



Tournament Officiating Workshop

April 14, 2026

Blue Coat University: Rules 301



Outline



- **Season Overview**
- **Rules Education**
- **Officiating Criteria**
- **What to Bring & What is Provided**
- **Assignments**
- **Zello & Radio Etiquette**
- **Officiating Best Practices**



Season Overview

Championships

CDGA / Illinois State Qualifiers and Championships, and USGA Qualifiers

75 Tournament Days between April 21 – October 5

9 additional days for outside events (College and IHSA)

Over 2000 CDGA members will play in these events in 2026!

Social Competitions

Net and/or flighted tournaments

42 Event days between May 1 – October 26

Over 1200 CDGA members will play in these events in 2026!



Rules Education



- **Monthly Blue Coat Rules Chats**
 - Open forum for questions and discussion
 - Occasional, brief presentations by CDGA Staff on rules/officiating topics
 - Weekday evenings from 7-8 p.m.
 - Register in your My CDGA Caddie under “My Events”
- **Outside Resources**
 - **The Roving Official**
 - Subscription site with customizable quizzes
 - **General Area**
 - Free site with study aides and quizzes
 - **Other AGAs**



Rules Education



- **USGA Resources:**
 - **PGA/USGA Workshops**
 - Full coverage of the entire Rules of Golf
 - Taught by the most experienced USGA and PGA officials
 - Optional exam on final day
 - Virtual and in-person options
 - Reimbursable by the CDGA once per Rules cycle
 - **Rules of Golf Quizzes**
 - Customizable by difficulty
 - **Rules of Golf Explained Videos**
 - Short videos on Rules topics



Officiating Criteria



- **The Blue Coat Qualifications for CDGA Championships & Qualifiers can be found in My CDGA Caddie under “Volunteer Sign Up.”**
- **This document outlines:**
 - **The three levels of officiating at CDGA-administered tournaments**
 - **Which rulings must be called in**
 - **Protocols for assigning Blue Coats to tournaments**
- **Your officiating level is based on your USGA Rules Exam Score**



Observer/Tournament Volunteer



- **Those scoring 69% or below on either the 100-Question or 80-Question Exam**
- **Those who have not taken an exam this Rules cycle or within the last 4 years**
- **Observer/tournament volunteers:**
 - **May volunteer at any qualifier or Championship**
 - **May be assigned as a starter or rules official**
 - **Must radio in all rulings to a rover or staff member**



Advanced



- **Those scoring 70-84% on either the 100-Question or 80-Question Exam**
- **Advanced level officials:**
 - **May volunteer at any qualifier or Championship**
 - **May be assigned as a starter or rules official**
 - **May make rulings for free relief or one-stroke penalties when 100% certain of the correct ruling**
 - **Must radio in all rulings involving a general penalty**
 - **Must radio in all rulings with even the slightest doubt**



Expert



- **Those scoring 85% or higher on either the 100-Question or 80-Question Exam**
- **Expert level officials:**
 - **May volunteer at any qualifier or Championship**
 - **May be assigned as a starter or rules official**
 - **May make any ruling when 100% certain of the correct ruling**
 - **Must radio in all rulings with even the slightest doubt**
- **Those who score 90% or above on the 100-Question Exam will be automatically appointed to the Championship Rovers Committee**



Social Competitions



- **All Blue Coats are welcome to volunteer at Social Competitions**
- **Blue Coats assigned at Social Competitions may:**
 - **Assist with registration**
 - **Assist with infrequent rulings and pace of play scenarios**
 - **Interact with a diverse cross-section of CDGA members**
 - **Be an ambassador for the CDGA**



Blue Coat Sign Ups

- Sign Ups are now open for all CDGA and Illinois State Championships, Qualifiers and Social Competitions, as well as all CDGA-conducted USGA Qualifiers
- To sign up for most events, navigate to My CDGA Caddie and select “Volunteer Sign Up”
- At the bottom of the page, select “Tournaments”
- Select all tournament dates that you wish to volunteer and click “Submit”

2026 CDGA VOLUNTEER SIGN UP FORM

Please check each day you would like to work and click the submit button when you are finished.

- All events that fall under the CDGA Championship schedule are indicated in **WHITE**
- All events that fall under the CDGA Social Event schedule are indicated in **BLUE**

You will be able to print out a listing of your choices once you've submitted your form.

You will need to wait until the next day to submit any additional volunteer opportunities once the form is submitted.

Name of Volunteer: Will Cawthon

Avail?	DATE	Event	Comments
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tue, Apr 21	11th CDGA Mid-Am Champ Qual <i>Countryside GC (Mundelein)</i>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Tue, Apr 28	11th CDGA Mid-Am Champ Qual <i>Kankakee Elks CC (St. Anne)</i>	<input type="text"/>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Tue, May 5	CDGA KemperSports Two-Person Scramble #1 <i>Glen Club (Glenview)</i>	<input type="text"/>



Blue Coat Sign Ups



- **The Illinois State Amateur Championship requires a more detailed sign-up process**
- **In My CDGA Caddie, select “My Events,” as if you are RSVPing for a Board Meeting**
- **Select “yes” or “no” for each round and dinner, then click “Register Now”**
- **Outside event registration will open on Monday, June 8**
- **Those events will include:**
 - **Men’s U of I Invitational (9/18-20)**
 - **Wendon Memorial (9/28-29)**
 - **IHSA Finals (10/9-10)**
 - **Women’s U of I Invitational (10/12-13)**



