



# Blind Golf Canada Constitution

## January, 2024

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## **Preamble**

Blind Golf Canada, a not-for-profit with a focus on giving and charity, promotes the sport of blind golf, and its associated social, physical, and emotional benefits, to blind and vision impaired people, and organizes blind golf events across Canada, working closely with, and supporting provincial and regional blind golf organizations and charities.

Blind Golf Canada (BGC) is committed to the belief that all individuals, regardless of vision impairment, have the right to enjoy the benefits of sports and physical activity. We recognize that blind golf can be a particularly challenging sport, but BGC believes that with the right support and training, anyone can participate and enjoy the game.

Our mission at BGC is to empower people with vision impairments through the sport of golf. We provide opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to participate in this life-changing sport, and through our work, we strive to make a lasting impact on the lives of people who are blind or vision impaired. BGC is driven by our values of inclusion, accessibility, and community, and we are committed to making a difference, one swing at a time.

BGC understands that accessibility is a key factor in making blind golf available to all, and is committed to working with golf courses to ensure that they are accessible to blind golfers, and the organizations that support them.

BGC recognizes the physical benefits of sport, and fresh air, and believes blind golf offers mental and emotional benefits that are invaluable to those who participate, promoting self-confidence and independence. BGC supports players who want to learn to navigate the course, and life with the same positive outlook.

BGC believes golf fosters a sense of community and belonging, as players come together to share their love of the game and support each other regardless of abilities and visual impairment, or blindness.

Friendships and bonds formed on the golf course can last a lifetime and the game provides a unique opportunity for sighted and visually impaired people to interact and learn from each other, breaking down barriers and stereotypes.

Blind golf is more than just the score on the card, it's about the journey that leads to that score. It's about courage, determination, and perseverance. It's about finding strength in adversity and celebrating victories, both big and small. Above all, it's about the connections we make with one another along the way.

BGC exists to unite people in the pursuit of making the world a better place, one act of kindness at a time. We believe that by working together, we can make a positive impact that reaches far beyond our individual capabilities. We believe that our collective purpose is to create a more compassionate and caring world, and that every member, volunteer, and supporter plays a vital role in achieving this goal.

It's about showing compassion, and working to create a better world for blind golfers. BGC is dedicated to making a positive impact in every way possible, whether it's through our programs, our partnerships, or our daily interactions with the community we serve.

## **Name and Purpose**

The name of the organization is and will remain, Blind Golf Canada, also known as BGC. BGC provides opportunities for blind and visually impaired people to participate in the sport of golf, promotes the game as a means of personal development and well-being, and fosters a community of care and camaraderie among its members, volunteers, and supporters.

BGC aims to promote awareness and understanding of blindness and visual impairment within the golf community and beyond, both within Canada, and internationally, and advocates for greater accessibility and inclusion for blind and visually impaired people. BGC believes that golf

can empower the blind community, which will break down barriers and create a more equitable society for its members.

## **General Provisions**

Blind Golf Canada is committed to giving back to the blind and vision impaired community and supporting all BGC members, regardless of their financial means. This commitment is at the heart of our mission and values, and is reflected in all aspects of our work.

In addition to supporting BGC members, the organization is committed to engaging with the general community. This includes increasing awareness about the sport of blind golf, attracting new members, and growing our coaching base. BGC believes that by engaging with the community-at-large, we will have a positive impact on the sport as a whole.

BGC is committed to making all documents and digital assets accessible to our blind and visually impaired membership. This includes providing documents in accessible formats, ensuring compatibility with screen reader and screen magnification assistive technology, providing large print on demand, accessible audio, with a commitment to working towards making all digital assets accessible.

BGC believes in our charitable ways, and will strive to become a registered Canadian charity that will serve our members and the blind golf community.

## **Board of Directors**

The Board of Directors is the governing body of BGC, and is responsible for the overall direction and management of the organization. The Board is made up of a group of volunteers who are elected by the members of BGC, and each Board member serves in a voluntary capacity for a 2-year period.

The Board shall consist of seven (7) members, fundamental for the governance of the organization, who will provide a framework for how BGC will function, including where need be, the authority to establish and update any bylaws, policies and procedures of the organization.

The Board shall have a fiduciary duty to the organization which requires the Board to act in good faith, and in the best interests of the organization, at all times. This includes the duty of reasonable care, the duty of loyalty and acting in the best interests of BGC and membership, the duty of obedience in accordance with the organization's missions and purposes, and the duty of disclosure of material information to ensure complete transparency and accountability.

