



—THE— SAWGA NEWS

01 February 2026

The 2026 golf season is on the horizon. We can't wait to see you soon!

The President's Page

Welcome to all our new members and all returning members! If you haven't sent in your membership entry electronically, please do so ASAP. And don't forget your payment! Anyone who has not done so by Feb 10th will be deactivated from the GHIN system. If you are wondering why our membership dues went up \$5 this year, please know it was the GHIN System that upped their fees, \$35 of the membership fee is the cost to maintain your GHIN. SAWGA has not raised their fee since God was an altar boy. We're not sure how much longer we can hold out, but we are good for 2026.

The Hole-In-One pot is creeping close to \$1,300. You all need to try harder. Entry fees for tournaments will continue to be used exclusively for prize money. Membership fees are used for all other expenses--lunches, gifts, trophies and administrative items.

The Board welcomes Bethany Wells as our new secretary! We immediately dumped a ton of work on her plate, and she is responding like a trooper. One of her projects is to create a Facebook page for us. We will be asking you to send her cool (or silly) photos that she can post to Facebook and our SAWGA portal. We will also be asking anyone who does not want to appear in any posts to let us know.

Our goal is to do a monthly newsletter this year. As you will see, we will have sections where we discuss rules and where we answer questions you have. Please let us know rules you would like us to tackle and questions you might have for Betty Birdie, our own take on Dear Abby.

I'm excited about golf this year. I hope you share my excitement. SAWGA rules!!!

-Grace

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Community Corner

We have developed a handbook that is being given to all new members as they join SAWGA. It contains all you would ever need to know about our Association--history, dos, don'ts, rules, tips, etc.

However, we don't want to just let the new kids on the block get all the goodies.

If you would like an electronic copy of the Handbook, just shoot us an email and we will send it to you. We think all will benefit from it. We welcome any suggestions you have on how to make it better. For example, what are we missing? What needs to be corrected?

Tidbits from the Treasury

Last year we had 151 members – the most since I have been treasurer! The balance of the bank account as of December 31st was \$3,659.48. While this is a sizeable sum to end the year with, this money will be going towards things like lunches, special contests, guest gifts for the member guest tournaments. In 2025 we were able to subsidize lunches for three weekend tournaments and one weekday tournament.

Our hole in one funds are up to \$963 as of the end of 2025! We have not had a hole in one during a tournament at Santa Ana since Becky Luco and Linda Sudderth both had one on the same hole at the 2022 Turkey Shoot. Good luck to everyone in 2026!

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Rules We Live By: Lost Ball Times Up!

You are standing on the first tee, certain that today is going to be your day. Then you totally duck-hook your ball into the deep stuff, perhaps never to be seen again. After screaming, swearing, and/or stomping your feet, you choose one of the four options listed at the end. If you decide to look for your ball, you have three minutes **ONLY** to look. Your time starts when you reach the area where you believe your ball is lost. You should set your phone timer, the three minutes goes by quickly and is not an arbitrary time.

If you find your ball within three minutes, you **must** play it. If you don't find your ball within three minutes, you must immediately go to one of the four options below.

Once your three minutes are up, BY RULE, your ball is deemed lost and no longer in play. If you then spot your ball, the WORST thing you can do is hit it. If you do hit it, you are assessed a two-stroke penalty for hitting the wrong ball. That wrong ball is now thrown to the wolves, and your next shot is your "option ball". (See below).

Options from that first awful shot:

1. Do nothing and go try to find your ball. Please don't choose this. If you can't find your ball, you will have to trudge back to the tee to the consternation of your playing partners and the group waiting behind you with hands on hips. This is a stroke and distance penalty, so you are hitting your third shot off the tee.

2. Declare you are putting a new ball in play and not looking for your ball. You are hitting your third shot off the tee. Not a good choice. Your first ball may have miraculously hit a rock and bounced back in the grass. But it is no longer in play.

3. Hit a provisional ball off the tee. This is your third shot **ONLY** if you use it. You **MUST** declare that you are hitting a provisional before you hit it and declare how this ball is marked differently than your original ball. Use the term "provisional". You should always use this option unless E-5 is an option. If you do not find your ball, the provisional is now in play. If you find your ball, the provisional is abandoned.

4. Local Rule E-5. (Played in all SAWGA events.) You do nothing off the tee. If you don't find your ball, you may determine where it is lost and then drop a ball two club lengths on that line back in the fairway. It is a two-stroke penalty, but it is the same result as a stroke and distance penalty. So, you are laying three at this point.

So, the moral of this story is timing is everything. If you want to exceed the 5 second food-on-the-ground rule, be our guest. But you need to play by the 3-minute rule in golf.

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FORE!!

The SAWGA golf season starts with our first tournament on Saturday, February 21st. Look for the registration email in your inbox!

Suggestions to get you ready for a great season:

- ❖ Register for the SAWGA Portal through the email sent by noreply@golfgenius.com and then bookmark it for future use. You can also access the SAWGA Portal with this link: <https://sagc-sawga2.golfgenius.com/websites/11188988043954531031>
- ❖ New golfers: download the GHIN app and post your scores to develop your handicap index.
- ❖ Download the USGA Rules of Golf app.
- ❖ Add “LadySAWGA” and “Golf Genius” to your contacts or whitelist them for your inbox.
- ❖ Bookmark the SAWGA web page: mynewmexicogolf.com or use the link: <https://www.santaana.mynewmexicogolf.com/associations/santa-ana-women-s-golf-association>
- ❖ Check out the full 2026 calendar on the SAWGA portal or SAWGA webpage.
- ❖ Do your golf buddies a favor and tell them about SAWGA!

Ask Betty Birdie

Dear Betty Birdie,

I am new to golf and am trying to understand and use the correct lingo. Last Wednesday I heard the term “Dorito ball”. Please explain.

Sincerely,

Clueless on Cheena One

Dear Clueless,

Yes, you are. The term is actually “BURRITO BALL”. It is unique to New Mexico golf. It is normally used in casual golf by a totally frustrated golfer. It entails taking the damn shot over. It is preceded by statements such as “oh no”, “I’m gonna cheat”, “ovaries”, and my personal favorite “oh s**t”.

In other regions of the country, the term is mulligan, overs, breakfast ball, brunch ball, lunch ball, cocktail ball. Sometimes golfers remain silent and just throw another ball down. I hope this helps you out.

My advice to you is twofold. Never use the term “Dorito ball”. And never eat Doritos while playing golf. Your messy fingers can alter your golf ball. Though Cheetos are even worse.

Happy golfing,

-Betty Birdie

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19th Hole

- ❖ The Rules We Live by Column will explain a rule every month. If you wish to see a certain rule discussed, email it to us! Please know that we are not using official USGA language in our explanations.
- ❖ Bonus tip--- If you are playing on a course other than Santa Ana, please make sure they have E-5 as a local rule before you try to use it. Not every course has the same local rules, so CYA and know the local rules of the course you are playing.
- ❖ Need Betty's advice? Submit questions to ladasawga@gmail.com
- ❖ We can't wait to see you on February 21st for the putt to any hole tournament!

Happy golfing!

-SAWGA Board