



Iowa Girls' High School Athletic Union

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2026 Golf Season Manual

GENERAL DATES & GUIDELINES

- First Practice: Monday, March 16
- First Allowable Meet: Wednesday, March 25
- Regular Season Playing Dates: 12
- Scrimmage Dates per School: 1
- First Round Regional (1A, 2A): Friday, May 15
- Regional Final Date (1A - 4A): Wednesday, May 20
- State Meet Dates: Thursday - Friday, May 28-29
- Bound Reporting Date: Every Tuesday during regular season
- Scholarship Dates: March 25 - April 14. Eligibility resumes 12:01 am, April 14.

STATE TOURNAMENT SITES

- 1A Cedar Pointe Golf Course, Boone
- 2A American Legion Golf Course, Marshalltown
- 3A Pheasant Ridge Golf Course, Cedar Falls
- 4A Waverly Golf Course, Waverly

STATE CO-ED DATE/LOCATION

- Tuesday, June 9
- 1A American Legion Golf Course, Marshalltown
- 2A Westwood Golf Course, Newton

CLASSIFICATIONS

- Class 4A – 50 teams
- Class 3A – 60 teams
- Class 2A – 80 teams
- Class 1A – Remaining Schools

COMPETITION DATES:

- Each individual player may participate in 12 competition dates during the season. If a scheduled competition is rained out, teams may postpone or reschedule the competition; it will be considered one date. A competition date is considered 9 or 18 holes of scheduled play.

STATE TOURNAMENT:

- Day 1 - 9:00 shotgun start, Day 2 - 8:30 AM tee time start (weather permitting)
- Each qualifying school is allowed to play six golfers in the State Tournament. The four best scores are used to determine the total score for each school. A school entering less than four golfers in the State Tournament may compete for individual honors, but not team honors.
- Spectator admission is charged at the State Golf Tournament sites.

SITE AVAILABILITY:

- If you would like your course considered for a Regional Tournament site, have your athletic director fill out the site availability form in the online forms in Bound by April 3rd.

CO-ED TOURNAMENT: JUNE 9, 9:00 AM

- Classification:
 - 1A (Schools with BEDS number 349 & lower):
 - 2A (Schools with BEDS number 350 & higher):
- Schools must register and submit the names of the team(s) for the Co-ed Tournament by June 2nd. The online registration form will be on the IGHS AU and IHSAA websites. The Co-ed format is alternate shot.

SCRIMMAGE:

- One scrimmage is allowed per school. The scrimmage can be played under normal rules or used for a special format (alternate, best shot, etc.). A scrimmage shall be defined as that which takes place between member schools at one site on one calendar day, as well as established definition relating to the mandatory absence of scorekeeping and spectator charge. Athletes

ONLINE RULES MEETING

- The Coaches Rules meeting will be posted on BOUND. All head varsity golf coaches must view the online Coaches Rules Meeting prior to their first competition. Failure by any head golf coach to view the online rules meeting may result in a sanction against that coach.

BOUND STATS:

- Varsity coaches are required to submit their varsity roster and schedule through Bound before March 25th.
- **Coaches are required to have their individual varsity meet results updated on Bound every Tuesday during the regular season.** Please ensure course rating is entered for each meet.
- Coaches are also expected to update their Bound throughout the Regional Tournament series by noon the day immediately following their regional meet. Failure to submit the required information by the mandatory dates may result in the suspension of the coach.

ATTIRE:

- All varsity participants in regular season and tournament competition must wear similar (color and style) school-issued and/or school-approved golf uniform during competition.
- Due to adverse weather conditions, if an individual varsity player desires to wear clothing (jacket/sweatshirt) over the top of her shirt, the jacket/sweatshirt does not need to be the same as her teammates. All attire worn at all levels shall be school-approved and have no alcohol, tobacco, or any inappropriate graphic on the clothing.
- **Note:** Additional clothing layers worn for adverse weather do not need to be same.

USGA Rules: Please review the USGA Rules by going to the USGA website (usga.org).

- It is important that you continue to familiarize yourself and your golfers with the USGA Rules of Golf. The Iowa Golf Association will offer rules seminar(s) for coaches and players. Information about the rules seminar(s) will be on the Iowa Golf Association website (iowagolf.org) in early March.

