



Houston Amateur Golf Association
Rule Book and By-Laws

<https://www.haga.org/>

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HAGA Introduction

Founded in 1952, The Houston Amateur Golf Association (HAGA) is a non-profit organization run by the members whose purpose is to hold golf tournaments on a regular basis throughout the year on a variety of courses.

HAGA is governed by a Constitution and By-Laws included in Appendix A of this document.

Tournament Planning starts by assembling the list of players in order based on their Course Handicap. We split the field as evenly as possible with a target of 12-14 players per flight, in order to have players of like skills competing in the same flight. HAGA pays 4 places when we have 12 players. As we add more players to the flight we will add a fifth-place prize.

HAGA New Members, known as “Specials,” will play in their own flight and compete on a low net score basis. The number of prizes paid is based on the number of Specials that participate in the event. There is approximately \$35 in prize money per Special participation.

In addition to the Regular players, HAGA offers an optional “Senior” designation for members over 62, and a “Bomb Squad” option for highly skilled players that want to play from the back tees. The information on both of these programs is included in this Rule Book.

Players may participate in several optional cash games for Skins, Deuces Wild, Hole-in-One and other games for each event. Players who enter the Cash Games but withdraw from the tournament are still entitled to their winnings in the cash games (except Low Gross and low Net).

Most HAGA tournaments are one day, 18-hole stroke play events, played on Sundays. In addition, HAGA has several special events each year, including match play which runs from March to August and a Four-Ball tournament in the Fall. One special event is our “Player of the Year” (POY) contest whose winners receive free tournament entry fees and additional cash prizes.

HAGA uses [BlueGolf.com](https://www.bluegolf.com) as our registration website. To learn more, please visit <https://www.haga.org/> and download our [New Member Information sheet](#).







BlueGolf

- HAGA uses BlueGolf.com for membership roster, tournament registration, and payments. HAGA also utilizes the BlueGolf email and text system to contact members.
- Upon joining, members will be issued an ID and password for their BlueGolf membership, and must add personal info and a credit card for entry fees
- HAGA members should add a photo to their account to allow others to recognize them.
- All HAGA entry fees are paid via the credit card in the player’s HAGA profile
- BlueGolf charges a 3.5% fee along with 3.25% to the credit card processor. No sales tax is charged.
- Most events are \$130 plus approximately \$9.00 for credit card processing and BlueGolf fees described above

Board of Directors

The HAGA Board has six Officers, plus At-Large members elected bi-annually. See Appendix A for Directors' Duties.

Current Officers:

	President, George Harlow		Handicap Chairman, Brian Johnson
	Tournament Director, Ron Hill		Treasurer, Jeff Pauley
	Membership Chairman, Randy Mackay		Secretary, Lundin Schneider

Current At Large Members:



Mike Bunn



Nick Loughlin



Robert Curran



Steve Mills



Robbie Guinn



Harold Newhouse

Rules Committee

The Rules Committee's primary responsibility is to resolve rules questions. At least one Rules Committee member remains for each tournament until all scores are posted and the results are final. A secondary role is to help educate our members on the rules and answer 'what if' questions.

Rules Committee members do not act as rules officials or enforce the slow play penalty during the round. They may make rulings for their own or another group, provided that doing so will not slow down play.

There are 3 members Rules Committee members:

- Garry Brunson, Chair
- Brian Johnson
- Randy Mackay

Players should raise any Rules issues with the Committee before returning a scorecard. Often, rules questions are asked when the scoring table is busy, and/or by a player who has had a bad round. In such cases, unless it is a simple question, the Rules Committee representative and player should find a quiet location to discuss the matter. Guidelines may be found in the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf Section 6C, #7.

Other key references in the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf:

- Playing Two Balls – see Rule 20.1c for requirements the player has to follow.
- Rules 20.2b and 20.2d – HAGA Rules Committee rulings are final, but erroneous rulings will be corrected if possible. Section 6C/#11 in the Committee Procedures has guidelines for handling incorrect rulings.
- Disqualification – disqualifications are rare, two Committee members must agree that a disqualification is the correct penalty. If a second Rules Committee member is not available, an HAGA Officer or Board member may be asked. If two members are not available, the decision should be deferred until another Rules Committee member is consulted.

Withdrawal Policy

Before the Tournament Begins:

A player may withdraw from the tournament.

1. Withdrawal without penalty is allowed up to the entry/withdraw deadline date and time posted on the website.
2. There is a \$5.00 processing fee for withdrawal prior to the entry/withdraw deadline.
3. Withdrawal after the entry/withdraw deadline date and time will result in forfeiture of all entry fees.

HAGA No-Show Policy

Registrants are expected to be at the tournament. No-shows will forfeit their entry fee.

If unable to attend an event, HAGA encourages members to notify HAGA Tournament Administrator Linda Hill, by email at LMMBH@comcast.net as early as possible so she can adjust the pairings.

Withdrawal during the HAGA event

1. Withdrawing Player should help ensure there are adequate markers for the remaining players.
2. WD player must stop by the Tournament Administrator's location and notify her of his intent to withdraw.
3. The WD player will not be entitled to any refund after play has begun.
4. WD player will be entitled to the "Cash Game" awards won, (i.e., Deuces Wild and Skins are still in play for holes completed).
5. In the case of "Special"¹ members, the event will not count toward the three tournament requirement if the player withdraws from the event.
6. No POY points are awarded for a WD.

¹New members joining HAGA for the first time are designated as "Specials", and are required to complete a minimum of three HAGA events and have an official USGA GHIN handicap index before being included in the Flight competition with other members. Refer to the [New Member Information sheet](#) for further details.

Basic USGA Rules all members should know

The two basic principles of the Rules of Golf are 'play the course as you find it' and 'play your ball as it lies'. While the Rules of Golf may seem complicated, almost all situations are covered by the following 9 items, and players should know how to handle them.