The Board has the responsibility and obligation to keep information that is confidential in nature confidential, which may include, but is not limited to, financial information, intellectual property, documentation, private personal information, and strategies or the like. There may be exceptions to the confidentiality obligations where disclosure is required by law or for the protection of the organization.

The Board will be committed to impartiality, and will act objectively and without bias at all times. The Board will avoid any and all conflicts of interest, ensuring trust and confidence in the Board's decisions and actions. Impartiality is key to maintaining the integrity of the Board and BGC as a whole.

## **Officers**

The officers of the organization will be responsible for carrying out the organization's mission and managing its day-to-day operations. The officers are elected or appointed by the membership or the Board, and they are accountable to the membership. All officers will serve terms as specified in the BGC Bylaws.

The President is the chief Executive officer of the organization, responsible for overseeing the BGC and Board activities ensuring at all

times BGC operates in accordance with its mission and bylaws. The President, where appropriate, will also represent the organization in the community, media, and at all appropriate events or circumstances.

Vice President of Finance is responsible for the financial health of the organization, overseeing the organization's budgets and financial affairs, and ensuring, along with any other professional service providers, BGC is in compliance with all relevant laws and regulations. The Vice President of Finance chairs the organization's finance and outreach committees, governance and documentation committee, and any other committees per President or Board directive.

The Vice President of Administration will be responsible for maintaining BGC records and archives, including meeting minutes, bylaws, constitution or policies, and other important documents as deemed necessary by the Board. The VP Administration will also handle correspondence on behalf of BGC, and coordinate with other officers to ensure that the organization's business is conducted smoothly and efficiently.

All officers, executives, and Board members, past and present, shall support continuity and institutional memory for the organization, and will always act in the best interest of BGC and membership.

All officers or executives of the organization are expected to act in the best interests of the organization, the Board and shall abide by BGC bylaws and governing documents, policies, and procedures.

## **Membership**

BGC welcomes blind and visually impaired Canadian persons regardless of gender, ethnicity, age, provincial residency, or other protected characteristics deemed important by moral and ethical capacities.

Members are responsible for, but not limited to, paying their dues and/or membership on time, attending meetings called for by the Board,

respecting the rules and policies of BGC, representing the blind golf community in a positive and professional way, and upholding the missions and values of BGC.

BGC will maintain an open membership application process for annual membership, or in certain cases, lifetime membership for esteemed and recognized contributions and activities in the blind golf community. Members, at their sole discretion can renew or terminate their membership accordingly.

Members will be granted access to the organization's services and resources, and shall be treated fairly and impartially by the organization and the Board.

Events for members will be subsidized to the best of BGC's ability, with the primary intention being to host events, and to decrease all costs for our members, and coaches, and providing reasonable funding to ensure the future growth and sustainable maintenance and operation of our organization.

Golfers are encouraged to participate in the World Handicap System, and to share name, sight classification, golf handicap and score history information within that system.

## **Meetings**

General meetings, or the AGM, of BGC is a place where members can come together to collaborate, share ideas, impact decisions, and ultimately help the organization achieve its goals. These meetings will be called by the Board, or in appropriate specific circumstances recognized by the Board at its sole discretion. Board meetings will be conducted by Board members only, and may or may not include other committee chairs, invited guests, or other parties invited to attend by the Board.



Meetings will be held in places where the various members can come together to work towards the common goals of the organization, in safe spaces for open and honest communication, where everyone's ideas are respected and all voices will be heard.

Meetings will be guided and operate according to the rules and principles set out by the BGC bylaws, policies, and procedures.

## **Finances**

BGC will be responsible for managing its finances in a prudent and responsible manner, including budgeting, financial reporting, and ensuring adequate internal controls. The VP Finance, and the Board of Directors will be responsible for overseeing the financial management of the organization, and BGC is committed to the sound management of its finances.

The Board, and Executive will be transparent and accountable in its financial affairs, and will provide regular financial reports to BGC members, and any other significant, and recognized stakeholders of consequence.

BGC believes the development of a budget, the regular reporting of financial activities, and the execution of appropriate internal controls are the foundation of responsible financial activities.

