

RIWGA-RIGA MERGER PROPOSAL 2012

Why should the two organizations merge?

Originating in 1902 and 1914 respectively, the RIGA and RIWGA embody the history and tradition of golf in the state. The two organizations have historically been the dominant governing bodies of golf in Rhode Island. While working closely together over the years the two associations have operated on separate yet parallel paths to ensure that Rhode Island golfers can compete at the highest levels both locally and nationally. They have afforded golfers of all ability levels to play socially and competitively. By merging the associations this great history and tradition would be maintained and we would go forward with a stronger, more unified voice to accommodate all the golfers in the state.

Having one governing body for golf in the state will give us the ability to more easily speak to all golfers regardless of age or gender. It will be able to give a powerful message about the direction and approach of the leadership of the sport. It is a message that will be more appealing to younger generations who are our future players and golf club members. With the increasing difficulty of attracting people into golf club membership, the sport, more than ever, needs to be aligned with today's culture and society. If golf does not reflect societal change, it cannot hope to attract the next generation of golf club members. Attracting new golfers and new members will be easier if there is one clear and consistent message - golf can be challenging, it can be fun, but above all it is enjoyable whether you are a man, a woman, a boy or a girl, an elite player, a social player, an average player or a beginner.

Having a unified organization would also be much easier for our member clubs. They would be dealing with one organization in creating schedules and setting aside dates for tournaments. All events would be organized by a highly professional and competent staff.

HOW WILL THE ASSOCIATION OPERATE AFTER A MERGER?

1. The current operations of the RIGA will remain in place with the executive director and staff. They will be in charge of both men's and women's events. An additional staff person will be added to run women's events. They will conduct all operations, scheduling tournaments, running tournaments and all administrative duties. The TPP system that we currently utilize is also utilized by the RIGA – registration for tournaments will remain the same.
2. RIWGA will retain its' major tournaments: Championship, Senior Championship, Stroke Play, Junior/Senior, Four Ball, President's Team championship, Endicott, RI/CT and NEWGA.

3. We are currently analyzing the format for weekly tournaments. The RIGA currently utilizes a package system in which participants sign up for events as a foursome and play in six weekly events throughout the season. Women's weekly tournaments will most likely be adapted to a similar format – though the specifics have yet to be determined.
4. Board Composition. During the transition the executive committees of both associations will work together to effectuate the merger in ironing out details and revising the by-laws of the RIGA to account for the merger. Once the merger is effectuated there will be a women's committee to act in an advisory role for women's events. The chair and vice chair of the committee will serve on the RIGA executive committee.
5. Member clubs. All 49 member clubs of the RIGA will be part of the Association. There will no longer be any type of segregation between public, semi-private and private courses.
6. Index requirements. There will no longer be a maximum index limit, however, tournaments that already have index limitations such as RI/Ct, Endicott and NEWGA will remain unchanged.
7. Costs. Membership dues will be approximately what they currently are or perhaps slightly lower than our current fee. Currently RIGA and RIWGA tournament costs are approximately the same. They will most likely remain largely unchanged in the near future, though it is difficult to predict costs set by the clubs.
8. Team matches. We will continue to have in-state team matches, though the format will continue to evolve as we work with our members and the clubs. The RIGA is also interested in developing a similar tournament for the men.
9. Juniors. The RIWGA junior program would remain in place and we would seek to integrate a boys program as well.
10. Junior Scholarship Fund. At this time this would be maintained as a separate entity, but the organization would continue to evaluate the program and see if there are ways to enhance it through the merger of the associations.
11. RIWGA funds. Current funds of the RIWGA would be utilized to assist in the transition of merging and adding a staff person for the RIGA.