

# GOLF AUSTRALIA RULES

## NEWSLETTER

Winter 2016



GolfAustralia



## Rules on Tour - The Open at Royal Troon

By Robert Crosby (Chairman Golf Australia Rules of Golf & Amateur Status Sub-Committee)

I received the official invitation from The R&A on 29th March 2016 to referee at the 145th Open Championship at Royal Troon. To say I was excited at the prospect of refereeing at arguably the best golf Major is an understatement.

Accompanying the invitation was a document for Rules Officials, "A Brief Guide for Those Attending the Open as a Rules Official for the First Time", which proved most helpful. Also, there was a list of all Rules Officials, some 75 of them, from 22 countries with 18 first timers. Andrew Langford-Jones from the Australasian PGA Tour, who I had worked with on many occasions, was the only other Australian and I was sure that he would provide any help I might need as a first timer at The Open.

In the lead up to The Open my wife and I spent a few days in Glasgow, then on the Monday of The Open week transferred to our hotel in Irvine,

which is about a 20 minute drive to the Royal Troon course. Most of the referees stayed at the hotel in Irvine and travelled to and from the course on a regular shuttle bus service.

**Monday:** Arrived at the course early afternoon and walked about 12 holes with Dave Mangan from NZ Golf, more just to get familiar with the layout and surroundings. I also had an appointment to collect the uniform, shoes and umbrella. Loaded up it was then back to the hotel. With all this additional luggage I could see it might be a problem in the suitcase department, even though I had allowed some extra space.

**Tuesday:** Back to the course, I obtained a copy of the Draft Additional Local Rules, Local Rules for Temporary Immovable Obstructions (TIOs), Grandstands, Metal Fencing and Elevated Cables, and the Hole-by-Hole Rules Guide and set off for a full walk of the course on my own. The weather was fine and mild and I hoped that these conditions would remain for the week as it made life very pleasant on the course.

### Winter 2016: In this edition



**Rules History**  
The story of Ivo Whitton



**Driving Distances**  
The R&A and USGA publish some interesting results regarding driving distances in professional golf



**Notes on Match Play**  
The R&A provides guidance on some of the rules particularly relevant to match play



**Wednesday:** All Referees attended a Rules Committee Meeting in the morning with a range of topics covered including local rules, conditions of competition, course marking, pace of play, suspension of play, rules assignments, and the weather, etc. The meteorologist did not have all good news for the week. This was followed by a course walk in groups of six, with a Leader to provide instruction on any possible problem areas and to answer questions from the group. One of the major areas that would require close attention was the grandstand and metal fencing area between holes 1 and 18, and it was comforting to know that there would be an R&A Referee permanently stationed in this zone to assist with any rulings required. The metal fencing local rule was quite involved and included an additional option if the ball lies on the outside of the fencing and within four club-lengths of it. There were also four Exceptions under this Rule. Phew!



*View down the 18th on practice day*

**Thursday:** My first assignment was with Group No 2 with a tee-off time of 06:46 am. The players included one of the Australian Olympians, Marcus Fraser, Steve Alker from NZ and Sanghee Lee from Korea. After collecting the Final Version of the Additional Local Rules and a radio it was off to the first tee. By now I was feeling a few butterflies as I walked through the tunnel to the tee. Standing on the tee looking out over the Firth of Clyde on a beautiful crisp, sunny morning, with the bank of grandstands lining the adjoining 18th hole stretching down the left hand side of the 1st fairway for over 200 metres, was enough to take your breath away. The players were yet to arrive so I chatted to the starter, who was also doing his job for the first time, following the retirement of the iconic Ivor Robson, who it seemed had been the official starter for an eternity. The grandstand for the first tee was quite full for this time of morning, but with local Royal Troon member, Colin Montgomerie in Group 1, many had come out in support. The players eventually arrived, and who I suspect were also a tad nervous. After introductions I stepped aside and waited for the action to begin. About this time I was secretly wishing/hoping that the players' drives would find the fairway, as I didn't fancy any tricky rulings in amongst the metal fencing to start with. Thankfully, all was well as the three players found the fairway with their drives and second shots on the green. All good so far. The second hole was similar with the Korean birdieing the first two holes. The first hiccup came on the 4th hole when I was requested by one of the roving referees to ask the players to pick up the pace a bit as they had fallen a hole behind. Not having closed the gap sufficiently, the group was then put 'on the clock' on the 5th hole. From there on it was smooth sailing until the 10th hole where Lee needed assistance with an unplayable lie. The group fell behind again on the 13th hole and was subsequently put on the clock again. One player was given a 'bad time' on the 16th hole and another a 'bad time' on the 17th tee. Although the group completed their round in only 3 minutes over their time par, the roving referees will generally monitor those early groups fairly closely to ensure they do not lose time as this can impact back through the field. Just as an aside and to finish off the day, while having lunch with GA Chairman, John Hopkins