Players should Install the free USGA Rules app on their phone and carry a copy of the HAGA Local Rules

1. If unsure what the Rules require, play a second ball (Rule 20.1c). Player must decide to do so before hitting the original ball and should tell another player which ball they wish to count (otherwise the first ball played counts). Player must report the facts to the Committee even if the score was the same with both balls.
2. Relief Area (Definition and Rule 14.3) – this is used for a number of things such as taking relief from a cart path, Penalty Area (PA), embedded ball, etc. It is either 1 or 2 club lengths using the longest club other than a putter. See Diagram 14.3c.
3. Obstructions (Definition and Rules 15.2 and 16.1) are manmade objects. If movable (like a rake) do so. If the ball moves, put it back. If immovable (like a cart path or sprinkler head) and it interferes with the player's stance or swing, find the Nearest Point of Complete Relief and drop within 1 club length of this spot. See Diagrams 16.1a, b, c, and d.
4. Penalty Areas (Rule 17) – Players have 3 options:
 - a) Play the ball as it lies
 - b) For 1 penalty stroke, take stroke and distance and play the shot over again from the original location
 - c) Or back on the line formed between the point where the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard and the flagstick, for both yellow and red areas (see Diagram 17.1D in the Rule Book)
Note: 2 club lengths from the margin of the hazard for red areas.

You may remove loose impediments and ground the club. Diagram 17.1d (two versions)
5. Bunkers (Rule 12) – Player can remove loose impediments but cannot touch sand with the club until the downswing of the stroke.
6. Unplayable Ball (Rule 19) – Player can declare a ball unplayable anywhere on the course except in a PA. 1 stroke penalty with 3 relief options. Diagrams 19.2 and 19.3
7. Ball Lost or OB (Rule 18.2 and HAGA Local Rule) – Player takes stroke and distance or 2 strokes if electing the HAGA Local Rule option
8. Ball Accidentally Moved by Player (Rule 9.4) – 1 stroke penalty and ball must be replaced. If a player accidentally moves the ball on the putting green or while searching for the ball, they may put it back without penalty.
9. Loose impediments (Rule 15.1) can be moved anywhere, but if the ball moves it must be replaced with a 1 stroke penalty unless the ball is on the putting green.

HAGA Local Rules

All tournaments are played in accordance with USGA rules and HAGA Local Rules. Each Player is responsible for knowing any additional rules for a specific tournament before play begins.

Some courses have a list of Local Rules on their scorecards. In general, rules identifying penalty areas, out of bounds, and no play zones and those protecting young trees and flowers can be used. However, local rules which modify USGA rules are **NOT VALID for HAGA** tournaments (i.e. ball drops at penalty areas, winter rules, etc.). Drop zones cannot be used unless the Tournament Director approves their use.

1. CODE OF CONDUCT

Contestants (and their caddies/guests) are to observe proper golf etiquette at all times. Any abuse or disrespect of fellow competitors, employees and other players of the host facility, or other persons conducting or attending an HAGA event can be grounds for disqualification from the event and possible rejection of entry to future HAGA events. Such abuse may be verbal, physical or by threat and includes, but is not limited to, the use of obscene language, physical damage to property or equipment of the host facility, and abuse of alcohol or controlled substances during a competitive round.

Some courses have a particular dress code, and this information may be obtained from the course prior to play. HAGA's dress code is straight forward; no cut off shorts, no sleeveless tee shirts and no tank tops. It is the responsibility of each Player to present themselves in accordance with golf course policy. Remember that we are guests at ALL courses!

2. PROMPT PACE of PLAY (K-1)

A group which finishes their round more than 20 minutes behind the group in front of them has violated the Prompt Pace of Play Rule and each Player in the group may be assessed a two-stroke penalty. There is no penalty if the group's total time is 4 hours 30 minutes or less. If the first group finishes their round in a time which the Tournament Committee deems unreasonable, each Player in that group may be assessed a two-stroke penalty. Any appeal of a slow play penalty must be made to the Rules Committee before all scores for the group are posted.

3. HAGA occasionally plays courses that have not been marked to USGA guidelines. The following local rule has been established for such courses:

OUT OF BOUNDS

- A ball which comes to rest on or across a paved area, including roads and parking lots but not cart paths, is out of bounds **(A-2)**.
- A ball, which comes to rest on property which is not part of the golf course, such as a residential yard, is out of bounds **(A-1)**.

4. RELIEF FROM ABNORMAL COURSE CONDITIONS

- **CRACKS IN THE GROUND (F-8)** - many courses, particularly in the dry summer months, have large cracks in the ground. If a ball in the general area or on the putting green comes to rest in a crack at least one-quarter of an inch wide caused by hot dry conditions, the Player may take relief under Rule 16.1. Interference does not exist if the crack only interferes with the Player's stance or, on the putting green, the line of play.
- **AERATION HOLES (E-4)** - if a ball lies in or touches an aeration hole in the general area or on the putting green, the Player may take relief under Rule 16.1. Interference does not exist if the aeration hole only interferes with the Player's stance or, on the putting green, the line of play.

5. ALTERNATIVE TO STROKE AND DISTANCE FOR LOST BALL OR BALL OUT OF BOUNDS (E-5)

When a player's ball cannot be found or is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds, the player has the option of taking a two-stroke penalty rather than proceeding under stroke and distance. This option cannot be used when the ball is known or virtually certain to be in a penalty area or the player has played a provisional ball. If neither the original ball nor the provisional ball can be found, this two-stroke penalty option may be used for the provisional.

For **two penalty strokes**, the player may take relief by dropping a ball inside the relief area formed by:

- a line from the hole through the ball reference point (where the original ball is estimated to have come to rest or went out of bounds)
- a line from the hole through the point **on the fairway of the hole being played** that is nearest to the ball reference point. For purposes of this Local Rule, "fairway" means any area of grass in the general area cut to fairway height or less.
- two club-lengths to the outside of either line.

The drop must be in the general area and no nearer the hole than the ball reference point. See the Diagram on the following page.

6. CLEANING BALL (E-2) – HAGA Alternative to Lift, Clean & Place

Occasional mud on your ball is part of golf and the ball is just played as it lies. But when the course is so wet (or may become so wet) that mud will often be on golf balls the Tournament Director may decide ahead of an event to allow the ball to be picked up and cleaned. Players cannot decide to do this on their own. When this Local Rule is in effect:

- The ball may be lifted, cleaned, and replaced without penalty when the ball lies anywhere in the general area (fairways and rough) but not in penalty areas or bunkers.
- You must mark the spot of the ball before lifting it (see Rule 14.1).
- The ball must be replaced on its original spot (see Rule 14.2).
- If the ball does not stay on its original spot, you must try a second time. If the ball again does not stay on that spot, you must place the ball at the nearest spot where it will stay at rest that is not nearer the hole and is in the general area.
- If your ball has been replaced and is at rest, and then moves, there is no penalty and the ball must be played from its new spot, unless another Rule applies.