Blue Coat Assignments



- **The optimal number of Blue Coats at each tournament varies based on:**
 - **Field Size**
 - **Course Layout**
 - **Type of Tournament**
- **General ranges for each type of tournament are:**
 - **Social Competitions: 2-4 Blue Coats**
 - **Qualifiers: 4-8 Blue Coats**
 - **Outside Events: 8-10 Blue Coats**
 - **Championships: 10-12 Blue Coats (maximum one per group)**
 - **Illinois State Amateur Championship: ~35 Blue Coats**



Blue Coat Assignments



- Assignments will be posted monthly with the Blue Coat Notifications email
- When a tournament day is oversubscribed, some Blue Coats will receive a designation of “No Assignment”
 - Every effort will be made to give those with “no assignment” at one event an assignment at another

My Volunteer Assignments

Mon	Apr 18	7th CDGA Mid-Am Qual. (Maple Meadows GC)		7:15 a.m.
Thu	Apr 28	20th CDGA Senior Amateur Qual. (Bloomingtondale GC)		7:15 a.m.
Mon	May 9	U.S. Women's Open Qualifying (Stonebridge CC)		7:15 a.m.
Mon	May 9	U.S. Open Local Qualifying (Cantigny Golf)		
Wed	May 25	20th CDGA Senior Amateur (Medinah CC)		7:15 a.m.
Thu	May 26	20th CDGA Senior Amateur (Medinah CC)		7:15 a.m.
Mon	Jun 6	U.S. Junior Amateur Qualifying (Itasca CC)	TBD	
Mon	Jun 6	U.S. Girls' Junior Qualifying (Itasca CC)	TBD	
Tue	Jun 21	91st Illinois State Amateur Qual. (Sanctuary GC)	TBD	



Questions





Before the Tournament

- **CDGA Staff will typically mark the course and prepare the Notice to Players 1-3 days prior to the tournament**
- **Once this is completed, Blue Coats will receive two emails:**
 - **Tournament Reminder with assignments**
 - **Email from CDGA Staff with:**
 - **Notice to Players**
 - **Hard Card**
 - **Pace of Play Policy**
 - **Hole Locations**
 - **Raguzzi**
 - **Zello Channel**
 - **Rules meeting time and location**

2024 TOURNAMENT REMINDER
 9TH CDGA MID-AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFIER
 TUESDAY, APRIL 23, 2024
 SUNSET VALLEY GC
 1390 Sunset Road, Highland Park, IL 60035
 Phone: (847) 432-7140
 Website: www.sunsetvalleygolfclub.org
[Volunteer Assignments](#)

[Print Page](#)

	NAME	RULES MEETING
STARTERS	Tee William Loeb	7:15 a.m.
	Tee Patrick Dowdle	7:15 a.m.
RULES OFFICIALS	Ken Urbaszewski	7:15 a.m.
	George P Jameson	7:15 a.m.
	Scott Rowe	7:15 a.m.
STAFF IN CHARGE	Colin J Wadelin	7:15 a.m.
STAFF	Will Cawthon	7:15 a.m.
	Damian Rodriguez	7:15 a.m.

Comments:
 Format: **This is a one day 18-hole stroke play qualifier.**
 Entries: **Limited to 84 players at each qualifying site. The CDGA reserves the right to expand the field size at a qualifier to accommodate an excess of entries. The number of players at each site will determine the number of qualifying places.**
You must qualify to have an opportunity to play in the Championship.

***** NOTE TO ALL TOURNAMENT OFFICIALS:** We do ask that if anyone is not able to work their assignment, to notify Jodi or Colin at the CDGA office prior to the event.
 The Blue Coat attire for all CDGA Championships (CDGA & USGA) and all CDGA Social Events is khaki pants, CDGA golf shirt, and dark shoes. Navy blazer and bucket/baseball hat are optional.

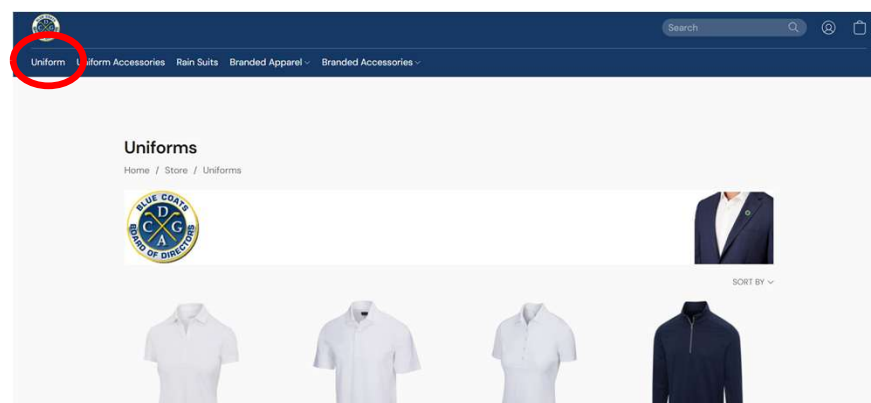


Attire



- **The Blue Coat uniform for all CDGA-administered tournaments is:**
 - White, CDGA-logoed golf shirt
 - Khaki slacks, shorts or skirt (women)
 - Khaki slacks (men)
 - CDGA-logoed hat (bucket or baseball)
 - CDGA-logoed navy outerwear
 - Tie & Blue Blazer (optional)
- **Uniform pieces can be purchased by going to My CDGA Caddie, selecting “Blue Coat Store” and navigating to the “Uniform” tab**