in the dining room, who would be at the next table but HRH Prince Andrew, a former Captain of The R&A. (OK that was namedropping.)

**Friday:** Well, from the front of the field one day to the back the next day. Group 51 at 16:05. The weather had taken a turn for the worse overnight, cold, wet and windy conditions now prevailed. Someone said they had had their summer last Tuesday! My group of players were Aussie Nathan Holman, Dave Coupland from England and Phachara Khongwatmai from Thailand. After getting a reasonably easy ride the previous day in terms of rules situations, today was totally the opposite. In our Referees On-Course Folder is



provided a rules incidents card to record occurrences during the round. With provision to record seven incidents my card was full by the end of the day. Some of these were; a check for an embedded ball, ball lying against cables, unplayable ball, casual water, GUR, TIO and time expiring for a ball search. With very overcast conditions and rain there was some discussion whether it had become too dark to play when we were on the 15th hole, but play continued, finally completing the round at 9:00 pm, some 25 minutes over the time par.

**Saturday:** I was assigned as an observer for the group of Charl Schwartzel and Bill Haas, meaning my primary role was to assist the referee and advise him of any potential rulings required in the landing areas. Things got off to an amusing start when Bill Haas had teed his ball up on the 1st tee waiting for the starter's introduction, which came with "on the tee from South Africa, Charl Schwartzel". Much to the amusement of the players and spectators, Haas then sheepishly removed himself and his ball from the tee to allow Schwartzel to have the honour. The round was fairly uneventful as far as rulings go with only one minor ruling required. The highlight came on the par-3 8th 'Postage Stamp' hole when Haas holed a shot out of the treacherous front bunker followed by Schwartzel holing a long putt for birdie as well. This hole caused many players grief during the Championship.

**Sunday:** I was assigned to Group 21 of Jason Dufner (USA) and Ben An (Korea), roughly in the middle of the field. I had an anxious moment on the 1st tee when Dufner's tee shot appeared to be going well left of the metal fencing at the end of the grandstands and therefore could require some assistance. I took off quickly to try to assess the situation, brushing up on the notes for metal fencing on the way. As I reached the fairway bunker I noticed a ball lying in it. A nearby marshal then advised that Dufner's ball had ricocheted off the metal fence back into the bunker. A tricky ruling did not eventuate. I was only called on once during the round to assist with relief where the ball was lying against a bunch of cables. The pace of play from this group was exceptional with the round being completed in 21 minutes under the time par. It was a pleasure to watch players play in this manner; why can't they all play that way?

Immediately following the final group completing the 18th hole the presentation ceremony took place around the green. The Referees were invited to join the ceremony, congregating adjacent to the green. What an amazing final round duel between Henrik Stenson and Phil Mickelson, with Stenson holding on for his first Major victory.

# Rules History: Joint Rules Conference 1951

In 1951, representatives from the USGA, The R&A, the Australian Golf Union and the Royal Canadian Golf Association gathered in London and St. Andrews to draft the first uniform code for the Rules of Golf. Prior to this point, the Rules of Golf varied depending on the governing body of the area. These agreed-upon Rules went into effect worldwide in 1952 and laid the groundwork for the identical USGA and R&A co-branded Rule book used around the world today.



