



Pen Pushers of America Golf Society



Official Handbook

Definition/Introduction:

What is a Golf Society? A golf society is an organization with regular members who get together periodically at different golf courses to compete and have fun. The purpose is to have regular golf competitions and social gatherings. We want to play in competitively fair competitions, with a group of good, fun loving, guys. Serious enough to mean something important when you win, but not so serious that people start to act like cut-throats, or complainers, or become difficult to play with. It is like a Golf Club without a home course. Pen Pushers of America meets 9 times per year (March – November). We have a nine-event tour each season, with both individual event and total tour awards and recognitions. All events have a common structure and format, (explained in this document). The society also has rules, regulations, and processes to manage the events and other activities. There is a board of directors committee that manages and governs the society. It is a not-for-profit organization, totally run by volunteers, to provide the best golf society experience, for the best possible price.

About this document:

This document is written with the purpose of documenting the Pen Pushers of America Golf Society's rules and guidelines used to run events and manage the society over-all. It will include information regarding the organization structure, its goals, rules, events structure, committee roles, and member responsibilities and guidelines. After nearly 20 years and 167 events, this golf society has evolved to be managed by a committee who keep the traditions alive and going for every event, and every season, without written guidelines. This document is meant to help both the managing committee and the Members to keep those traditions alive and guide them going forward. It will need to be kept up to date, revised and expanded as needed. It should be read and understood by all members. It is divided into two sections. The first section is focused on general membership rules and guidelines. The second section is focused on our golf events.

- Sections:**
1. General Membership Rules, Roles and Responsibilities
 2. Event Structure, Rules and Guidelines

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SECTION 1: GENERAL MEMBERSHIP RULES, ROLES AND GUIDELINES

Our origin: Pen Pushers UK

We are part of the international golf society, The Pen Pushers, founded in 1985 in the south of England by a gentleman by the name of Raymond Deem and a few of his golf buddies. Ray is still the chairman of the Society today(2021). The Pen Pushers of America is a spin-off, local chapter centered in northern Virginia, USA. An American (John Sullivan) while on international assignment in England was invited to be a member of Pen Pushers in 1998. When he returned to the States in 2001, he explained the golf society to several friends and the first event was held in June of 2002. The membership has grown over the years though our many "golf buddy" connections. The Britts donated one of our first perpetual trophies, "The British Cup", in 2004. We also continue to play a Ryder Cup format competition against the Britts every four years. That event is called the "Deem Cup". We compete for a crystal jug that looks similar to the Claret Jug, the British Open trophy.

Code of Conduct:

Our golf society is not for everyone who plays golf. We are looking for a certain type of golfer. Membership only happens if a current member sponsors a guest, and the committee approves their request for membership. Whether you are a member or a guest, we expect all golf rules and etiquette to be always followed at our events. We understand that some new golfers may need some help with rules and etiquette and our members will help them with that. Our values include integrity, honesty, and brotherhood. We do not lie, cheat, or steal. We do not put-up with club throwing or F-bomb screamers. We are all friends with a common love and respect for the game, respect for other players, including players of all skill levels. If they can keep up with the pace of play, and play by the same rules, we welcome high handicappers as well as those in the single digits. We have a wide range mix of skill levels in our society, and we like it that way. We want our events to be both competitively meaningful and fun for all. Our culture is to be helpful to each other and no gamesmanship. So, no jerks allowed...

