

GOLF INTERPRETATIONS—Questions from Sport Meeting Video

Welcome to the 2011-12 WIAA Golf season. Once again, there is great anticipation for the WIAA Girls Golf Tournament this fall as well as for the WIAA Boys Golf Tournament in the spring of 2012.

Below you will find a number of situations and interpretations that have come my way during the summer months. I hope the explanations provided will provide assistance to coaches understanding of WIAA and USGA regulations. If I can be of assistance, please feel free to call me at (715) 344-8580 or via email at tshafranski@wiaawi.org.

All the best to each and every school golf program during the 2011-12 school year.

SCHOOL ATHLETIC CODE, RULES OF ELIGIBILITY AND PHYSICALS

QUESTION: Can a player start practice without turning in a WIAA physical form?

INTERPRETATION: No, WIAA Sr. High School Handbook, Rules of Eligibility, Article VII—Health and Behavior, Section 1—Physical Examination, page 39, A student may not practice for or participate in interscholastic athletics until the school has written evidence on file in its office attesting to (a) parental permission each school year including an acknowledgement of receiving the school athletic code and WIAA Rules of Eligibility, and (b) current physical fitness to participate in sports as determined by a licensed physician or Advanced Practice Nurse Prescriber (APNP) no less than every other school year with April 1 the earliest date of examination. School policy determines when an athlete may return to competition following an injury, except where rulebook or WIAA tournament policies apply.

Note: It is recommended that a student also have dental fitness attested by a licensed dentist.

--Physical examination taken April 1 and thereafter is valid for the following two school years; physical examination taken before April 1 is valid only for remainder of that school year and following school year.

QUESTION: Does a foreign exchange student now have to have a physical from a physician here in the United States?

INTERPRETATION: Yes, WIAA Rules of Eligibility now indicate the following in Article II, Section 4, A., Note 2: All foreign students must have a physical conducted in the United States prior to participating in practice or competition.

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. Devices used by coaches may not include gauges or other conditions that might affect play (e.g., gradient, wind speed, temperature, etc.).

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 I, 9., page 514, the following wording is used for WIAA competition, “a player may obtain distance information by using a device that measures distance only. If, during a stipulated round, a player uses a distance-measuring device that is designed to gauge or measure other conditions that might affect his play (e.g., gradient, wind speed, temperature, etc.), the player is in breach of Rule 14-3, for which the penalty is disqualification, regardless of whether any such additional function is actually used.”

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

INTERPRETATION: The 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.

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 without stepping onto the green; however, appropriate golf etiquette needs to be maintained so as 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. One designated coach for each varsity team and one designated coach for each JV team is allowed.

QUESTION: **With the new 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: Keep in mind that pace of play requires both a time limitation and a continuous flow where a group of players get more than a hole behind the group in front of them.

WIAA Spring Season Regulations, Boys Golf, page 15, 15., g., indicates, "Host schools must determine an appropriate length of time to play the course. Each host manager must mark the starting time on a designated card for each group, with one card marked per group. The recommended amount of time is two hours and 15 minutes for nine holes and four hours and 30 minutes for 18 holes. First violation – warning; second violation – a one-stroke penalty will be assessed to groups that do not meet the pace of play limits." If a group is behind in time and more than a hole behind the group in front of them then the penalty for delay is a group penalty on the players in that group.

Also, please review additional information found on the School Center regarding Pace of Play regulations in the PACE OF PLAY SUMMARY. Here you will find the appeal process that can be used if a penalty is assessed and it is only one individual or a couple of individuals/coaches in a group who have caused the delays: "If a player or players feel an individual or individuals are responsible for the group's penalty/penalties under this structure and would like the

Meet Management to consider waiving the penalty/penalties, the player or players must make an appeal to the Meet Director/Tournament Director or the Senior Rules Official prior to leaving the scoring area.

SUMMERTIME CONTACT

QUESTION:

I help coach the local High School boy's golf team and I'm also a PGA Golf Professional. My situation is that I've got a couple of our student athletes wanting lessons from me throughout the summer and I'm wondering what the rules and regulations are with the WIAA in regards to teaching these high school golfers as I do not wish to violate any policy.