My Blue Coat Links





What to Bring



- **Printed copies of documents sent in reminder email**
- **Smart phone with Zello downloaded**
- **Earpiece**
- ***Rules of Golf*, either mobile or hard copy**
- **Weather-appropriate gear (extra layers, gloves, rain gear, umbrella, towel, sunglasses, sunscreen, bug spray, etc.)**
- **Binoculars**
- **Stopwatch**
- **Fishing line, dental floss, string, etc. (for measuring and boundary decisions)**
- **Tees (for marking relief areas)**



What is Provided



- **These items will be distributed at the morning Rules meeting:**
 - Pairing sheets
 - Raguzzis (Rovers only)
 - Local scorecards (if available)
 - Course maps (if available)
 - Air horns (if applicable)
- **Breakfast will typically be provided at championships only**
- **A tab will typically be open for lunch and snacks at all tournaments**
 - **Any alternative lunch plans will be communicated at the morning Rules meeting**



Questions





Tournament Assignments

Championships

CDGA / Illinois State Qualifiers and Championships, and USGA Qualifiers

Starter

- Will be assigned to #1 or #10 at the morning meeting

Rover

- Only members of the Championship Rovers Committee will be Rovers

Rules Official

- Assigned Zone on the course, OR
- Assigned Group(s)

Social Competitions

Net and/or flighted tournaments

Observer

- Assist with Registration
- Monitor Pace of Play – just to keep play moving
- Be an ambassador for the CDGA
- Assist with Rules when asked by players



Starting



- **1-2 Blue Coats will be assigned as starters**
 - Depending on the number of starting tees
- **Starting tees will be set with a starter's box, including:**
 - Clock with official time
 - Tees
 - Ball markers and/or ball mark repair tools
 - Sharpies
 - Club scorecards
 - Notice to Players and Hole Locations (one copy for players to take a picture)
 - Starter's script



Starting

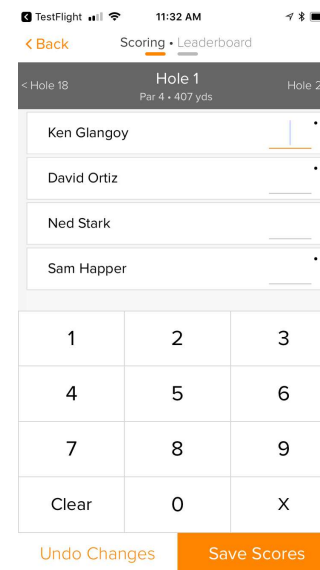
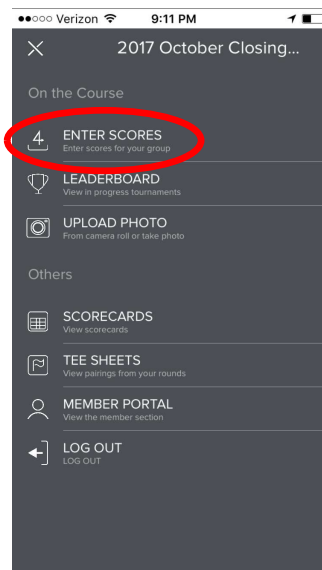
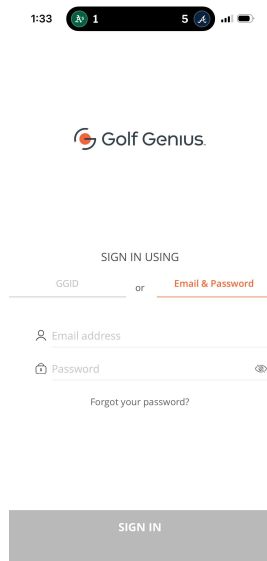


- **The most important thing:**
 - All players in each group off each starting tee **MUST** receive the same information in the same language
- **The starter's script will help promote consistency:**
 - Highlight any unique items from the Notice to Players
 - Inform where important documents are located
 - Provide scoring information
 - Administer order of play
 - Administer late to the tee penalties
- **Remember: tee times are precise to the second. The 8:00 group must tee off at 8:00:00, no sooner and no later**
- **Don't be afraid to ask players how to pronounce their name**