The representatives are, left to right, front row: Dr. James Lawson (The R&A); Isaac B. Grainger (Chairman, USGA Rules of Golf Committee); Dr. Harold Gardner-Hill (Chairman, The R&A Rules of Golf Committee); Comdr. J.A.S. Carson (Secretary, The R&A). Left to right, rear: Joseph C. Dey Jr. (Executive Secretary, USGA); Ivo Whitton (Australian Golf Union); Lt. Col. John Inglis (Deputy Chairman, The R&A Rules Committee); Richard S. Tufts (Secretary, USGA); Colin Rankin (Rules Chairman, Royal Canadian Golf Association).

For those too young to remember Ivo Whitton, his biography follows:

Ivo Harrington Whitton (1893-1967), golfer, was born on 9 December, 1893 at Moonee Ponds, Melbourne. Educated at Melbourne Church of England Grammar School where he captained the preparatory school cricket team, he is said to have taken up golf seriously at the age of 14 when passed over for the first XI. He practised in the paddocks surrounding his home in Munro Street, Armadale, and in 1908 joined the Caulfield Golf Club in which his father was an active member. When it moved to Oakleigh that year, becoming the Metropolitan Golf Club, Ivo won the last medal on the old course and the first on the new. He was club champion three times before the war; on 11 November 1911 he set two course records (71 in the morning and 69 in the afternoon), taking the monthly medal despite a handicap of plus four. He won his first Australian Open championship in 1912 and along with Greg Norman is the only Australian golfer to have won it five times (1912, 1913, 1926, 1929 and 1931), and that as an amateur.

On leaving school in 1911, Whitton joined the wool broking firm of A.R. Lempriere (the Australian Amateur champion in 1913) who allowed him time for golf in off-seasons. Late that year Whitton went to England and in 1914 competed in the British Amateur Championship.

After the war Whitton worked as a wool appraiser for the Commonwealth government in 1919-20 before returning to wool-buying. In 1926 he joined the sports-goods firm of A.G. Spalding & Bros, becoming a director in 1931 and later general manager. In addition to his 'opens', he won numerous amateur championships including the Australian (1922, 1923), the Victorian (1919-20, 1922-24) and the New South Wales (1929). In 1920 he won the Helms award for the outstanding athlete of the year. He published an instructional book, *Golf*, in 1929.

Having joined the Royal Melbourne Golf Club in 1913, Whitton was club champion nine times in 1920-36, its captain in 1947-50, and was made an honorary life member in 1953. He represented the club on the Victorian Golf Association and the Australian Golf Union (which merged with Women's Golf Australia to form Golf Australia in 2006). From 1948 to 1953 he was a member of the Rules of Golf committee of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews, and in 1951 was the Australian delegate to a conference in Britain to unify the rules. In 1960 the V.G.A. established the Ivo Whitton Trophy to be awarded annually to the best male amateur golfer.

A modest but tenacious player, Whitton also enjoyed the 'club' and social side of golf; his other interests included tennis, fishing and photography. He had married Evelyn Jessie Jennings, herself a good golfer, at All Souls Anglican Church, Sandringham, on 9 June, 1920. Survived by his wife, son and two daughters, Whitton died at Sandringham on 2 July, 1967 and was buried in Cheltenham cemetery. The R.M.G.C. established the Ivo Whitton Cup in his memory.



## Rules Quiz

By Brian Nesbitt (Victorian State Level Referee)

Club Level, No Rule Book Quiz – Rule Headings Please.

The key here is to try to learn Pages 3 and 4 in the Rule Book.

1. Rule 4 Heading is....
2. Rule 8
3. Rule 12
4. Rule 16
5. Rule 20
6. Rule 24
7. Rule 28
8. Rule 32
9. Rule 6
10. Rule 10

Club Level, you may use the Rule Book if necessary here, but I want the Rule number and sub-paragraph as well please.

1. Stroke Play – doubt as to procedure
2. The Player – Time of Starting and groups
3. Information as to Strokes Taken – Stroke Play
4. Searching for and Identifying Ball- Lifting Ball for Identification
5. Substituted Ball; Wrong Ball – Wrong Ball
6. Ball at rest moved – By Opponent
7. Cleaning Ball

8. Obstructions - Immovable
9. Ball Lost or Out of Bounds; Provisional Ball – Ball not found within five minutes
10. Three-Ball, Best Ball and Four Ball Match Play – Four-Ball Match Play

*This next Section will require the use of the Decisions Book and is aimed at State Level Referees. Please give the Decision number, but you should be able to give the Rule number and possibly the sub-paragraph from memory!*

