

The Caddie PLAYBOOK

A guide to starting, building
or perfecting your club's
youth caddie program



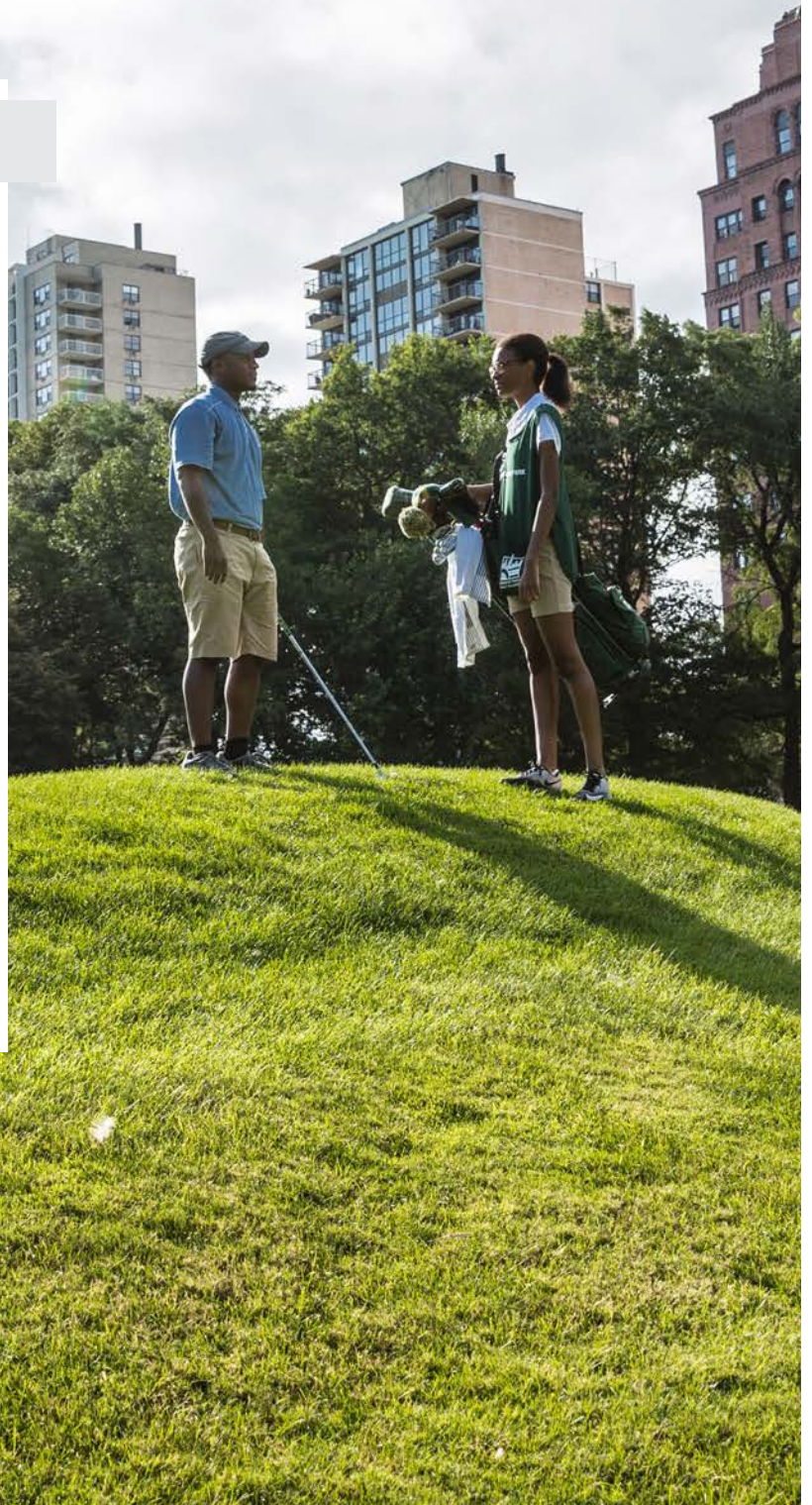
PRODUCED BY THE WESTERN GOLF ASSOCIATION

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Western Golf Association
Evans Scholars Foundation





Introduction

Caddying is an investment in the future of young men and women. Caddies learn to work as a team on the golf course, helping one another and providing a great service that amplifies the golfing experience.

At the Western Golf Association, we provide affiliated clubs with extensive resources for the development and operation of caddie programs at the club level.

Materials available include:

- Caddie training video
- Caddie training manual
- Caddie exam
- Caddie operations manual
- Brochures and posters promoting the benefits of caddie programs

Our 22-minute caddie training video, *Becoming a Great Caddie*, outlines a caddie's duties before, during and after a round of golf. The video is ideal for the training of first-year caddies and is an excellent refresher for experienced caddies.