Starting: Golf Genius

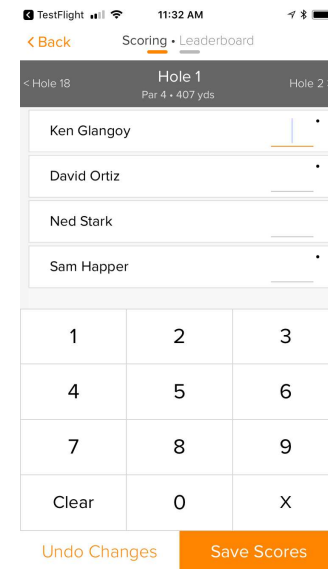
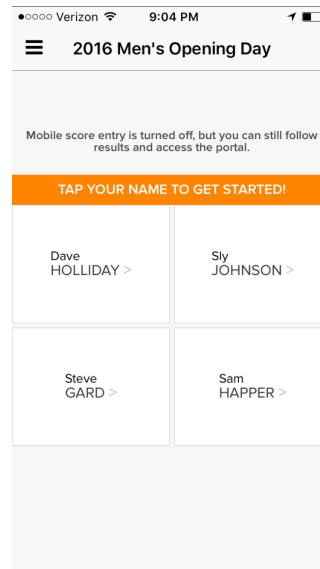
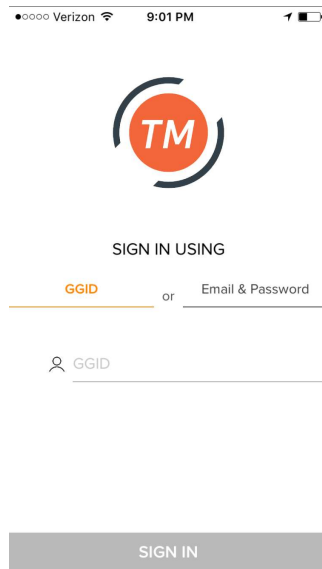
- There are two ways for players to reach live scoring in the Golf Genius app:
 - Log in with their email and password, then select “Enter Scores”





Starting: Golf Genius

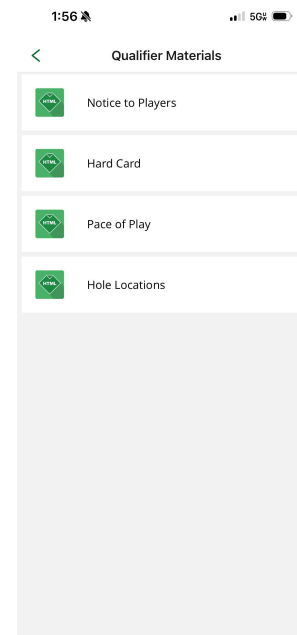
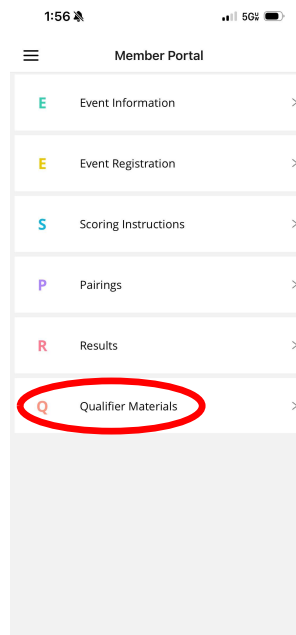
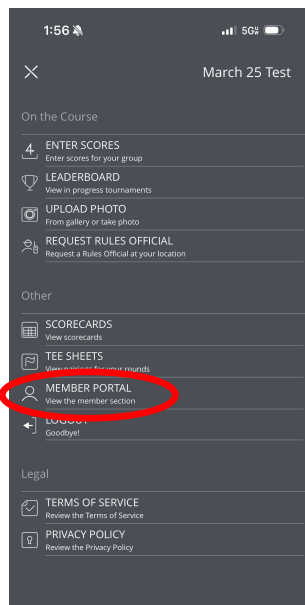
- There are two ways for players to reach live scoring in the Golf Genius app:
 - Log in with the Group GGID on the tee sheet, then select the player's name





Starting: Golf Genius

- **Golfers can see important documents by selecting the hamburger menu and tapping Member Portal, Qualifier Materials, and the Document**

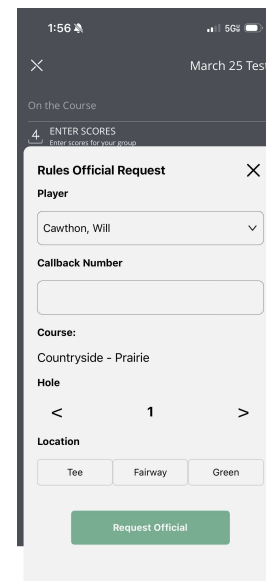
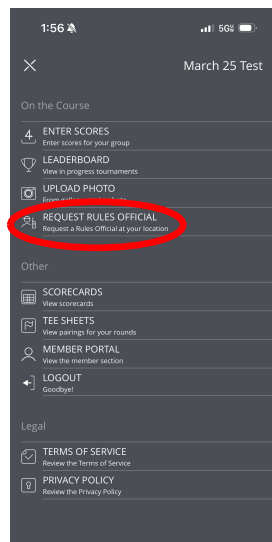




Starting: Golf Genius



- If golfers logged in with the Group GGID, they can request a Rules Official by selecting “Request Rules Official” and then filling out the form.
 - This will send a text to the on-site staff member





Rules Officials



- **Most Blue Coats at each tournament will be assigned as Rules Officials**
- **Specific assignments will be communicated at the morning Rules meeting. These may include:**
 - **Specific groups**
 - **Specific holes**
- **Rules officials should:**
 - **Arrive early to assigned holes and check markings and tee and hole locations. They should think of rulings that are likely to come up and radio a rover or staff member with any questions**
 - **Be mindful of nearby players with speaking volume, cart placement, positioning, etc.**
 - **Be mindful of the course by keeping the cart in high, dry, closely mown areas**



