minimum of 5 players
- **4th Place** - Division must have a minimum of 12 players
- **5th Place** - Division must have a minimum of 16 players

Ties for first place only are decided by a Playoff - A chip-off, putt-off or card-off will decide the winner.

To ensure accuracy, we need all scores posted and approved prior to handing out awards. If you leave the tournament site before knowing the complete results and/or fail to communicate with the Tournament Staff that you need to leave and can't wait for the presentation, you will FORFEIT THE AWARD. Not communicating your inability to stay for the presentation will be viewed as a breach of sportsmanship and may be subject to suspension. You will retain your finish place and points.

Player of the Series Points are earned in every tournament played separately for each division. To view the points, see the TIP for each specific tournament.

## Inclement Weather Policy

Inclement weather in and of itself is not a reason to cancel a round of golf or an entire golf tournament. Cold or rain are simply course conditions like heat and wind.

We ask that you do not contact the course directly, but rather pay close attention to e-mail for up-to-date information.

In the case of a weather delay, players are asked to remain at the course until announcements have been made. Several factors will be taken into consideration when determining whether to suspend a round, postpone, shorten or cancel golf:

### Unsafe Course Conditions:

- Fast flowing creeks, overflowing lakes, bridge(s) out, trees falling over, etc.
- Golf traffic causes unnecessary damage to golf course

### Unsafe Weather Conditions:

- Thunder storms (lightening)
- Rain so heavy that it would be unreasonably difficult to require players to continue
- Winds moving a ball on the putting surface, trees/limbs falling

### Standing Water on Fairways, Greens & Bunkers:

- Too much or large amounts of casual water, especially on greens and fairways making the course impossible to play.

Please understand that in many cases, the weather forecast shows a system that may end within a reasonable length of time or holes to be played. If in doubt, players should plan to play.

## Suspending Play

**USGA** Rule 6-8b governs when play is suspended by the Committee. It states: When play is suspended by the Committee, if the players in a match or group are between the play of two holes, they shall not resume play until the Committee has ordered a resumption of play. If they are in the process of playing a hole, they may continue provided they do so without delay. If they choose to continue, they shall discontinue either before or immediately after completing the hole, and shall not thereafter resume play until the Committee has ordered a resumption of play.

However, a Note under **USGA** Rule 6-8b states: The Committee may provide in the conditions of a competition (Rule 33-1) that, in potentially dangerous situations, play shall be discontinued immediately following a suspension of play by the Committee. If a player fails to discontinue



play immediately, he shall be disqualified unless circumstances warrant waiving such a penalty as provided in **USGA** Rule 33-7.

**This condition is in effect for all VCJGA Tournaments:**

- **Discontinue Play Immediately = One prolonged note of horn/siren.**
- **Discontinue Play = Three consecutive notes of horn/siren, repeated.**
- **Resume Play = Two short notes of horn/siren, repeated.**

## Volunteers Markers

The VCJGA is a VOLUNTEER based organization. In order to produce organized, high quality tournaments, we need the help of adults. Volunteering as a Marker will be required from time to time and contributes to a successful event and we will let you know via e-mail when we need you.

## Spectator Code of Conduct Policy

Spectating is a privilege on the VCJGA Tour, not a right. We require that all spectators (including parent/guardian) adhere to the **Spectator Code of Conduct Policy**. This policy is vitally important to the players, volunteers, staff and our partners, such as the AJGA and SCPGA.

The bottom line about spectator behavior is that it could determine the outcome of the tournament. Spectator conduct not only has rules of golf implications, it can also tarnish the credibility of the competition. Here is the Policy:

### **PLAYERS PLAY - SPECTATORS SPECTATE - RULES OFFICIAL OFFICIATE**

Parents and spectators are extremely important to the VCJGA; however, it is up to the hosting golf facility as to whether parents and spectators are permitted on the golf course and whether or not to charge a spectator fee. Spectating in golf may appear different than other sports such as little league, however; we expect spectators to give all players as much space as possible so that they may go about their business without distractions.

#### **PLEASE DO NOT GET INVOLVED WITH THE COMPETITION.**

Spectators **MUST** always register in the Golf Shop prior to going on the course. *Golf Carts are only available for rent to those with verified Handicap credentials that have followed the procedure on page 15.*

1. Spectators **MUST WALK** the course and should stay one shot ahead of the group they are following. This allows spectators to follow errant shots and help identify where the ball comes to rest. Spectators are allowed to aid in the search for lost golf balls using care not to improve the lie of the ball. Spectators must keep off tees, fairways and greens - Stay on cart paths. In the absence of cart paths, we ask that spectators stay in the rough away from players.

- Remember to keep proper distance/space from all players (75 yards or more is recommended).
- Spectators cannot walk with players during tournament play and should make every effort to not disturb ANY of the players.
- Keep in mind that in many situations on certain parts of the course, a spectator may not be able to see the shot played nor are they entitled to see every shot played.

2. Spectators as a rule should NOT speak to players. A parent may speak with their child regarding #4 below.

3. Spectators **MUST RESPECT** all RULES SITUATIONS and NOT to give rulings on the Rules of Golf. You will be brought into a situation only if the Rules Official asks you. If you have a question or information, it should be done away from competitors and in a calm manner.

**USGA Rule 6-1:** The Player is responsible for knowing the Rules. If the Rules Officials need to change their focus from the players to the spectators, you may be asked to leave the golf course immediately.

4. Spectators are allowed to carry medicine, drinks/snacks for players (not equipment - Do not caddy, handle or go through a player's equipment/bag/hand cart).

#### **5. Absolutely no alcohol or smoking when spectating.**

The VCJGA may assess a penalty to the player based on the severity of the spectator violation. Continuous conversations with player(s) are not appropriate. If a serious breach has occurred, the spectator, without warning, may be asked to leave the golf course, the facility, or the spectator may not be permitted to attend other VCJGA tournaments.

Please note that parents/guardians and spectators agree to let participants compete without giving any advice or counsel to them during the stipulated round knowing that a violation may cause a two-stroke penalty against their participant without warning.

For your personal safety, we ask you exercise caution at all times. Golf balls can come from any direction at any time and hit you.

When inclement weather moves into the area, the VCJGA will suspend play by sounding air-horns. Accordingly, you should seek shelter immediately. The VCJGA and Volunteers will assist evacuating players from the course.

Spectators must be aware and move to safety on their own.

**SPORTSMANSHIP – PURSUING VICTORY WITH HONOR**

-Revised 2022