



GolfAustralia

Key changes to the Rules of Golf to come into effect 1 January 2016

- **Withdrawal of Rule on Ball Moving After Address**

Rule 18-2b (Ball Moving After Address) has been withdrawn. This means that if a ball at rest moves after the player addresses it, the player is no longer automatically deemed to have caused the ball to move. A one-stroke penalty under Rule 18-2 will be applied only when the facts show that the player's actions have caused the ball to move.

Under Rule 18-2b up until 2012, a player whose ball moved after address was automatically presumed in all cases to have caused the ball to move. In 2012, an Exception to Rule 18-2b was introduced to cover situations where it was "known or virtually certain" that the player had not caused the ball to move, but the application of that standard was not always clear. Under Rule 18-2 from 2016 onwards, if the facts show that the ball was moved as a result of the player addressing it, or by other actions of the player, the player will still incur a one-stroke penalty.

- **Limited Exception to Disqualification Penalty for Submission of Incorrect Score Card**

A new exception has been introduced to Rule 6-6d (Wrong Score for Hole) stating that a player will not be disqualified for returning a score card with a lower score than actually taken for a hole, provided that the mistake is the result of the player failing to include penalty stroke/s that they did not know they had incurred. Instead, the player incurs the penalty under the Rule that was breached AND must add an additional penalty of two strokes for the score card error. In all other cases in which a player returns a score for any hole lower than actually taken, the penalty will continue to be disqualification.

This Rule change will maintain the importance of returning an accurate score card by penalising the player two strokes for the score card error in addition to the penalty for the original underlying breach of the Rules. However it will enable the player to remain in the competition.

- **Prohibition on Anchoring the Club While Making a Stroke**

As announced by The R&A in May 2013, the new Rule 14-1b (Anchoring the Club) prohibits anchoring the club either "directly" or by use of an "anchor point" in making a stroke. The penalty is loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play. This new Rule will apply to all golfers in **club golf, social golf, and professional golf**.

The R&A has produced a guidance document to assist committees with the implementation of this new Rule. The document is available from the following page of the GA website – www.golf.org.au/randaanchoringdocument

Two key points to note on this Rule change are that long putters may continue to be used – it's just that they may not be anchored. And the new anchoring Rule applies to all levels of golf – not just professional golf.

- **Modification of Penalty for Single Non-Permissible Use of Artificial Devices or Equipment**

The penalty for a player's first breach of Rule 14-3 (Artificial Devices, Unusual Equipment and Abnormal Use of Equipment) during the round has been reduced from disqualification to loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play. The penalty for any subsequent breach of Rule 14-3 will continue to be disqualification. An example of a device that would cause a breach of this rule if used during a round is a purpose-built alignment rod.

- **Distance-Measuring Device Local Rule: Relaxation so that Players now Only in Breach if they Actually Use a Non-Conforming Feature (for competitions where distance measuring devices are permitted)**

The local rule on distance-measuring devices has been relaxed so that there will no longer be a penalty if a player uses a device with a non-conforming feature but does not actually use the non-conforming feature itself. (Distance-measuring devices may only be used in competitions where the committee has the local rule in effect.)

Examples of non-conforming features include applications that measure or provide advice on: elevation changes or slope, wind speed, club selection, green reading, and effective distance between two points based on elevation changes or other conditions that affect shot distance.