We recognize that many golf courses and clubs take alternative approaches to running a caddie program. Many variables affect caddie programs, including geographic location, number of golfers, number of caddies, etc. Please view these practices as general recommendations rather than a formula for success that all caddie programs must follow.

Still, there are basic elements that all successful caddie programs enjoy. These include:

- A dedicated caddie manager to recruit, train, select, pay, promote, encourage and discipline caddies
- An involved professional staff
- Interested golfers who are supportive of caddying
- Committed young men and women

The WGA is committed to growing the game of golf through caddying, and we have dedicated staff to support caddie-related services. If you have questions or are interested in promoting your program, please reach out and utilize our caddie resources.

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Benefits of Youth Caddie Programs

A caddie assists golfers during their rounds and is considered a vital part of the game of golf. Their responsibilities include carrying the golfer’s bag, pacing yardages, replacing divots, raking bunkers and attending the flagstick.

Caddying is a great way to learn the game of golf in addition to being an important part of golf’s heritage and part of its future. Caddying is an investment for the future of young men and women learning valuable life skills along the way.

Caddying is often the first job for many kids – it exposes them to real-life work experience and helps develop outstanding work ethic and attitude. It helps grow the game of golf, allowing young people from modest backgrounds a chance to learn the game.

WHO BENEFITS?

Player	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better play and increased health benefits Opportunity to mentor and pay the game forward Enhanced golf experience, especially with guests
Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faster pace of play and improved conditions Enhanced status and image
Caddie	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work outside and earn money with flexible hours Exposure to positive role models Chance to exercise and make new friends Opportunity to earn caddie scholarships
Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caddies develop outstanding work ethic Young people receive real-life work experience Mentoring relationships in a healthy environment Clubs can give back to the community



Program Guidelines

While there is no one all-encompassing caddie program formula, many successful programs include well-trained caddies, an intuitive Caddie Manager, a proactive head golf professional and staff, an active caddie chairperson and an influential WGA Director.

Dedicated Golf Staff

An engaged and supportive caddie manager and golf professional is vital to a successful youth caddie program. Whether the caddie program consists of all full-time students or a mix of adults and teenagers, maintaining a pipeline of young men and women can ensure long-term success. The golf staff should understand the positive impact caddying has on young people.

Member and Club Leadership Support

To complement the golf staff's efforts, club members play a significant role in elevating the caddie program. In addition to the opportunity to mentor caddies, members can work in tandem with the staff to effectively promote and utilize club caddies. You can eliminate many problems by understanding the demands of your caddies and golfers. Forming a Caddie Committee, formal or informal, is a great way to improve communication to the membership and caddies while giving thoughtful consideration to the program's efficiency.

Thorough Caddie Training

In order for the caddie program to add value to any club, the caddies in the program need to be well trained. The WGA offers a caddie training video, caddie manual and caddie exam. Pre-training is vital in order for on-course-training to be effective. Have golf staff, member volunteers and experienced caddies work together to train the caddies. Incorporate a "shadow loop" as part of the training – where a new caddie shadows an experienced caddie to improve their skillset. If needed, during the golf season, have ongoing training during the week for those who need additional help. This can be done by experienced caddies, staff or volunteers, and will address any ongoing performance issues.

Appropriate Roster

By establishing the correct number of caddies on the roster, a caddie manager can eliminate turnover and maintain a group of quality caddies. Accepting too many caddies will result in high turnover and low standards. Turning away too many caddies will result in disappointed golfers.

Single Bags

Emphasizing quality of loops over quantity will elevate caddie performance and member satisfaction.



Recruiting

Focus on adding caddies with high character who are committed to caddying and available during peak times (weekends, tournaments, leagues, guest play). Youth caddies with strong grades make for excellent candidates. They are likely to grasp concepts quickly, have the attention span to stay engaged and the work ethic to be successful. Those who come from modest financial backgrounds, displaying a degree of need, may benefit the most from the opportunity to caddie.

Where to Look

Many clubs find youth caddies from their network of current club employees. Notify your club staff about caddying opportunities and encourage them to consider getting their children, grandchildren, relatives and neighbors involved.

Work with local school officials to identify eighth and ninth graders at private schools who are currently receiving tuition assistance based upon financial need. You might be able to help high-achieving students with need earn life-changing scholarship opportunities by connecting them with your caddie program. Invite potential caddies and their family members to learn about the benefits of caddying.

Public school officials can help identify families with financial need. Students may receive financial assistance like a reduced or free lunch.

Partnering with local and community organizations focused on youth development can help you find young men and women who are seeking work and scholarship opportunities. Consider the Boys & Girls Club of America, The First Tee and other mentoring/leadership programs.

