

GOLF INTERPRETATIONS

REVISIONS TO USGA RULES FOR 2012

- ADDRESSING THE BALL** The definition is amended so that a player has addressed the ball simply by grounding his club immediately in front of or behind the ball, regardless of whether or not he has taken his stance. Therefore, the Rules generally no longer provide for a player addressing the ball in a hazard. (See also related change to Rule 18-2b)
- Rule 1-2** The Rule is amended to establish more clearly 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, Rule 1-2 applies only when the action is not already covered in another Rule. For example, a player improving the lie of his ball is in breach of Rule 13-2 and therefore that Rule would apply, whereas a player intentionally improving the lie of a fellow-competitor's ball is not a situation covered by Rule 13-2 and, therefore, is governed by Rule 1-2.
- Rule 6-3a** Rule 6-3a is amended to provide that the penalty for starting late, but within five minutes of the starting time, is reduced from disqualification to loss of the first hole in match play or two strokes at the first hole in stroke play. Previously this penalty reduction could be introduced as a condition of competition.
- Rule 12-1** Rule 12-1 is reformatted for clarity. In addition, it is amended to (i) permit a player to search for his ball anywhere on the course when it may be covered by sand and to clarify that there is no penalty if the ball is moved in three circumstances, and (ii) apply a penalty of one stroke under Rule 18-2a if a player moves his ball in a hazard when searching for it when it is believed to be covered by loose impediments.
- Rule 13-4** Exception 2 to Rule 13-4 is amended to permit a player to smooth sand or soil in a hazard at any time, including before playing from that hazard, provided it is for the sole purpose of caring for the course and Rule 13-2 is not breached.
- Rule 18-2b** A new Exception is added that exonerates the player from penalty if his ball moves after it has been addressed when it is known or virtually certain that he did not cause the ball to move. For example, if it is a gust of wind that moves the ball after it has been addressed, there is no penalty and the ball is played from its new position.
- Rule 19-1** The note is expanded to prescribe the various outcomes when a ball in motion has been deliberately deflected or stopped by an outside agency.
- Rule 20-7c** Note 3 is amended so that if a player is to be penalized for playing from a wrong place, in most cases the penalty will be limited to two strokes, even if another Rule has been breached prior to his making the stroke.

GROUP SCORING

- QUESTION:** What do you mean by Player "A" has to use Player "D's" scorecard when officially scoring his/her group?

INTERPRETATION: Player A is not allowed to score his/her own round; consequently, Player A has to use the scorecard of another player in order to score the round for each player and be the official scorer for that group.

QUESTION: **Should every player now score all players in their group?**

INTERPRETATION: Yes, each player needs to keep track of the scores for all the other players in their group. This group scoring method is proving to help prevent mistakes in scoring and scoring problems.

Coaching During Meets

QUESTION: **While a player is at address on the tee box, can a coach tell the player to “aim left?”**

INTERPRETATION: Yes, a coach is allowed to provide instruction while a player is at address. Strategic advise like “aim left” is allowed.

Coaches are not able to “align” players while they are at address. This includes moving them to the proper alignment.

QUESTION: **Are coaches now allowed to go on the tee box at any time?**

INTERPRETATION: WIAA coaching regulations have now been rewritten and coaches are allowed to be on the tee box at any time.

QUESTION: **Can a coach stand behind a player and help them with their alignment or are coaches in violation of USGA Rule 14-2b?**

INTERPRETATION: Coaches are allowed to help line them up. Obviously, coaches then have to move off the line before they initiate the swing. This is just like how a caddy helps the player line up. You see this quite a bit on the LPGA tour.

Rule 14-2b actually doesn't prohibit a coach from doing this. It does refer to "assistance", but "In making a stroke." So as long as the coach is off the intended line of play once the player begins the stroke, there is no problem.