Membership Benefits: Section 1.1

Being a member comes with many benefits and opportunities, but it also comes with some responsibilities. Following the rules of our events is mandatory as well as adhering to our code of conduct. Failure to do this can, and will, lead to expulsion from the golf society. Memberships are renewed on an annual basis. These membership benefits include:

- Access to the Tour of Events for the season
 - Nine (9) monthly events at different premium courses in Northern Virginia
 - Perpetual Trophies for each event (with all previous winner of that event)
 - Prizes and awards at each event,

- Champion, Putting Competition, Closest to the Pin, Long Drive, Lion-Man, and Goat-boy
 - A true and fair test of your golf skills, against a field of 30-40 players per event
- Access to the password protected website (www.penpushers.us)
 - The website has all the information about our golf society.
 - Is the portal to register for events (and to register guests)
 - Handicap and event score history is kept based on our Stableford scoring method.
- Ability to bring guests to our events and sponsor them for membership.
- Opportunity to participate in international Ryder Cup competitions against our English chapter.
- Access to golf trip packages
 - Ocean City
 - Myrtle Beach
 - England
- Access to more than 50 golf buddies

How we are Managed:

Section 1.2

Pen Pushers Golf Society is a “not for profit” organization and is managed by a board of committee members with both general and specific roles and responsibilities. These are all volunteer positions. No one is paid or makes money from Pen Pushers. This committee meets periodically to plan and resolve matters for the golf society. In January each year, this committee meets to plan the upcoming season and confirm roles and responsibilities. It is at this meeting that potential rule or policy changes are considered, and the schedule and venues for the season are confirmed. This information is shared with the membership as part of the “season opener newsletter”. The general responsibilities include, but are not limited to, helping to manage, and run our events, helping to educate members regarding our rules and policies and helping to enforce them. The committee also defines and modifies our rules and policies as needed. The specific committee roles are as follows:

1. Chairman
2. Vice Chairman
3. Treasurer
4. Handicap Czar
5. Captain
6. Vice-Captain
7. Director of Events
8. Event Director(s)
9. Charity Director(s)
10. Communications Director
11. Golf Trip Director(s)
12. Website Webmaster

Committee members often hold more than one title or function at a time. Most of these roles are self-explanatory based on the name. More details on some of these specific roles is below.

The entry level position to become part of the committee is usually Vice-Captain.

Vice-Captain (Entry level position to Committee)

- Holds position for 1 year.
- Becomes Captain the following year.
- Responsible for setting up and keeping track of putting comp activities and equipment for every event.
- Event day; early set up and take it down of equipment before we golf.
- Organize tiebreaker at events when required.

Event Director (leads the planning, negotiates contract with the course, and responsible for all event day activities for the event)

- Event Directors Checklist (attached in appendix) (Brian to help with this....)

Handicap Czar (Official Keeper of our membership handicaps and scoring records)

- Owns and uses our Handicap methods, fairly and without bias

Director of Events (helps define and maintain consistency in our events, checklists, and policies)

Communication Director (Authors and distributes communications to members)

- Newsletters, event reminders and recaps

Website Webmaster (Manages all aspects of our website footprint)

- Hosting services, content management and controls, database management

Chairman (Responsible for everything, last word in all disputes)

How to become a Member:**Section 1.3**

The path to membership is straight forward. A member can bring a guest to an event. The membership path starts with playing 2 events as a guest and then being approved by the committee. One of those first two events must be played with at least one committee member in the foursome. The member is responsible for his guest and must be present and play in the same foursome as their guest. That member takes the responsibility for explaining to the guest how we operate our events, some of our history, keeping scorecards, and behavior regarding rules and policies. That member is “vouching” for that guest as a potential future member. There are more detailed rules for guests attending events in the “Events” section of this document.

Member Fees

- **Annual Membership Dues:**
 - \$80.00 per season (required for each member)
- **Event Fees** (paid only for events as attended)
 - \$80.00 per Event (required for each event)
- **Charity/Event Raffle** (Optional for each event)
 - \$20 per Event
 - Creates cash pool for Charity donation, prize, and raffle.

