

2024

GOLF GUIDE



**The Mendota Reporter and The Amboy News
Wednesday, May 1, 2024**



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Golf terminology for beginners

Golf is a fun game that is not without its challenges. Getting a tiny ball from a tee box into a small hole that's several hundred yards away requires considerable skill and a lot of patience. But novices know that mastering the game is not the only challenge on the course.

Like most sports, golf has its own unique terminology. Confusion can set in when beginners arrive at a course and feel as though they're surrounded by people speaking a different language. This glossary of golf terms, courtesy of the PGA of America, can help beginners master the lingo of the links.

- Par: The score an accomplished player is expected to make on a hole. Holes are either a par three, par four or par five.

- Birdie: A score of one-under-par on a hole.

- Eagle: A score of two-under-par on a hole.

- Double eagle: A score of three-under-par on a hole.

- Bogey: A score of one-over-par on a hole.

- Double bogey: A score of two-over-par on a hole.

- Green: The area at the end of each hole where grass is cut especially short.

- Fairway: The area of short grass between the tee and corresponding green.

- Rough: The area of longer grass around the fairway and the green.

- Hazards: Obstacles, including water, between a tee and a green.

- Bunker: Sometimes referred to as a "sand trap," the bunker is a hollow comprised of sand or grass or both that exists as an obstacle and, in some cases, a hazard.

- Divot: The turf displaced when a club strikes the ball on a descending path.

- Fore: An exclamation golfers yell to warn others that they have hit a bad shot.

- Ranger: A course employee who drives around the course ensuring golfers are following the rules and playing at a reasonable speed.

- Range: Sometimes referred to as the "golf range," this is a facility where players can practice their full swings and, in some cases, their short games.

- Pin: The flag on the green that indicates to players where the hole is.

- Shank: When the ball is struck on the hosel of the club, usually sending it shooting off to the right.

- Slice: A ball that curves from left to right after being struck. Left-swinging players will slice right to left.

Golf has its own unique terminology. Knowledge of some basic terms can help any player feel more comfortable on the course.

A rundown on golf clubs

Some golfers would say you're only as good as your gear. Perhaps no gear is as important to a golfer's performance as his or her clubs. The differences between each type of club may confuse those unfamiliar with golf, so a rundown of the various clubs in a golfer's bag may help novices improve their scores.

Driver

Drivers are what golfers utilize on the tee, so this club marks a good place to start. Drivers are designed to give golfers distance off the tee, and these will likely be the longest club in the bag. Choosing a driver depends on a number of variables that are unique to each golfer, so it's best to speak to a pro shop professional to find the right driver before hitting the links.

Irons

Golfballs.com notes that a standard set of irons features between five and seven clubs, typically a 3-iron to a 9-iron. However, irons range from a 1-iron to a 9-iron. Golfballs.com notes a 1-iron and a 2-iron are typically only utilized by especially skilled golfers, which is why they're not often included in standard sets. According to the sporting goods experts at Dick's, the following is the average distance golfers can expect from their irons:

- 2-iron: 105 to 210 yards
- 3-iron: 100 to 205 yards
- 4-iron: 90 to 190 yards
- 5-iron: 80 to 175 yards
- 6-iron: 70 to 165 yards
- 7-iron: 65 to 155 yards
- 8-iron: 60 to 145 yards
- 9-iron: 55 to 135 yards

Fairway woods

Dick's notes that fairway woods are versatile clubs that can be used from the fairway or the rough. Fair-



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way woods can even be used in the place of a driver if golfers are more comfortable doing so. Dick's notes that average distance also determines which fairway wood to utilize.

- 3-wood: 125 to 240 yards
- 4-wood: 110 to 220 yards
- 5-wood: 105 to 215 yards
- 7-wood: 90 to 170 yards

Hybrids

Golfballs.com notes that hybrids can be used in place

of long irons (a 3-iron to a 6-iron). Novices may be most inclined to do so, as the shorter shafts on hybrids compared to long irons makes them easier for some beginners to use effectively.

Wedges

Dick's notes that wedges are designed for low-distance shots. There are various types of wedges, and usage can be determined by how long a shot golfers are hoping to hit. A pitching wedge can be used for shots between 50 and 120

yards, while a lob wedge is a good option for a shot between 35 and 90 yards. Gap wedges are good for shots slightly shorter than a pitching wedge, while a sand wedge helps golfers escape the dreaded bunker.

Putter

Putters are used when golfers reach the green. As is the case with drivers, putters can be chosen after consultation with a pro shop professional to ensure the club does not adversely affect your score.

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Odds of a hole-in-one? 12,500 to 1

Few individual accomplishments in sports may be more coveted than sinking a hole-in-one on the golf course, but golfers from all walks of life may not want to hold their breath hoping to accomplish that feat the next time they hit the links. According to the National

Hole-in-One Registry, the odds of the average player making a hole-in-one are 12,500 to 1. Even professional golfers may want to temper their expectations of sinking a hole-in-one, as the Registry cites the odds of a pro accomplishing the feat as 3,000 to 1. Golfers who like

to play in foursomes should know that their odds of sinking a hole-in-one if someone in their group has already done so are especially long. According to the Registry, the chances of two players from the same foursome sinking a hole-in-one are 17 million to 1.

Health benefits of a round of golf

Playing a round of golf is a great way to spend a morning, afternoon or early evening. That's particularly true when the weather is warm and a golf course is soaked in sunshine and cooled down by warm breezes whistling through the surrounding trees.