INTERPRETATION:

WIAA High School Rules at a Glance are perhaps the best language to answer your question. Your Athletic Director will have this document. Golf coaches who will be coaching high school student-athletes next year are allowed to have contact with these student athletes during the summertime period (until school starts in the fall). Then they must cease and desist from contact/instruction (except for their own children).

NON-SCHOOL PARTICIPATION

QUESTION:

Just wanted to be sure about this one: One of my players may participate in the final Wisconsin PGA event on Aug. 11 and 12 and then join the team at an event on Aug. 15 so long as she does not practice with the team prior to the event on Aug. 14. Is this correct?

INTERPRETATION:

Page 37 of the WIAA Sr. High School Handbook, Article VI, Section 1, 2), provides the language you seek: "A student who was a member of a school team in a given sport during the previous year may not delay reporting for the school team beyond the school's official opening day of practice in order to continue non-school training or competition, except in the fall-sponsored sports of tennis, golf, and swimming, provided the delay does not extend beyond the first interscholastic meet."

You are correct, she is not allowed to practice with the team until she has officially reported to the golf team. Once she reports, then she must cease and desist from participating in non-school events.

So long as this golfer reports prior to the first meet of the DCE girls swimming season (JV and/or Varsity), she is allowed to do so without filing any paperwork with our office. If she is to report following your first meet, please see Mr. Smith. He knows how to get in touch with my office for review of these matters.

Also, please remind your player of WIAA Amateur status regulations as found on page 34-35 of the WIAA Sr. High School

Handbook. Golf, perhaps more than any other sport, creates potential jeopardy of student-athletes eligibility. Remind her she may only accept prizes like trophies, plaques, medals, and other items of no intrinsic/utilitarian value. Student-athletes are not able to accept such merchandise items like shirts, equipment, gift certificates, merchandise, e.g., regardless of their value.

QUESTION:

A recently graduated student from our high school died unexpectedly from a previously unknown heart condition. That student was a soccer player at our high school when he was in school. Some of the soccer/golf players who graduated with him are organizing a golf outing on August 15, 2009, to raise money to purchase a permanent scoreboard for our high school soccer field. I am interested in playing in this golf tournament, and I am sure that some of my high school golfers will also play in it, as many of them played soccer with the aforementioned student. I have already spoken to the organizer of the event and made sure that my high school golfers do not receive any prizes from the event – first question, do prizes from a raffle count in this prohibition, as I am sure they will have a raffle at the conclusion of the event.

Second question – can I (as their high school coach) participate in this event? I will not be on any of my players' team – my team would consist of myself, my wife, our district administrator, and a board member (who is a parent of one of my players).

INTERPRETATION:

Let's begin with August 15 is the summertime period. This allows coaches to have contact with the student-athletes they are already or will be working with during the coming school year. The only two sports where a coach could not be involved are basketball and ice hockey. You don't have ice hockey, so it is only the basketball coaches who would be in violation of WIAA contact regulations should they participate. To answer your second question, yes, you can participate and so can your players because you are in season on August 15. Soccer and Cross Country student-athletes and coaches can also participate because they are allowed restricted contact throughout the summertime period.

All of your student-athletes are able to participate if they wish. However, the bigger issue is what can they accept—here's the answers:

1. Student-athletes with remaining high school eligibility can accept entry gifts that everyone who enters receives.
2. Student-athletes can also accept trophies, plaques, medals, ribbons, or other items with no intrinsic/utilitarian value as found on page 35 of the WIAA Sr. High School Handbook.

3. Yes, to answer your question, student-athletes can also accept prizes from a raffle.

I advise having any student-athletes that participates in the event to write on the entry form that they are “going to participate in the outing, but cannot accept any prizes of value as identified in the WIAA Amateur Status regulations” on page 35 of the WIAA Sr. High School Handbook. This helps inform organizers of players that can and cannot accept prizes without jeopardizing their high school careers.

You may have additional questions come your way regarding this event, student-athletes participating and amateur status situations. Please feel free to write or call me on each of them. Whenever golf events of this nature are organized, we will regularly find the eligibility of student-athletes being jeopardized. I am always glad to provide you with the interpretations to these questions.