IGHSAU CODE OF CONDUCT:

The IGHSAU local rule governing code of conduct for players prescribes that a verbal warning shall be issued on the first offense for conduct unbecoming high school players. Such conduct shall include, but is not limited to:

- Club throwing or ball throwing defined as could cause harm to another participant, spectator, course or means of releasing frustration.
- Use of abusive language.
- Willful acts which damage property or equipment on the course.
- Other unbecoming conduct as determined by the Golf Rules Committee (coaches' jury).

Second offense: the player shall be assessed a two-stroke penalty.

Third offense: the player shall be disqualified.

In regular season meets, the code of conduct shall be enforced by the Golf Rules Committee (coaches' jury) which in dual meets is comprised of the two head coaches and/or pro serving as the rules interpreter in that dual meet. In multi-team competitions, the designated three-person coaches' jury and/or pro serving as the rules interpreter shall comprise the Golf Rules Committee. Players and coaches have the discretion to alert the Golf Rules Committee if they believe a Code of Conduct violation has occurred.

The IGHSAU Code of Conduct Rule does not negate the ability to enforce USGA Rule 1.2a for "serious misconduct" which may result in immediate disqualification. The phrase "serious misconduct" in Rule 1.2a is intended to cover player misconduct that is so far removed from the expected norm in golf that the most severe sanction of removing a player from the competition is justified. The committee must determine if the misconduct is serious considering all the circumstances. Please refer to USGA Rule 1.2a Interpretations for further clarification.

Any player who uses tobacco (including smokeless and similar devices) or gambles on the course is automatically disqualified per USGA Rule 1.2a for serious misconduct. In the case of gambling between players, the players involved are disqualified in that given

Eligibility Rule 14(2) Penalties: Any student disqualified from an interscholastic contest by game officials for flagrant, violent, or verbal misconduct will be ineligible for the next regular scheduled game/meet at the level of competition and all other games/meets in the interim at any level in addition to any other penalties the IGHSAU or school may assess. The second violation carries a four games/meets automatic ineligibility. It will be the responsibility of the host school meet manager to report any disqualification(s) to the IGHSAU the day following the meet, if the meet is held on a Friday or Saturday, then on the Monday following the meet. It is the coach's responsibility to inform his/her administrator of any disqualification(s). The administrator will file an official report form with the IGHSAU.

COMMUNICATION DEVICES:

- The use of cell phones, tablets, or other communication devices by is prohibited during the regular season and tournament play **except for the use as a rangefinder or official scorekeeping. No cell phone for general use may occur until the player's round is completed and the scorecard is submitted to the official scorer. Use of a cell phone for unauthorized purpose(s) will result in a code of conduct violation.**
 - The penalty for violation of this rule: 1st offense – warning; 2nd offense - 2 stroke penalty; 3rd - offense disqualification.
- Golfers may use their phones in/around the clubhouse once their round is complete and they have submitted their scorecard to the scoring officials. Spectators should refrain from speaking on their cell phones on the course when play near them is occurring. In the event of an emergency or suspension of play, it is permissible for a golfers and spectators to use their cell phones on the course.

- In response to USGA Rule 4.3a(4) the IGHSAU shall expand its local rule banning cell phones to include restrictions on all portable audio and video devices that players might watch or listen to during play.

RANGE FINDING DEVICES:

- Range finding devices are allowed for use by players and coaches during the regular and postseason tournaments provided they are only used to measure distance. Range finding devices designed to measure conditions other than distance are permitted, provided the golfer only uses the device for distance measurement and not for the following banned functions, which include but are not limited to, wind speed, slope, or club selection.
 - The penalty for violation of this rule: 1st offense – warning; 2nd offense - 2 stroke penalty; 3rd - offense disqualification.
- If a player must wear a watch besides a GPS/range finding device, it must be set to airplane mode during competition.
 - The penalty for violating this policy is as follows: 1st offense – warning; 2nd offense - 2 stroke penalty; 3rd - offense disqualification.
- Players and school-appointed, licensed coaches are encouraged to share distance information upon request. A player with a range finder may shoot distance on the course and relay that information upon request to another player, PROVIDED the process does not delay play. Spectators are not allowed to provide or assist golfers with distance information.

MAXIMUM SCORE:

- Per USGA local rules, utilizing a maximum score format is allowed but not mandatory for IGHSAU regular season meets. The IGHSAU suggests a maximum score of 10 strokes if competing teams want to implement the local rule in a regular season meet. Under this format, players would pick up their ball once the maximum score is reached without finishing the hole. IGHSAU post-season tournaments will not implement a maximum score option.

