



11 November 2025

To Whom it May Concern

Over the past few months, it has come to our attention that there is sometimes a disconnect between the golf clubs, the Rules of Golf, the Rules of Amateur Status and the World Handicapping Rules.

GolfRSA realise that communicating frequently with clubs, through the Provincial Unions, is important. There can be a challenge with this as staff changes over time, and there can be other communication breakdowns, that in many cases are responsible for the disconnect.

In recent months we are seeing more and more advertising of competitions that entice amateurs to enter and play for money. In many instances these competitions violate amateur status rules, as set and governed by the R&A and USGA in unison and which are the same the world over.

Players that compete in these competitions run the risk of losing their amateur status and not being able to play in regular club competitions, leagues etc. for an extended period of time, even if they apply for their amateur status back. This will have a negative effect on the clubs and their members.

In order for Amateur Golf to remain healthy it is important that GolfRSA, Provincial Unions and all clubs work together to implement all Amateur Golf's Rules.

While the Rules of Golf and Rules of Handicapping are used by golfers daily, the Rules of Amateur Status are something that club committees, staff and players are only vaguely aware of. We would like to take this opportunity to inform or remind you of the Rules of Amateur Status in order to protect your members and membership from the possibility of falling foul of the Rules and not being able to compete in Amateur Golf competitions, leagues and club championships.

Below are excerpts from the Rules of Amateur that pertain to Amateur Golfers. As GolfRSA, we believe it is important to illuminate relevant facts, so that all provincial unions and clubs can protect their members by making sure that the Rules of Amateur Status get upheld by your members and visitors that play in amateur golf competitions/golf days, both at your golf courses and at away courses.

The Rules of Amateur Status

Purpose of the Rules

Amateur golf has a well-established tradition in the game, including a history of competitions limited to amateur golfers. The Rules of Amateur Status define who is eligible

PHYSICAL Unit 8 • Ferndale Mews North • 355 Oak Avenue • Ferndale • 2194
PHYSICAL The Momentum Golf Village • De Beers Avenue • Somerset West • 7130
L +27 11 781 3718 • C +27 82 374 3456 • E admin@golfrsa.co.za • W www.golfrsa.com

CHAIRMAN J.P. Rupert **DIRECTORS** M. Gondwe • D. Hayes • K. Walker • S. Eagle • C Verburg • H Smith • S. Andrew (Ms) • P van Schalkwyk • M. Ngoasheng • P. Verwey • H Lourens • S Grobbelaar **CEO** G. Hepburn
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to compete as an amateur golfer. Golf is largely self-regulating, and 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 form and value of prizes an amateur golfer is allowed to accept based on performance in competition.

Amateur Golfer

All golfers are amateurs unless they:

- *Accept a prize that is not allowed under Rule 3: Prizes;*
- *Play in a golf competition as a professional;*
- *Accept payment or compensation for giving instruction that is not allowed under Rule 4: Instruction;*
- *Are employed (including being self-employed) as a golf club or driving range professional; or*
- *Hold membership of an association for professional golfers.*

An amateur who takes any of these actions becomes a non-amateur and remains a non-amateur until being reinstated as an amateur (see [Rule 5: Reinstatement as an Amateur Golfer](#)).

Prizes

Scratch Competitions

An amateur playing in a scratch competition is allowed to accept any prize, including prize money, up to a limit of £700 or US\$1000 in value, per competition, unless the national governing body has set a lower limit. For the purposes of these Rules, a scratch competition is a competition that does not have a net score element in any part of the competition and handicaps must not be used to separate players into different scratch categories. Any competition that is not a scratch competition is a handicap competition.

The current limit in South Africa set by GolfRSA is R17 500

Handicap Competitions

An amateur playing in a handicap competition is not allowed to accept prize money, but may accept any other prize up to a limit of £700 or US\$1000 in value, per competition, unless the national governing body has set a lower limit.

The current limit in South Africa set by GolfRSA is R12 500

General

For a non-monetary prize, the value of that prize is the price at which the item is generally available to purchase from a retail source at the time the prize is accepted.

The prize limit applies to the following:

- *Any tee-to-hole golf competition involving a score for a hole, regardless of where that competition is played (for example, on a golf course or a golf simulator).*
- *Any skills competition where the shot is played during a tee-to-hole golf competition*

- *The total prizes accepted in a single competition or multiple competitions being conducted at the same time (for example, individual and team competitions).*

The prize limit does not apply to the following:

- *The value of trophies and other similar prizes.*
- *Long drive competitions, target competitions, competitions involving specific skills, trick shots and competitions that solely involve putting (unless the competition or shot is played during a tee-to-hole golf competition).*
- *A prize for a hole-in-one made:*
 - *Outside a tee-to-hole golf competition or*
 - *During a tee-to-hole golf competition, provided the length of the shot is at least 50 yards.*
- *Gambling or wagering among individual golfers or teams of golfers.*
- *Expenses to compete in a subsequent stage of the same competition.*

Meaning of Prize Money

For the purposes of Rule 3, prize money may come in many forms, and includes cash, physical or digital currency, cheques, bank deposits, and shares, stocks and bonds. Gift cards and debit cards that may be redeemable for cash or can be used to withdraw cash are also considered prize money.

Prize money does not include vouchers, gift certificates and gift cards that can be exchanged for products and services in retail outlets and/or a golf course or club.

Policy on Mementoes and Gifts

A sponsor or competition organiser may give a memento or gift to the players competing, irrespective of their value, provided it is not used to circumvent the prize limit.

Reinstatement as an Amateur Golfer

Reinstatement Guidance

A player requesting reinstatement as an amateur golfer should follow the application process for the national governing body of the country where they reside, which may involve submitting an application for reinstatement to that national governing body. Having an application process ensures the appropriate national governing body has an opportunity to review each application and determine what it considers to be the appropriate outcome based on the circumstances. Once a player requests reinstatement from the applicable national governing body, that person is considered an applicant for reinstatement, but remains a non-amateur until being reinstated.

Waiting Period Prior to Being Reinstated

It is recommended that the national governing body require a minimum waiting period of at least six months. In deciding the waiting period for reinstatement, the national governing body can consider whether additional waiting time would be appropriate based on the applicant's length of time as a non-amateur. The national governing body should determine when the waiting period starts and the length of the waiting period based on a number of factors:

- Start Date

It is recommended that the waiting period starts on the date of the player's last action that was not allowed by the Rules, such as the date the player was last employed as a golf professional, last played as a professional, or last accepted payment or compensation for instruction when not allowed. The national governing body retains the discretion to use a different date if it wishes.

Accepting Prize Exceeding Limits in Rule 3 in a Handicap Competition

To help protect the integrity of the game by minimising pressure on the Rules of Golf and the Rules of Handicapping, the Rules of Amateur Status limit the form and value of prizes an amateur golfer is allowed to accept based on performance in competition. A national governing body may therefore decide to extend the waiting period beyond the minimum recommended waiting period for a player who accepts a prize in a handicap competition when the value of that prize exceeds the limits in Rule 3.

Yours sincerely



NEIL HOMANN

Manager: Governance, Rules and Training