

Proposed Rules of Amateur Status Explanations

Expenses

Current Rule: Rule 4 generally prohibits an amateur from receiving assistance in covering expenses related to golf competitions. However, receiving assistance is allowed in some cases, provided the expenses are reported and approved by a national, regional, or state golf association.

If an amateur plays at an elite level, the source of such assistance must not be promoted or advertised.

Several exceptions allow for the receipt of expenses, including expenses related to school or club teams and sponsored handicap competitions, as well as more general golf-related expenses.

Proposed New Rule: The proposed Rules would no longer include any restrictions on how an amateur covers his or her expenses, including whether such assistance is provided to the amateur in exchange for involvement in promotional or advertising activities (see Promotions and Advertising; Name, Image and Likeness)

Explanation for Proposal:

- While recreational golfers can manage their expenditures on the game by limiting how often they play, elite-level competitive golf requires a significant investment to cover costs, including entry fees, transportation and accommodation, instruction and practice, fitness and equipment.
- The current permission allowing an amateur to receive outside assistance was only introduced in 2012 and this was done in the belief that the limited restrictions that remained would eventually be removed entirely, as is currently being proposed.
- The change that was made in 2012 was based on the belief that, generally, the extent of any assistance being provided would self-regulate, meaning that an outside source would only cover what was reasonably required for the amateur to compete at the elite level, and this has proved to be the case.
- The elimination of restrictions does mean that a highly marketable amateur talent may receive significant support, in excess of golfing expenses. This type of exceptional case is considered a necessary consequence of allowing elite and other amateurs to access much more modest funds to assist their development in the game.
- The related elimination of restrictions related to promotional and advertising activities provides further rationale for no longer needing to regulate or monitor the source of an amateur's assistance with expenses - if an amateur can receive direct financial compensation for promoting a company, regulating how expenses are paid is no longer necessary.
- Amateurs selected to a national squad or collegiate program are currently allowed to receive significant expenses that are not available to most amateur players.
- An amateur who fails to qualify for a national or collegiate program must currently find a way to cover expenses while being required to report the source to a national, regional or state golf union or association, but being unable to publicly reference the source of the assistance.
- It is believed that removing the current complex reporting procedures and restrictions would allow all amateurs the same opportunity to seek assistance with their expenses and help introduce additional equity in the amateur game.