MOTORIZED CART REQUEST POLICY:

- Motorized carts and caddies are prohibited. Use of non-motorized pull or push carts is allowed throughout the entire season. Requests for use of a motorized golf cart during regular and postseason competition must be due to a disability and will be evaluated by the IGHSAU on a case-by-case basis. Transitory illnesses and injuries (actual or expected duration of six months or less) do not qualify under the ADA as a disability and thus would not qualify for use of a motorized cart.
- Golfers using a cart for a medical condition must remain near the members of their group and not drive ahead of the walking members. Driving a head of the group could give the rider a visual advantage of the course layout.
- Athletic directors must submit the request for golf cart use and documentation from the golfer's physician stating the disability and the extent to which it prevents the golfer from walking during competition. Upon receipt of the request, the IGHSAU will notify the school in writing of approval or declination.

WEATHER AND LIGHTNING PROTOCOL:

- When thunder is heard or lightning is seen, play should be suspended, and shelter taken immediately. Once play has been suspended, a 30-minute wait from the last sound of thunder or lightning strike witnessed must be taken before resuming activity. Any subsequent thunder or lightning strike during the 30-minute waiting period resets the clock, and a new 30-minute waiting period begins.
- Meet hosts are responsible for monitoring the weather activity and determining when to suspend competition. Weather protocol (notification method and procedure for calling golfers off course, shelter locations, evacuation procedures, etc.), should be given to participants prior to the start of the meet. The IGHSAU encourages all meet managers to utilize a lightning app on their phone to monitor their local weather.

RAINOUT POLICY

- Regular Season – If a meet is not completed due to weather, it can be postponed or replaced with another meet. For a postponed meet, the golfers can resume the round from their location when it was postponed, or all golfers can start their round over. This is something that should be agreed upon by the participating teams prior to the start of the make-up meet.
- Every effort must be made to reschedule the rained-out meet. If a date cannot be found to reschedule the meet, then your school may find another meet to enter to fulfill your 12th date, as your rained out meet becomes void. Make sure you delete the cancelled date from your schedule on Bound. If you replace the cancelled meet, make sure you enter that meet in your Bound schedule.
- Regional Tournament – If you are required to return a second day because of a rainout and you are rained out a second time, and have finished nine holes, those nine holes scores (score to par) will determine which teams and individuals qualify for the State Tournament. This **only** occurs for the second time you return. **Example 1:** Regionals were scheduled for Monday and the meet was rained out. Your team comes back on Tuesday, and you are rained out, but everyone gets at least nine holes played. Those nine holes on Tuesday will determine the teams and individuals that advance on to the State Tournament. **Example 2:** Regional play has begun, groups finish at least nine holes and are rained out, everyone returns the next day and begin play from the last completed hole by everyone in your group. If rain again forces competition to end for that day and everyone has **not** completed competition (nine holes), the first day's nine holes will determine the teams and individuals that advance to the next level of competition.
- State Tournament – If eighteen holes are played on the first day and it is impossible to play the second day due to rain, the first eighteen holes will determine the champion. Likewise, if the first day is rained out but weather permits eighteen holes to be completed on the second day, the second day eighteen holes will determine a winner.
- Unless otherwise determined by the IGHS AU, Day 1 scores will be carried over to Day 2 of the State Tournament if the entire field has completed at least 12 holes. Every effort must be made to complete 18 holes on Day 1 of the tournament. Day 2 will commence with teams completing Day 1's round by re-starting where golfers' balls were marked when play was suspended on Day 1. Tee assignments for Day 1 will be carried over to Day 2 if teams are finishing their Day 1 round on Day 2. If both days are rained out, then the tournament will be rescheduled by the IGHS AU, and participating schools will be notified accordingly. When the tournament is rescheduled, competition will be eighteen holes.

SPECTATOR REGULATIONS:

- Family, friends, spectators, etc. cannot provide instruction or guidance to participants on the course until the final scorecard has been signed and submitted. (Walking immediately alongside a player is deemed to be communication.)
- Spectators may cheer, applaud, and offer words of encouragement to golfers. However, spectators must adhere to golf etiquette when doing so.
- Spectators are allowed to assist a player in looking for a lost ball but may not offer any rulings.
- Spectators should remain in the rough or on the cart paths and always keep parallel to the golfers.
- Spectators should refrain from speaking on their cell phones on the course when play near them is occurring.
- Any spectator disrupting play in the opinion of the Rules Committee will be removed from the course. Competitors may be disqualified if in violation of this rule.