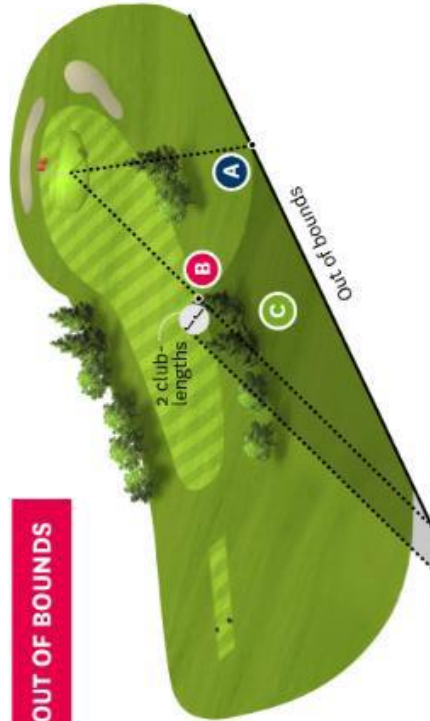
If you have an embedded ball or interference from temporary water, you would take relief from those conditions first and then use this Local Rule.

7. Players may typically bring guests or a caddie but there are exceptions so the Player should check with the course directly. HAGA has adopted the following local rule regarding minors - Players may not bring onto the course any child under the age of 12. Breach of this rule is immediate disqualification, and the Player will be asked to leave the course. HAGA takes no responsibility for the safety and well-being of any Player and/or guest during an HAGA tournament.

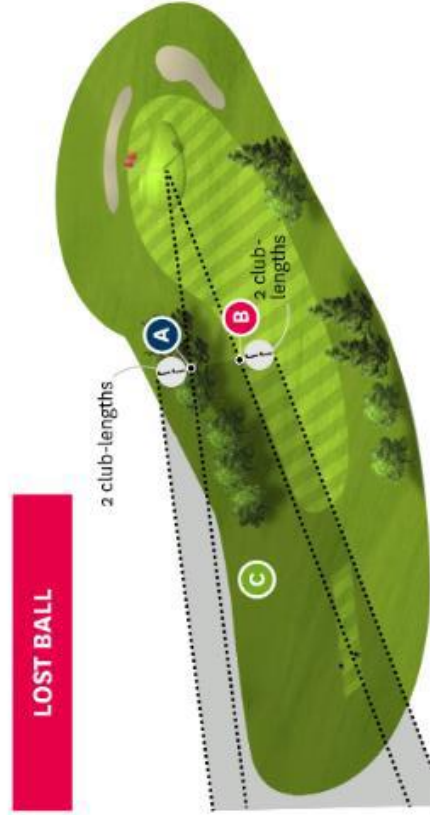
GOLF'S NEW RULES: STROKE AND DISTANCE

A new Local Rule provides an alternative to stroke-and-distance relief for a ball that is lost outside a penalty area or out of bounds, effective January 1, 2019.

BALL OUT OF BOUNDS



LOST BALL



If the Local Rule is in effect, you can still take stroke-and-distance relief, but you now have the following additional option that comes with a penalty of two strokes:

A DETERMINE SPOT where your ball went out of bounds (left diagram) or is likely to be lost (right diagram).

B FIND NEAREST FAIRWAY EDGE no closer to the hole.

C DROP YOUR BALL IN SHADED AREA as defined on one side by a line from the hole through point A and on the other side by a line from the hole through point B, and not nearer the hole. The relief area is extended on both sides by two club-lengths.

This Local Rule is not intended for higher levels of play, such as professional or elite amateur level competitions.



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Determining Ties

First it should be noted that the HAGA only decides ties for the Prize Fund award in our handicap stroke play competitions. The POY points award retains ties, so players who finished tied equally divide the POY points. In Match Play, there are no ties, and each match continues until a winner is determined.

Because the HAGA pays the Prize Fund at the end of the round, it is necessary to decide the ties for the Prize Fund in order to facilitate the pay-out process. Since a playoff is not feasible at our tournaments, HAGA breaks ties using the matching score cards method recommended by the USGA, which decides ties on the basis of the best score for the last 9 holes (i.e., holes 10-18). Since our tournaments are handicap stroke play competitions, half of each player's Course Handicap (rounded to nearest whole number) is deducted from their gross scores for the last 9 holes to determine their last 9 holes net scores. The player with the lowest 9 holes net score is the winner.

Example from a recent HAGA tournament: Josh Shake, Lynn Cormier, and Steve Morris all scored a net 72 to tie for 1st place in the Championship Flight. The ties were decided as follows;

1. Josh Shake had a gross 36 on the last 9 holes. One-half of his 5 handicap is 2.5 which is rounded to 3 strokes. His gross 36 is reduced by 3 strokes for a net 33.
2. Lynn Cormier had a gross 36 on the last 9 holes. One-half of his 1 handicap is 0.5 which is rounded to 1 stroke. His gross 36 is reduced by 1 stroke for a net 35.

Josh Shake with a last 9 holes score of 33 is awarded 1st place, Lynn Cormier with a 35 is awarded 2nd, and Steve Morris with a 37 is awarded 3rd.

In the event that the players have the same score for the last 9 holes, the process proceeds to the last 6 holes using one-third of handicaps, the last 3 holes using one-sixth of handicaps, the last hole using one-eighteenth of handicaps, the 17th hole using one-eighteenth of handicaps, the 16th hole etc. until a winner is determined.

Note that all 3 players in the example above were awarded 366.67 POY points, as they shared the 500, 350, and 250 points for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place, since POY Awards retain their ties and therefore share the points awarded.

Fourball

Note: This is NOT a Scramble event. Two players compete as a side and each plays their own ball.

Handicap

1. Both players must be HAGA Active members
2. Players will receive 85% of their course handicap
3. Strokes are applied based on the number of strokes and the hole handicap rating, beginning with the #1 handicap hole.
Example:
 - a) Player A on Team #1 has a 10.0 handicap index
 - b) Course is a par 72 with a course rating/slope of (70.0/127), which results in a course handicap of 9.265 for Player A
 - c) 85% of 9.265 is 7.875 which rounds to a playing handicap of 8; Player A gets 8 strokes (1 stroke on each hole with a handicap rating of 1 through 8)
 - d) Player A's "net score" on handicap holes 1 through 8 will be his gross score on the hole, less one stroke.
 - e) Strokes are NOT transferrable to other holes or his playing partner.
4. Strokes are for individual scoring, not as a team stroke

Pairings

1. Members may choose partner on their own with no restrictions
2. HAGA will match players if they do not have a partner
3. Players who want to be matched to a partner must register at least one week in advance

Scoring

1. Both GROSS scores must be entered on each hole for each player
2. Although players may "pick up" when they are "out of the hole", scores will still be posted for handicap purposes. If you don't finish a hole record your most likely score.
3. For the TEAM score, record the lower of the two NET scores for each hole, by applying the handicap stroke to the appropriate player's score. It must be clear which player's score is the one that is being used.
4. At the end of the round at least one partner must certify and sign the scorecard
5. Ties are settled using a scorecard playoff, using the usual formula of last 9 holes, last 6 holes, last 3 holes and then using individual scores by hole, beginning at 18 and moving backward, until one player has a better outcome than the other.

