

Houston Senior Travelers League (HSTL)

How the League Works

(Revised April 7, 2024)

The purpose of the League is to provide handicapped golf events for fun and socializing, while still maintaining the competitive spirit that dwells within each of us. In doing so, we employ USGA rules with certain local-rule exceptions. We strive to provide golf at some of the best and most beautiful golf courses in the Greater Houston area at a discounted price.

Membership: Membership is limited to golfers age 60 and above. The membership year runs from November 1st to October 31st. A \$25 Annual Membership fee is due at the first tournament played each year. New members must be sponsored by an existing member. Membership will be limited to approximately 200 members.

Operations and Governing: The Houston Senior Travelers League is governed by a Board of Directors, made up from the Membership. In addition, volunteers from the Membership serve as Coordinators, assisting in the various operational roles. In accordance with the HSTL Constitution and By-Laws, the Directors make all decisions regarding HSTL Operations, including the appointment of Coordinators.

The current Directors are:

Peter Arbour – Tournament Director and Board Chair
Ken Aldredge – Assistant Tournament Director
Bill Arbour – Finance Director
Bob Curry – I.T. Director, Membership, and Handicaps
Bob Bankert – Director at large
Carl Stubbs -- Treasurer

Dress Code: Proper golf attire is to be worn at all times. Some golf courses have restrictions on denim/blue Jeans, collarless shirts, un-tucked-in shirts, etc. When in doubt, call the course in advance for restrictions. This is the Member's individual responsibility.

Members: HSTL is a self-policing league for seniors age 60 and above. As such, courtesy by and congeniality with all members is a necessity. Member complaints will be reviewed to determine if disciplinary action is warranted, at the sole discretion of the Board of Directors.

Playing Format: Weekly Thursday Tournaments, plus additional Fun Day special Tournaments, are generally scheduled. Except for the Match Play and Fun Day Tournaments, the format will be Net Medal (stroke) Play. Tournaments will be flighted and handicapped. Weekly cash payouts and Travelers Points will be awarded. Travelers Points will be used to determine positions in Match Play, eligibility to compete to be Club Champion, and a portion of the year-end payout.

“Fun Day” Tournaments: A once-a-month “Fun Day Tournament” with varying formats may be scheduled at WindRose Golf Course. These are generally scheduled on Mondays and all members are eligible to participate. Dates, time, costs and format will be announced on the HSTL website. Fun Days are also open to other senior golfers with an established handicap.

Costs: Course fees include green fee, cart and range balls. In addition to course fees, HSTL charges a \$20 entry fee which is reduced to \$15 for all players checking in 30 minutes or more before the scheduled start time. The entry fee covers weekly payouts, league expenses, a hole-in-one pool, and special events. In addition, HSTL offers an optional Birdie Pool for an additional entry fee of \$5. See details further below.

Schedule: The League plays every Thursday (holidays excluded). The schedule is published on the HSTL website.

Signing up for Play: All communication is via e-mail. The Tournament Director will typically send out three advance e-mail “calls” or invitations to all Members (1st Call 2 weeks out, 2nd Call 1 week out and final Call 4-5 days out), listing course name, time, cost, etc. Tournaments are limited to 120 Players on a first-come, first-serve basis. Except as noted in the next two sentences, each Member must enter himself or herself. *With advance notice to a Tournament Director*, one Member may enter a second Member on a one-time basis when the Second Member is expected to have limited or no internet access when 1st Call is to be made. *The Second-Member entry must be made in a separate email.* Those who sign up after the 120-tournament-player limit has been reached will be placed on a stand-by alternates list, and will be entered only if space becomes available.

Schedule changes, if necessary, (except rainouts) will be announced A.S.A.P. via standard e-mail announcements.

Penalties for Player Withdrawal: Players who withdraw from a Tournament may do so without penalty up to one hour before the scheduled tee time.

Withdrawals within one hour of tee time and NO SHOWS: Ten point penalty

Players who accumulate twenty (-20) Travelers Points in penalties are subject to dismissal from the League.

The following “old” rule is currently SUSPENDED, but may be re-instated by the Board upon notice:

~~Players who withdraw from a Tournament may do so without penalty up to 6:00PM three days prior to a Tournament (Monday for a Thursday Tournament). After that, the following penalties will apply:~~

~~A. Withdrawals on or before 6 PM three days before a Tournament (Monday at 6 PM for a Thursday tournament): No Penalty~~

~~B. Withdrawals after the time set forth in A above but before 6PM two days before a tournament (6 PM Tuesday for a Thursday tournament): Two point penalty~~

~~C. Withdrawals after the time set forth in B. above but before 6PM one day before a tournament (6 PM Wednesday for a Thursday tournament): Five point penalty~~

~~Withdrawals after the time set forth in C. above, and NO SHOWS: Ten point penalty~~

~~If you are an alternate, the following rule will apply:~~

~~If you are on the alternate list there is no penalty if you withdraw prior to the time set forth in A. above. If you leave your name on the alternate list after the time set forth in A. above and you reach the end of the queue, you then become a player and are expected to play. Should you decline to play, you will be assessed a penalty based upon the respective times and penalties set forth in B. C. and D. above for failing to remove your name from the alternate list.~~

Player “D/Q’s”: A Player who D/Q’s or a Group that is D/Q’d for a rule violation may be subject to additional disciplinary action by the Board of Directors.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS RESERVES THE SOLE DISCRETION TO DETERMINE WHAT DISCIPLINARY ACTION IS TAKEN, IF ANY, DEPENDING ON THE SEVERITY OF THE INFRACTION.