Rovers



- **Rovers will be assigned at tournaments with enough Blue Coat sign ups**
- **Typically, there will be one rover each on the front and back nines**
 - **Rovers may also be assigned to larger blocks of groups**
- **Rovers are responsible for:**
 - **Giving second opinions**
 - **Answering questions from Rules Officials**
 - **Pace of Play monitoring and enforcement**
 - **Giving breaks to Rules Officials**
- **Rovers will receive additional training this afternoon at the Championship Rovers Committee Meeting**



Pace of Play



- **Pace of Play monitoring and enforcement will depend on the number of Blue Coats at events.**
- **Only Rovers and Staff can enforce the Policy**
- **However, Rules Officials should notify the on-site Staff when they observe a group out of position**
- **The first group is out of position when:**
 - **They complete a hole in excess of time par**
- **Any subsequent group is out of position when:**
 - **They complete a hole in excess of time par, AND**
 - **They reach the teeing area of a par-4 or par-5 hole that is clear of all play, or they reach the teeing area of a par-3 hole that is clear of all play and all players in the preceding group have played from the next teeing area**



Questions





Zello



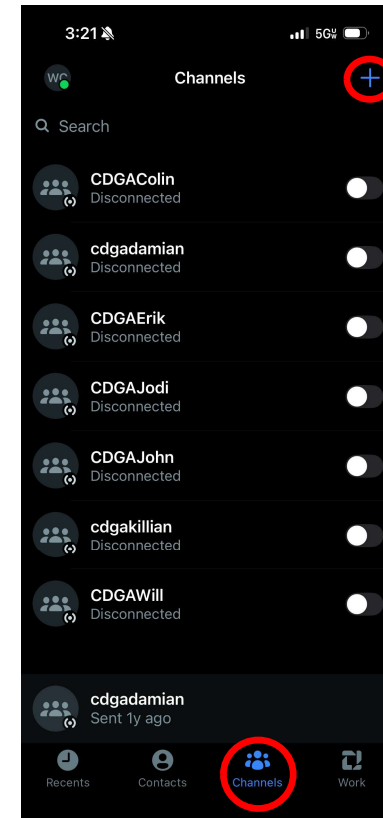
- **The Zello app will be used for radio communications at all CDGA-administered tournaments**
- **Setting up the app:**
 - **Go to the Apple App Store or Google Play Store, search for “Zello”, download the app and open it**
 - **Create an account with a unique username easily identifiable to you (i.e. JohnDoe or CDGAJohnD)**
 - **Allow the app to access your microphone and Bluetooth devices**



Zello



- **Adding a channel:**
 - **Select “Channels” at the bottom of the screen. Then, press the blue “+” at the top right corner and search for the channel name**
 - **The channel name and password will be in the reminder email sent 1-3 days prior**

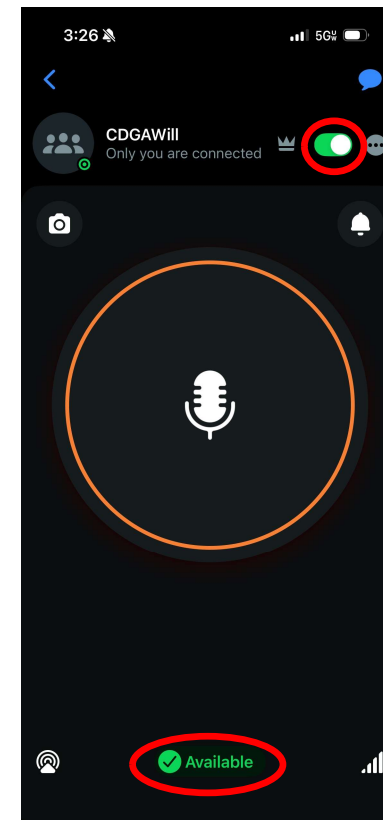




Zello



- **Speaking:**
 - Your screen should look like the image on the right. Note the “Available” at the bottom and the green switch toggled on at the top
 - Make sure your volume is up
 - Press and hold the microphone and wait until you hear a beep
 - Continue holding down the microphone, speak, and release the microphone when you are done
 - If you are in a windy place or a moving cart, be sure to shield the microphone