Specials will be eligible to play in the separate “Special” flight with individual stroke play.

Instructions

1. Both players tee off and play their own ball
2. Senior players play from the HAGA designated “Senior” tee even though they are paired with a Regular HAGA member who is playing from another HAGA designated tee.
3. At least one player must hole out to post a team score for the hole
4. All USGA and HAGA Local Rules apply
5. You should be familiar with Rule 23 “Four-Ball”
 1. Since this is stroke play a second ball may be played if a player is in doubt as to the rule
 2. A player may give his partner advice
 3. A player may take any action the partner is allowed to take before making a stroke such as marking, lifting, replacing or dropping his partner’s ball
 4. Any action that would be a penalty to you, will be a penalty to your partner if you do it for his ball or equipment. Examples of actions that would result in a penalty for the partner are lifting his ball without marking it or improving the conditions affecting his stroke.
 5. Partners may play in any order the side considers best. For example, if a player has a putt for par and his partner has a longer putt for birdie, the player can go ahead and complete his par putt even if it helps his partner.
 6. To help with pace of play, players are encouraged to “pick up” when they are “out of the hole”

Club Championship

1. All HAGA members for the current year are eligible to participate in the two-day tournament held at the end of September, known as the HAGA Club Championship.
2. Players must play both days, there are no one-day options.
3. A Club Championship title is awarded to both the Low Net and Low Gross player with the lowest aggregate total over the 2-days. Both players' names are engraved on the Club Champion trophy.
4. POY Points are earned by players during the Club Championship that will decide the end of year POY awards (see next page).
5. Prize money is based on two days of competition and is two times the standard cash prize payouts and twice the regular POY Points (POY Points changed for 2025):

2025 Points		2025 Points	
PLACE	POY POINTS	PLACE	POY POINTS
1	400	6	200
2	360	7	160
3	320	8	120
4	280	9	80
5	240	10 +	40

6. In order to compete for the Club Championship, participants must have completed at least six HAGA tournaments since January 1 of the current year, or eight since Oct. 1 the prior year
7. Members without the six required events will play in a separate flight(s) for members who did not qualify. Prize money for this separate flight will depend on the number of entries. The prize money generated will fund the prize money for this flight.
8. Special members may also participate. There will be a separate flight for Specials allowing all new members to play. The prize money depends on the number of Specials playing in the 2-day event.
9. For members of the Special flight, the Club Championship counts as two of the three initial rounds required for new members to qualify for full HAGA membership.
10. All cash games are played based on one day results and players must enter the cash games for Saturday and Sunday separately. Cash prize money is distributed at the end of each day.
11. As with all Major events, the Club Championship course handicap is based on the low 12-month GHIN or low 12-month HAGA index, whichever is lower.
12. Tie-breaker for the Club Championship is based on the standard USGA playoff formula using the second day scorecard, (i.e., last 9 holes, last 6 holes, last 3 holes then 18th hole).

Player of the Year

The HAGA Playing Year runs from October 1 through September 30. The final tournament of the year that often decides the POY outcome is the Club Championship.

The HAGA Player of the Year awards are based on the accumulated Player of the Year points earned at HAGA tournaments from October 1 to September 30 each year.

Before the start of playing year of 2025, the HAGA Board reviewed the past several years' POY results and found a lack of competition for Player of the Year honors toward the end of each year. For the preceding four years, only two members had a chance to win Player of the Year, making our most prestigious tournament, the Club Championship, a less exciting event fielding fewer than 50 players.

The board also found that increased POY Points and payouts for Majors did not increase participation. In some cases, the increased points and payouts made scheduling a Major at a premium course too expensive, which led the board to schedule Majors at less important courses.

For the playing year of 2025, which begins October 1, 2024, the HAGA POY Point awards formula will reward participation as well as wins and will eliminate added points for "Majors". The 2-day tournaments will earn 1.5X for The Memorial in May, and 2X for the Club Championship.

Please review Figure 2: 2025 Player of the Year Points Revision. The 2025 Points model has blue headings, and the section with grey headings shows the previous POY point model.

Figure 2: 2025 Player of the Year Points Revision

2025 Points		2025 Match Play		STANDARD		MAJOR		MATCH PLAY	
PLACE	POY POINTS	PLACE	POY POINTS	PLACE	POY POINTS	PLACE	POY POINTS	PLACE	POY POINTS
1	200	1	200	1	500	1	750	1	500
2	180	2	164	2	350	2	525	2	350
3	160	3-4	128	3	250	3	375	3-4	215
4	140	5-8	92	4	180	4	270	5-8	110
5	120	9-16	56	5	130	5	195	9-16	50
6	100	17-32	20	6	90	6	135	17-32	30
7	80			7	60	7	90	33+	20
8	60			8	40	8	60		
9	40			9	30	9	45		
10+	20			10+	20	10+	30		

Player of the Year Awards

Player of the Year awards are as follows:

1. The player with the most points accumulated through the Club Championship is declared the Player of the Year
 - His name is engraved on the POY trophy.
 - Wins 5 free rounds and \$400 in cash.
2. Second place receives 3 free rounds and \$300 in cash.
3. Third place receives 2 free rounds and \$250 in cash.
4. Fourth place receives 1 free round and \$200 in cash.
5. Fifth place receives 1 free round and \$150 in cash.
6. Places 6 through 10 receive \$100 in cash.
7. These awards are distributed after the Club Championship concludes.

Player of the Year results are also used to identify the team for the South Texas Match Play tournament, competing with the San Antonio “South Texas Amateur Golf Tour”, played in November. This is a match play “Ryder Cup” format over 2 days. The Top 20 in POY Points are eligible. If a player cannot play, the 21st player will be eligible and so on until we field 20 players.

HAGA also uses POY Points to seed participants for the HAGA Match Play Tournament played every year.

