

Proposed Rules of Amateur Status Explanations

Prizes

Current Rule: Prizes come in two forms (i) cash prizes (and their equivalent) and (ii) non-cash prizes, each with different restrictions.

Current Rule 3 prohibits an amateur golfer from:

- Playing for a cash prize of any amount; or
- Accepting a non-cash prize in excess of the \$750 prize limit (or a lower limit if one has been set by the national governing body).

Rule 3 currently applies to almost all competitions in which players use a club and a ball.

Proposed New Rule: The proposed new code would:

- Retain a prize limit maximum of \$750 but would no longer differentiate between cash and non-cash prizes.
- Make acceptance of a prize the standard factor in determining when a player has lost amateur status (which means that entering or playing a competition as a professional would not, of itself, result in the loss of amateur status - see "Professionalism").
- Apply the prize Rule only to competitions that require a player to play from a teeing area into a hole (including such simulator-based competitions), and would no longer apply to other competitions such as long-drive events, putting competitions, and skills competitions that are not played as part of a tee to hole competition.

Explanation for Proposal:

- As golf is largely self-regulating, to help protect the integrity of the game by minimizing pressure on the Rules of Golf and the Rules of Handicapping, the Rules of Amateur Status limit the value of prizes an amateur golfer is allowed to accept based on performance in competition.
- For this reason, the code would retain the prize limit of \$750 (US dollar or lesser value in a local currency set by the national governing body in the territory).
- Allowing Cash Prizes:
 - The permissible use of vouchers has been liberalized considerably in recent codes to the extent that there is virtually no limit on their allowable use which means that vouchers are very much the equivalent of cash.
 - Payment systems have continued to evolve and have created a number of complications in differentiating between a cash prize and one that is equivalent to cash (which is also currently prohibited in any amount).
 - These include the ever-increasing popularity of gift cards and mobile and app-based payment systems.
 - Because these forms of payment will only become more common, an amateur golfer would be able to accept any prize (including cash prizes), provided the value of such a prize does not exceed the prize limit.

- Acceptance of Prizes:
 - In the current code, playing for a cash prize of any amount is prohibited, regardless of whether the golfer plays well enough to win such a prize.
 - However, the current code treats non-cash prizes differently, where an amateur may play for large prizes but is in breach only if he or she accepts a non-cash prize in excess of the prize limit.
 - Recognizing that, for the reasons above, cash prizes would be permitted, loss of amateur status would occur only when an amateur golfer accepts a prize in excess of the prize limit.

- These two proposed changes would produce a Rule with a clearly defined “bright line” that is easy to explain and understand, namely that an amateur golfer may not accept any prize with a value in excess of the prize limit.

- The Rules would no longer apply to competitions in which the player’s score on a hole is not the primary goal, as prizes in such events, like long driving contests or other skills challenges, do not impact the self-regulating nature of the game as they don’t put pressure on the Rules of Golf or the Rules of Handicapping.