THE 103rd ARMY MATCHPLAY CHAMPIONSHIP
SAUNTON GOLF CLUB 5 – 8 JULY 2026 – ADMIN INSTRUCTION

1. General. The 103rd Army Matchplay from Sun 5 to Wed 8 Jul 26 at Saunton Golf Club (SGC), North Devon, EX33 1LG.

2. **Competitions**. On the direction of the AGA Executive Committee, the format is as follows:

a. **Main Event.** The Army Championship will be a singles scratch Matchplay event, comprising 64 players with each round played over 18 holes under R&A rules, from Mon 6 Jul 26 to Wed 8 Jul 26. Halved matches will be decided by sudden death from the 1st hole and then holes 2, 17, 18, 1 etc in that order.

b. **Pre-Qualifying Format.** To enable a larger field to enter the Championship, there will be an 18-hole pre-qualifying Matchplay competition on Sun 5 Jul 26 commencing at 1230 hrs. The event will comprise the number of players that are required to reduce the field to 64 for the main event commencing Mon 6 Jul 26. For example, a field of 91 players will require 54 entrants (27 players ranked by handicap above 64, plus the 27 players ranked 38-64) to play in the pre-qualifying event. Selection for the pre-qualifier will be based on handicap with entrants being put into a seeded order draw based on handicaps; in other words, using the example above player 38 will play player 91. The winning 27 players will go forward into the main championship.

c. **Reserve Matchplay Event.** Players losing their pre-qualifying match on Sun 5 Jul 26 will participate in a Reserve Matchplay event commencing am Tue 7 Jul 26 with the final at 1300 hrs on Wed 8 Jul 26. To qualify for this event, all players will play in a scratch Stableford event on Mon 6 Jul 26 on the West Course from 1000 hrs. The top 16 players will go forward to the Reserve Matchplay event seeded in order from the scratch scores – 1 plays 16, 2 plays 15 etc. The non-qualifiers will take part in the Stableford events on Tue 7 and Wed 8 Jul 26.

d. **Plate Competition.** Those defeated in the first round of the main championship will take part in a subsidiary Matchplay plate competition commencing pm Mon 6 Jul 26 with the final at 1330 hrs on Wed 8 Jul 26.

e. **Other Competitions.** Those players knocked out of the Matchplay events on Mon 6 Jul 26 or Reserve Matchplay non-qualifiers are eligible to play in the 18 hole handicap Stableford competition on Tue 7 Jul 26 on the West Course, together with any reserves who did not get into the Championships. In addition, those players subsequently knocked out of the Matchplay events on Tue 7 Jul 26, any reserves and golfers playing in the Inter Corps Championship are all eligible to play in the 18 Hole handicap Stableford competition on Wed 8 Jul 26 on the West Course.

f. **Programme**. The overall programme is:

- Mon 29 Jun 26 – Competitors Entry Closing Date (by 1230 hrs).
- Tue 30 Jun 26 – Competition Draws.
- Sun 5 Jul 26 – Pre-Qualifying Competition and Practice Round (East Course).
- Mon 6 Jul 26 – Championship Rounds 1 and 2, Plate Competition Round 1 (PM) on the East Course and Reserve Matchplay Qualifying event (AM) on the West Course.

- Tue 7 Jul 26 – Championship Round 3 and Quarter Final, Plate Competition Round 2 and Quarter Final, Reserve Championship Round 1 and Quarter Final on the East Course and Stableford Competition (AM) on the West Course. Evening BBQ in the Clubhouse for all competitors and officials.
- Wed 8 Jul 26 – Championship, Plate Competition and Reserve Competition Semi-Finals and Finals on the East Course and Stableford Competition (AM) on the West Course. All participants not in the finals are expected to watch the three events. There is also the 2026 AGA Annual General Meeting following the prize-giving from approximately 1830 hrs.

