COVID-19 Youth Caddie Program Guidelines

The safety of golfers and caddies in the wake of COVID-19 is the top priority of Carry the Game and the Western Golf Association. These guidelines, created in conjunction with Dr. Kevin Most – Chief Medical Officer at Northwestern Medicine Central DuPage Hospital, a former caddie and an Evans Scholars Alum – provide guidance on how youth caddies can safely work this summer while utilizing social distancing and other health measures.

General Safety Measures

- Depending on CDC recommendations and local safety guidelines, masks may be required or encouraged for all staff and caddies to reduce exposure.
- All courses should mandate that individuals with any respiratory illness stay at home until symptoms have resolved.
- Clubs should make hand sanitizer available at multiple areas on the course.
- To maintain adequate hydration, bottled water should be made available. Public water fountain use should be discouraged.
- Take proper measures for any caddie restrooms and have cleaning supplies available.
- Individual packed caddie meals can be made available in advance.

Social Distancing

Caddies and golfers should follow social distancing guidelines – 6 feet, unless recommended otherwise.

- Minimize clusters of golfers and caddies, and maintain proper spacing. Focus on tees and green, where congregating occurs.
- Consider sending caddies ahead to forecaddie. If carrying a golf bag, a caddie should always walk a distance greater than 10 feet from his or her golfer.
- When placing the bag down, the bag should be a minimum of 10 feet from the ball. The caddie should then back away 6 feet until the club is selected.

No handshaking or other form of physical contact (high-fives, “knuckles,” hug, etc.).

- Introductions may be made verbally from a safe distance.

Caddies should NOT touch the flagstick for any reason.

- Even if discouraged or not allowed, touching the flagstick may be required. If it falls out of the hole or the golfer adamantly prefers no flag, it is up to that golfer to handle the flagstick.

Caddies should NOT touch a rake at any point.

- They can either leave the footprints alone, let the golfer attend to them or smooth out the bunker with their feet.
- A dedicated staff person can periodically rake high-traffic areas on the golf course.

Club transfer from caddie to player should be done with great discipline.

- Whenever possible, the golfer should grab their own club and put it back into the golf bag themselves. This method eliminates many of the potential concerns surrounding club exchange/transfer.
- When transferring a club to and from a player, the caddie should always hand and receive the club from the head of the club. This transaction should be done with both the player and the caddie with arms outstretched, assuring a distance greater than 6 feet. This will allow the caddie to clean and replace the club without touching the grip.
- Minimize other touching of the golfer’s equipment. Bag rooms should have a process to clean the outside of each bag upon completion of play. The virus will not survive on these surfaces between rounds.

Caddies should social distance on the greens. Balls that are washed should be thrown back to a player.

- Caddies should hold out their towel to clean golf balls when requested. No direct contact needs to be made with the golf ball – only through their towel. This will allow for minimizing exposures from one player to one caddie.
Scheduling Loops

If possible, your club should arrange for advance scheduling of all loops.

- This will minimize instances of caddies congregating. Caddie shacks should be monitored for adherence to social distancing.
- Caddies should show up for their scheduled loop at a designated time and leave the premises immediately after the round — no “hanging around.” This includes the caddie shack.
- Caddies should arrive 15-30 minutes prior to their scheduled loop.
- Consider having golfers indicate prior to their round if they would like a caddie, or assigning 1+ caddie for each tee time.

Payment & Feedback Options

Caddie payment and golfer feedback will be done electronically.

- Do not use caddie cards unless absolutely necessary. Instead, set up a secure email address where the player can give feedback to advance the skill of the caddie. Daily feedback is key to the advancement of all caddies.
- Suggested caddie rates and fees can be posted in the golf shop, locker room, on the first tee and emailed to golfers.
- Cash should be discouraged. If you do not currently use electronic payments, consider using Venmo, PayPal, Chase QuickPay, Zelle or other electronic forms of payment when possible.
- Caddies appreciate guest tipping. A guest information sheet should be given to each player that includes a brief bio of their caddie as well as their electronic information for a tip, if appropriate.
- Golf staff can assist in electronic payment and facilitate member charges for caddie fees while reducing the handling of cash between golfer and caddie.

Any comments, positive or negative, will be emailed to the Caddie Manager or Professional Staff.

- This allows for easy tracking of all caddie loops in a safe manner.

Additional Issues to Consider

Educate members and guests.

- All golfers need to understand what caddies can – and more importantly CAN’T – do on the golf course. The Caddie Manager or Professional Staff should make sure both caddies and golfers understand the restrictions in place prior to their round.

Consider how the social situations for many caddies may require different travel accommodations.

- The goal of the club should be to minimize the congregating of caddies.
- A drop-off and pick-up system may not be possible for some caddies. Care should be taken to make sure caddies who are on site for extended periods of time understand social distancing requirements.

Make it clear that those who do not follow those requirements will not be allowed to work.

- Caddies traveling further or reliant upon family and friends for a ride may need additional consideration.
- Some caddies take public transportation, and schedules may be altered or not an option.

Re-align expectations for caddies and golfers during this time.

- Emphasize patience to all parties involved as we work together to enjoy the game we love so much.

Questions?
Contact us. Tim Orbon, Director, Carry the Game and Caddie Development orbon@wgaesf.org