Website Functions:**Section 1.4**

- Registration process (Registration Tab – www.punpushers.us)
 - All registration for events is done through the website. ID and logon credentials are required to register.
 - Member can also register guests on this page.
- Trigger to Payment process (Hopefully we get this done soon)
- Member Contact information (protected by logon credentials)
- How to contact us
- Handicap Tracking
- Event Scores and History of Scores
- Event Rules
- Pen Pushers Handbook
- Photos
- History of PP

Handicap Rules**Section 1.5**

Many of our members do not keep an official USGA GHIN handicap. For this reason, we keep handicaps for all our members. We use our stableford scoring method as the basis for our handicap calculations.

- For Members who do have a GHIN handicap
 - We use the lower of their handicaps for our events.
 - It is the responsibility of the member to alert the event organizer and the Handicap Czar if their GHIN handicap goes below their Pen Pusher handicap.

Monthly Adjustments

Each month, after the event, we register and record scores and make an analysis regarding the need to make handicap adjustments on all players from that event. We also do a special adjustment on the event winner. This involves an extra cut to help make sure that we do not have the same person winning every month. We want to spread the wins around in the group some. The monthly adjustment for the winners and non-winners will be on a graduating scale based on handicap range. For the monthly adjustment we will use the average score for that event minus the high and low scores (Avg. Score). The Average Score is a better indication of the course difficulty and weather conditions.

Monthly Winners Handicap (HC) will be adjusted based on the players HC range for that event as follows:

- Beginning HC 0 to 10.4 -2 and -.1 per point over Avg. Score
- Beginning HC 10.5 to 20.4 -3 and -.2 per point over Avg. Score
- Beginning HC 20.5 to 30.4 -4 and -.3 for points over Avg. Score
- Beginning HC 30.5 to 36 -6 and -.4 for points over Avg. Score

Non-winners HC will be adjusted by the same tenths of a points system as above based on HC for that event for scores above or below Avg. Score. The monthly adjustment will be limited to +/- 5 times the appropriate tenths of a point adjustment. A score of Avg. score, less high and low score, incurs no

handicap adjustment unless that player is the event winner. These adjustments are made because it is much easier for a higher handicapper to shoot 5 to 10 points better than their handicap than it is for a lower handicapper.

The purpose of all the handicap adjustments is to bring the members handicaps in line with their Stableford scores and create a level playing field where all members have a chance to win the event. We had 9 different winners last year!!! The Handicap Czar has the right to make all handicap rule interpretations and rule changes and arbitrary adjustments are made to the handicaps of those members who whine and moan about the rules or their handicaps. Members should not complain to the Handicap Czar about their handicap.

Annual Adjustments

At the beginning of each year, we review the handicaps and the past season's scores of each member for potential handicap adjustments. The minimum handicap is 0 and the maximum is 36. For the beginning of each season, we will adjust a member's raw handicap +1 stroke for each point where the rounded average prior year's scores (3 event minimum) is below 30 points (Maximum Adjustment will be 2 points up). We will adjust a member's raw handicap -1 stroke for each point where the rounded average Prior Year scores (1 event minimum) is above 36 points. Raw handicaps are rounded for use at each event.

SECTION 2:

EVENT STRUCTURE, RULES AND GUIDELINES

Our monthly events are golf outings. They are played at different golf courses with several competitive and social aspects. The competitive aspects include on a regular basis several categories.

They are:

1. Champion,
2. Putting Champ
3. Long Drive (the Big Dog)
4. Closest to the Pin
5. Lion Man
6. Goat-boy

The results from these event categories also roll up to our season tour categories, such as Tour Champion. In addition to the competitive nature of our events, there are also regular social aspects, which generally occur after we play the round of golf, we have an awards banquet/gathering. We provide a light meal, award the trophy's and prizes that were won, make general announcements, and celebrate the day together. These events have a consistent structure with some general and specific rules and guidelines. This section describes these aspects in more detail.

Event Categories: **Section 2.1**

1. Champion

- a. Highest Stableford Score for the event
- b. Drinks a Toast from the Champion's Chalice at the awards ceremony.
 - i. Champion's Chalices is filled with beer for the toast by the previous month's champion.