3. **Eligibility.** The Championship is open to all male officers and soldiers on Regular and Reserve service engagements who hold a WHS handicap and are members of the AGA. The entry fee is either £105 for the more Junior Rank Golfers (Cpls and below and 2Lts/Lts) and £120 for the remainder, which includes the practice round, all competition green fees and the BBQ. Entry forms must be submitted electronically via individuals, and both the form and payment are to be with the AGA Assistant Ops Manager by 1230 hrs on Mon 29 Jun 26.

4. **Numbers.** The Championship is limited to a total of 93 players, which is the effective number of golfers that can play on the course for each round. If numbers exceed this figure, applicants will qualify by exact handicap. The pre-qualifying event will come into being if there are more than 64 entrants. You must hold a WHS handicap to play in this event. If you are not a member of a club, you can still obtain a WHS handicap via the iGolf platform – **https://englandigolf.co.uk/.**

5. **Draw.** The draws, for both the main championship and the pre-qualifying event, will be made by 1500 hrs on Tue 30 Jun 26 at the AGA Office. For the main championship, there will be 4 seeds representing the Winner (Seed 1), Runner-up (Seed 2) and two losing semi-finalists (Seeds 3 & 4) from the 2025 Matchplay Championship; Seed 3 & 4 order will be determined by the AGA Men's Captain. If a seed is unable to play in the Championship, then the seed will not be replaced and his place taken by one of the other seeds (ie Seed 2 will replace Seed 1 etc). The remaining players, comprising non-seeded players and pre-qualifier slots, will be drawn in strict handicap order on Tue 30 Jun 26. Details of the draw will be available from the Assistant Ops Manager from 0900 hrs on Wed 1 Jul 26 and will be published on the AGA website. They will also be posted at SGC from 0900 hrs Sun 5 Jul 26.

6. **Practice Rounds.** Practice rounds for those that are not involved in the pre-qualifying event will commence at approx 1430 hrs on Sun 5 Jul 26 at 8 min intervals following the pre-qualifying competition. Practice times are to be booked in advance with the AGA Assistant Ops Manager; due to time constraints, practice will be in four-balls only from the blue tees. Players may only have one ball in play during practice rounds; dropping additional balls for practice shots is not permitted. All players are to book in and register with the tournament office at least 30 mins prior to their tee time on Sun 5 Jul 26.

7. **Etiquette**. Competitors should acknowledge club members and their rights throughout the Championship. Saunton has challenging links courses with traditional rough; players and caddies should watch ball flight closely to assist with finding errant balls and to help speed play which tournament officials will monitor. If it becomes obvious that a ball may be difficult to find, following matches **are to** be called through without delay. As normal, care must be taken to rake all bunkers and repair divots and pitch marks.

8. **Other Administrative Details**.

a. **Food.** Breakfast will be available in the clubhouse from 0645 hrs daily from Mon 6 Jul 26. Payment for food is an individual responsibility. Evening meals, for

groups, may be arranged separately with the club catering staff. There will be an informal BBQ for all players and officials on Tue 7 Jul 26 from 1930 hrs, the cost of which has been included in the entry fee.

b. **Club Dress Code.** SGC's dress code is smart/casual at all times during the day, but no jeans, trainers, collarless shirts, outdoor/waterproof clothes or shoes worn on the golf course are to be worn in the public rooms. A jacket and AGA tie will be required for evening meals after 1900 hrs and for the prize giving and AGM on Wed 8 Jul 26 golf attire may be worn.

c. **Local Accommodation**. Reasonable bed and breakfast accommodation is available locally. Details can be sought from local tourist information offices. Military accommodation may not be available at RMB Chivenor, due to an increased military occupancy. All accommodation arrangements are an individual responsibility.

9. **Travel at Public Expense.** Travel is authorised in accordance with JSP 752. Every effort must be made to minimise publicly funded travel costs by sharing vehicles.

10. **On Duty Status**. Competitors should advise their RAO to ensure that their participation in the event has been published on respective Unit Part 1 Orders, to formalise their ‘on duty’ status for this event.