VGA Championship COVID-19 Policies and Procedures

Below are a set of Policies and Procedures the VGA staff have generated for Championship events. The Vermont Golf Association has created these policies to keep golf safe, follow guidelines set by our State Government. The VGA is working with each host site facility to ensure that they are following the proper procedures for retail, food and beverage, and golf course operations outlined by the CDC.

As such, the VGA will be implementing the following Policies and Procedures until such a time that the VGA deems it safe to remove them. Please note, that where these Policies and Procedures directly contradict either the VGA Rules and Regulations or the USGA Rules of Golf, these Policies and Procedures will override.

All golfers that attend a VGA event must self-screen before coming to the event for any of the signs or symptoms possible with COVID-19 listed by the Center for Disease Control at https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html. If an individual does not feel well, they must stay home and take the proper precautions. If this is the case, players will be given a full refund during the time that these policies are in affect. If you are sick, please stay home.

It is the responsibility of all players participating in a VGA event to fully read and understand these policies and abide by them. By registering for and participating in a VGA event, players are agreeing to all these policies and to accepting any potential penalties deemed appropriate by the VGA staff.

It is each participant's choice if they would like to enact stricter measures than are outlined in this document for themselves, however, restrictions beyond these Policies and Procedures for others are not guaranteed.

COVID-19 Education & Protection

COVID-19

- Based off national and local guidance, it is important for players to understand how COVID-19 spreads and ways to protect yourself.
  - **Knowing How It Spreads** – The virus is spread mainly from person to person:
    - Between people who are within 6-feet of each other
    - Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks
    - These droplets can land in the mouths of noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs
  - **Basic Ways to Protect Yourself**
    - Washing your hands often
- Avoid close contact
- Cover your mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Clean and disinfect
- Remain 6-feet away from individuals

Self-Screening

- All VGA players will be required to self-screen prior to being on-site at Championships.
- Players must stay at home if they display any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Chills
  - Repeated shaking with chills
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - Loss of taste of smell
  - Diarrhea feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
  - Known close contact with a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19
- When washing your hands, you should:
  - Use soap and water
  - Wash for a minimum of 20 seconds

Social Distance/Player Conduct

- The VGA asks that regardless of their position on the golf course, that players maintain six feet of distance between themselves and other players. This includes when they are preparing for a shot, walking down the fairway/rough, on the teeing area, or the putting green, and all other locations.
- All players must refrain from touching their fellow competitors in any way, including shaking hands prior to, and following the round.
- Players must not touch, handle or share each other’s equipment.

Coughing and Sneezing

- Face coverings required in interactive areas (starting tee, scoring area, clubhouse etc.)
- While out on the golf course, face coverings required at any higher-traffic areas (halfway house, etc.). Otherwise, players are expected to keep at least six feet distance between themselves and other people.
- If you are in a private setting and do not have on your cloth face covering, remember to always cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow.
  - Throw used tissues in the trash.
- Immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer.
General Player Information

Arrival Time

- Golfers are not allowed to access the golf course more than 30 minutes prior to their starting time. If you arrive at the facility prior to this time, you must stay in your vehicle.

Tournament Paperwork

- The VGA will communicate all applicable Local Rules, Hard Cards, Hole Locations, and Contestant information to players digitally prior to the tournament rather than passing out paper copies at the tournament site. Players will also be able to access these documents on their mobile devices through Golf Genius app and www.vtga.org.

Starting Format

- All events will be tee time starts to reduce the number of people congregated in one area.
- To reduce the amount of person-to-person contact, the VGA will be suspending the registration area at all events. Players will register on their starting tee ten (10) minutes prior to their starting time. It is the players responsibility to know their time of starting and be on the starting tee ten minutes (10) prior.
- Starting times and groupings will be emailed to all players prior to the tournament, posted to the Tournament Portal Page, and available via the Golf Genius App and www.vtga.org.

Scorecards

- Will be distributed on the starting tee. Scorecards will not be exchanged between players and it will be the players responsibility to keep all players in the group’s score.
- Scorecards will have all players in the group’s name printed on them. Each player will be required to mark the hole-by-hole scores of every player in their group to ensure proper verification of each player’s score at scoring.
- Players must bring their own writing utensil for recording scores, as none will be provided on the 1st tee and players will not be permitted to share.
- The scorecards that has your name highlighted will be considered your official scorecard.