QUESTION: **Can coaches hold an umbrella over a player when it is either raining or very sunny?**

INTERPRETATION: Umbrellas - again similar to a caddy. We can hold the umbrella while they are getting ready to play the shot - ex. Putting the tee in the ground, lining up a putt, etc. But we then have to get out of there as they play the shot ("in making a stroke").

QUESTION: **What are the regulations about coaches providing advice to players around the greens?**

INTERPRETATION: The new regulation allowing one designated coach to coach during a competition prevents a coach from going onto a green during the competition. This new regulation also prevents coaches from aligning players while the player is at address nor delay Pace of Play in any way. Coaches are allowed to provide advice to players while remaining off the green. This allows players to go to their coach, off the green to seek advice (without delaying pace of play) or for a coach to provide verbal information to a player from off the green.

GOLF COACHING ON THE COURSE REGULATION

- QUESTION:** With the WIAA Coaching regulation, can a coach walk down the fairways with their golfers?
- INTERPRETATION:** Yes, it is allowable for a coach to walk down a fairway with a player. This can be done as long as play is not delayed in any way and the coach remains out of any bunkers and does not go on the greens during the meet.
- QUESTION:** Can a coach have an electronic measuring device and walk down the fairway with one of their players?
- INTERPRETATION:** Yes, walking down the fairway with a player and the coach possessing an electronic measuring device is allowed. Coaches are allowed to do so and are allowed to relay information to players.
- Spectators are allowed to carry and use electronic measuring devices, but may only relay yardage information to coaches. Spectators are not allowed to provide any type of information to players during a competition.
- QUESTION:** Can electronic measuring devices have slope and other instruments on them?
- INTERPRETATION:** No, USGA Decisions on the Rules of Golf, Appendix IV, 5., page 162, the following wording is used for WIAA competition, "During a stipulated round, the use of any distance-measuring device is not permitted unless the Committee has introduced a Local Rule to that effect (WIAA Season Regulations identify the allowance for use of EMDs). Even when the Local Rule is in effect, the device must be limited to measuring distance only. Features that would render use of the device contrary to the Local Rule include, but are not limited to: the gauging or measuring of slope; the gauging or measuring of other conditions that might affect play (e.g., wind speed or direction, or other climate-based information such as temperature, humidity, etc.); recommendations that might assist the player in making a stroke or in his play (e.g., club selection, type of shot to be played, green reading or any other advice related matter); or calculating the effective distance between two points based on slope or other conditions affecting shot distance."
- Be reminded that WIAA Regulations do not allow the use of communication devices (i.e., cell phones, smartphones, ipads, etc.) per 15., k., page 15 of the WIAA Spring Season Regulations.
- QUESTION:** Can a coach provide yardage (distance) information to an opponent?
- INTERPRETATION:** Yes, USGA definitions of advice have been modified to allow the exchange of information on distance, as it is not considered to be "advice."
- QUESTION:** Can a coach holler to a player on the green the break of a putt?
- INTERPRETATION:** Yes, a coach can holler to a player the break of a putt; however, appropriate golf etiquette needs to be maintained so other players are not disturbed and appropriate pace of play is maintained.
- QUESTION:** If a JV team is playing in an invite including varsity teams, would they be subject to the varsity coaching rule or the JV coaching rule or should it be up to the discretion of the tournament director?
- INTERPRETATION:** In accordance with the WIAA Adaptation to USGA rules, letter f., coaching contact/instruction is allowed at all levels of play.
- QUESTION:** With the rule allowing coaches to coach during the play of a hole I am concerned with pace of play issues. If the group has a coach who slows play by advising his player on most of his shots should the player be penalized 2

strokes or should the two strokes be added to the team total? In the past the four players in the group are penalized. If the slow play is the fault of the coach it does not seem right for the whole group to be penalized. From what I have seen in the past this could be a major problem.

INTERPRETATION:

WIAA Pace of Play now has an individual component that requires groups that are behind to play shots in 40 seconds or less. This allows for individual players to be analyzed for their pace in addition to reviewing the group's pace. Please review WIAA Pace of Play regulations as found on the Golf page of the WIAA website.