2. Putting Competition

- a. A putting competition will be set up on the practice green of the course.
- b. It generally consists of several holes but can also be a single hole format.
- c. It is laid out by the reigning Vice-Captain.
- d. It is considered "optional",
 - i. if you want to compete arrive early enough to have time to do it, all putting competition closes 10 minutes prior to shotgun start time!
- e. You are allowed one practice round.
- f. When ready to compete, you must declare "this is my official" and pair up with a partner, you will witness each other's score to make them official.
- g. The clip board for scores is generally on an honor system, write in your score.
- h. If there is a tie in this category, tie breaker will be a putt off at the awards ceremony.
 - i. And generally, leads to some additional fun to watch as the VC can sometimes get a little creative with methods depending on the situation and options.

3. Long Drive (The Big Dog)

- a. A single hole will be selected by the Event Director for each event.
- b. Winner is determined by longest drive in the fairway of the hole where you teed off.
- c. The winning ball must come to rest in the fairway or on the green and be the closest to the hole. The longest tee shot that lands – and stays! – in the fairway, wins the longest drive.
 - i. This is to say that a ball could be hit further off the tee box, be in the fairway, but not be closer to the target hole, so winning shot has shortest shot to the green, etc.

4. Closest to the Pin

- a. Determined by a tee shot that is closest to the pin at rest.
- b. Ball must come to rest on the green.
- c. Player must play to par or better on the hole or be disqualified from Closest to the Pin.

5. Lion Man

- a. This category is intended for the lower handicappers in the group.
- b. It is awarded to the player with the Lowest Gross Score of the day
- c. Tie Breaker rules will apply if necessary.
- d. Can be won more than once by a player in a season.
- e. Drinks a Toast from the Lion-Man Chalice at the awards ceremony.
 - i. Lion-Man Challis is filled with beer for the toast by the previous month's Lion-man.

6. Goat-Boy

- a. Intended for the player who struggled the most on that day.
- b. Measured as the lowest stableford score of the day.
- c. Can be won only once per season (Exempt for season after winning it)
- d. Exemption rule only applies in the “same season.”

In addition to these main category awards, we also award for the following:

- Each gross Birdie or better (Eagle, Double Eagle, etc..) is awarded a **whiskey** at the awards ceremony for this event.
- Each player in the champions foursome is awarded a bottle of **wine** at the awards ceremony.

Event Registration and Payment: Section 2.2

Registration:

Registration for the events is strictly handled through the website.

- Access to the registration page is Member ID and password protected. (www.penpushers.us)
- From the menu on left, select “Registration.”
- Input User ID and password
- From the Event Registration table, Change the “?” to a “Y” for YES, or “N” for NO
- **IMPORTANT:** Must click the “Submit Changes” button for registration to be complete
- Page will refresh with new entry to confirm that it was input to the database for the event.
- Verify that it recorded your registration status correctly, if not try again...
- A member can go back and change their registration status up to a few days before the event.
- A member is responsible for registering and **making sure they pay** the outing fee before the event. The member must include contact email and their USGA handicap or best guess.

Event Registration Locked:

A few days (sometimes a week) before an event the registration status is “locked”, and any changes at this point need to go through a committee member (preferred event Director)

- The last day to register for each event is shown on the registration page.
- Registration on the site is also locked at a maximum of 40 players per event.
 - Exception to this cap is only possible through the Event Director for the event

Cancelation Policy:

If you need to cancel up to a week before the event, just go to the site and change your status to “N”. If it is at the last minute (after the registration page is locked), please call the Event Director ASAP. This allows us to adjust the player count, assess the impact on the pairings, and let the course know to not have to pay for the last-minute drop out. Contractually, courses have the right to still charge us for that slot. In most cases they give us a break. If you cancel at the last minute, and the course insist on charging us for the slot, the member is responsible for paying for this.

Payment:

All Payments for Events and Membership fees should be paid through the current electronic payment method.