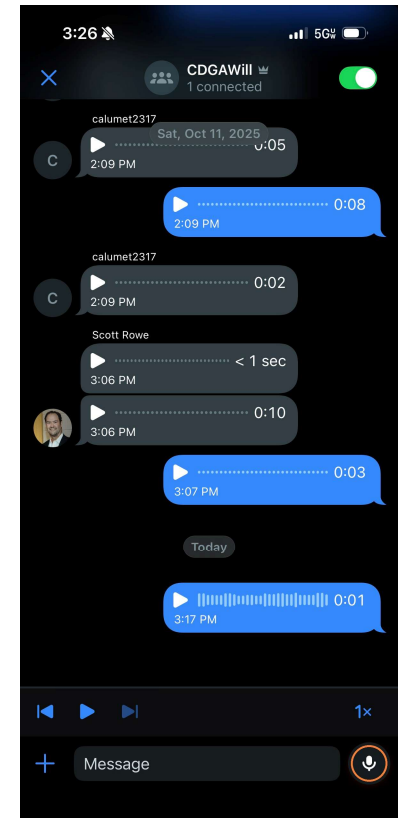
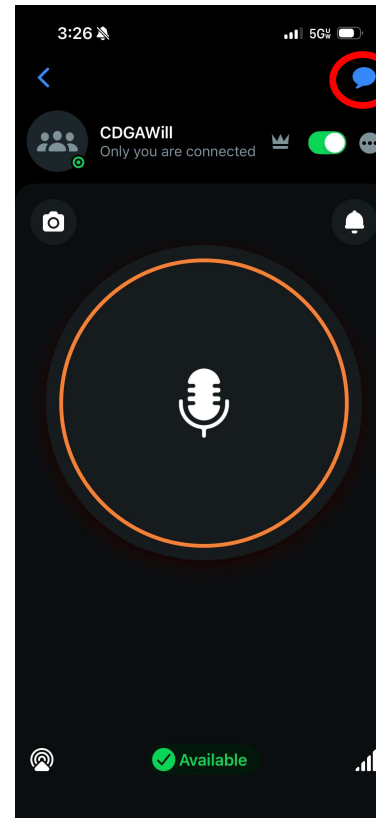


Zello



- **Chat:**

- Zello allows you to go back and listen to previous messages, instead of asking for repeat transmissions
- To access this feature, tap the blue speech bubble in the top right
- Press the “play triangle” on the message you would like to hear again
- You can also send messages and images in the chat





Zello



- The Zello channel used depends on the staff in charge:
 - CDGAWill
 - CDGAColin
 - cdgakillian
 - cdgadamian
 - CDGAPatrick
 - CDGAJodi
 - CDGAErik
 - CDGAJohn
- The password for all channels is *golf1914*





Radio Etiquette



- **When using the radio, be mindful of players around you by:**
 - Using an earpiece
 - Making sure there are no players within earshot before speaking
 - Speaking at an appropriate volume
- **Be mindful of others on the channel by:**
 - Acknowledging receipt of transmissions, when they are directed to you (copy, 10-4, thanks Colin, etc.)
 - Keeping transmissions concise when possible
 - Refraining from unnecessary conversations and comments
- **Use the radio to:**
 - Confirm rulings
 - Request help
 - Ask questions



Questions





Principles of Being a Good Rules Official

- **Getting the Ruling right** - Even the most knowledgeable Rules Officials will have a moment of hesitation or second-guessing, but help is only a radio call away. There is no shame in double checking a Ruling before giving it.
- **Professionalism** – Rules Officials will be among the only CDGA representatives a player interacts with during the whole event. It is important to keep a calm, professional demeanor at all times.
- **Preparedness** – Knowing the Rules, reviewing the Notice to Players and Hard Card, Pace of Play Policy, etc. is important to ensure you are prepared for any questions or situations that may arise.
- **Being Adaptable** – You may not always get the assignment you want or you may be asked to do something different or new.
- **Being Open to Feedback** – There is always room for improvement!



A Good Rules Official Should

Be discreetly available

- “Visibly invisible”
- If in a golf cart, park off the path to stay out of the way of players, spectators
- Position yourself in an area where you are least likely to factor into an errant shot
- Be visible enough to players that you are easily called in to a ruling situation



A Good Rules Official Should

- **Interact with players in a professional, friendly, and concise manner**
 - Most players do not feel at ease when they see a Rules Official enter the situation
 - Remember that you are there to help
- **Remove sunglasses** when interacting with players
- **Stay aware of surroundings**
 - Especially when driving a golf cart, make sure that players are not preparing to make a stroke when moving



A Good Rules Official Should

If there is any doubt, reach out

- Players are allowed to request a second opinion
- Rules Officials can request a second opinion if unsure of what to do
- If a second Rules Official comes into the ruling, step away and let the rover handle the situation
- ***Only one Rules Official (at a time) per ruling!***
- Use radio for clarification if not 100% certain



A Good Rules Official Should Not



- **Distract play**
 - By driving a cart, speaking on a radio nearby, using a radio without an earpiece, having loud conversations nearby
- **Be positioned in a bad place**
 - On or close to an extension of the line of play behind the player or on the other side of the hole
 - In the landing zone (better to be short of or beyond landing zone)

A Good Rules Official Should Not

- Go onto the putting green or into a bunker
- Move, attend, or replace the flagstick
- Rake a bunker for a player
- Touch, handle, or carry player equipment
- Initiate casual conversation with players



A Good Rules Official Should Not

- Mark and lift or otherwise touch a ball in play
- Run or jog on the course
- Be positioned in a bad place
- Involve spectators in a ruling
- Escalate tension when interacting with players



Positioning

The Rules assume the honesty and integrity of the player, so while Rules Officials are there to act on a breach, Rules Officials do not need to hover or see every action taken by every player.

- Be positioned to help a player if needed
- Visible enough to be called in quickly, invisible enough to not be a distraction
- Give the player plenty of space before, during and after a Ruling
- Don't make the player feel like they're being watched by "Big Brother"





Positioning

When positioned on a hole or in a zone, find the best spot

- Start by picking a spot where you can see as much as possible
- If covering multiple holes, find high ground where you can see multiple areas of multiple holes
- Over time, you may identify trouble spots where many rulings happen
- Avoid being in landing areas to avoid being part of a ruling! Aim to be short of or just past landing areas.
- If you are in a golf cart, make sure that you cart is well out of the way of errant shots and spectator foot traffic.

