



**Central Florida Challenge Cup
Heathrow Women's Team - Match Play Guide**

The purpose of this Match Play Guide is to provide relevant information associated with etiquette, protocol, format, scoring, rules and strategy that can be used by everyone, from beginner to advanced, who competes in match play format.

I. Match Play Etiquette and General Protocol

Order of Play - As a courtesy, the "visiting team" always tees off first on the number one hole played in the match. Subsequent to the first hole of the match, the order of play is determined by the winner of the gross point on the previous hole.

Inclement Weather - In Challenge Cup Match Play, if the weather is so bad and the home captain decides to "call play" (stop play) and as long as 13 holes have been played by the competitors the match is scored by the results of the holes played and the splitting/halving of the remaining holes not played. **If less than 13 holes have been played and the home captain decides to "call play" (stop play)**, then the match will take place on the scheduled make-up date.

Observing the Line of the Putt - In certain circumstances, observing the line of a putt by either your player partner or a competitor might aid your putt. **The line may be observed from the opposite side of the cup but never from behind the putter, even if the putter is your partner.** Note: your competitor may ask you to move if you are observing her putt from the opposite side, and etiquette requires that you do move in that case.

II. Format & Scoring

There are dozens and dozens of different formats that can be played as match play. However, the format outlined here is **Fourball Match Play, the format used in Challenge Cup**. In Fourball, each side consists of two players. Each player plays her own ball throughout the round.

On each hole, the low ball of the two players serves as that side's score, and each hole is worth one point. **In Challenge Cup we play both Net and Gross score within the same competition. Therefore, two scores are maintained for each team throughout the eighteen hole round.**

Example: On the first hole for Team A, Player 1 scores a 4 and Player 2 scores a 5, so the Gross team score is 4. If Team A gets a Gross 4 while Team B scores a Gross 5, then Team A wins Gross for the hole or 1 point. If both Team A and Team B get a Gross 4 on the hole then each team gets $\frac{1}{2}$ point for the hole. (Net scores are computed in the same way although handicaps are applied per hole based on course hole handicap).

Note: In Challenge Cup, all 18 holes are played regardless of whether one team is behind by more than the number of holes remaining to be played. We are competing as an overall Heathrow Team and every point counts toward the Heathrow Team Score.

III. Rule Differences For Match Play versus Stroke Play

Golfers playing Match Play need to be aware of the differences in the rules between match play and stroke play. Some of the differences are major, some are minor and some involve a different type of penalty when rules are broken.

The Way It Is Played

In **Stroke Play**, golfers accumulate strokes over the course of 18 holes. The golfer with the fewest strokes at the completion of the round wins. In **Match Play**, each hole is a separate competition. The player/team with the fewest strokes on an individual hole wins that hole; the player/team winning the most holes wins the match.

The stroke total for 18 holes simply doesn't matter in match play. **Stroke play** is more a player vs. the course approach; **match play** is directly player vs. player, or side vs. side. There is one opponent you must beat, and that's the opponent you're facing in the match you're playing right now.

Conceded Putts

In friendly rounds of golf, golfers often ask for and give "gimmies", very short putts that one simply picks up rather than holing out. In **Match Play**, however, conceded putts are perfectly legal. Your opponent can concede a putt to you at any point, whether it's 6 inches from the cup or 60 feet. But conceded putts almost always come, of course, on very short putts.

Conceded putts should only be offered, they should never be requested. That is why in some match play matches you'll notice a golfer lingering over a very short putt - the golfer is hoping her opponent will tell her to just pick it up.

In Challenge Cup it is important for the 2 person team playing a match to confer before a putt is conceded or to designate one player on the team who can make the call to concede a putt so there is no confusion. Once you verbally concede a putt to your opponent it can't be retracted.

Fellow Competitor vs. Opponent

In **Stroke Play**, the golfers you are playing against are your "fellow competitors". In **Match Play**, the golfer you are playing against is your "opponent".

Hit That One Again

There are several scenarios in **Match Play** where a transgression might result in your opponent canceling your shot and requiring you to replay it; whereas in **Stroke Play**, the same transgression would result in a 2 stroke penalty or no penalty at all.

Examples:

Playing Out Of Turn: In **Stroke Play**, order of play is a matter of etiquette. If you hit out of turn, it's a breach of etiquette, but there is no penalty. In **Match Play**, if you hit out of turn your opponent can require you to replay the shot in the proper order and if your first shot was a great one, you can bet that you'll be replaying.

Hitting From Outside The Teeing Ground: In **Stroke Play**, teeing off from outside the teeing ground (the teeing ground is between the tee markers and up to 2 club lengths behind the tee markers) results in a 2 stroke penalty. In **Match Play**, there is no stroke penalty, but your opponent can cancel your shot and require you to replay it.

Hitting An Opponent: In **Stroke Play**, if your ball hits a fellow competitor or her equipment (if it is accidentally stopped or deflected by same), it's rub of the green. In **Match Play**, you have the option to replay the shot.

The Big Penalty: In the rule book, just about every section concludes with a warning - "Penalty for Breach of Rule". If a golfer fails to follow the proper procedures set forth in the rules, she will incur a penalty in addition to any penalties set forth in that rule. That penalty in **Stroke Play** is usually 2 strokes, and in **Match Play** it is loss of hole.