1. A player removes a stake defining out of bounds which interferes with his swing. Is this permissible?
2. A player removed a post defining out of bounds, and as a result, improved his line of play. He realised he had made a mistake and replaced it before his next stroke. What is the ruling?
3. If a fellow-competitor purposely improves the competitor's line of putt by repairing spike damage, the fellow-competitor is penalised under Rule 1-2. If the fellow-competitor's action is sanctioned, tacitly or otherwise, by the competitor, is the competitor also subject to penalty?
4. A player cannot determine whether a long blade of grass, a twig, a tumbleweed or some similar natural object interfering with his swing through the green is loose or is attached. The player moves the object to the extent necessary to make a determination and discovers that the object is attached. What is the ruling?
5. A player's ball lies in casual water in a bunker. The player elects to play his ball as it lies and touches the casual water with his club prior to making the stroke. The player's club does not touch the sand in the bunker except in making the stroke. What is the ruling?

## The R&A and the USGA publish paper on driving distance in professional golf

**The R&A and the USGA have published a research document that reports important facts on driving distance in professional golf. Supporting data comes from seven tours, including US PGA Tour data beginning in 1968.**

Key facts noted in the paper include:

- Between 2003 and the end of the 2015 season, average driving distance on four of the seven tours increased about 1%, or 0.2 yards per year.
- For the same period, average driving distance on the other three of the seven tours studied decreased about 1%.
- Looking at all of the players who are ranked for distance on the US PGA Tour and PGA European Tour, the amount by which players are "long" or "short" is virtually the same – for instance, the 10 shortest players in that group are about 6% shorter than average, while the 10 longest players in the group are about 7% longer than average. The statistics are not skewed toward added distance.
- The average launch conditions on the US PGA Tour – clubhead speed, launch angle, ball speed and ball backspin – have been relatively stable since 2007. The 90th-percentile clubhead speed coupled with the average launch angle and spin rate are very close to the conditions that The R&A and the USGA, golf's governing bodies, use to test golf balls under the Overall Distance Standard.

In 2002, The R&A and the USGA co-authored the Joint Statement of Principles, which confirmed their commitment to the fundamental

notion that skill, not technology, should be the primary determinant of success in the game. The Joint Statement acknowledged the benefits of equipment technology for golf, but noted that any further significant increases in hitting distances at the highest level were undesirable.

Since that time, The R&A and the USGA have continued to monitor equipment technology's effect on the game, and considered the effects of other factors, such as course setup, athleticism and coaching. When appropriate, new Rules have been introduced after discussions with equipment manufacturers and other stakeholders, in accordance with the Equipment Rulemaking Procedures produced in 2011.

"I believe it is important in terms of good governance and healthy for the sport to achieve greater transparency on key issues such as driving distance," said Martin Slumbers, Chief Executive of The R&A. "We have decided to publish this report on distance data and will do so each year in the future. This is clearly a frequently debated topic in golf which elicits strong views. By publishing the data we can help to inform the debate and ensure reliable information is available."

"Hitting distance is, and has long been, a constant subject of healthy and spirited debate in golf," said Mike Davis, Executive Director/CEO of the USGA. "We want everyone in the game to have access to the facts, to better understand the decision-making process and the research we use to ensure that our game is both enjoyable and sustainable for future generations."

[Click here](#) to download the full report

# The R&A Notes on Rules of Golf for Match Play

## 1. DEFINITION OF “REFEREE”

Unless a referee is assigned to accompany the players throughout a match (i.e. the referee is walking solely with that match from the 1st tee until the conclusion of the match), a referee has no authority to intervene in a match other than in relation to:

- Rule 1-3 (agreement to waive the Rules)
- Rule 6-7 (undue delay and pace of play condition)
- Rule 33-7 (exceptional circumstances, e.g. cheating or serious breach of etiquette)

Therefore, when acting as a roving referee in match play it is unlikely that you will become involved in a match unless:

- there is a claim
- you are specifically asked to assist with a ruling, or
- the match has a pace of play issue

## 2. PLAYING OUTSIDE TEEING GROUND (Rule 11-4)

Opponent may recall stroke, at their option if done immediately. No penalty, ball may be re-teeed.

