

AJGA Announces New Policy Regarding Non-Motorized Pull Carts

The American Junior Golf Association announced that it will allow limited use of non-motorized pull carts during AJGA events for the 2008 season. The decision comes in response to information gathered from the NCAA's pull cart policy and recent studies indicating that carrying a golf bag on a regular basis poses a health risk, particularly for younger players.

In enacting this new policy, the AJGA looked at the NCAA's rules for its Division I, II and III Championships, where women are allowed to use non-motorized pull carts and men are allowed to use them with permission for a medical condition. The NCAA has not found that the use of pull carts provides players with a competitive advantage, and the AJGA believes the same.

Though research on the subject is not yet complete, studies have shown that consistently carrying a golf bag does pose a health risk. This risk of injury is particularly high for smaller players whose bag constitutes 10-20 percent of their body weight, players who have sustained a temporary injury and adolescent players whose schedule consists of year-round, frequent practice and competitive golf. *Injuries and Overuse Syndromes in Golf*, a medical journal study published by Georg Gosheger, gathered data that proved these players are more likely to suffer from lower back, shoulder and ankle injuries.

In an effort to transition the membership into the new policy, all Junior-All Star Series participants will have the option of using a non-motorized pull cart without any stipulation. These players, ages 12-15, as smaller, younger athletes, are more susceptible to injuries sustained from regularly carrying a golf bag, research shows. All other events (AJGA Invitational, Open and Medicus Preseason events, as well as Qualifiers) will allow the use of non-motorized pull carts on the basis of medical need.

The use of non-motorized pull carts will also depend on the policies of the host facility. If a host golf club does not allow the use of non-motorized pull carts, the AJGA will abide by that rule, even at a Junior All-Star event. The AJGA will not provide any non-motorized pull cart; the use of one comes at a player's own expense. The new policy is in place for 2008 only and will be reviewed as necessary.

"We believe this policy takes our members' best interest to heart while at the same time supports the AJGA's mission," Mark Oskarson, AJGA chief operations officer, said. "By minimizing risk of injury to healthy younger players, the new policy eliminates the possibility that injury related to carrying a golf bag would affect any player's ability to earn a college golf scholarship."