QUESTION:

**I have a young lady that would like to play in a golf league this summer with her brother (A couple's league).
Is she able to do this up to the start of girls' golf on August 8?**

INTERPRETATION:

Yes, WIAA regulations do not prevent girls or boys from competing in non-school competitions during the summertime period. Once she reports to the school team on August 8, she must cease and desist from participating in the league and any other non-school competitions.

Also, since golf is probably the sport where there are more occasions of student-athletes violating Amateur Status regulations, a friendly reminder that she is not able to accept any prizes, gift certificates, cash, etc., except that which is identified in the Amateur Status regulations found on page 34-35 of the WIAA Sr. High School Handbook.

QUESTION:

I have a golfer who has played in a golf invite in the past. This year's event takes place during the first week of practice for girls' golf. Can she play in this event without losing her eligibility?

INTERPRETATION:

Yes, girls are able to compete in a non-school event during the first week of the golf season. However, they may not report to practice until after they have completed non-school competition and the non-school event must be prior to the first school meet of the season. Girls must report to their school team prior to the first scheduled meet of the school season.

QUESTION:

I have a girl golfer who would like to participate in her club championship. It is held in September, obviously right in the middle of our season. Can she compete?

INTERPRETATION: No, WIAA Nonschool Participation regulations as found in the WIAA Sr. High School Handbook, Rules of Eligibility, Article VI, pg. 37, indicate that it is the philosophy of this Association that a student owes loyalty and allegiance to the school and team of which he/she is a member during the season of a given sport. A student becomes ineligible in a sport for the remainder of the season for competing in nonschool game, meet or contest in the same sport during the season of practice and competition established by the school.

A local club championship does not meet the criteria required for a waiver to be granted.

QUESTION: **Can girls participate in the junior club championship at our golf club after reporting to the school golf team?**

INTERPRETATION: No, once girls have reported for practice or the first interscholastic meet of the girl's fall season is held, they are no longer eligible to participate in club championships or any non-school events. I encourage high school coaches to talk with local PGA professionals and other junior tournament organizers about scheduling their events prior to the start of the girl's school golf season.

QUESTION: **Can my daughter participate in a fundraising golf outing for our athletic department on Sunday, August 21?**

INTERPRETATION: Not if she wishes to maintain her WIAA eligibility for the remainder of the 2011 WIAA Girl's Golf season. WIAA Sr. High School Handbook (page 37) indicates the following: "It is the philosophy of this Association that a student owes loyalty and allegiance to the school and team of which he/she is a member during the season of a given sport. A student becomes ineligible in a sport for the remainder of the season for competing in non-school game, meet, or contest in the same sport during the season of practice and competition established by the school."

AMATEUR STATUS

QUESTION: **We are hosting our annual golf fundraiser and I want to make sure I'm following the rules correctly. We will be having some of our high school players playing with family and friends. As I understand it, they cannot win any hole contests or be part of a winning team that accepts prizes. If they are on a team that wins, is their entire group ineligible from winning prizes or can the high school player not accept the prize and the others can accept theirs?**

We also have raffle items that aren't connected to any golfing performance. They are door prizes and people can purchase additional raffle tickets. Am I right to assume that high school players can win raffle items since it's not tied to golfing ability?

INTEPRETATION: Student-athletes with remaining eligibility should always indicate on the entry form for a tournament that “they are willing to play in the event; however, they and their teammates will not accept any prizes except those intrinsic prizes allowed by WIAA regulations.” WIAA Sr. High School Handbook indicate: “B. A student shall be determined to be in violation if he/she: 1) Accepts, receives and/or directs to another, reimbursement or award in any form of (a) salary, (b) cash, c) merchandise of any kind or amount or (d) share of game or season proceeds, for achievement in athletics.”

QUESTION: **I am writing to inquire if it is permissible for the XXX Golf Tournament to donate my son's winnings for 2nd place in C flight (\$50 in merchandise) to another organization, specifically, the YYY H.S. Golf Team?**

INTERPRETATION: No, Amateur Status regulations do not allow student-athletes to accept/receive or direct inappropriate gifts like gift certificates for merchandise. A student-athlete is not able to donate these funds to any organization. WIAA rules as found on page 35 of the WIAA Sr. High School Handbook indicate: “B. A student shall be determined to be in violation if he/she: 1) Accepts, receives and/or directs to another, reimbursement or award in any form of (a) salary, (b) cash, c) merchandise of any kind or amount or (d) share of game or season proceeds, for achievement in athletics.”

