

Late has its limits

Among the changes to the rules beginning in 2012 is a revision of the penalty when a player fails to get to the first tee on schedule

Over the last several months, the CDGA Rules Education Committee has focused on Rules of Golf changes that took effect Jan. 1. Each article in *Chicago District Golfer* has concentrated on a particular rule: 13-4, 18-2, and 12-1.

However there are several other changes that took effect that are equally important, including: time of starting; exerting influence on movement of ball or altering physical conditions; a new Appendix IV to the Rules of Golf; and Rules of Amateur Status.

The change in Rule 6-3a (Time of Starting) reflects language that in prior years was covered in the Conditions of the Competition section in Appendix I. Committees normally adopted this condition and so the verbiage of this change is familiar to most competitive players. The breach of Rule 6-3 now states that if a player arrives at the teeing ground within five minutes of the official starting time, he will still be able to play the stipulated round. The penalty will be two strokes in stroke play or, in match play, loss of the first hole. However, after the five minutes has passed from the starting time, the player is disqualified.

Rule 1 very succinctly states how the game is played: what happens if you exert influence on the movement of the ball or alter physical conditions; consequences of agreeing to waive the Rules; and how to proceed when something happens that is not covered by the Rules.

The second section of this rule states that “if a player intentionally takes an action to influence the movement of a ball or to alter physical



conditions affecting the playing of a hole in a way that is not permitted by the Rules”, then that player is going to be penalized . . . and possibly disqualified. If a player takes an action that is already covered in another rule, that other rule prevails, such as accidentally moving your ball. However, if the action is not covered by another rule, then this section of Rule 1 applies.

For example, a player’s ball lies through the green. He plays a pitch shot up a slope. He sees the ball start to roll back toward him. He places his club in front of the ball and stops it. Obviously, the player purposely stopped the ball; he didn’t accidentally stop the ball. He will incur a penalty under Rule 1-2.

A new Appendix IV discusses two things: other equipment, such as tees, shoes and clothes, and devices.

It is in this second section where the ruling bodies have put forth their position on the distance measuring devices. First, they have reaffirmed

that distance devices cannot be used unless the Committee adopts the Local Rule to that effect. And when the Local Rule has been adopted, the device can measure only distance. For example, if a player has a smartphone with an app for measuring distance, then this smartphone must not contain any other feature, such as apps for weather or a compass that, while playing, would allow you to use the phone in some manner that could affect your play.

For example, a weather app would tell temperature and a compass could tell you wind direction. Obviously, this ruling body position will prevent using nearly all smartphones as distance devices during a stipulated round, when the Local Rule has been adopted.

Finally, the book now contains the Rules of Amateur Status, and it’s a very interesting section to read. We all have met individuals that at one time were a professional and have been reinstated to amateur status. The process of amateur reinstatement is included in this section, which also discusses the limitations that are placed on amateur golfers and how these limitations, including financial, prevent a detrimental impact on the integrity of the game.

One paragraph is worth repeating. “Through appropriate limits and restrictions, the Rules (of Amateur Status) are intended to encourage amateur golfers to focus on the game’s challenges and inherent reward, rather than any financial gain.”

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