GOLF REGULATIONS:

- USGA rules will be followed for all regular season and postseason tournament play, unless modified by the local course management or IGHS AU. Any errors or discrepancies that take place during medal play must be resolved prior to turning in the scorecard. If a discrepancy arises, golfers should make every effort to resolve the discrepancy before playing the next hole. If the discrepancy cannot be resolved, the hole/score should be circled. At the completion of the round, the player(s) involved should refrain from turning in her scorecard until the rules committee has made a ruling.

LOCAL RULE:

- The IGHSAU will not invoke the Local Rule stroke and distance for OB for postseason as it is not part of the USGA rules revision.

COACHES ON THE COURSE:

- Coaches are not allowed to play golf on the course during competition/meets. **Penalty is disqualification of all team members.** During meets, the IGHSAU strongly encourages coaches to be out on the course coaching their golfers. While it is understood only the designated Rules Committee makes rulings, it is essential coaches be on the course to help their golfers with situations to avoid repetition of rule violations.

COACHING GUIDELINES:

- The IGHSAU allows multiple school appointed, licensed coaches to coach their team on the course during the regular season. Two coaches per team are allowed to coach their players on the course during the postseason. Individual qualifier(s) may also have two coaches per school. School appointed, licensed golf coaches are allowed to coach their golfer up until the golfer and golfer's ball are on the green. There is to be no delaying of play anywhere anytime when providing instruction during the prescribed coaching time frame. Coaches on the course should not make rulings unless they are part of the Rules Committee.
- Coaches are not to assist or instruct a player regarding any putting on the green. If any part of the golfer's ball is on the actual green, the ball is considered on the green. Once the golfer arrives at the green (no delay by the golfer), coaches can have no more communication with their golfers until all golfers in the group have holed out. When providing advice, the coach must NOT enter a bunker. Coaches must adhere to golf etiquette when coaching their players and should **not** be communicating with their golfer(s) while other golfers in the group are playing their ball in close proximity.

SCORECARD SIGNATURES:

- Scorecards must be signed by the golfer whose score is being kept and the person keeping the score upon completion of the round.

SCORING:

- Each golfer is responsible for the accuracy of her score recorded for each hole.
- Signed scorecards must be turned in by the golfer to the official scorer immediately following the round.
- Each golfer must total her own score for the round before turning in her card. This will assist with inaccuracies between the actual score and recorded score and may prevent a card turned in with a blank score.
- The score totaled by the individual is not their "official score" (as there may be some inaccuracies with their addition), the hole-by-hole score will be their official score.

REGIONAL / STATE BOUND ENTRY FORMS:

- Regional roster forms will be on Bound. Schools are required to print, complete, and submit the form to their regional tournament manager seven days prior to the meet. Regional Final forms are to be sent to the tournament manager six days prior to the meet.
- Schools will be notified of the start time, location and other details pertaining to their regional tournament by the tournament manager of the region they are assigned. Tournament managers have total liberty in establishing start times. Tournament managers will let each school know of their golf course policy for outside food and beverage. **FYI...outside food and beverage will NOT be allowed at State Golf Tournament venues.**

GREENS FEES:

- A \$15 per participant fee will be assessed to each school for participation in all regional tournaments, payable directly to the tournament manager (host athletic director), which in turn will be responsible for paying the host course.
- Tournament managers may request schools make their checks payable to the host course, which is permissible as well. The tournament manager will present the green fees for all participating teams to the course management. **State tournament green fees will be paid to the tournament site by the IGHSAU.**

PRACTICE ROUNDS:

- Loss of school time for practice rounds is governed by each local district, not the IGHSAU. Coaches must have their school administration's approval to practice during school time. Arrangements must be made with the host course concerning time and regulations governing play. All tee times and green fees will be the responsibility of each school/golfer.

WALKING THE COURSE:

- There is no rule against teams arriving at the Regional/State site to walk the course provided they seek permission from the course management prior to doing so. **Players walking the course are not to have clubs with them while walking the course. Players are not allowed to roll balls on the greens when walking the course.** Violation of this rule is disqualification from the tournament.