QUESTION: **Can a golfer from my team be the person who hits drives during a fundraising scramble golf event where players will bet on how far he hits the ball?**

INTERPRETATION: No, a high school golfer with remaining eligibility is not allowed to participate in a betting event like this. This would jeopardize eligibility for the boy or girl involved based upon Amateur Status regulations. Organizers of such events should involve individuals who do not have any remaining eligibility. This might include alumni or individuals who have completed their high school eligibility and are recognized within their community.

PACE OF PLAY

QUESTION: **How should coaches address pace of play issues during a meet?**

INTERPRETATION: During the Girls Golf season, a “group warning” must be issued before a one-stroke penalty can be assessed to groups that do not meet the pace of play limits. A group warning occurs when a group gets more than one hole behind the group in front of them and is behind in their time par. “One hole behind” is defined as a group that has not placed the flagstick in the cup of the hole they are playing while the group in front of them has completed their hole and returned the flag to the cup of the hole they are playing.

In warning the players of their pace, the tournament manager/designee

informs the group they must each place a “P” in the scoring box of the hole they are currently playing. This documents the warning and the hole it was assessed.

The tournament manager/designee also needs to tell the group that they are now behind in their pace and must do the following until they have advanced into their proper position:

1. Quickly walk all the way to your ball, then move aside to let others hit if need be.
2. Play “ready golf.” Disregard the honor system and allow whoever is ready to hit.
3. Do not mark putts within a foot of the hole. Finish the hole out and then proceed to the next tee box.
4. After each player finishes a hole, quickly proceed to the next tee box and tee off as soon as the group in front clears. Do not wait for other players in your group to finish the hole.

Tournament managers/designees must remain with the group until they have caught up with the group in front of them and regained their appropriate position. When this occurs, the tournament manager/designee has the group remove the “P” from the scoring box of the hole the warning was issued rescinding the warning.

If the group is not able to regain their appropriate position by completion of their round, then a one-stroke penalty is issued to each of the players in that group by the tournament manager. At the scoring area, an appeals meeting that includes the players and coaches involved can be held to review the pace responsibilities of each player. The tournament manager can assess a player(s) responsible for the pace delays the one-stroke penalty, rescinding the penalty for the other players.

Additional information on pace of play strategies can be found on the WIAA School Center in the Fall Sport section under Girls Golf.

CO-OP PROGRAMS

QUESTION: Does the no-cut policy for co-op teams apply to golf only or to all other sports as well?

INTERPRETATION: If a program has been approved as a co-op program, no matter what WIAA sport it is, there can be no cuts made. This WIAA regulation for co-op teams does apply to all sports.

RIDING CARTS FOR PLAYERS

QUESTION: I have a girl who broke her ankle. She anticipates having the cast removed in approximately two weeks. Is she eligible for a waiver to use a motorized cart during the girl’s golf season?

INTERPRETATION: No, WIAA Fall and Spring Season Regulation 15., e. , indicates permission must be requested for using a riding cart for a permanent illness/disability.

QUESTION: **We have a junior on our girls golf team who has braces on both of her legs. She has been with the golf program as a freshman and sophomore. She has had no issues walking nine holes. My head coach would like to use her for some varsity 18 hole events this year. He thinks it will be an issue for her to walk 18 holes. Is there any wavier for this player to use a cart? Will we need a medical statement from her doctor?**

INTERPRETATION: WIAA Fall Season Regulations for Girls Golf indicate the following: e. “. . .riding a cart may be approved by the WIAA for an individual with a permanent illness/disability. Permission must be requested for using a riding cart for a permanent illness/disability prior to the individual’s first meet.” Obtaining a physician’s written note indicating this student-athlete has a permanent disability is all that will be needed since your request is being made well in advance of the start of the golf season.