HAGA Annual Match Play Tournament

For 2025, registration must be completed by Monday, March 17, 12:00 noon; play may begin Saturday, March 22.

Round	Must Complete by	Round	Must Complete by
1	Sunday, April 20	4 (Elite 8)	Sunday, June 29
2	Sunday, May 18	5 (Final 4)	Sunday, July 13
3 (Sweet 16)	Sunday, June 8	Finals	Sunday, August 3

Seeding: Seedings are based on POY points as of March 17, 2025, and remain the same throughout all matches. If one player is seeded 5th and the other is seeded 25th, the 5th seeded player is the higher seed.

Eligibility

Participants must be a full HAGA member as of the close of registration on March 17. Specials may Register for Match Play but if they do not complete the required number of rounds to qualify as "Active" status by March 17, they will not be included in the tournament.

Pairings

1. The total field will be evenly split into two "flights", based on the number of players registered, using the Lower of their current HAGA or GHIN index
2. Players will compete within their flight until the final playoff round
3. Within each flight, the field is seeded according to POY points accumulated Oct. 1, 2024 – Mar. 17, 2025
4. The field is limited to the first 32 players based on the registration date.
5. Players are paired by seeding assignment using the BlueGolf program for match play

Notification

1. Players will be sent email messages to confirm their participation, along with a player contact roster.
2. Players must retain the roster to contact their opponents throughout the match play tournament
3. Players are instructed to check the match play bracket on BlueGolf to determine their opponent
4. The higher seed is responsible for initiating contact with his opponent to schedule the match.
5. After the match has been played, it is the winner's responsibility to contact the handicap chairman with the results and a copy of the scorecard. (email Brian Johnson at Bhdcjohnson@live.com)
6. The handicap chairman will verify results and enter the scores into GHIN (see scoring below)

Continued

Format

1. Because certain rules are substantially different between stroke and match play, matches cannot take place during an HAGA tournament
2. The time and place should be mutually agreeable to both parties and not pose an undue burden on travel for either party.
3. If a mutual location cannot be determined, the higher seeded player will choose the venue for the match
4. Higher seeded player will select the tees to be played – both players will play from the same tees
5. On the first hole, the higher seeded player will have the honor
6. The player who wins the previous hole has the honor on the next hole
7. It is a loss of hole penalty if you give your opponent the wrong number of strokes (including penalties) unless it is corrected in time (generally before he takes another stroke).
This is because of the effect it may have on your opponent's decision on how to play his next shot or whether to make a concession.
There would be no penalty if you give the wrong number of strokes after a hole is completed and it does not affect the result (e.g., you tell him you had a 4 when you really had a 5 but he made 6).
8. For the final match, the player with the most POY points will choose the venue and tees
9. HAGA board of directors has limited play to no more than 6,800 yards and no less than 5,900 yards
10. Players must work together to get the match completed in the allotted time shown above
11. Matches must be completed by the round deadline or may be subject to forfeit by one or both players

Prizes

\$60 entry fee, 32 players = \$1,920 purse. 100% of the entry fee goes to Match Play prize money.

2025 Match Play			
PLACE	POY POINTS	EACH	TOTAL
1	200	\$550.00	\$550.00
2	164	\$350.00	\$350.00
3-4	128	\$250.00	\$500.00
5-8	92	\$130.00	\$520.00
9-16	56	\$0.00	\$0.00
17-32	20	\$0.00	\$0.00

Posting match play scores to GHIN

1. The HAGA handicap chairman will post all scores to GHIN
2. The winner of the match must send a picture of the scorecard along with tees played
3. The world handicap system for posting scores will be used for any holes not played.

Continued

HAGA match play rules

Ties

1. If a match is tied after #18, it is extended one hole at a time until there is a winner.
2. After hole #18, play continues beginning on hole #1 until one player wins a hole, and any handicap strokes will once again be in play
3. We recommend players notify the pro shop that this is a match play event, and you may need to continue to the first few holes to decide the match (the match must begin on the number 1 hole, not on an alternate hole, due to the handicapping in place)

Handicaps

1. For each match players will use the lower of the current GHIN index or the HAGA index, published at the conclusion of the previous HAGA event (this will be sent to all participants after each HAGA event)
2. Players are responsible for obtaining both their GHIN index and their HAGA index. GHIN index may be found at <https://www.GHIN.com/>. The HAGA index is published by the Handicap Chairman twice each month.
3. You will need to login with your GHIN number and then click golfer lookup at the top of the page.
4. Players should consult the USGA national course rating database (<https://ncrdb.usga.org/ncrdb/>) to determine the course and slope ratings for the course and tees selected
5. You will need the course rating, slope rating, par and GHIN index for each player
6. If the course is not listed in the database, it should not be played since handicap strokes would not be known
7. Use the USGA course handicap calculator to determine the appropriate strokes for each player, using the four pieces of information above: <http://www.usga.org/course-handicap-calculator.html>
8. The number of strokes is based on the difference in course handicaps between the two players as calculated above, not on the individual GHIN index
9. Determine the number of strokes difference between the two players
 - a) Low course handicap will play at 0 strokes
 - b) High course handicap will receive the difference between the two players' course handicaps in number of strokes for the match
 - c) Example: player A has a course handicap of 7 and player B has a 12. Player A plays at 0 and Player B plays with 5 strokes, one each on handicap holes 1-5
10. Mark the holes where strokes are awarded using a "dot" in the corner of the scoring square for that hole for the player affected

Continued

Scoring

1. Match play is based on winning an individual hole against your opponent
2. In the example used above, player A does not get any strokes in the match
3. On a hole where player B was awarded one of the five strokes (in the example), he will deduct one stroke off of his gross score, in order to determine the winner of that hole
4. Example – “A” scores a 5 and “B” scores a 5 on a hole where “B” gets a stroke. “B’s” net score is 4 and he wins the hole
5. The player to win the most holes wins the match
6. The match is over when one player leads the other by more holes than remain to be played (e.g. If player A is 3 up with 2 holes left, he has won)
7. If the match is tied after 18 holes, and must continue, player B will again receive strokes on the appropriate holes if they are played a second time
8. To record the hole-by-hole scores on the scorecard, post the gross scores for both players, then have a second line for “net” for the player receiving the strokes
9. Gross scores are used for posting to GHIN record for both players
10. Leave all unfinished holes without a score and handicap chairman will enter the scores
11. For conceded holes, enter the “most likely” gross score for each player from the ball position that the hole is conceded. For any conceded putt within 5 feet from the hole that is not subsequently putted, the player should add 1 additional stroke as “the most likely score”