We except payments one of three ways:

1. Zelle Through most banks. Account to send to-penpushers@gmail.com
2. PayPal Through mobile app or the link [Paypal.com](https://www.paypal.com) Account to send to: penpushers@gmail.com
3. Venmo Through mobile app

**Tie-Breaker Rules:****Section 2.3**

Our general Tie-Breaker Rule is as follows:

For Event Championships:

1. Lowest Gross score on number 1 handicap hole (most difficult hole)
2. If still tied, continue to next most difficult hole until a winner is determined.
3. If still tied after all gross scores used, use back nine total stableford, then front nine if needed, (should never be needed....)

For Event Goat-boys: (the inverse of the event champion method)

1. highest Gross score on number 18 handicap hole (on easiest hole)
2. If still tied, continue to next easiest hole until a winner is determined.
3. If still tied after all gross scores used, use back nine total stableford, then front nine if needed, (should never be needed....)

Putting Contest ties:

Determined by a putt-off, layout and format defined by the Vice-Captain.

Pace of Play:**Section 2.4**

Pace (or Speed) of play is a particularly important topic for our golf society. It is easy for a golfer (especially the new golfers, though some of our lower handicappers can play slow too), to take too much time looking for a ball, or lining up a putt. Adding in the fact that this is a competitive event, people play slower than normal. We have several rules and practices to help with this.

1. We play "Ready Golf", go to your ball, and play it, if you need some help with a ruling, wait and ask for assistance from your group.
2. Make every effort to keep up with the group in front of you.
3. Adhere to USGA rules regarding how long to look for a ball for no more than **the three minutes allowed.**
4. Pen Pushers Lost Ball rule (Exception)....

All USGA Rules apply to our events except where Pen Pusher exception for a lost ball rule can be applied.

Exception: Pen Pushers Lost Ball/OB Rule:

This exception applies to shots hit from anywhere on the golf course, though it is most common when hitting from the tee box. It applies to a shot that may be lost or out of bounds. The USGA rule also applies regarding "hitting a provisional", as you will always have the option to hit a provisional, and all USGA rules around hitting and playing a provisional apply. However, if you do not hit a provisional for whatever reason and go to where you think your ball should be, and you cannot find your ball within the allotted time limit, either because it is Out of Bounds or lost in a hazard, you have the right to take a drop with a one (1) stroke penalty. Two (2) club-lengths from (where it is agreed with a Member in your playing group) the logical point where the balls flight would have crossed the out of bounds line, or short of the hazard it may have entered. It is not a lateral drop from the distance that the ball flew. It is on the line that it went out of bounds.

Requirement to use this exception rule:

1. Drop Location, where you take the drop must be agreed to by an active member of the golf society.
 - a. by a player from your playing group
 - b. should be someone who saw the shot.
2. Two (2) club lengths from boundary
3. One (1) Stroke Penalty

General comments regarding Pace of Play:

As a club without real estate, we are guests at every course we play. If we become known as a club that clogs up a course, that routinely takes 5-6 hours to complete our rounds, then we won't be able to book the great courses that we book every year. Maintaining an acceptable pace of play in every event is critical for us.

Pen Pusher expectation. We believe a foursome should be able to play a round of tournament golf in no more than 4.5 hours, assuming that group is not impeded by the group in front of them. That is a maximum. We also believe that all players should play *ready golf*. This is the standard for our club.

Need to get committee input on this one, might be too strict or difficult to implement

Pen Pusher rules. If a group plays in more than 4.5 hours and reports in more than 16 minutes behind the group in front of them (meaning that the group was a full hole behind), everyone in the group is assessed a 2-stroke penalty. And a group that plays in over 4:45 and is over 30 minutes behind the group in front of them, is disqualified.