QUESTION: **I have a girl who has played in a school meet already this year. She injured here ankles in an accident and is experiencing difficulties getting them to heal. Can she receive a waiver to use a riding cart?**

INTERPRETATION: No, applications for use of a riding cart must be made prior to a student-athlete competing in a school meet per WIAA Season Regulation 15., e. In addition, it is unclear with this case whether or not the student has a permanent disability. Additional information from a physician would be required should application for this waiver be made in the future.

GOLF MEETS WITHIN MEETS

QUESTION: **We have nine schools coming to an invitational. Seven of the schools are conference schools and two are non-conference schools. Can the seven schools play the front nine as a conference meet and then all nine schools play the 18 holes for the invitational?**

INTERPRETATION: Yes, you are referring to a meet within a meet. This type of format has not been denied by the WIAA for regular season golf competitions. As indicated in 15., a., of the Adaptations to USGA Rules, the host school or conference will determine the type of play (match, medal, or combination match-medal) governing competition.

QUESTION: **I had a team pull out of my Match-play tournament two days ago and the tournament is in two weeks. Without an even number of teams, you don't have match play. I don't want to drop the format the girls love it. What I would like to do is play my 2nd group of 5 girls. I know that girls can only play in 14 matches/15 if one is on Sat.. which we have one of those in Sept. I have 14 varsity matches and 12 JV right now. Will this be ok?**

INTERPRETATION: Regarding playing two squads in one event, yes, this can be done. WIAA Season Regulations allow 15 meets for varsity and JV teams so long as one meet is on a Saturday. WIAA Golf regulations remain silent regarding two squads from one school participating in the same meet; consequently, this is allowed.

QUESTION: **The teams in my conference set their schedule in Oct. and an invite we enter had to change their date because their golf course closed. My question is: Can I play in the Dual meet and enter the jv invite? They are both on the same day. I would not be playing the same girls.**

INTERPRETATION: In order to have two JV teams compete in the same event or in two different events, you need to have two approved JV teams. This approval needs, at the very least, to be made by the school administration and may even need school board approval. Each of these teams then needs to have their own schedule. In this way, the meet counts towards one meet on each JV team's schedule.

MIDDLE SCHOOL 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 new 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 with a high school sport team.

QUESTION: **Can a 6th grader play along with the JV or varsity golf team without counting their score?**

INTERPRETATION: No, any student who is not enrolled at a member high school is not allowed to participate in any way at a high school meet. Non-enrolled students do not have a physical or insurance forms on file with the high school and are not responsible to that high school's academic or athletic codes.

HOME COURSE DESIGNATION

QUESTION: **Please explain the process we go through to list two 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 last year as the Wisconsin Athletic Directors

Association asked to have more than one course due to requests they were receiving from courses within their communities.

QUESTION: **Can a course that is approximately 25 miles from our school be one of our three “home courses?”**

INTERPRETATION: If there is a question regarding the distance a designated “home course” can be from a school, golf coaches should contact their A.D. and have the A.D. contact Tom Shafranski at the WIAA office. Generally speaking, 25 miles has been used as the limit for schools to travel for practice/”home course” meets. Discussion with school administrators regarding courses that are further than 25 miles is very helpful when situations require travel to courses further than 25 miles.

QUESTION: **Another school used to sponsor a tournament at one of our home courses. This year that school doesn't want to do that and the pro has been looking for a school to sponsor it...any suggestions?**

INTERPRETATION: As far as hosting an event at a course that is not designated as one of your “home courses,” you can certainly host a meet there, WIAA regulations do not prevent you from doing so. However, keep in mind, you are not able to hold an official practice there. The girls can go to the course on their own, with parents, friends, relatives, etc. However, they cannot go to the course with you for practice purposes as you have three other courses already identified.

PRACTICE AT A WIAA REGIONAL SITE

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. However, the WIAA Board of Control has approved the allowance of 15 meets so long as one meet is scheduled for a Saturday beginning in the fall of 2010. WIAA Season Regulation, 9., indicates, “A school which practices on a course (except home course(s)) where later in the season (regular season and WIAA tournament series) it will be competing must count such practices in its maximum allowed meets.” 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. If coaches have a practice at the regional site, they must count it as one of their 15 allowed meets. This is also true of practice at a conference site or any regular season meet that is not held at one of a school's designated home courses.