## 3. PLAYING OUT OF TURN (Rule 10-1c)

### a. Teeing Ground

Opponent may recall stroke, at their option, if done immediately. No penalty, ball may be re-teeed.

Four-Ball: See Decision 30-1/1

### b. Through the green or in a hazard

Opponent may recall stroke, at their option, if done immediately. No penalty, ball is dropped. (See also Decision 13-4/39).

### c. On the putting green

Opponent may recall stroke at his option, if done immediately. No penalty, ball is placed.

Note: A referee accompanying a match should determine who is to play in any situation where this is a doubt and should intervene if the players are about to play out of turn (except when they have agreed to do so to save time - see Decision 10-1c/3)

## 4. BALL IN MOTION STOPPED OR DEFLECTED

### a. By player's side

One stroke penalty if accidental (Rule 19-2). Loss of hole if deliberate (Rule 1-2).

### b. By opponent's side (accidentally) (Rule 19-3)

No penalty. Player has option to replay the stroke immediately or play ball as it lies.

### c. By opponent's side (deliberate) (Rule 1-2)

Loss of hole (including in four-ball).

## 5. PLAYING WRONG BALL (Rule 15-2)

Playing a wrong ball - loss of hole.

## 6. BALL AT REST MOVED

### a. By opponent's side during search (Rule 18-3a)

No penalty. Ball must be replaced.

### b. By opponent's side other than during search (excluding when moved by opponent's ball) (Rule 18-3b)

Opponent penalised one stroke. Ball must be replaced.

### c. By another ball (Rule 18-5)

No penalty. Ball at rest that was moved must be replaced. Other ball is played as is lies. (This also applies on putting green.)

## 7. BALL UNFIT FOR PLAY (Rule 5-3)

If a player has reason to believe their ball has become unfit for play during play of hole, they may lift it to examine it but they must inform their opponent in advance and give their opponent an opportunity to examine both the ball and the process of lifting and replacement. Alternatively, the Referee may oversee the procedure (Decision 5-3/7).



## 8. BALL INTERFERING WITH OR ASSISTING PLAY (Rule 22-1 and Rule 22-2)

Any player may have any ball lifted if they consider that it might interfere with their play. If a player considers that a ball might assist any other player, they may lift the ball if it is their ball or have any other ball lifted, but this may not be done while another ball is in motion. Except on the putting green, a player must not lift their ball solely because they think it may interfere with another player's stroke. If a player does so, they incur a one stroke penalty.

## 9. CONCEDED OPPONENT'S NEXT STROKE (Rule 2-4)

When the opponent's ball is at rest, or deemed to be at rest under Rule 16-2 (Ball Overhanging Hole), the player may concede the opponent to have holed out with their next stroke and the ball may be removed by either side with a club or otherwise. A concession may not be declined or withdrawn.

NOTE: When ball is overhanging hole a concession cannot be granted until player has been allowed enough time to walk to the hole without undue delay and an additional 10 seconds to determine whether the ball is at rest (Rule 16-2).

If a concession is made (i.e. the player lifts or knocks the opponent's ball away) before the end of the 10 second period the player loses the hole (Decision 16-2/2), assuming Rule 2-2 (halved hole) did not apply.

## 10. ASSISTANCE (Rule 14-2)

In making a stroke the player shall not position their caddie on or close to an extension of the line of play or line of putt behind the ball.

**PENALTY:** Loss of hole.

**NOTE:** If the caddie was inadvertently located on the extension, there is no penalty



## 11. FLAGSTICK

### a. Unauthorised attendance or removal by opponent's side or opponent's caddie (Rule 17-2)

Opponent loses hole if the attendance might influence the movement of the ball (however, if player sees the flag being attended or removed and raises no objection they shall be deemed to have authorised it).

### b. Player's ball striking attended flagstick or attendant (Rule 17-3)

Loss of hole.

## 12. STATE OF THE MATCH PENALTIES

The following have "state of the match" penalties:

- one caddie at any one time Rule
- maximum of 14 clubs Rule
- the transportation Condition

In each case, the state of the match is adjusted at the conclusion of the hole at which the breach is discovered.