The VP Finance will, with the support of the Board, oversee and direct the general financial and regulatory affairs of the organization. The VP Finance will assist in the development of financial policies and procedures, lead and support the organization's fundraising efforts, lead regulatory affairs, and shall oversee the organization's investments and endowment funds.

As finances play a pivotal role in the affairs of advocating for BGC interests with government officials, any other stakeholders, or



international organizations, both domestically and internationally, the VP Finance is expected to be involved, at the discretion of the President.

## **Committees**

Committees are an important part of the functioning of BGC. Volunteers are essential to all committees, bringing unique skills and perspectives to the table. BGC committees are open to all who wish to participate and contribute. Members may be nominated or appointed, per Board direction. Every committee must have at least two (2) Board members.

The Committees of the organization are vital to its mission and success. These committees provide support, expertise, and insight on a wide range of issues, and play a crucial role in the organization's governance.

Committees will have clear roles with salient responsibilities for each committee member, and each committee will have a clear line or lines of communication between the committees and the Board, and all updates and communications will happen on a timely basis.

Committees, like the Board, will have a system of checks and balances within their structure to ensure that no one committee, member or individual has too much power, and that decisions are made in a fair, balanced, moral, and ethical way. A system of review and evaluation of the committees will further ensure that committees are functioning effectively and meeting their objectives.

Adequate resources for the committees to do their work effectively will include, but is not limited to, funding, Board, member, internal or external support, and access to information and technology, and any other resources that may be deemed appropriate by the Board or any membership directive that is supported by no less than the majority of members, or greater, based on the bylaws of the organization.

## **Governance**

The governing body of BGC is made up of a Board of Directors, and any committees, or similar groups, that may play a role in the operations of the not-for-profit. In general, the governing body, the Board, is responsible for making decisions about the organization's strategy, finances, policies, and other important matters.

Members of the organization have the right to know about the governing body's decision-making process, and do have the right to provide input and be involved in the governance of the organization, by election or appointment of the Board, or subject to the BGC Bylaws. The entire governing body is accountable for, or to, their actions, best intentions and decisions.

The Board, and governing body or bodies, is subject to certain legal and regulatory requirements and is required to comply with all relevant laws and regulations. The organization will submit any required reports or disclosures and ensure that the organization is in good standing and is operating in accordance with its mission and values.

## **Amendments**

Membership has the ability to amend the Constitution, and the Bylaws, based on a set of procedures that must be followed, but if there is no quorum, based on the existing bylaws requirement(s), then the Board can unilaterally take action to amend the Bylaws with the interest of the members and the organization at the forefront, until such time they can be approved at the AGM.

BGC recognizes the importance of the amendment processes, to ensure that the Bylaws and governing documents are kept up to date, are relevant, and reflect the needs and wishes of the membership and the organization.

Members will have the opportunity to review and comment on any proposed amendments, new policies, and procedures, and members must be reasonably satisfied any comments have been considered by the Board before the amendments are put to a vote at the Board, or membership level.

## **Conflicts of Interest**

Conflicts of interest arise when the interests of an individual or group conflict with the interests of BGC. These conflicts can take many forms, and can create risks for the organization if they are not identified and managed appropriately. Clear guidelines will be in place to ensure that the interests of the organization are always protected, and the Board takes steps to identify and manage any conflicts.

A financial conflict of interest occurs when an individual or organization has a financial interest that could inappropriately influence their actions or decisions. Individuals must not have a questionable financial stake that would result in a profit or gain, they must not benefit financially from a particular outcome they can influence, and they must not influence an outcome to avoid personal loss.

Personal conflicts of interest may occur when an individual's personal interests could inappropriately influence, and/or impair, their decisions. Personal interests might include friendships, family, political affiliations, religious beliefs, social causes, or the like.

The BGC Board is responsible for identifying and managing conflicts of interest that arise. The board will address any reports of potential conflicts, and is committed to enacting fair and just decisions on how to resolve said conflicts. The BGC Board will consider all the information available and make a decision that is in the best interest of the organization. At all times the Board will ensure that all individuals involved are treated fairly and equitably.

## **Privacy and Data Collection**

BGC is committed to respecting the privacy and protecting the personal information of its members, volunteers, and other stakeholders. The following policies outline how BGC collects, uses, and discloses personal information. These policies are in accordance with applicable privacy laws and regulations, and reflect BGC's commitment to transparency and accountability.