Positioning

Be positioned so that players can readily identify you and you can assist.

- If a player looks like they may need assistance, stand up to make yourself more noticeable and potentially take a few steps toward the player
- If you see that you may be needed for a relief situation soon, make yourself more visible, but do not wait at the situation for the player to approach



Positioning

Stay aware of your surroundings and approach professionally.

- Be calm and neutral going into a ruling.
- If a player calls you over, walk whenever possible.
- Don't run or jog to the player, even if there is a pace of play complication.
- If you are too far away and walking will take too much time, drive your golf cart toward the situation and park 10-15 yards from the players, away from the direction of play
- Always be aware of all players in the group.



Positioning – Match Play

When assigned to a match, stay with the players.



Positioning – Match Play

When assigned to a match, stay with the players.

- Walk back to all tees and be present with players throughout the hole so that you are readily available to assist.



Positioning – Match Play

As you are moving around, plan for your next position.

- Avoid standing on the through line (extension of the view past the hole)
- Avoid standing on an extension of the line of play behind the player
- Consider the position of all players and how your position may affect the next player to play
- Around putting greens and tees, avoid moving around a lot. Pick a spot that will be out of the way and stay there if possible.



Positioning – During a Ruling

While giving a ruling, make sure to give the player plenty of space.



Positioning – During a Ruling

While giving a ruling, make sure to give the player plenty of space.

Avoid standing in or parking a golf cart in a potential relief area



Positioning – During a Ruling

While giving a ruling, make sure to give the player plenty of space.



Avoid getting too close to anything you could accidentally alter to affect the player's conditions, such as low-hanging branches, loose impediments, deep grass, etc.

Positioning – During a Ruling

Pick a position where you will be able to make a quick exit once the ruling is complete.



Match Play

Rules Officials who are not assigned to a match do not have the authority to intervene in the match, except in a few specific circumstances.





Match Play

Only intervene when...

- Player or Opponent asks for help with the Rules or requests a Ruling (Rule 20.1b(2))
- Code of conduct issue (Breach of Rule 1.2 (Standards of Player Conduct) or the Code of Conduct Policy in effect)
- Players agree to ignore any Rule or penalty they know applies (Breach of Rule 1.3b(1))
- Pace of Play issue (Breach of Rule 5.6a (unreasonable delay), 5.6b (prompt pace of play), or the pace of play policy in effect)
- A player arrives late to their starting point (Breach of Rule 5.3)
- A player's search for a ball reaches three minutes (Breach of Rule 5.6a)





Match Play

Player or Opponent asks for help with the Rules or requests a Ruling...

- There is no need to be overly deferential in these situations.
- While players in a match can decide Rules issues for themselves, once either player involves a Rules Official, the Official should rule on the matter.
 - Exception: when it is too late to request a Ruling, no Ruling should be given (Rule 20.1b)
- In most cases, these will be “live” situations.
 - “Is this Ground Under Repair?”
 - “Can I move this stake out of the way?”
- Unlike in stroke play, Rules Officials should not warn players who may be about to breach a Rule. If the player does breach a Rule, the Rules Official should not apply the penalty without the opponent requesting a Ruling.

Questions?

Key Elements of a Good Ruling

- Accuracy
- Efficiency / Timeliness
- Demeanor
- Professionalism
- Outcome



Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Accuracy

- Ball is played from the correct place
- Penalty is issued if required
- Ball is put into play correctly
- Any additional information given is correct
- Consulting over the radio is not a sign of weakness
- If player questions a ruling, offer to call for a second opinion when appropriate



Key Elements of a Good Ruling



Efficiency / Timeliness

- Relevant Questioning
- Efficient language – a ruling is not the time for a Rules workshop
- Reasonable time for decisions
- Properly positioned to reach player when called
- Radio communication succinct and direct



Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Demeanor

- Calm greeting and tone
 - “How can I help?” if called in
 - “Sorry to interrupt, but I noticed...” if intervening
- “Open” posture
- Attitude to assist
 - Not here to dish out penalties or “catch” players doing something
- Allow player to state facts and case
 - Listen intently and allow player time to explain – never assume!
 - Get everyone involved to agree to the facts before giving the ruling
 - Say “tell me (or show me) what happened” and then listen



Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Professionalism

- Eye contact
 - Sunglasses off!
- Fact-based statements
 - A ruling or question about a ruling is not the time for casual conversation or jokes
- Unintrusive
- Avoids negative implications
 - “At least it’s not...”





Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Outcome

- Complete explanation (without being too “Rulesy”)
- Express sympathy for the player when needed. It’s okay to show that you know it’s a tough situation.
- Stay to fully complete ruling
- Player accepts and feels heard
 - Player may not like the ruling, but a good ruling will allow the player to accept it and understand why

When to Intervene

- The Rules are written assuming the honesty and integrity of players. The majority of competitive golf is played without a Rules Official observing the player's every action.
- These principles guide when a Rules Official should intervene in a ruling situation.



