



GUIDELINES ON PRIZES FOR AMATEUR GOLFERS

The Rules of Amateur Status apply to all competitions at a golf course, driving range or golf simulator where a player is asked to replicate a shot similar to that they would encounter during a round of golf. This guide is designed to clarify the Rules as they apply to prizes.

It is important that golfers, organisers and sponsors of amateur events are aware of the limits on prizes. Where any doubt arises concerning a proposed course of action, the Governing Body of the Rules in the player's own country should be consulted. The "Governing Body" for the Rules of Amateur Status in any country is the national golf union or association of the country. (Note: in Great Britain and Ireland, The R&A is the Governing Body).

Cash Prizes

An amateur golfer must not play golf for prize money (Rule 3-1). If a cash prize is offered, all those competing in the competition would be in breach of the Rules, not just the players who accept a cash prize.

An amateur golfer may participate in an event where prize money or its equivalent is offered, provided that in advance of participating in that competition and in writing, the player waives the right to accept any prize money in that event.

However, note the exception for hole-in-one competitions.

Prize Limit

An amateur golfer may accept a prize or prize voucher of retail value no greater than £500, or the local currency equivalent (Rule 3-2a). A Governing Body may set a lower prize limit if it wishes to do so.

The prize limit applies to the total prizes or prize vouchers won by an amateur golfer in any one competition, e.g. main prizes (1st, 2nd, 3rd etc), longest drive, nearest the hole, etc. or a series of competitions.

In a foursome, four-ball or team competition, each player may individually accept a prize up to the limit of £500, however, the players may not jointly accept one prize over the limit of £500.

Symbolic Prizes

An amateur golfer may accept a symbolic prize of any value (Rule 3-2a). A symbolic prize is a trophy (e.g. a cup, medal, plaque, etc.) made of gold, silver, ceramic, glass or the like that is permanently and distinctively engraved.

The reference to the engraving is important as it distinguishes these prizes from other items of utilitarian purposes, such as watches, luggage, golf bags or other merchandise. Although such items may be engraved or marked, acceptance of such a prize exceeding the limits of Rule 3-2a would be a breach of the Rules. Symbolic prizes cannot be used as a means to circumvent the prize limit Rule.

Prize Vouchers

A prize voucher in lieu of a prize, is a voucher, gift certificate, gift card or the like, which has been approved by the Committee in charge of a competition, for the holder to select goods and services from a professional's shop, a Golf Club or other retail source.

The guidelines on issuing and redeeming prize vouchers are:

1. The organising committee is strongly encouraged to define accurately the purpose for which the voucher may be used e.g. purchase of goods in a professional's shop or sporting goods shop, any goods and services from the Golf Club or from any retail or food and beverage source.
2. A voucher may be credited to a Golf Club account and be used for items such as a bar bill, Golf Club subscription, payment of entry fees, and other goods and services at the Club, e.g. vouchers may be applied toward use of a practice area, tuition, use of a golf cart, green fees and food and beverages.
3. When making payment in respect of the voucher, it is the duty of the organising committee to satisfy itself that the conditions of the voucher have been complied with and that it has been redeemed for the respective goods and/or services.
4. If the value of the voucher, is, say £100, the organising committee may, at its discretion, issue two vouchers for £50, four vouchers for £25 etc., if it considers that these would be simpler to administer.
5. An amateur golfer may submit a voucher to his national, regional, state or county golf union or association and thereafter be reimbursed, from the voucher, for any expenses incurred that relate directly to competing in a golf competition. Therefore, following the production of receipts, an amateur golfer could be reimbursed for expenses such as travel and accommodation costs, entry fees, etc. which relate directly to participating in the competition concerned.

Hole-in-One Prizes

An amateur golfer may accept a prize of retail value in excess of £500 or the equivalent, including a cash prize, for a hole-in-one made while playing a round of golf. It is important to note that the hole-in-one must be made during a round of golf and be incidental to the round of golf.

Multiple entry competitions (where the amateur has several attempts at achieving the hole-in-one), putting competitions, nearest the hole and longest drive contests and competitions conducted other than on a golf course (e.g. on a driving range or golf simulator) do not qualify and are subject to the prize limits in Rule 3.

Longest Drive and Nearest the Hole Prizes

For longest drive, nearest the hole and other competitions where golf skill is a factor, it is a breach of the Rules for an amateur golfer to accept a prize of retail value in excess of £500 or the equivalent.

Sweepstakes, Gambling, Wagering

Informal gambling is permitted among individual golfers or teams of golfers provided the primary purpose is the playing of the game for enjoyment, not for financial gain. Cash payments for gambling are permitted when the players know each other, participation is optional and is limited to the players, the money is advanced by the players and the amount of money involved is not generally considered to be excessive.

For more information on the points above, please refer to the Rules of Amateur Status and Decisions on the Rules of Amateur Status at www.randa.org