Rules issues During Match Play

1. During the round players must agree on how to decide a rules issue and the agreed outcome stands even if it was wrong as long as the players did not deliberately agree to ignore a rule or penalty.
2. If a player wants the rules committee to make a ruling, he must notify his opponent before either player tees off on the next hole or, during or after the final hole, before the results are final.
3. A claim cannot be made after the results are final except in the circumstances listed in rule 20.1b (3)
4. Current rules committee members are Garry Brunson, Brian Johnson, and Randy Mackay

USGA Rules

1. Players should be familiar with rules 3.2, 6.4a, 20.1b, and 10.3 if a caddie is used
2. A stroke may be conceded any time before the stroke is made and a hole or match may be conceded at any time including before the players start
3. Concessions must be clearly communicated by words or actions. A concession is final and may not be declined or withdrawn.
4. The penalty for a breach of a rule in match play is loss of hole except when otherwise provided.
5. You cannot play a second ball in match play. This only applies in stroke play.
6. If a player plays out of turn the opponent can cancel the stroke unless the opponent had agreed that the stroke could be made out of turn to save time.
7. You may practice on the course the same day as your match (this is not allowed in stroke play).

8. Other players can play their match as part of your foursome, or they can join your foursome and play regular stroke play. In either case, care should be taken so no advantage is given to those playing their match.

Suspension of Play

1. Players may agree to stop play for any reason (e.g. weather or darkness).
2. If they agree to stop play and then one player wants to resume play, the agreement has ended and the other player must resume play or he will be DQed.
3. If a player won't resume (e.g. he thinks the course is unplayable or he is concerned about lightning) he has to make a claim before either player makes a stroke. If the Rules Committee upholds the claim the match must be resumed at the point it was stopped. If the claim is rejected the match goes to the player who wanted to continue.
4. When the match is completed on another day, it must be resumed from where it was suspended unless both players agree to do otherwise. If both players agree, they can start on Hole 1 and practice until they get to the point the match was suspended and resume from there or cancel the holes played and restart the match on Hole 1 or another course.

Play during an HAGA Tournament

An added note to those players who ask us every year if they can play their Match Play round during an HAGA event. The Board of Directors has discussed this multiple times. We do not allow this to happen for several reasons:

1. The matches need to be played from the same tee box. That would present a problem for most of the Round 1 matches and several other matches.
2. Our preferred tournament is a shotgun start. When this occurs, the holes do not lay out in their natural progression, thus changing the place where stroke holes appear in the round. This would result in an advantage for one player over the other
3. The ability to concede a stroke or a putt is negated by Stroke Play Rules.
4. The order of play could result in further delays to the HAGA tournament.
5. Conducting two tournaments at the same time would create conflicts in certain rules. As an example, there is no second ball rule in Match Play. Opponents need to decide on the answer and the player cannot play a second ball.

HAGA provides ample time to get the matches completed.

HAGA Senior Division

HAGA offers a Senior division option for all current members who are 62 years of age or older.

New members who would normally join as a “Special” may opt to begin their membership as a “Special SR” immediately and compete in their qualifying rounds playing from the designated tees played by regular HAGA Senior players.

1. The Senior designation is completely voluntary, and at the player’s discretion
2. To receive the Senior designation, the member who is age eligible, must request Senior designation by emailing the Handicap Chairman, Brian Johnson.
3. Player may “opt in” to the Senior designation at any time during the playing year, until June 1
4. **Members celebrating a birthday between June 1 and August 31 may opt in within 7 days of their birthday. September birthdays are required to wait until after the Club Championship.**
5. Once the player requests to play as a Senior, that designation is permanent for the playing year, unless the Senior player wishes to opt out before June 1.
6. The time frame is based on the HAGA “Playing Year”, which begins from the date of the first event following the Club Championship in September until the following Club Championship
7. All Senior designated players at the end of the Season will automatically be classified as Senior for the next Season, unless the player requests a return to Regular designation.
8. Player may choose to “opt out” of the Senior designation for the following year after the Club Championship
9. Senior players will play from one tee position forward of the regular members. The tee position is confirmed in the Terms of Competition published in advance of the tournament and posted at the check-in table for all tournaments.
10. Under the World Handicap System adopted January 1, 2020, players will have their Course Handicap calculated using the formula: $((\text{Handicap Index}) \times (\text{Slope}/113)) + ((\text{Course Rating} - \text{Par}))$, where Slope, Course Rating and Par are for the tees being played. No other adjustments are made.
11. Senior players will be assigned to the appropriate flight determined by their final course handicap.
12. HAGA will attempt to pair at least two seniors in a group together to allow for cart sharing efficiency
13. Seniors will be allowed to compete in all “Cash” games while playing from the Senior tees
14. Seniors may compete in all eligible HAGA events, based on POY standing. This includes Club Championship, Team events, etc.
15. HAGA Match Play tournament rules require the participants to agree on a common tee, selected by the player with the most POY points (tee cannot exceed HAGA standard length of 6,800 yards)
16. HAGA reserves the right to modify or cancel the Senior status at any time

HAGA Bomb Squad

HAGA offers a designation for players who wish to play from a longer distance than the standard HAGA tees. HAGA tournaments target yardage of 6,300 – 6,600 yards for regular members. The Bomb Squad will play one tee behind regular members with no target yardage. Players in this group will be designated as Bomb Squad Member or “BSM”