Though many see golf as recreation, the sport can offer some notable health benefits. The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, which was founded in 1754 and has since grown from a small club to one with 2,500 members across the globe, published a golf and health report in 2020. That report highlights research indicating the ways golf promotes both mental and physical health, and such evidence can make anyone feel better about spending a day on

their nearest course. With that in mind, individuals can consider these three notable health benefits of playing golf the next time they're thinking about visiting their local course.

1. Golf may help you live longer.

Frustrated golfers who can't master their short game may suggest otherwise, but a study published in the Scandinavian Journal of Medicine and Science and Sports discovered a 40 percent reduction in mortality rates among 300,000 members of the Swedish Golf Federation. That corresponded to an increased life expectancy of roughly five years and applied to golfers of all ages, genders and socio-economic backgrounds.

2. Golf can help combat disease.

A summary of findings conducted by researchers at the University of Edinburgh and published in the British Journal of Sports Medicine in 2016 found that golf can help prevent and treat 40 major chronic diseases, including diabetes, heart attack, stroke, depression, dementia, and cancers of the breast and colon. That link probably has something to do with golf being a physical activity that encourages people to embrace a less sedentary lifestyle. Indeed, the R&A notes that additional studies have found that risk factors for heart disease and stroke, including high blood pressure, are reduced among people who play golf.

3. Golf promotes social interaction.

See Benefits, Page 8



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Contact Jodi Manning to get more information about letting MGC host your next golf outing.

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Benefits

Continued from Page 7

The Alzheimer's Society reports that social isolation can increase a person's risk for dementia by roughly 60 percent. People who play golf tend to play in groups of two, three or four, and that social interaction can promote social interaction among people of all ages. Social isolation also has

been linked to additional mental health issues, including anxiety and depression, so activities like golf that encourage social interaction can help people safeguard their mental health.

A round of golf may be widely viewed as a recreational activity. However, a day on the links also provides some notable health benefits.

• Popular golf courses •

- **Cypress Point:** This club sits at the foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountains at the tip of the Monterey Peninsula in California. Located in coastal dunes and on rocky coastlines, Cypress Point is often noted for its dramatic holes along the Pacific Ocean.

- **Pine Valley:** Located in Pine Valley, NJ, this course, which is more than 100 years old, boasts some formidable hazards with sophisticated green expanses.

- **St. Andrew's:** This historic course in Scotland has hosted the Open Championship (once known as The British Open) a record 29 times. Historians believe golf originated in Scotland, and people have been playing on this course since the 15th century. Massive greens, cavernous bunkers and a brilliant layout contribute to its distinguished history.

- **Shinnecock Hills:** This course in Southampton, NY, is a very old club built in the tradition of Scottish courses. This was likely the inaugural American golf course design, and the Shinnecock Hills Golf Club was one of the five founding members of the United States Golf Association.

- **Augusta National:** Home to the Masters, Augusta is considered a golf paradise by many. The sheer beauty of Augusta has made it a staple on many golfers' bucket lists, even if only a few may get to walk its fairways with club in hand.



Millions of people enjoy playing the game of golf. As beginners introduce themselves to the game, they can keep various strategies in mind to ensure their day on the links is fun and fruitful.

Golf tips for beginners

Golf courses are serene settings that allow people to enjoy the great outdoors while simultaneously engaging in the thrill of competition. Those factors undoubtedly motivate people to hit the links and play a round of golf, which remains a wildly popular sport. In fact, a recent report from the National Golf Foundation found that roughly 119 million people followed golf on television or online, read about the game, or listened to a golf-related podcast in 2022.

Golf can certainly be a fun sport to follow, but it's just as fun to play. Golf is a challenging sport, and it can be especially difficult for newcomers. Patience is paramount when learning to play golf, and the following are some additional strategies beginners can keep in mind as they learn to golf.

- **Work with a pro.** Golf pros at local courses or even private coaches typically have extensive experience teaching the game. That experience is invaluable. Beginners can learn the

basics from a seasoned pro, who can instruct students on fundamentals such as stance, grip and swing so they enjoy their first round that much more.

- **Purchase a good set of clubs.** The right clubs can make the game that much easier. Adults who are not sure if they want to fully commit to playing can get by with secondhand clubs, while parents can do the same as they try to teach their children the game. Once a commitment has been made, a new set of custom fitted clubs can be a worthy investment that lets golfers take their game to the next level. Using clubs that are too small or too large can affect performance, as can other factors like grip size. Custom fitted clubs can be expensive, so beginners may want to wait until they catch the golfing bug before they make such an investment.

- **Golf with a friend.** The buddy system makes numerous recreational activities more fun, and golf is no exception. Beginners can ask a friend who already plays to tag along, but

it also can be fun to learn the sport alongside another novice. Friends with experience may be willing to offer some tips to becoming a better player, while two beginners can share a few laughs as they navigate their way through rounds that end up well over par.

- **Choose the right courses.** Certain courses are more challenging than others. Par-3 courses can be perfect for beginners because they include only par 3 holes, which feature shorter distances from tee to cup and tend to be flatter and easier for novices. Par-3 courses also tend to be just nine holes, which can be ideal for beginners. When playing a traditional course, beginners can look for one with a reputation for being less challenging so they are not discouraged by their final scores.

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