



Golf Terms & Definitions

Away – as in, “You’re away.” When you’re “away,” your ball is farthest from the hole. Typically that means that it is your turn to play.

Back Nine – The last nine holes of an eighteen-hole golf course.

Bag Drop – A designated area, usually near the entrance of the clubhouse, where upon arrival, where you can unload and leave your clubs while finding a parking space.

Ball Mark – The indentation your ball makes when it lands on the green.

Ball Marker – Any small object that can be used to mark the position of a golf ball that has been lifted off the green. Coins are commonly used as ball markers.

Best Ball – Partners or teams using only the best score for each hole.

Blind Draw – Method of drawing blind the players’ names for pairing together in competition.

Bunker – A hazard, often a depression, which is usually filled with sand. In some instances a bunker may be a grassy depression on a golf course.

Caddy – A person who carries or handles a player’s clubs during a round of golf. A caddy can also help the player with club selection and strategy.

Car/Cart Fee – The rental fee charge for using a cart during a round.

Car (or golf car) – The vehicle used to travel on a golf course. The two most common types of cars are electric powered (very quiet) and gas powered (you will hear the engine when you accelerate).

Chip Shot – A short shot with a low ball trajectory played onto the green causing the ball to roll when it lands.

Clubhead – The end of the club designed for striking the ball.

Course – The “course” is the whole area within which play is permitted.

Daily Fee Course – An upscale public golf course that is privately owned and open to the public without restriction.

Defeated Flight – Secondary flight consisting of players losing first round matches.

Divots – A piece of turf dug out of the ground by the golf club when striking the ball. They should be replaced and stepped on, or if seed mix is provided (check in your golf cart or on the tee box to see if available), completely fill the groove in the ground.

Down – In match play (see “match play”), a player that is losing more holes than winning, is deemed as being “down” in the match. For example: If a player has won two holes but lost four holes, the player is considered “two down” (See “up” for additionally match play terminology).”

Draw – Method of pairing (see “pairings”). Also a term used to describe a ball in flight that curves to the left.

Driving Range (also known as the ‘practice range’) – An area of a course or separate facility that is used for practicing. One can buy a bag or bucket of balls to hit without having to pick them up.

Executive Women’s Golf Association (EWGA) – The Executive Women’s Golf Association is a not-for-profit organization formed in 1991 to provide opportunities for women to learn, play, and enjoy the game of golf for business and life.

Fairway – The closely mown grass leading from tee to green. It is the desirable place to land your ball while playing golf.

Flag Stick – A moveable pole or straight indicator with a flag centered in the hole on the green to show the hole’s position (sometimes commonly, but incorrectly referred to as “the pin”).

Flights – Bracketing of players with specified limited groups according to qualifying score or seeding (see “seeding”).

Fore – A warning shouted to let a person within hitting range know that a player is about to hit. It is also shouted when a ball in motion may hit or come close to hitting another person.

Foursome – Common terminology used when referring to four golfers in the same group playing a round of golf. “Threesome” would identify three golfers in a group. “Twosome” would identify two golfers in a group and the term “single” would identify one person playing a round of golf.

Front Nine – The first nine holes of an eighteen hole golf course.

Golf Bag – A leather, vinyl, or canvas bag used for carrying golf clubs, golf balls, and accessories.

Golf Shoes – Shoes specifically designed for the game of golf. The soles on golf shoes are specially designed to give you the traction needed to help you stay balanced while you swing, yet provide you with comfort. They are available in a variety of styles and made with a variety of materials. Plastic cleats are mandatory at virtually all facilities. It is difficult, if not impossible, to find golf courses that permit metal spikes on the bottom of shoes.

Green Fee – The fee a golfer has to pay for the use of a golf course.

Green – This part of the hole is designed for putting. It is the best-kept area of the course.

Grip – The part of the club held by the golfer. Common materials used are leather and rubber. The term “grip” is also used when referring to the placing and positioning of the hands on the club.

Hazard – A “hazard” is any bunker or water hazard.

Head to Head – Competition between two players individually, or teams on a hole-by-hole basis. Can also be referred as match play.