Are we the right club for you? If you think that *every* putt needs to be read from 17 different angles, if your pre-shot routine would make the average PGA Tour pro mutter "while we're young", if you're perfectly happy standing around waiting to hit because the person who "has the honor" is answering the

call of nature, then Pen Pushers are probably not the right club for you. But if keeping up with the group in front of you is part of your golf-DNA, then we are the club for you.

Scorecard Rules:

Section 2.5

- **Stableford format** (number of points awarded is determined by the number of strokes taken to par after being adjusted in relation to a player's handicap) Ex: a handicap of 10 will be afforded an extra shot to the holes that have a stroke index of one to ten. A 24-handicapper would get two extra strokes on holes with a stroke index of one to six and one extra shot on holes with a stroke index of seven to 18. Scores are as follows:
 - Net double bogie or higher 0 points
 - Net Bogie 1 point
 - Net Par 2 points
 - Net Birdie 3 points
 - Net Eagle 4 points
 - Net Albatross 5 points
- **Card verification** (trading cards and signing before turning them in)
 - We trade cards at the beginning of the round with another member in our group. They become the official score keeper for your round and sign the card at the end of the round after completing and verifying with the player. Players should also keep their own scores to compare and validate at the end of the round.
- **How we fill out cards**
 - We fill out individual cards for each player.
 - Cards must have scores for:
 - Gross
 - Net
 - Stableford Points
 - Birdies are **CIRCLED** so that whiskey prizes can awarded.
 - Cards must include totals for Gross, Net and Stableford Points
 - Cards must be signed by both the Player and the Score Keeper before turning them in

The History of Stableford

The Stableford system was the brainchild of Dr. Frank Barney Gorton Stableford (1870–1959) – hence the capitalized 'S' in the name – to stop golfers from giving up after a poor start to their rounds. It was first used at Glamorganshire Golf Club, Penarth, Wales, in 1898, and first used in competition at Wallasey Golf Club in Wallasey, England, in 1932. Stableford is especially popular in the UK and is the preferred scoring system for a lot of club competitions and social golf events. It is also known to speed up play as, once it is no longer possible to score a point, players do not have to complete the hole.

Guest Rules:**Section 2.6**

- The sponsoring Member is responsible for his guest and must be present for the event.
- Only ONE guest is allowed per member per event (exceptions may be given but MUST be obtained in advance)
- Guests are not allowed to invite guest observers to ride along.
- Guests must play twice (once with a board member) before being eligible to join.
- The same guest is only allowed to play three times in a season as a guest or become a member.
- Guests are not eligible to win the event championship, or Goat-boy.
- Guest can win:
 - Putting contest
 - Long Drive
 - Closes to the pin
 - Charity raffle
 - Lion Man

Other General Rules:**Section 2.7**

- **NO MULLIGANS**
- The Ball must come to rest in the hole to score any points on that hole.
- **Special note:** When we play Shotgun start, playing additional holes are not allowed (ex: group finished their 18 holes on hole number 15 – **DO NOT**, repeat, **DO NOT**, continue play on holes 16, 17 and 18 on return to clubhouse. All groups should finish at about the same time and then return to the clubhouse to awards.
- Violations of Pen Pusher rules can result in expulsion or in case of a guest not being allowed back to play.
- **No GIMME's** - You must PUTT OUT to score any Stableford points on the hole, and the ball must come to rest in the hole, no whining about the ball would have gone in if the stick were out, etc.
- **The PICKUP rule.** (This is a Speed of play rule) If you have hit enough shots such that you cannot score on the hole, please pick up your ball, declare that you are a "blob" for the hole, (record as "0" points, gross score as shots to earn "0" points).
- **Closest to Pin winners** must make Par or Better to win award.
- **Long Drive** ball must be in our own fairway, and closest to the hole.

If in doubt about what to do: (while play in an event)

- Discuss with your group.
- Make a decision and continue play.
- Bring the ruling to attention of committee member after the round and before you sign your card. Guidance will be given on how to score it on your official card.
 - Worst case scenario, you take a "blob" on the hole.