The Bottom Line

Caddying gives your club a unique opportunity to give back to the community and the next generation of students. With the number of summer and seasonal job opportunities for young people declining, caddying is more important than ever. Young people enjoy a healthy and positive work environment full of role models and mentors. Caddying instills a sense of accomplishment, encouraging self-confidence that young people carry well beyond the golf course. Youth caddies learn to be self-sufficient through hard work, while being driven to achieve.



Training Caddies

Offering multiple training sessions that help young men and women learn how to become successful caddies will enable you to grow and sustain your caddie program for the future. Have a combination of club staff, members and experienced caddies mentor new caddies to create a mix of different perspectives.

Some training sessions will feature large groups going on the course, while others will feature one trainee assigned to each caddie trainer. Trainers are usually golfers who take caddies, professional golf staff or the most experienced caddies.

Training continues well after an applicant becomes a certified caddie. Employ a system like a ticket/rating card or electronic feedback that enables golfers to evaluate their rounds. Once the Caddie Manager has the evaluation, it is his or her job to address the feedback. Positive feedback helps you identify your better caddies while less flattering feedback may help you identify caddies who might benefit from supplemental training.

The top caddie programs in the country all have active participation from the club's membership and often feature a caddie committee.

PREPARE YOUR CADDIES

Before they step on the course, every caddie in your club's program should:

- Review the WGA's caddie training manual**
- Watch the caddie orientation video**
- Complete the WGA-issued caddie exam**



Classification

Caddies are often classified into ranks based on their experience and abilities.

Most often, first-year caddies are referred to as “B” caddies. These caddies often require guidance and patience. Ideally, the Caddie Manager will be able to pair B caddies with more experienced caddies to help with training and maintain pace of play. Once a caddie gets experience, they will often be promoted to the “A” rank. This comes with an increase in base pay. A caddies perform many of the same duties as B caddies, but they do it at a higher standard. Once an A caddie has mastered those responsibilities, he or she should be promoted to the highest rank – “Honor” caddie.

The caddies who perform at the highest level will not only become leaders among their peers, but they will often earn larger gratuities and get requested more frequently for special events. By accurately classifying caddies of different experience levels and abilities, it will help create a good mix of newer and experienced caddies and satisfy your membership. Golfers taking caddies may often prefer different levels of service for various reasons. Putting caddies in a position to succeed and understanding the skill level of each caddie will help maintain a positive culture.

EXPECTATIONS

B Caddies:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Calculate yardage | Understand rules of golf |
| Maintain pace by staying in front of golfer and locating ball | Illustrate courtesy during round |
| Replace divots | Assist with the course upkeep |
| Rake bunkers | Follow instructions |
| Forecaddy on appropriate holes | Demonstrate attentiveness and a good attitude |
| Stand quietly and politely | Demonstrate work ethic |
| Keep clubs and balls clean | Work as a team with others |

A Caddies:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Possess advanced knowledge of golf and the course | Encourage and train inexperienced caddies |
| Provide direction of the wind | Act as role models |
| Calculate yardage to hazards | Exhibit confidence and leadership |
| Provide service to multiple golfers at once | |

Honor Caddies:

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Provide expert advice | Assist during training sessions |
| Assist Caddie Manager with everyday operations | Mentor A and B caddies |



How to Assign Caddie Loops

Every caddie program pairs caddies and golfers differently. Golfers may request certain caddies or ones with a certain experience level. Some Caddie Managers take more of a scientific approach to assigning loops, while others view it as an art form.

If a golfer requests a certain caddie, he or she may contact that caddie directly and coordinate the date and time of the loop. Often, the Caddie Manager communicates directly with the caddie about when to arrive. Once a caddie accepts the request, they are set. If the caddie is not available, the Caddie Manager will find the golfer another appropriate caddie.

The scientific option is a hierarchal, or seniority-based, approach. Once a golfer decides to take a caddie, the caddie manager will offer the loop to the Honor caddies – those with the most experience. The most experienced Honor caddie has his or her choice to accept that golfer or pass it on. This process continues down to the A and B caddies until the loop is filled.

The alternative approach requires more consideration from the Caddie Manager. To assign a caddie, the Caddie Manager might consider factors like the personality of golfer and caddie, experience and quality of the caddie and the golfer's typical payment. Sometimes a golfer who may ask for a newer caddie to help in his or her training and development. Allowing the golfer to mentor the newer caddie will have a profound impact on the learning and enjoyment of the experience.

Always strive to be fair and put caddies in a position to succeed. You should make every effort to place at least two A and/or Honor caddies in each group to help achieve balance. Encouraging golfers to take caddies of differing experience levels can be healthy for the development of your caddie program. Having caddies work for different golfers will enhance their growth and maturity as well.