In most cases, a player who “D/Qs”, or is unable to complete a round, is still eligible for the Birdie Pool, CTTP and Travelers Point credit for playing that tournament. A Player who “D/Qs” is not eligible for 1st – 4th place prize monies or for bonus Travelers Points.

Tournament Check-in: All registered tournament entrants are expected to be checked-in with fees paid *not-later-than 30 minutes before the scheduled Tournament start time*. Late arrivals must still check-in with the Tournament Director and must pay the late check-in fee in addition to the usual fees. If, in the meanwhile, there is a walk-up member available to play, the walk-up member may replace the registered entrant player.

No Shows: “No-Shows” are not tolerated and will be assessed a ten (-10) Travelers Point penalty. If you sign up, you are expected to be there; if you can’t make it, let the Tournament Director know so he can attempt to find a replacement. Should it become necessary to cancel two (2) hours or less before start time, the Player should notify the Course. Upon two (2) “No-Shows”, a Member may be removed from membership.

Handicapping: HSTL currently uses a proprietary handicap system known as AL8. You can learn more about the AL8 handicap system on the HSTL website. Scores from HSTL system are the only scores that will count toward calculating handicaps in HSTL competition. New Members will be assigned a handicap index based on the best available data. Prior to accumulating five (5) HSTL Tournament scores, an index for LOWEST RECORDED HSTL SCORE or assigned index (whichever is less) will be used to determine the Member’s playing handicap for the next event. Once a member has accumulated five (5) HSTL scores, their index will be calculated by the HSTL handicap coordinator using the HSTL system. See the HSTL handicap coordinator for more detail. 36 is the maximum allowable HSTL handicap index.

Flighting of Regular Weekly Events: The number of flights in each tournament will be based upon the number of Players participating in the tournament. All tournaments will be limited to a maximum of 120 Players and six (6) Flights. The number of players per flight will be balanced (+/- 1). Players will be placed in flights in ADJUSTED HANDICAP ORDER for the particular course being played. If adjusted handicaps are the same, the index will be used to determine flighting. If it becomes necessary to place Players with equal indexes in different flights, the Player with the greatest number of tournaments played will be placed in the lower numbered flight.

Inclement Weather Policy: A tournament is cancelled only when the Tournament Director announces the cancellation. When lightning is close, seek cover or shelter. Play will be suspended by a loud blast of a horn, or verbal instruction relayed from the Tournament Director. Once this happens, the tournament is suspended. Cease play immediately, either mark or leave your golf ball and seek shelter. Do not continue play. The Tournament Director will consult with Pro Shop to determine if play can likely be resumed within one (1) hour. If not, then the tournament will be cancelled. If you leave during the one-hour suspension period and the tournament resumes, then you are considered to be “Withdrawn” (W/D). A Player who “W/D’s” is still eligible for net skins, the Birdie Pool, CTPP and two (2) Travelers Points. A Player who “W/D’s” is not eligible for 1st - 4th place Prize Monies or bonus Travelers points.

Payouts and Travelers Points for “Placing”: All potential payouts listed below and elsewhere in these HSTL documents are for the weekly Thursday tournaments and are estimates. They are based on 120 participating players. Payouts and Travelers Points awarded in each flight will be:

First (1st) place ----- \$60 and 10 pts.
Second (2nd) place ---- \$40 and 9pts.
Third (3rd) place ----- \$25 and 8pts.
Fourth (4th) place ----- \$15 and 7pts.
Fifth (5th) place ----- 6pts.
Sixth (6th) place ----- 5pts.
Seventh (7th) place ----- 4pts.
Eighth (8th) place ----- 3pts.

All other participants earn 2 points.

To encourage participation at some more-distant HST play sites, the Board may designate certain courses as Double-Travelers-Points, or DTP, courses. Double Travelers Points will be paid for participation in tournaments on DTP-designated

courses. The DTP designation will be made in the Schedule or in the First Call for the tournament.

Other special tournament payouts, if any, will be documented in the announcement for the tournament.

Additional Payouts:

Net Skins (Flighted) – Net Skins entry is included in your weekly entry fee. You are only playing against golfers in your flight. There are no more than 20 players in each flight. To win, you must be the only player in your flight with the lowest net score on that hole. The total pot per flight is equal to the number of players in the flight times \$5. The amount of payout per player is the flight pot divided by the number of individual holes won outright (rounded to the dollar).

Par 3 Closest to the Pin (CTTP) - \$20 Dollars will be awarded to the player whose first shot ends up on the green closest to the pin on each CTTP hole. No additional Travelers Points are awarded for CTTP.

Low Gross and Low Net – Two (2) Travelers Points are awarded for Low Gross and Low Net overall, including ties. One Player can win both.

Optional Birdie Pool – HSTL offers an optional Birdie Pool for an additional entry fee of \$5. Birdie Pool is different from the Flighted Net Skins, in that flights are disregarded. To win, the player must have a gross birdie or better and be the only player with the lowest score on that hole. The “Pool” is number of players participating, multiplied by \$5. The amount of payout per player is the “Pool” divided by the number of individual holes won outright. For example: 67 Players entered x \$5 (\$335.) divided by 3 (number of Holes won outright) = \$110. All payouts will be in whole dollars, thus the remaining \$5 in this example is carried forward to the next tournament.

Hole-in-One – Members, who have played at least 5 rounds with HST in the current or immediate past year, who score a hole-in-one will receive a special cash payout of \$100.

Cash Payouts -

Cash payouts will be available for pick-up at the next scheduled Tournament. If a Member wants someone else to pick-up their winnings, they should notify the Tournament Director via e-mail as to who they designate to pick up their winnings. After four (4) weeks, unclaimed winnings shall be forfeited and returned to the League General Prize Fund.