## 13. HALVED HOLE (Rule 2-2)

A hole is halved if each side holes out in the same number of strokes. When a player has holed out and his opponent has been left with a stroke for a half, if the player thereafter incurs a penalty, the hole is halved.

## 14. CLAIMS (Rule 2-5)

If a doubt or dispute on the Rules arises between the players, a player may make a claim. Claims must be made in accordance with Rule 2-5 and before any player tees off on next hole or in the case of the last hole of match, before all players leave green.

No later claim will be considered unless it is based on facts previously unknown to the player making the claim and the player making the claim had been given wrong information by an opponent.

# On-course Marshals



**Carbrook Golf Club, Queensland, to the club's on-course marshals (rangers).**

### Role

- To ensure the field flows as quickly as possible and to ensure each group does the best they can in keeping up with the group in front and keeping their position in the field.
- The Marshal can also prevent slow groups from becoming out of position purely by being a presence. Most players will move faster if they know they are being watched by an official.

### Addressing groups out of position

If a group is out of position, and a gap of more than half a hole has opened up it is important to be careful to not jump to conclusions. Most players take offence at being told they're slow. A few tips are:

- Make sure you are aware of what is in front of them. Know the position of the 2-3 groups in front and ensure there are no waits or

hold-ups ahead. The last thing you want to do is tell a group they are out of position and then the next hole they are waiting on a tee.

- Monitor them for a hole to see what their behaviour is like – are they slow or are they making an effort. Your presence with no communication may have an immediate effect.
- If they are still behind, a non-aggressive and empathetic approach is always encouraged. A good way to approach them is "have you guys had any trouble?".
- When they reply either yes or no (they may have just lost a ball), you can then say "if you can just help us and try to close the gap over the next two holes it would be appreciated".
- Then leave the group but pop back a hole later to let them know you are still watching them.
- Should they not make any effort you will have to ask them again? For example, "Guys, I know you are trying but there is still a bit of a gap, and we need you to close it by the 13th please".
- For groups that are consistently slow the Club's Pace of Play Policy can also be applied.

### Tips

- Always go into the situation giving the player the benefit of the doubt.
- Be friendly and empathetic.
- Don't be aggressive even if the players you are speaking to. Remain calm but assertive.
- Most of the time your presence will be enough. Just hovering around a group without saying anything will make them move faster.
- Encourage the players to be faster between shots. They don't have to rush their actual strokes, just walk faster and make an effort.



## Rules Quiz Answers

### Answers to Club Level Quiz - Rule Numbers

1. Clubs
2. Advice; Line of Play
3. Searching for and Identifying Ball
4. Putting Green
5. Lifting Dropping and Placing; Playing From Wrong Place
6. Obstructions
7. Ball Unplayable
8. Bogey, Par and Stableford Competitions
9. The Player
10. Order of Play

### Answers to Club Level Quiz using Rule Book

1. Rule 3-3
2. Rule 6-3
3. Rule 9-3
4. Rule 12-2
5. Rule 15-3
6. Rule 18-3
7. Rule 21
8. Rule 24-2

9. Rule 27-1c
10. Rule 30-3

### Decision Book Answers

1. No. Decision 13-2/17. Objects defining out of bounds are fixed. Improving the position of a ball by moving anything fixed is a breach of Rule 13-2.
2. Decision 13-2/25. The player was in breach of Rule 13-2 the moment he moved the post and there was nothing he could do to avoid the penalty. The replacement of the post before the next stroke was irrelevant.
3. Decision 13-2/36. Yes, under Rule 13-2, for allowing his line of play to be improved.
4. Decision 13-2/26. A player is entitled to move a natural object for the specific purpose of determining whether the object is loose, provided that if the object is found not to be loose, (i) it has not become detached and (ii) it is returned to its original position before the next stroke if failure to do so would result in a breach of Rule 13-2. Except as otherwise permitted in Rule 13-2 (e.g. in fairly taking the stance), if a player moves a natural object other than to determine whether it is loose and it is found to be attached, the player cannot avoid a breach of Rule 13-2 by returning the object to its original position.
5. Decision 13-4/7. The player incurs no penalty as he did not touch the ground in the bunker with his club prior to making his stroke – see Rule 13-4b.