1. The Handicap Chairman will identify the Bomb Squad tees to be used for each event, as well as identifying qualified BSM, via email prior to the beginning of each event.
2. A player must have a Handicap Index (GHIN or HAGA) equal to or lower than 8.0 at the time he makes his request for Bomb Squad designation.
 - a) Once a player has Bomb Squad designation, he will keep that designation for the season even if his Handicap Index increases above 8.0, unless he elects to change his designation during the season.
 - b) BSM will not be allowed to change their designation after June 1
 - c) At the start of a new season, BSM who still have a Handicap Index equal to or less than 8.0 will automatically start the new season with Bomb Squad designation.
 - d) At the start of a new season, BSM whose Handicap Index is above 8.0, will start the new season with Regular designation. If during the new season his Handicap Index drops to 8.0 or lower, he may elect BSM designation, before June 1.
3. Membership in the Bomb Squad is completely voluntary, and at the player’s discretion
4. To receive the Bomb Squad designation, the member who is handicap eligible, must request BSM designation by emailing the Handicap Chairman, requesting a change.
5. Player may “opt in” and/or “opt out” of the Bomb Squad one time during the playing year, until June 1. After that, the player will have to wait until after the Club Championship to return Regular designation.
6. This time frame is based on the HAGA “Playing Year”, which officially begins from the date of the first event following the Club Championship in September until the following Club Championship
7. Bomb Squad players will play from one tee position behind the regular members
 - a) Example: At most courses Regular members play Blue Tees. Bomb Squad players would play Gold or Black Tees
 - b) As stated previously, the Handicap Chairman will designate the tees to be played by BSM for each event
8. Under the World Handicap System, players will have their Course Handicap calculated using the formula: $((\text{Handicap Index}) \times (\text{Slope}/113)) + ((\text{Course Rating} - \text{Par}))$, where Slope, Course Rating and Par are for the tees being played.
9. As with all HAGA members, BSM will use the lower of their GHIN index or the HAGA Tournament Index to determine their course handicap
10. BSM will be assigned to the appropriate flight determined by their course handicap.
11. HAGA will attempt to pair at least two BSM in a group to allow for cart sharing efficiency
12. BSM will be allowed to compete in all “Cash” games while playing from the Bomb Squad tees
13. BSM may compete in all eligible HAGA events, based on POY standing. This includes Club Championship, Team events, etc.

14. HAGA Match Play rules require the participants to agree on a common tee, selected by the player with the most POY points (highest seeded) but the selected tees cannot exceed 6,800 yards, or be less than 5,900 yards unless BOTH players agree to the longer yardage
15. HAGA reserves the right to modify or cancel the Bomb Squad status at any time

Appendix A — HAGA Constitution and By-Laws

Organization

Constitution and By Laws

SECTION I

1. NAME OF CORPORATION -- The name of the corporation shall be "The Houston Municipal Golfers Association." It shall also be known by its initials of MGA and is hereinafter referred to as the Association.

AMENDMENT (October 30, 1962) - Official name changed and chartered as the "THE HOUSTON AMATEUR GOLF ASSOCIATION." It shall also be known by its initials HAGA.

2. OFFICERS -- The Officers of the Association shall consist of a President, 1st Vice President(Tournament Director), 2nd Vice President(Membership Chairman), 3rd Vice President(Handicap Chairman), Secretary and Treasurer. Each shall be elected at the annual election held during the annual meeting of the Association by the membership. There shall also be an Ex-Officio President. Such officer shall be the last retiring President. He shall serve as a member of the Board of Directors during the term of the incumbent President who succeeded him in office.

3. BOARD OF DIRECTORS -- The Board of Directors shall consist of the President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, Ex-Officio President and nine (9) members elected at large at the annual election by the membership.

4. POWERS AND DUTIES --

a. President -- shall preside at all meetings of the Association, and/or board of directors, appoint all committees subject to the approval of the board, and see that all rules and regulations are properly enforced. He shall be a member of all committees. He shall sign all contracts or perform such other duties, as the Board of Directors shall assigned to him. Should a vacancy in the presidency occur the 1st Vice President shall advance to the presidency, as shall all other officers. The President shall then fill any vacant offices created by such situation, subject to the Board's Approval.

b. 1st Vice President, Tournament Director -- shall set up annual schedule of golfing events, through telephone and/or personal contacts. This scheduling should take place between October and January to insure desired dates. He shall make all necessary preparations for tournaments, such as receiving mail, and/or collect all entry fees, figure prize lists and Marshall at tournaments. The 1st Vice President shall maintain records of monies received; maintain point lists and other pertinent information.

c. 2nd Vice President, Membership Chairman -- shall receive mail and/or telephone calls from prospective applicants, maintain a current roster of members in good standing. The 2nd Vice President shall maintain good records of which members have paid their annual membership fees, and turn all monies over to the Treasurer.

d. 3rd Vice President, Handicap Chairman -- shall maintain all handicap records on all members. He shall use the USGA handicap system to maintain those handicaps and shall report those scores to the subscribed handicap agency by the assigned monthly date. He shall verify, adjust and post all tournament scores.

- e. Vice Presidents -- shall in the absence of the President, in their order, perform the duties of the said President and such other duties as may be assigned to them by the Board of Directors and shall preside in the order of their seniority.
- f. Treasurer -- Shall collect all monies due and deposit the same in the depository selected by the Board of Directors and shall have the right to sign all checks. He shall pay only on vouchers duly approved by the Board and shall perform such other duties as may assign him by the Board of Directors. He shall report in writing the state of finances at any meeting when requested to by the Board of Directors and at the Annual Meeting, he shall present a full written report showing all receipts and disbursements for the year.
- g. Secretary -- shall keep a record of all meetings of Association and the Board of Directors, shall keep roll of the membership and shall be in charge of all correspondence and records and such other duties as the board may assign him. He shall submit a written report to the membership at the annual meeting.
- h. Ex-Officio -- shall serve as a member of the board and remain there so long as his successor shall remain President. His duties shall only be those of a member of the Board of Directors.
- i. Board of Directors --
1. The Board of Directors shall be vested with the powers granted them by the Charter, and other powers herein defined. The Board of Directors shall have general supervision and control between annual meetings of the Association of all the affairs, funds, policies, and properties of the Association, and shall through committees appointed by the President with the approval of the Board, have charge of all tournaments, contest, special events, social events, and other activities of the Association. The Board shall authorize or approve expenditures of funds for the purchase of such supplies as the Association may need, and for such purposes as may be necessary. The board shall approve or disapprove and expenditure of more than \$50.00 per month by the President in purchase of any supplies or needs in the interests of the Association.
 2. The Board of Directors shall be vested with the power of censure, fines, suspension and/or expulsion of members of the Board or the Association which in the opinion of the Board is detrimental to the good order, welfare or reputation of the Association. Provided, that no sentence of such suspension or expulsion shall be pronounced by the members of the Board except upon a vote of at least two-thirds (2/3) of the member of the Board and after reasonable notice of charges and a reasonable opportunity has been provided for the person charged to be heard in his own defense at a hearing before the Board of Directors.
 3. The Board of Directors may by a majority vote to drop from the Board any member of the Board of Directors who has three (3) unexcused absences from meeting of the Board in a year; or is delinquent in his dues; after he has been given due notice of such delinquency as is hereinafter provided for.
 4. Suspended or expelled members of Board members may be restored to membership and/or to the Board upon good cause shown for such restoration and with a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
 5. Regular meeting of the Board of Directors shall be held on the second Tuesday of each month at a regular time and place set by the Board at its first meeting following each annual

election. The Board shall be notified of the time and place of such first meeting by the Secretary. Thereafter, no notice of a Board meeting need be given unless there arises some change in the time and place of any following regular meeting.