BGC may collect information like name, contact information, and demographic information. Handicaps in the WHS system is public if members choose to submit. This information may be collected through membership applications, event registrations, or surveys. All members agree to provide information subject to the terms and conditions on BGC documentation, or as part of any digital assets.

Members or volunteers may access and correct their personal information, and have the right to make a formal complaint to the BGC Board if they believe their privacy rights have been violated, or to voice any concerns.

## **Indemnification**

The Board of Directors, members, coaches, volunteers, and supporters of BGC are indemnified against any claims arising from their activities in support of the organization. This includes, but is not limited to, legal claims, financial claims, and personal liability claims. This indemnification is provided in recognition of the valuable contributions, the moral and ethical commitments to making BGC a professional, and growing organization.

The scope of indemnification provided by BGC is limited to claims that are directly related to the activities of the Board of Directors, members, coaches, volunteers, and supporters. It does not cover any claims that are unrelated to the activities of blind golf, these individuals or groups, or that are the result of any individual or group negligence or misconduct.

The indemnification provided by BGC is subject to certain limitations and exclusions, which are set out in more detail in the BGC Bylaws.

BGC believes the following exclusions and limitations apply to the indemnification provided by BGC: (1) indemnification does not apply to any losses that are caused by the gross negligence or willful misconduct of the indemnified parties; (2) indemnification is limited to losses that are incurred as a direct result of the indemnified parties' involvement with BGC; and (3) indemnification does not apply to any losses that are unforeseeable or that are not reasonably related to the activities of the indemnified parties.

## **Dissolution**

The Board of Directors, with the President taking charge of the process, shall be responsible for the dissolution of the organization, and will be supported by the VP Finance and the VP Administration. Funds will be used to wrap up the affairs of the organization, and any remaining funds will be donated to other blind golf charities and/or blind sporting bodies per the direction of the outgoing Board.

BGC will communicate with members and stakeholders during this dissolution process, which includes providing clear and timely information about the process, and allowing members an opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns.

All assets and liabilities will be handled in accordance with Canadian or Ontario law. This includes, but is not limited to a fair and equitable distribution of assets, and the settlement of any outstanding debts or obligations.

The dissolution process will be conducted in an orderly and transparent manner, with the goal of ensuring total closure and the preservation of any and all BGC records and other legacy documents required.

## **Members Code of Conduct**

As an organization that values transparency and integrity, BGC acknowledges it is important that all members adhere to a Code of Conduct that outlines the expected standards of behavior.

BGC believes a Code of Conduct is essential for maintaining a respectful and professional environment for all members. BGC expects all members, its Board, and any coaches, volunteers, or partners to act with integrity and honesty, and to treat each other with respect.

Members are expected to be aware of the organization's ethical standards and expectations.

The Members Code of Conduct is as follows:

### **Professionalism and Respect**

Members are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism and respect towards fellow members, volunteers, and participants at all blind golf events. BGC will ensure a collaborative and supportive atmosphere where members uplift and encourage each other is in place and in practice.

Members must respectfully represent blind golf in the community, and act as ambassadors for the sport in a way that reflects BGC ideals, highlights diversity and inclusion and promotes the spirit of camaraderie and kinship among players and enthusiasts.

### **Fair Play and Sportsmanship**

Members shall uphold the principles of fair play, honesty, and sportsmanship.

### **Attendance and Participation**

Regular attendance and active participation in organizational activities and events are cornerstones to a fair, inclusive

community and all members are encouraged to be involved, and contribute pro-actively.

### Conflict Resolution

BGC members are encouraged to resolve conflicts in a respectful and constructive manner, promoting a harmonious, positive organization representing the blind and visually impaired community.

### Compliance with Laws and Regulations

Members must adhere to all applicable laws, federal, provincial or municipal. BGC or local regulations related to blind golf, and blind sports in general, will also be respected at all times.

### Collaboration

BGC is a philanthropic and charitable organization, and knows the importance of working with all of our members, and their different abilities and strengths. Fostering a collaborative approach, combined with a commitment to teamwork and unity, ensures all national, provincial and regional events are successful.

## Signature Page

The signatories to this document, have acted to ensure a formal record has been agreed to, and the Board, and membership, have voted on and accepted the terms of this BGC Constitution, with said Constitution enacted on this        day of February, 2024.

Gerry Nelson, President

Printed Name, Vice President