

# GOLF LEAGUES:

## Catching On for Good Reason

*Provided by Yorkville Sports Association*

Golf leagues offer a host of benefits to golf lovers, leading to their growing popularity in recent years. Golfers in a workplace or community are frequently itching to get out and play more often, but lack an easy way to connect with players of similar ability. Leagues offer this opportunity.

The way a golf league works is simple. An administrator organizes the teams and manages all of the details, including scheduling, communication and posting results, which typically include individual and team standings. The league is split into divisions based on handicap, giving all golfers chances for friendly competition. Often, games are played on a number of different and challenging courses, presenting the player an opportunity to try a variety of courses in

their vicinity. Leagues generally end a season with championships and awards while pre-season scrambles or special events, such as fundraisers or off-season golf trips, augment the experience.

Leagues can be organized for individuals, corporations, restaurants, professional associations, or small businesses such as accounting firms or law practices.

Research has shown that employers who sponsor teams have observed a variety of benefits. When built around a workplace, a golf league provides opportunities for teambuilding and meeting new co-workers. Where else can co-workers go to share three or four hours together, playing, talking, and walking? Golf requires commitment and



focus, qualities any employer would like to see developed and carried into the work environment. And good sportsmanship builds trust and respect among all levels of employees. After establishing leagues, some employers have reported improved morale, higher productivity and decreased absenteeism.

For individuals, a golf league can be beneficial as it can help overcome frequent barriers to play. Finding partners of similar ability, and a schedule that works for all, can be challenging. While friends, family members and colleagues may be golfers, they also may play primarily at their own private club or may have their own foursome. A golf league provides an ideal solution that delegates the task of matching player ability and scheduling time on the course.

The wellness benefits of a golf league should also not be underestimated. League play requires regular exercise, which can reduce stress and improve fitness levels. Research shows walking a typical 18-hole course is the equivalent of 10,000 to 11,000 steps -- about 5 miles. Golfers who drive carts burn around 200 to 400 calories per 18 holes while walkers can burn 700 to 1000 calories.

Leagues are most successful when they emphasize camaraderie, inclusiveness and teamwork over the competitive aspect. Participants find that leagues create chances to forge new friendships, and get regular exercise and fresh air. They also enjoy taking their love of the game into a competitive arena. Golf is the ideal way to move people from a structured environment to a relaxed atmosphere with others who share their passion. Peaked your interest? Take some time early this season to explore options for golf leagues in your area.

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