Hole – An area of the course consisting of a teeing ground, putting green and the area in between. The term “hole” may also refer to the hole found on the green.

Honor – The person who tees off first on a hole.

Iron – Any club with a thin metal clubhead.

LPGA (Ladies Professional Golf Association) – The Ladies Professional Golf Association is the longest-running women's sports association in the world, having celebrated its 50th anniversary in the year 2000. The LPGA Tour and the LPGA Teaching & Club Professional (T&CP) Division comprise the backbone of what has become the premier women's sports organization in the world today.

Lie – This is the position of the ball on the course after a shot has been made. In most circumstances, the golfer is not allowed to touch or move the ball once it has landed.

Line – The players intended path of ball to the hole.

Match Play – Head to head competition on a hole-by-hole basis.

Medal Play – See “Stroke Play.”

Medalist – Lowest gross scorer during qualifying round(s).

Pace of Play – The speed in which a group plays during a round of golf. A good rule of thumb is to always keep up with the group in front of you.

Pairing Sheet – Sheet upon which the pairing (see “pairings”) of players are listed.

Pairings – Person(s) with whom players play a tournament round of golf with.

Par – The score in strokes assigned to a hole based on how an accomplished player would score on the hole.

Penalty Stroke – A stroke added to your score for a rules violation.

PGA of America – Founded in 1916, the PGA of America is the largest working sports organization in the world, comprised of more than 28,000 dedicated men and women promoting the game of golf to everyone, everywhere.

PGA Tour – The guys you see play on TV.

Pitch Shot – A short shot in which the ball is played with a higher trajectory onto the green causing it to have little or no roll.

Play Through – To pass a group of players in front of you, or to allow a group of players behind you to pass or “play through.”

Practice Putting Green – An area designate to practice putting.

Private Golf Course – A golf course where play is restricted to members and guests only

Public Golf Course – A golf course where the public can play by paying a green fee.

Putt – A shot played on the green. The characteristic of a putt is that the ball rolls to its intended target.

Putter – A club specifically designed for putting.

Relief – Permission to lift the ball and drop or place it without penalty.

Resort – A golf course located in a vacation or destination area, usually affiliated with a lodging component.

Rough – The area of long grass that lines the fairways and connects from tee to green. Typically, you would want to avoid landing your ball in the rough.

Round – Typically eighteen holes of golf.

Scramble Format – Each team member hits a tee shot. The team then decides on the best shot and plays the next shot from that location. Again, the team decides on the best shot and plays the next shot from that location. This process is repeated until the ball is holed out. The score for each hole is kept and the total score will be posted as a team score.

Seeding – Placing players in draw (see “draw”) according to skills.

Semi-Private Golf Course – A golf course that has members but also allows some limited access for the public to play.

Shaft – The long, thin part of the club connecting the club head to the grip. Some of the common materials used for shafts are steel, graphite and titanium.

Shotgun Start – Players starting simultaneously with each group assigned to a specific tee to start play.

Stroke – The term used when making a swing at the golf ball.

Stroke Play – Play based on total score for a completed stipulated round of golf. Also known as “medal play.”

Superintendent – The person in charge of maintaining the golf course. Also call the greenskeeper.

Tee – A small peg used for resting your ball on and raise it off the ground. Typically, tees are used only from the Tee Box.

Tee Box (or teeing ground) – A designated area as the starting place for the hole to be played.

Tee Shot – A shot played from the tee. It is your first shot on every hole.

Tee Time – The reservation time made for beginning a round of golf. For example, if you have a nine o'clock tee time, that means that you need to be on the 1st tee and hitting at 9 o'clock.

Up – In match play (see "match play"), a player that is winning more holes than losing is deemed as being "up" in the match. For Example: If a player has won five holes and lost four holes, that player is "one up (See "down" for more match play terminology)."

USGA – The United States Golf Association. They are the ruling body of golf in America.

Winter Rules – Local Rule whereby the lie of the ball may be improved within specified areas due to extreme conditions of the course.

Wood – Any club that has the general characteristics of a wooden-headed club. Today, "woods" are primarily made of metal composites. Typically sends the ball long distances.