When to Intervene

- If the player waves you over
- If a call comes via radio that a player needs assistance
- If a player is about to breach a Rule, has breached a Rule, or is proceeding incorrectly
- If a player appears to be looking around for a Rules Official or doesn't appear to be handling the situation on their own



When to Intervene – Ball Search

If a player is searching for a ball, assist in the search even if not requested

- Make sure you get a timer going for the search clock
- Identify which player's ball is involved and ask how long they have been searching
- Periodically update the player on their time remaining
- Make a firm declaration that 3 minutes has elapsed and the ball is lost



When NOT to Intervene

If the player is taking relief on their own correctly, do not intervene



When NOT to Intervene



- If you see a player's ball in a potential relief situation, give the player time to assess the situation and consider their options before rushing in or offering to help
- Rules Officials are there to assist the player IF they need it

When NOT to Intervene

- It is appropriate to stand up out of a golf cart or take a few steps toward a situation to be more visible and ready to assist if called
- If you see a player's ball in a potential relief situation, do not wait next to the ball for the player to arrive (unless the ball is in a hard-to-find location)





How to Intervene

- **Set the tone as you approach the ruling** – be calm, open and keep your body language neutral. Take a deep breath as you approach the situation.
- Don't assume that you know what the player is trying to do.
- **“How can I help?”** – when called into a ruling
- **“Sorry to interrupt. I’m the Rules Official on this hole and thought you might have a Rules question.”** – when intervening on your own because players looked confused
- **“Sorry to interrupt. I’m the Rules Official on this hole and just want to make sure you’re taking the right drop. Can you walk me through what you did here?”** – when intervening on your own because a Rule may have been breached
- Keep in mind that you are there to help, not accuse



Body Language and Tone

Always be aware of what your body language may be communicating

- Avoid standing too close to the player
- Generally, you can keep at least a few yards between you and the player at all times



Body Language and Tone

Always be aware of what your body language may be communicating

- As you approach a situation, the player is most likely feeling anxious or on edge – try to de-escalate the situation if possible
- As you interact with a player, try to pick up on the tone of the situation.





Giving the Ruling - Get the Facts

- When entering a ruling situation, your first instinct may be to assume what is happening or what relief the player wants to take.
- Instead of assuming and jumping into relief options, take a beat and ask the player what they are trying to do.
- Starting the interaction with “how can I help?” allows the player to tell you what they are trying to do and what the problem may be.
- You may need to gather more information without leading the player.
 - “Tell me (or show me) what happened” then **listen** to their answer

Giving the Ruling– Asking Good Questions

Depending on the situation, you may need to ask follow-up questions after being called into a ruling. Questions should be open-ended and not lead the player toward a particular answer.

- Where was the ball originally?
- Who did what in what order?
- What actions has the player already taken?
- Where was the player standing when that happened?
- How did you determine that?



Giving the Ruling— Asking Good Questions

Repeat back facts to confirm.

- You may have to wade through a lot of extra information to get to the facts.
- “Just so I’m clear...”
- “To make sure we’re on the same page...”



Giving the Ruling – Be Direct

- Answer player's questions directly and concisely
- Answer the questions that are asked and avoid giving additional rules information (unless the player is likely to make a mistake)



Giving the Ruling – Be Direct

- If the player asks about relief, you can ask if they would like all available options, but do not proactively give all available options in great detail
- Avoid “I think” or “You should” statements – let the player decide how to proceed



Giving the Ruling – Be Direct

- A ruling is not the time for Rules education
- Avoid “Rules-speak” whenever possible
 - “Yes, you can move that twig.”
 - Instead of “That twig is a loose impediment, and you are allowed to move loose impediments anywhere on the golf course, including in a bunker.”
- Rules education phrases should also be avoided
 - Nearest, not nicest point of relief, 1+2=2, calling a penalty a “discount”



Giving the Ruling – Penalties

If a player gets a penalty, make sure the player is aware of the penalty and knows to include it on the scorecard



Giving the Ruling – Penalties

- If the player is obviously aware of the penalty (such as penalty area relief), no need to tell the player of the penalty
- Avoid any suggestion that the penalty is better than it could have been



Giving the Ruling – Close It Out

- When the ruling is complete, close out the interaction
- For example:
 - “Anything else I can help you with?”
 - “Alright, relief is complete.”
 - “You’re good to go.”
- Once complete, exit the ruling as quickly and quietly as possible.





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Questions?



Outdoor Stations



- **Station 1: Starting**
 - Jodi, Damian & Cullen
 - Hole #1 Tee
 - Starting Procedures, Late to the Tee
- **Station 2: Giving the Ruling**
 - Will & Patrick
 - Hole #1 Left Rough
 - Penalty Areas, Unplayable Ball
- **Station 3: Asking for Help**
 - Colin & Killian
 - Behind the Practice Green
 - Second Opinions, Radioing for Help





Outdoor Stations



- **20 minutes at each station, 5 minutes to rotate**
 - Horn will blow to signal change
- **Everyone should get the opportunity to participate at least once**
- **Everyone will be invited to share constructive feedback about each ruling:**
 - Was the ruling correct?
 - What did you like about how the ruling was delivered?
 - What did you think could have been done better?
- **Staff will act as players, Blue Coats will be rules officials**



Outdoor Stations



- **Group 1: Last names Artz – Green**
 - Station Order: 1,2,3
- **Group 2: Last names Grygiel – Saliba**
 - Station Order: 2,3,1
- **Group 3: Last names Salierno – Wilson**
 - Station Order: 3,1,2

- **Have Fun!**