REGIONAL ADVANCEMENT:

- Teams: The top two teams in each region advance to the next level of play (Regional Finals and/or State Tournament).
 - For the first round of Regionals only (classes 1A and 2A), if the host school (playing on their home course) finishes first or second place in the first round of Regionals, then the third-place team will advance to the Regional Final match as well. *This procedure is for the first round of Regionals only. Third place teams will NOT advance to the State Tournament from the Regional Final meet if the host school finishes first or second in that region.*
- Individuals: The top six individuals (and those tied for 6th place) also advance to the next level of play, regardless of if they are on a qualifying team or not. All individual ties will be broken (except for 6th place ties) to determine each golfer's final rank.

TIE-BREAKING SYSTEM FOR POSTSEASON:

- Team Competition
 - Regionals - the 5th team player scores shall be compared. If a tie still exists, compare the scores of the 6th players. If a tie exists at each of these levels both teams advance. There are no playoffs at Regional Tournaments. If a team does not have a 5th (or 6th) place golfer to compare scores, then they automatically lose and the team with the 5th (or 6th) place golfer wins.
 - State - The combined score of the 5th golfer for both days will be compared. If still tied, the combined score of the 6th golfer for both days will be compared. If a team does not have a 5th or 6th golfer to compare scores and the other team does, the team without the 5th and/or 6th golfer automatically loses the tiebreaker. If teams are still tied after that, they tie for that team place (for all non-champion positions). If multiple teams are tied for the championship after comparing 5th and 6th golfers scores, the coach will name four players who will play in a hole-by-hole playoff. All four scores count. Teams will play until the tie is broken. Teams may not change out their four golfers once the playoff has begun
- Medalist Competition:
 - Regionals - medalist distribution and place will be determined by a card back starting with the number one handicap hole. Medals will be issued at the regional final meet and awarded according

to the tie-breaker system. All players finishing sixth (or tied for 6th) shall advance. Ties for 6th do not need to be broken.

- State - a tie for State Medalist shall be determined by sudden death playoff with the pre-determined playoff holes. For individual play, ties beyond first place will be determined by a card back starting with the number one handicap hole.
- Golfers may use the practice driving range, chipping green, and putting green at Regional and State sites, if available, the night before, and the days of the tournament.

AWARDS:

- Regional Team Competition:
 - Regional Final champion and runner-up will receive a state qualifier banner.
 - Regional Final team champions will receive medals.
- Regional Medalist Competition:
 - The top six individuals at the Regional Final (and those tied for 6th place) will receive medals.
- State Team Competition
 - State qualifier teams will receive a trophy and medals.
- State Medalist Competition
 - The top ten individuals (and those tied for 10th place) will receive medals.
- Each qualifier (non-medalist positions) in the State Tournament will receive a qualifier medal.

STATE TOURNAMENT TRAVEL EXPENSES:

- The IGHSAU will reimburse State qualifying schools for travel expenses at the rates of 44¢ per mile one way for individual qualifier(s) and \$1.25 per mile one way per team.

NON-SCHOOL TEAM/INDIVIDUAL AWARD RULES:

- During the School Year: From the first day of school through the last day of school, high school golfers may **not** accept any award or prize which has a value more than \$50.00 and **NEVER CASH MONEY**. Golfers may participate in non-school events during the year, if allowed by local school policy. Those participating must check with their athletic director.
 - **Example:** Marcy Smith is allowed by her school to play in a four-person best ball tournament in late March. Marcy is playing with three individuals who are out of school, with Marcy being the only high school student. Marcy's team wins \$400.00. Each of the three out-of-school individuals can accept \$100.00 cash. Marcy can only receive a gift certificate for \$50.00. Marcy should ask the golf course to document what she received and have the course sign that document stating she only received a \$50.00 gift certificate. It is advised that she also provide a copy of the document to her athletic director, stating what she accepted. An individual can receive up to \$50.00 in gift certificates per tournament.
- Summer Months: During the summer months, high school golfers may accept any award or prize any amateur golfer is permitted under USGA rules, which is \$1000.00.
 - If it is a scratch event, where handicap is not factored into results, golfers may accept up to \$1,000 in any form.
 - If the event factors handicap into the end results, golfers may accept up to \$1,000, but **NOT CASH**.