

# SkyCaddie SX500 vs Garmin Approach G80

How two of the most high-tech GPS handhelds compare back-to-back

## THE DETAILS

► Price: £379.95  
[www.skycaddie.co.uk](http://www.skycaddie.co.uk)



## SKYCADDIE SX500

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### YOU NEED TO KNOW

The SX500 has a 5in full colour touch-screen, which SkyCaddie say makes the unit golf's biggest GPS display. Some 20 players on the Staysure Tour (formerly the European Seniors) have put an SX500 in their bags, instead of a laser or yardage book. Every course on the SkyCaddie database is mapped on foot, whereas competitors use aerial photography to calculate yardages. The SX500 comes with a year's membership; after this you'll need an annual subscription, which starts from £29.95 (nationwide courses) and rises to £44.95 (worldwide courses).

### DISPLAY: 10/10

The SkyCaddie has the biggest HD screen of any GPS system we've ever used, just 0.5in shy of an iPhone 8 Plus, so there's plenty of space to see hole layouts, but some might think it's a little too big to slip discreetly into a trouser pocket. The screen is every bit as responsive as a smartphone, too; it's bright with clear graphics and thanks to the extra size we had no difficulty clicking on icons or buttons, which can get really annoying on smaller devices, even wearing a golf glove.

### YARDAGES: 10/10

Yes, other GPS systems offer the ability to position the flag on the green (the Garmin does) and see run-outs to hazards, but it's how the SX500 automatically works out not only how far your perfect lay-up is away, but also the distance it leaves into the pin too (and front and back edge of the greens), that puts it on a different level. It also shows how much space is in front and behind the flag and to both sides of the green – it's like having a professional caddie in your pocket, calling out distances! All without the hassle of trying to lock onto a target while using a laser or work out any calculations in your head. We can see why pros feel there are benefits over a laser; right now you won't find more in-depth yardage info anywhere.

### TECH: 10/10

We admire SkyCaddie for getting out and mapping every course on their database, and the extra knowledge comes through in improved shapes of greens and hazards when compared side by side with the Garmin. The SX500 has a built-in 13MP



camera so you can snap and share pictures from your round, and the list of features is endless. We like how IntelliGreen Pro shows major green tiers and contours, just like a Tour pro's yardage book. It means golfers can make an informed decision before hitting a shot. And the Dynamic Rangeview (with club ranges) shows multiple yardage arcs across a hole, along with which clubs you hit to each distance, which makes for some simple and accurate club selection.

### DESIRABILITY: 7/10

What do we mean by desirability? Well, who needs one? And who really should be using one? SkyCaddie would argue everybody should have one, of course, but we reckon some golfers would be bamboozled by the amount of info the SX500 has to offer. Serious golfers are the target market and they'll appreciate everything the SX500 has to offer. That might be golfers currently using a laser, or golfers who've tried GPS before, but felt it wasn't quite as useful or as accurate as a laser for scoring. Just remember, though, that after the first year you'll need to pay a subscription to get this level of course detail.

### VERDICT: 37/40

This is hands-down the best GPS we've ever used. The SX500 can do things a laser never will, and for us that makes it a brilliant piece of kit. It's pricey, but it's so clever and we can see why, for the first time, pros are seriously looking at GPS as a way to replace their trusted lasers. Thanks to its size, the SX500 will probably be better attached to a trolley or kept in a bag pocket, like a laser. But if you put a premium on knowing the exact distance to the flag, or anything else on the golf course for that matter, we don't think you'll find a better device for doing it in 2019.