Out-Of-Season Coaching Contact

QUESTION:

I would like to take my girl golfers to a clinic that is being held during the school year, but outside of the WIAA Girls Golf season. Can I drive them to this clinic?

INTERPRETATION:

No, WIAA Rules at a Glance are the best place to find language that addresses this matter. Under I. it indicates that "Coaches may not have coaching contact with any athletes they will be coaching the following school season during restricted times (except their own children).

Interpretations regarding the transportation of students have always indicated this to be coaching contact that is not allowed unless it is a coach's child.

Spring Trips

QUESTION:

Last night I was approached by a parent of one of our golf team members about supporting a team golf trip during our Spring Break.

His proposal is to help pay for transportation (gas) to get our Boys Golf Team to a destination in southern Illinois or Indiana to golf during our nonschool break.

It would be optional and if need be, offered to other students as well. We would use school vans and employees (boys coaches) to drive. Housing, food and the green fees would be the individual's responsibility.

Please let me or my Athletic Director know as soon as possible if this is doable. If so, what stipulations must be met, in order to do so legally or with WIAA consent.

INTERPRETATION:

The WIAA does not have any language that prevents a trip of this sort from taking place. Local school regulations and policies will need to be reviewed to determine if trips of this sort are allowed by the school district.

Please keep in mind that WIAA school golf programs may not scrimmage any other school teams and are now only allowed one out-of-state competition unless the meet is in a bordering state (MN, IL, MI, and IA).

Since the first day of practice for the WIAA Boys Golf season is March 26, 2012, a trip that leaves on this day allows coach and student-athletes to travel together and for the coach to begin working with student-athletes on this day. Coaching contact is not allowed any earlier than March 26, 2012. It can be offered to any

student and since this is the first day of the golf season be offered to all golfers interested in going out for the golf team.

Regarding fundraising or a donation for the trip, this can be done. However, the funds need to be provided to the school administration and accepted through the School District's donation protocol. This will likely require the acceptance/approval of the Board of Education prior to the trip.

Since the school is providing transportation vehicles and employees, this is considered a school function/trip. All school district regulations will need to be applied and followed.

In most cases, spring trips are made to courses where meets are not held during the regular season; consequently, coaches and players can practice at these sites without identifying them as home courses.

Practice at Regional Sites

QUESTION: **Are school golf teams allowed to have a practice at the regional site this year without having it count towards one of their meet maximums?**

INTERPRETATION: No, the request by the WIAA Golf Coaches Advisory Committee to allow a practice by each school team at a regional site has been denied. An additional meet has been added beginning in the fall of 2010 for the girls and in the spring of 2011 for the boys so long as one meet is scheduled on a Saturday during the regular season. The numerous opportunities that student-athletes have to go to this course on their own, with a parent, relative or friends, with their coach (so long as it is counted as one meet), the potential loss of school time and competitive opportunities in scheduled meets during the regular season have been cited as rational for not allowing this practice session.

Attire

QUESTION: **Can mock turtleneck shirts be worn during the golf season?**

INTERPRETATION: Yes, the WIAA does allow school golf teams to wear mock turtleneck shirts so long as the school administration has approved of them as a school uniform. The collar rule is a local rule at each golf course. Almost all courses are approving of the wearing of mock turtlenecks. High School Coaches are advised to check with their home courses to ensure the wearing of mock turtlenecks is allowed during practice and competition.

Jr. High Students on High School Teams

QUESTION: **Hypothetically speaking, is it possible for a middle schooler (6-8th grade student) to compete with our frosh team?**

INTERPRETATION: No, at the 2007 WIAA Annual Meeting a regulation was adopted allowing 9th graders to compete on 8th grade teams. A waiver no longer exists allowing Middle School/Jr. High School students to compete at any level of the high school sport team.

Home Golf Courses

QUESTION: Please explain the process we go through to list three golf courses as our home course.