Special meeting of the Board may be called at the discretion of the President or by the request of three (3) members of the Board. Notice of the time and place of special meeting of the Board of Directors must be given to all members of the board at least three (3) day in advance by the secretary. Notice of any change of the regular time and place of a meeting of the Board must be given to all members of the Board at least three (3) days before any such meeting.

6. At all meetings of the Board of Directors, all members present and including the President or other presiding officer in his absence, shall constitute a quorum.

SECTION II

1. ELECTIONS, RESIGNATIONS AND REMOVALS -- The officers and members of the Board of Directors shall be nominated and elected annually as follows:

- a. A nominating committee shall be appointed by members of the current Board of Directors by the President at a regular board meeting held not less than sixty (60) days prior to the annual membership meeting. The Nomination committee shall consist of three members in good standing.
- b. The nomination committee shall consist of members from the Board of Directors or from the general membership. The President, the Vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer shall not be eligible to serve on the nominating committee.
- c. The Secretary shall notify the general members and each board member appointed to the nomination committee, within three days after his appointment.
- d. The nomination committee shall select the chairman and make those rules and regulations for themselves to nominate officers and directors. They must nominate two (2) members of good standing, at least, for each office to be filled and at least twelve members for the board positions.
- e. The nominating committee will thereafter report its findings to the Board of Directors at the regular meeting held thirty (30) days prior to the annual meeting of the general membership.
- f. The Board of Directors shall ensure that to each member in good standing receives a ballot with the names of those nominees.
- g. The election shall be held at the annual meeting at the conclusion of the annual golf tournament known as the Club Championship of each year.
- h. Only a majority of votes by members in good standing present at said general meeting shall be necessary to elect officers and board members.
- i. No one shall be entitled to vote if he is not in good standing according to the books of the Membership chairman and the Treasurer of the Association.
- j. The President at the meeting of the board shall appoint an election commissioner and he shall have drawn up or printed ballots to be used in the elections. He shall supervise the casting of said

ballots and he shall appoint tellers to count the ballots and to make a list of members who are eligible to vote and it shall be his duty to see that only those eligible to vote.

k. The election commissioner shall have full and absolute supervision and control of the election of officers, subject to the [rules of parliamentary procedure](#) and/or review by the Board of Directors.

2. VACANCIES -- All vacancies that may occur in the Board of Directors, officers or Committees shall be filled by appointment by the President with the approval of the Board of Directors thereafter.

SECTION III

1. MEMBERSHIP -- No person shall be members of this Association unless they have full amateur status, males over 17 years of age and are elected and accepted by a majority vote of the Board of Directors in accordance with the provisions of the Charter and By-Laws of the Association. No person is eligible for membership who competes on a high school or college golf team.

2. COMPLIMENTARY MEMBERSHIP -- The Board of directors shall have the power to confer complimentary memberships upon gentlemen who have performed or in a position to perform a valuable service to the association. This membership shall be limited to five annually and does not entitle voting privileges.

3. LIFE MEMBERSHIP -- The Board of Directors shall have the power to confer Life Memberships upon members who have performed truly outstanding services for the Association. The Life Membership shall be limited to two (2) new life members annually. There is not a requirement to have a Life Membership conferred every year. As a Life Member, the member will remain a full member of the Association with full member privileges for his life and will not be required to pay the Association's annual dues.

SECTION IV

1. ANNUAL MEETING -- The annual meeting of the Association shall be held during or at the conclusion of the annual golf tournament each year. Such meeting shall be scheduled to convene at the conclusion of golf play. Notice of the annual meeting shall be sent in writing (includes e-mail and published schedules) to all members of the Association at least ten (10) days before said meeting and at such annual meeting, those members present shall constitute a quorum.

2. SPECIAL MEETING -- Special meetings of the Association can be called at any time by the President or at written request of five members, said written request being addressed to the President to call such meeting. Notice of special meeting shall be sent in writing (includes e-mail) to all members of the Association at least seven (7) days before said meeting and at such writing, the object for which said meeting is to be held shall plainly stated. At such special meetings, those members present shall constitute a quorum.

3. COMMITTEES -- The President may with the approval of the Board, create or abolish any committee consistent with the needs of the Association.

4. FEES -- The annual fee to be charged for membership in the Association shall be determined by the Board of Directors of the Association. Such fee shall become due and payable on the 1st Day of January. Such fee shall be payable within thirty (30) days of said due date. Any member who has not paid such fee within 30 days from such due date shall be considered delinquent. If such fee is not paid fifteen (15) days after delinquency (February 15) then such members shall be dropped from the rolls

and cease to be a member. Any person who has failed to pay such fee at any time when it is due shall not be eligible to participate in any golf tournaments, events, or meeting of the Association. Tournament entry fee and fee for special events shall be subject to the approval of the Board of Directors prior to the time the membership is notified of such events.

The President, Vice Presidents (Tournament Director, Membership Chairman and Handicap Chairman), Secretary and Treasurer annual dues shall be waived for the calendar year following their election to office.

5. OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OR BULLETIN -- The official publication or bulletin sponsored by the Association through which the general membership shall be advised of the business affairs, news and events of the Association shall be known as the HAGA BULLETIN.

6. AMENDMENTS -- Amendments to these by-laws may be made at any annual meeting, special called meeting by a vote of majority of all votes cast by the members in good standing present at said meeting. Written notice of an Amendment must be made setting out the particulars thirty (30) days in advance of voting on such an amendment.

7. ORDER OF BUSINESS -- Parliamentary rules of procedure shall be followed and the following shall be the order of business at all meetings:

1. Roll call
2. Reading of minutes of previous meeting
3. Treasures Report
4. Committee reports
5. Presidents Report
6. Unfinished Business
7. New Business
8. Filling vacancies in office

SECTION V

1. TOURNAMENT RULES -- All tournaments shall be conducted in accordance with the rules and regulations of the United States Golf Association and local ground rules. Any diversions to these rules are the sole responsibility of the tournament committee.

2. TOURNAMENTS AND SPECIAL EVENTS -- All tournaments and special events are to be self-supporting, with exception of those events so approved by the Board of Directors of the Houston Amateur Golf Association.