Better Late Than Never: In **Stroke Play**, disqualification is the result if you miss your tee time. In **Match Play**, you can show up late and still play, as long as you make your match by at least the second tee. You'll have forfeited the first hole, but you can pick up the match on hole #2. If you fail to make the tee by the time your opponents tee off on hole #2, you are disqualified. **In Challenge Cup, a team may be composed of a single player and therefore your playing partner can continue the round to conclusion.**

IV. Match Play Strategy

In **Stroke Play**, the golfer plays against the golf course and a large field of other golfers. In **Match Play**, the golfer plays directly against one other golfer or one other side. Your opponent is right there next to you. You get to see exactly how well or how poorly she is playing, and she gets to watch your game as well. **This makes Match Play a different ballgame, literally and figuratively. And in ways large and small, it changes the way golfers approach the match.**

One On One: **Match Play** adds nerves and gamesmanship to golf. Both are likely to increase, because the one player you must beat is right there next to you. Take a lead and you're likely to feel more relaxed, fall behind and you're likely to feel much more pressure. **Match Play is usually played more aggressively than Stroke Play from the very first shot. You want to put the pressure on your opponent early, and then keep it there.**

But there are certainly times when it's best to be conservative, and some golfers believe the best initial strategy is to play your normal game until someone wins a hole. That approach is akin to giving your opponent a chance to make a mistake. Most believe, however, that falling behind early is too big a risk, and so aggression is called for from the first tee.

A player with a lead will generally play more conservatively; a player trailing will usually become more aggressive. Either way, **Match Play** requires that you react to your opponent's successes and failures.

Reactionary Golf: What is meant by reacting to your opponent's play? The object in **Match Play** is to win individual holes. If your opponent hits a fantastic shot, that forces you to try to hit an equally good shot. If your opponent chunks a shot into a pond, that gives you an opening to play safe. In **Match Play**, it doesn't matter if you take 8 strokes to play a hole if your opponent is taking 9. **In other words don't focus on the number of strokes per hole focus on winning the hole.** Your decisions on the types of shots to play are directly related to your standing in the match (ahead or behind?) and on the hole (sitting pretty or in pretty bad shape?).

On The Green: The way that **Match Play** affects a golfer's strategy is perhaps best showcased on the green. Let's say you've got a tricky downhill putt. In **Stroke Play**, you would be very careful not to run the putt way past the hole, because in **Stroke Play**, a high score on an individual hole can ruin the round.

But in **Match Play**, how aggressive you are with this putt depends on how things stand on this one hole. If your opponent has already holed out and your putt is to halve the hole, you must be very aggressive with the putt. If you run it 10 feet past, it doesn't matter - the hole is lost whether you miss by 10 feet or 1/10th of an inch. If your opponent has a short, easy putt remaining, you must try to make the putt - but you must temper your aggressiveness just a little bit. There is always a chance your opponent will miss her short one and you want to be able to make your comebacker.

If your opponent has an equally difficult putt remaining, then be more careful with your putt. Running it way past the hole, leaving yourself a difficult comebacker, is a bad play when a halve is otherwise the most likely outcome of the hole.

In Challenge Cup we are playing in two person teams, therefore if your playing partner has an short easy putt for par and you are "out" (meaning you are farthest from the hole and it is your turn to putt) with a potential birdie putt, you may allow your playing partner to make her putt which will allow you to go for a more aggressive putt from a farther distance for the birdie.

Conceding Putts: You should go into your match expecting to have to make every putt. Don't expect your opponent to concede anything - be prepared to hole out everything. Your opponent may, in fact, offer concessions at various points, but you must be mentally prepared if she does not.

By the same token, you must decide how to approach concessions for your opponent. Of course, offering your opponent a concession increases the odds of her conceding some of your putts too. Fail to concede an early putt and your opponent may not concede anything to you.

But what do you know about your opponent? Is she a good putter? Bad putter? It matters. A great putter is probably going to make those short putts anyway, so pick a distance, say 2 feet, and at least early in the match concede any putts within that distance. But if your opponent is a terrible putter, make her putt everything outside 6 inches.

Of course at no point do you want to concede any putt you believe there's a realistic chance your opponent will miss it to give you a win or a halve, and only rarely would you concede a putt that gives your opponent the hole (if the putt is 3 inches, yes; 2 feet for the win, no).

V. **Mind Set & Active Participation**

In Challenge Cup, it is not unusual for a high handicapper to play with a lower handicapper. While, this type of pairing can make the higher handicapper more nervous, it is important that both players on a side participate equally in the match. This means, you should always know yourself how many strokes you have in a match and on what holes you will receive these strokes. You should be prepared to be consulted before putts are conceded and not to simply say to your playing partner "that is your call" but rather offer your opinion based on your assessment of the situation. Placing too much pressure on the lower handicapper to keep the score, make all the decisions and to inform you on each hole of your strokes and your opponents strokes is simply too much to ask. Remember, these are gross and NET matches and NET is where the higher handicappers can really help the team.

Develop a **Match Play** mind-set by understanding the nature of the beast. **Stroke Play** is conservative and rewards low scores by minimizing taking high risk shots because every shot counts. **Match Play** rewards the gambler who has little to lose from taking high risk shots because only one point is at stake per hole.

It is very important to realize that when you have very little to lose and everything to gain, you have no fear to hold you back while going for it. This frees up your chemistry and allows you to pull off those miracle shots. This fact has caused many good tournament players to get down on themselves because it seems that their opponents always have career days against them during **Match Play**.

You have to start having fun and reverse the situation. Always play expecting that your opponent will make the shot. With that attitude you will have nothing to lose by going for it. You will free up your chemistry allowing you to make some miracle shots.

The only thing you have to fear is fear itself. So put on your game face and go out and score!!

S = Self Confidence

C = Commitment

O = Optimism

R = Routine

E = Execution