INTERPRETATION: Each WIAA golf school program is now allowed to designate up to three course(s) at their “home course(s)” for each golf season. These course(s) should be approved by the school administration, within approximately 25 miles of the school and be courses that will be used for practice and competition.

This regulation began years ago as the Wisconsin Athletic Directors Association asked to have more than one course to requests they were receiving from courses within their communities.

Practice Facilities

QUESTION: Our Country Club did some remodeling of the course and they will not have a putting green. The golf rules state that you can't play on any part of the course before meets. I was wondering if we can use a hole (#10 for 9 hole competitions) or 2 (#4 and #16 for the JV Invite) as practice greens on the day of competitions this season only?

INTERPRETATION: You are correct, USGA Rule 7-1 b., indicates before a round or play-off on any day of a stroke-play competition, a competitor must not practice on the competition course or test the surface of any putting green on the course by rolling a ball or roughening or scraping the surface.

However, USGA Rule 33-2 c., also reads--Where there is no practice ground available outside the area of the competition course, the Committee should establish the area on which players may practice on any day of a competition, it is practicable to do so. On any day of a stroke play competition, the Committee should not normally permit practice on or to a putting green or from a hazard of the competition course.

Your Head Coach will want to address this matter with coaches and/or a selected committee for each home meet. If there are some practice greens, a driving range or other golf facilities near by, they are the best options if no other practice areas are available at this course.

Starting a Girl's Golf Team

QUESTION: We have one girl's golf player whose parent would like her to be able to participate in the state golf tournament series. I told him that yes an individual could participate, was I correct in saying that? Also, I remember an email that said if you are new to a fall sport, you must let the WIAA know that you will be participating in that sport by Feb. 1, so I'm assuming whether we have one individual player or a team for girls golf 2009, we need to let your office know? Do I need any special form, or signature from some one on my end for that to happen?

INTERPRETATION: First of all, the deadline for new girl's golf programs to apply for tournament participation is February 1 (The Boy's Application period ends April 1) . The forms can be found on the WIAA website <<wiaawi.org>> in the FORMS FOR

DOWNLOAD file. These forms do require the signature of an Authorized Administrator.

There have been some school golf teams that have been able to operate a team with just one player. Although it can be difficult to schedule meets, some coaches and Athletic Directors will allow individuals to compete in their tournaments. WIAA Season Regulations do require a school team to compete in at least four (4) meets during the regular season in order to be eligible for the WIAA tournament series. So long as the application is sent to the WIAA office on time and this regulation is met, school golf teams with less than five players are allowed to compete in the WIAA tournament series.

Amateur Status

QUESTION:

I have a question for you regarding boy's high school golf. My question is, our coach is interested in enrolling the team in the Taylor Made purchase program, to purchase clothing, bags....ect..ect....at reduced rates. My question is this, I know, being a former varsity golf coach myself that there used to be issues with these purchasing programs in regard to amateur status...ect..ect...so I guess my question is this, are we okay to proceed with this purchase program, or will this affect our athletes eligibility and amateur status?

INTERPRETATION:

The fundamental issue regarding the use of any purchase program is that student-athletes, golfers in this case, cannot receive discounts when they purchase apparel and/or equipment because they are members of a team. Article IV—Amateur Status, Section 1—Loss of Eligibility, A., in the WIAA Senior High School Handbook indicates . . . he/she shall become ineligible for all further participation in the school's interscholastic program if he/she: 1) Accepts reimbursement, in any form (a) salary, (b) cash, (c) merchandise of any kind or amount or (d) share of game or season proceeds, for achievement in athletics.

If schools feel it is in their best interest to purchase attire or equipment through a purchase program, they may do so. Coaches and/or Athletic Directors are allowed to purchase these items as school representatives utilizing school funds and then provide them to their golf teams.