How to Evaluate Performance

When caddies receive feedback after a round, it can reinforce positive performances and help them identify potential issues. Develop a caddie ticket, chit sheet or use email to acquire honest, accurate feedback from the golfers. Utilizing electronic options (email, software, app, etc.) facilitates discretion – which is important to ensure the sharing of an authentic evaluation. Encourage members to complete it after every round they utilize a caddie. Honest and fair evaluations will help both the individual and the caddie program.

Many golfers/members prefer to share feedback through conversation. Taking notes and being organized will allow you to make sure this feedback is communicated to each caddie on behalf of the golfer/member.

If discipline is needed, it is the responsibility of the Caddie Manager to reprimand caddies for their actions once they arrive at the course. Offering supplemental

caddie training is a proactive way to address on-course performance. Don't forget to also share praise or compliments when positive feedback is offered. Caddie morale is important, and using positive feedback as a motivating tool can facilitate an encouraging environment.

Your caddie committee and patient members will play a vital role in conveying what type of effort is being put forth from the beginning for these new caddies. Experienced caddies can assist in this early development by identifying strengths and weaknesses in performance. Patience is needed, and you should provide caddies with immediate feedback as well as your reasoning.

More experienced caddies should be evaluated based on their performance. The expectations are higher (see chart on page 8), and it is important to make sure standards are consistently being met by these experienced caddies.



Caddie Compensation

Standard caddie rates should be made public to all members. Many programs will offer several rates based on level of service provided and caddie rank.

The typical range of compensation for caddies varies by club, city, state or even region. Monitoring what is considered a fair range of compensation will improve member satisfaction along with happy caddies. Overpaying or underpaying may have an unintended negative effect on attendance and performance. Communicating with similar clubs (status/geography) on a typical caddie fee will make sure everyone is treated as fairly as possible. Sharing these guidelines

with members and guests improve the alignment of expectations prior to the round.

Compensation for new caddies should be weighted to reward attitude and effort, while experienced caddies should be compensated based on attitude, effort and performance. Based on the guidelines provided, what the golfer actually pays is at his or her discretion.

In most instances, a golfer will pay a caddie directly immediately after the round. Methods of payment include cash, a signed caddie ticket or caddie card, or a form of electronic payment.



Caddie Awards & Incentives

Many clubs reward the hard work of their top caddies by celebrating their caddie programs and honoring caddies at an end-of-season banquet.

In most cases, the meal is donated by the members of the club and members may contribute money and gifts for the top caddies. Caddies have their choice in the selection of prizes, and many programs also award a Caddie of the Year and a Rookie Caddie of the Year.

Some clubs even host a Caddie/Member Golf tournament. Caddies are encouraged to play in the event, and members participate in various ways. Members could assist as starters or marshals or even

caddie for the regular caddies. This gives both golfer and caddie a unique perspective, enabling them to spend a day “on the other side of the bag.”

In addition to golf, the pool, tennis courts and other club facilities can be made available to non-golfing caddies.

Caddying can also be a way for young men and women to learn to play golf. As an added incentive, many clubs will allow caddies to play the golf course on Mondays or in the evening, when members are typically not using the course.



Promoting the Evans Scholarship

In addition to making money, many caddies can turn their summer job into an opportunity to receive a full tuition and housing Evans Scholarship.

The best way to publicize the Evans Scholars Foundation is to highlight your current Evans Scholars. Identify current Scholars with a special caddie bib, shirt or hat that includes their name and the university they attend. In addition to impressing members, this will often generate questions from younger caddies or newcomers who are unfamiliar with the Evans Scholars Program.

Many clubs create a display to showcase their past and current Evans Scholars. Use a framed photo of a current Scholar to enhance the look. Displays are often located in the pro shop, clubhouse, locker room or bag drop.

Most clubs have a weekly or monthly newsletter distributed to members digitally or in print. This is another great place to highlight the names, photos and achievements of your Evans Scholars. This engagement

gives supporters of the caddie program and the Evans Scholars Foundation an opportunity to enjoy local success stories.

In addition to promoting the Evans Scholarship to golfers, be sure to promote it to age-appropriate caddies who could be potential applicants. It's never too early to share information, even with seventh and eighth graders. Involve their parents, as well. This can be through word of mouth, posting information about the Evans Scholarship near the caddie shack or gathering area, electronic correspondence and other modes of communication.

Increasing awareness of this opportunity can improve caddie attendance, retention and be a highly motivational tool that incentivizes caddies to perform well. Promotional materials are available at wgaesf.org or by contacting the Evans Scholars Foundation directly.

The Caddie Playbook



Thank You

By establishing or developing a youth caddie program, you are investing in the future of hardworking young men and women in your community.

**QUESTIONS?
CONTACT US.**

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