Spectators & Caddies

- Caddies will not be permitted until further notice.
- Spectators are allowed but will be required to maintain social distancing of six feet unless they live in the same household until further notice.

Tournament Operations

Practice Facilities

- Driving Range
  - The VGA will be working with facilities to setup the driving range to ensure social distancing of six feet is still in effect.
- Putting & Chipping Green
In an effort to maintain social distancing, the VGA will restrict the number of players allowed on any practice putting green, or chipping green to however many holes have been cut in the green, with the maximum number allowed being nine (9). Players will be restricted to five (5) minutes in the areas when other players are waiting for access.

Practice Following the Round

- Practice on the putting green, chipping green, and driving range following the round is prohibited.

Scoring

- Once the round is completed, players must proceed straight from the final green to scoring with all their equipment. They are not to stop to converse with other players, not to go to their car or the parking lot for any reason.
- Only players are allowed in the scoring area. No other people will be permitted in scoring.
- Only one (1) group will be allowed into the scoring area at a time. All players must stand in the designated areas during scoring to ensure proper social distancing throughout the process.
- There will be no chairs at the scoring area. All players will be required to stand during the process.
- Once all scores have been reported and verified by players and the scorer, each player will sign the scorecard in their possession – this signature will serve as the certification of their own score, as well as their scores of the other players in their group.
  - This process will ensure that every player’s score has been certified as accurate.
- The VGA will be removing all scoreboards. The leaderboard may be viewed on mobile devices.
- Scorecard will be considered “returned” once you have left the scoring area.

Playoffs

- Until further notice, in the event that a player may be eligible for a playoff, they must proceed directly to their car following play and wait there until it is determined if a playoff is necessary.
- The VGA staff will contact that player via cell phone to let them know if a playoff will be necessary.
- Playoff procedures may be adjusted in subsequent phases of opening to align with clubhouse access as authorized by our state government.

Awards

- The VGA will not be conducting awards ceremonies events. Awards will be shipped to players following the event.

Weather Delays

- In the event of a horn blast signaling a discontinuance of play, all players must proceed directly to their vehicles. The VGA staff will communicate any resumption information via text message or email. The VGA will be conscious of the length of delays under this policy.

Holing Out

- The VGA will provide pool noodles that will be inserted into the cup. The ball must remain in the hole and below the surface of the cup for it to be considered holed.

Flagstick
• Players must not touch the flagstick under any circumstances. Attending the flagstick as outlined in the Rules of Golf is suspended until further notice.

Bunkers

• If the host facility can provide each player with a sanitized rake, bunkers will be played as normal.
• If the host facility is not able to provide a rake for each player:
  o A Local Rule will be in effect allowing relief from disturbed areas in bunkers, under Rule 16.1c (Ground Under Repair)
  o Note that Rule 16.1c includes an option for players to take back-on-a-line relief outside the bunker for one penalty stroke

Food & Beverage

Water Coolers & Snacks

• The VGA is asking all host facilities to remove on-course coolers. However, should a facility elect not to remove these, the VGA accepts no liability for them and encourages players to use extreme discretion regarding their use.
• The VGA will not be providing bottled water or snack on the first/tenth tee until further notice.
• All players are responsible for bringing their own bottled water and snacks for on-course consumption

Food & Beverage

On-Course Touch Points

Sand Buckets

• The VGA is asking all host sites to remove sand buckets from par 3’s. However, should a facility elect not to remove these, the VGA accepts no liability for them and encourages players to use extreme discretion regarding their use.

Golf Carts

• The VGA will be allocating each player their own cart, when available. The VGA is working with each host facility to ensure that carts are being properly sanitized prior to play.
• In the event that carts are limited, the VGA will issue a call of volunteers to walk or may limit the size of the field based upon cart availability.

Ball Washers & Benches

• Since it is impracticable to many facilities to removed ball washers and benches, the VGA asks that all players refrain from utilizing either of these items.

Starters Boxes

• The VGA will be removing starters boxes from all starting tees.
• Please ensure that you bring a writing utensil, ball markers, and tees with you.
• Sunscreen and bug spray will not be provided by the VGA. All players are expected to bring their own, if needed.
Hand Sanitizer

- The VGA will provide hand sanitizer stations at all starting tees and in the scoring area.
- Players will be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer for on-course use.

Clubhouse

- The VGA will defer to facilities’ practices and guidelines on whether the clubhouse is open to guests or not.
- The VGA will ensure each host site has at least one (1) male and one (1) female bathroom available.