Typically we similarly address shoe discounts issues and inform that they must be available to any/every student interested in having the benefit of a reduced price on shoes. "A benefit may not be based on performance/achievement/potential - as an athlete." Any student who wishes to "go out" for a program should have access to a discount. These purchase programs are similar to shoe purchases where as long as the offer to purchase is made to the entire student body and/or all students have the opportunity to go out for the golf team, it is OK for golfers to purchase merchandise from them.

If the purchase program allows only school golf teams or only the "varsity golfers" to purchase equipment, attire, supplies, etc. at a discounted rate then there is a problem.

If the A.D./coach wishes to use the school golf budget, donated funds, funds from a booster club, etc., to purchase merchandise through a purchasing program (and the program will allow you to do so) that is OK to do as well.

QUESTION: Two local golf teaching instructors are offering a clinic for coaches and athletes. They have indicated that the athletes and the coaches can get a special price. I assume special price isn't allowable for athletes unless they provide/open this price to all interested attendees.

INTERPRETATION: So long as 'every kid in school can go out for your golf team...and so long as every kid who **goes out for golf** can get this discount – in a manner of speaking/interpreting – the 'benefit' **IS** available to any/every kid in school. They just need to go out for golf to get it. (same interp as for 'shoe discounts' and the like)

If the discount were only available to 'varsity players' e.g., - a problem. Now it's a **'performance based benefit'**, only available if I make varsity...and as such, an amateur status problem.

Be mindful of coaching contact restrictions. If this affair takes place once the school season is underway, no problem at all. If held prior to the start of the season, would recommend different time slots for students and adults.

QUESTION: I just had 3 golfers from our school ask me about going to Australia to golf for an organization called Down Under Sports. They would have to raise money for travel, hotel and food.

Is this a WIAA sponsored activity and it is legal for these students to attend?

INTERPRETATION: This is likely a promotion being offered by a travel agency somewhere in the U.S. This is similar to a football player going to Europe of Australia for an All-Star game.

This is not a WIAA activity. I will need to review the materials you have been provided.

First questions for you includes: Does your School District have any policies pertaining to fundraising for events like this? Do you wish to allow student-athletes to miss school? Keep in mind that if allowed in this situation, you will probably have to allow for all other requests.

Also keep in mind, if the tour is during the golf season, golfers may not participate in non-school events during the season.

Golf Carts for Spectators

QUESTION: I have a parent with a disability and would like to be able to ride a cart while watching his son participate this spring. Does he need special permission to do so from our conference, tournament directors (invitationals etc.)?

I realize the form must be submitted for State competition, does that include regional/sectional competition?

Please advise on the proper procedures for us to follow.

INTERPRETATION: During the regular season, WIAA member school golf programs are allowed to determine whether or not they allow carts on the course and who is allowed to use carts.

It is during the WIAA tournament season (Regional, Sectionals & State Meets) where the WIAA spectator cart use policy takes effect. If a spectator provides a WI Disabilities Drivers License, they are allowed to rent a cart. I would encourage a similar policy be used by WIAA member schools and conferences during the regular season.

Girls on Boy's Golf Teams

QUESTION: Any special WIAA regulations concerning girls playing on the boys team?

INTERPRETATION: When a girl's team is not available in any sport, girls are allowed to participate on the boy's team.

In golf, we also have a WIAA regulation that provides girls with a 15% benefit in distance. WIAA Season Regulation 15., i., indicates during the regular season and the WIAA tournament series, host schools must relocate as many forward and men's tees as necessary to create a women's length course that is approximately 15% shorter than the men's length course.

Maximum Number of Meets

QUESTION: In the golf section of the spring handbook, it says 14 meets allow, but does not specify for what levels. Does that mean 14 varsity meets, or 14 combined (JV & Varsity)?

So, can I schedule 14 Varsity meets and 14 JV meets, as long as each individual golfer does not play in more than 14 events?

INTERPRETATION: To answer all your questions—Yes, you are correct. Varsity golf can schedule and play 14 meets during the regular season. JV golf can do the same. Golfers that are moved from varsity to JV, the coaches must keep track so that they do not exceed their Individual Participation Limit of 14 meets.