



## **GUIDELINES FOR “LOW HANDICAP” GOLFERS**

### **Introduction**

For golfers in the “low handicap” category, their greater skill raises their profile and increases the potential for problems with the Amateur Code. A number of the Rules of Amateur Status apply only to players with “golf skill or reputation”. A player is considered to have golf skill if he has had competitive success at a local or national level, he has gained representative honours at county or national level, or if he competes at an elite level.

It is a matter for the Governing Body to decide whether a particular amateur golfer has “golf skill or reputation”. 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).

The following is intended to provide a brief guide in order to prevent an inadvertent breach of the Rules of Amateur Status. It should be noted that some of the following guidelines apply to all amateur golfers irrespective of ability.

### **Prizes (Rule 3)**

An amateur golfer may:

1. Accept a prize of retail value of not more than £500, or the local equivalent. Playing for cash prizes is not permitted unless in relation to a hole-in-one or for a recognised charity, where the organisers of the event have sought prior approval from the Governing Body.
2. Accept a prize for a hole-in-one of any value, including cash.
3. Accept an expenses-paid trip as a prize provided it is worth no more than the prize limit and it is not for the purpose of playing in a golf competition. Exception: see Rule 4-2g (Sponsored Handicap Competitions).
4. Accept prize vouchers as prizes and submit them to his national, regional, state or county golf union or association and thereafter on the production of applicable receipts be reimbursed from the voucher for expenses incurred in competing in a golf competition.

For more information on prizes, please refer to the Guidelines on Prizes for Amateur Golfers.

### **Expenses and Funding (Rule 4 and Rule 6-5)**

An amateur golfer may:

1. Accept free food and drink at a golf competition, provided the same is offered to all competitors.
2. Receive financial support from a member of his family.
3. Receive expenses while playing in a team event.
4. Receive financial assistance for participation in individual events provided such funds are lodged with, and disbursed by, the national, regional, state or county golf union or association, or where authorised, his club.
5. Receive expenses for participating in an exhibition match in aid of a recognised charity.
6. Accept reasonable subsistence expenses, not exceeding actual expenses incurred, to assist with general living costs. The expenses must be approved by and paid through the player’s national golf union or association.
7. Accept an educational scholarship whose terms and conditions have been approved by the golfer’s Governing Body.

For more information on support funding, please refer to the Guidelines on Educational Grants, Scholarships and Bursaries.

### **Advertising and Promotional Activities (Rule 6)**

An amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation may:

1. Accept equipment free of charge from a manufacturer, provided no advertising is involved.
2. Have his name embossed on golf equipment and clothing. The golf equipment or clothing may bear only the name of the manufacturer of the equipment or clothing in addition to the name of the player.
3. As a member of a team, have the logo of a sponsor on his golf bag or clothing in addition to the name and/or emblem of the team.

An amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation must not:

1. Use his name or identity to advertise or sell anything.
2. Display his own name, or if sponsored the sponsor's name, on a motor car.
3. Accept payment or compensation for broadcasting, writing, or allowing his name to be used as author, on any material concerning golf unless he is actually the author and instruction in playing golf is not included.
4. Accept honorary membership, or membership at a reduced rate, as an inducement to play for a Golf Club.

### **Giving Instruction (Rule 5)**

An amateur golfer must not give instruction in playing golf for payment or compensation, other than as part of an instructional programme approved by the Governing Body.

### **Professionalism (Rule 2)**

An amateur golfer may:

1. Enquire as to his likely prospects as a professional golfer, including applying unsuccessfully for the position of a professional golfer but he cannot accept or retain membership of a professional golfers' association.
2. Work as a shop assistant in a professional's shop, be employed as a caddie, follow a career in golf course design or golf administration.
3. Play in any stage of a qualifying competition for a Professional Tour provided he waives his right to any prize money, in writing and in advance of play.
4. Enter into a contract with his national golf union or association, provided that he does not obtain payment, compensation or any financial gain.
5. Enter into a contract with a third party (including a professional agent or a sponsor), provided: (i) he is at least 18 years of age\*, (ii) the contract or agreement is solely in relation to his future as a professional golfer and does not stipulate playing in certain amateur or professional events as an amateur golfer, and (iii) he does not obtain payment, compensation or any financial gain, directly or indirectly, while still an amateur.

\*Note: In special individual circumstances, an amateur golfer under the age of 18 may enter such a contract with the permission of his Governing Body, provided the contract is of no more than 12 months duration and it is non-renewable.

### **Conclusion**

It must be stressed that these guidelines do not cover all aspects of the Rules of Amateur Status. 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.

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](http://www.randa.org)