



**Guide to  
Officiating  
MGA  
Championships**

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## **Purpose of this Guide**

## **PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE**

This guide is intended to develop the unity, consistency and effectiveness of the team of Rules Officials, also known as “MGA Committee Members”, who represent the Metropolitan Golf Association at championships and other events.

With a common frame of reference and objective guidelines, MGA Committee Members are better prepared to exercise sound judgment during the golf tournament.

The guide is intended to supply that common denominator which is necessary for the many MGA Committee Members to act as **one team** - a team we can all take justifiable pride in.



# The Spirit of Officiating

# THE SPIRIT OF OFFICIATING

Participants in an event are keenly aware of the spirit in which a tournament is conducted. There is no more certain way to injure the reputation of a tournament and the MGA than lax management. It may be difficult and unpleasant to be totally precise in the enforcement of The Rules of Golf, but it is a rare golfer who does not prefer to compete in a well-run event. Authority should be exercised for the sole purpose of helping to insure that an event will be fairly played under sporting conditions.

Officials should remember that as members of the Committee, their **primary role** is to lend assistance and offer counsel so as to help contestants **avoid unnecessary penalties** and to **obtain relief when entitled** under the Rules.

There are **three rules** to live by for a rules official to ensure that a championship is professionally administered:

1. Officials are cautioned **not** to use their position simply to watch play; this is very distracting and quickly recognized by the players and your fellow officials. **Be involved and be active.**
2. **Fear of Embarrassment** which keeps officials from seeking outside help when they are legitimately uncertain how to handle a situation. If you don't know, ask!
3. **Time Pressure** which an official places on himself in the mistaken belief that he is expected to make all Rules decisions instantaneously and without the use of backup material. Do not rush to an answer simply to get play moving. Make sure your

answer is correct by using your radio to check with the official-in-charge.

The legal profession has established a very worthwhile premise in dealing with clients. Lawyers do not always know the law that applies to a particular case, but they do know where to find it and how to apply it correctly. Rules officials would do well to apply this philosophy to their officiating technique.

In speaking with and polling players, the MGA knows that customer service plays a large part in our success. Maintaining the proper attitude and communicating effectively with players are ***key characteristics*** of the best officials.

When you are officiating an MGA tournament, make sure you adhere to the following guidelines:

- Be alert and be quiet!
- Be friendly and be willing to help, but don't intrude in a situation. Ask if you can be of assistance.
  - Greeting players as they play through is encouraged, but minimize commentary and conversation.
- Be professional and confident in your communication of rulings to players. Determine the facts of the situation and confirm with the players involved. Walk the player through his alternatives and explain their options.
- Be civil and courteous; **never** be confrontational. Once you communicate the ruling, step away but stay close enough to observe how the player proceeds.



# **Dress Code & Equipment Guide**

# DRESS CODE AND EQUIPMENT GUIDE

## Dress Code

- The MGA Committee uniform consists of:
  - STARTERS: Navy blue blazer with MGA Blazer Patch (optional depending on weather), white button up shirt, MGA Committee Tie, Khaki pants, MGA Belt and shoes (solid colored brown or black shoes), MGA Committee Hat, MGA Name Badge and lanyard.
  - RULES OFFICIALS: MGA name badge, MGA Committee Shirt (button up or golf shirt), khaki slacks, MGA Belt, dark shoes, MGA short sleeve pullover or windbreaker (optional).
- It is recommended Committee members bring appropriate clothing and materials necessary to cope with harsh weather (hat, sunglasses, sunblock, umbrella, MGA rain gear, etc.)
- Only hats, visors, jackets and rain gear with an MGA logo may be worn.

## Equipment Essentials

- All MGA Committee Members will be assigned a radio. **Radios are very expensive and should be carefully handled.** Please return radios to an MGA staff member when you're done volunteering for the day.

- Please bring your Rules of Golf and Decisions on the Rules of Golf books to all tournaments.
- **Don't forget** to bring a watch with a second hand.
- It may also be useful for you to bring your "Gotcha" string for measuring if a ball is out of bounds, as well as binoculars for spotting golf balls.

## Equipment Checklist

- Committee members should be sure to have the following with them on course:
  - Committee Handbook
  - *The Rules of Golf* book
  - *Decisions on the Rules of Golf* book
  - Radio & earpiece
  - Committee Assignment Sheet
  - Groupings and Starting Times Sheet
  - Notice to Players
  - Hole Locations / Local Rules Sheet
  - Pace of Play Matrix
  - Evacuation Plan
  - Course Score Card
  - "Gotcha" string
  - Watch (with a second hand)



# Rules Information

# **RULES INFORMATION**

## **Rules and Decisions**

- Please be sure to familiarize yourself with the Local Rules and Conditions of Competitions for MGA Championships (Hard Card) and the Notice to Players for a special Local Rules or Conditions of Competitions before the start of the first round.
  - Disregard the Local Rules posted at the club or on the club's score card, the MGA's Local Rules take precedence.
- Any Referee may make a decision on which he/she is certain provided he/she first refers to a *Rules of Golf* book. If you have the slightest doubt, please use your radio to consult with the OIC/SIC.
- Each Referee shall strive to prevent violations of the Rules of Golf by advising or reminding players of their rights. A Referee in stroke play and a Referee in match play have an obligation to call any Rules infraction which they may observe.

## **Ground Under Repair**

- No one is authorized to mark or otherwise designate any area as ground under repair without the approval of the OIC/SIC.

## **Pace of Play**

- Stroke Play – Every Referee is expected to be aware of pace of play. The Referee should time how long a ruling, a search for a lost ball or other legitimate delay takes with his/her hole and note any time of delay, reason and the player (s) involved in case the group is in breach of the Pace of Play Policy.
- Match Play – The Referee may encourage the players to speed up when they are approaching being out of position. A Referee shall time how long a ruling, search for a lost ball or other legitimate delay takes and inform the OIC/SIC.



# **Roles & Responsibilities**

# ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

## Committee Member Assignments

The primary officiating assignments at tournaments conducted by the MGA are:

- **Starting Official** on starting holes, typically the 1<sup>st</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> tees.
- **“On-Course” Rules Officials** to monitor play and assist players with rulings.
- **Scorecard Collection Officials** to accept score cards in a secured area nearby finishing holes, typically the 9<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> greens.
- **Scoreboard Calligrapher** to post results on the public scoreboard.
- **Check Point Officials** to apply USGA Check Point Policy in certain USGA Qualifying Rounds.

## Instructions for Starting Officials

- Perform a roll-call by calling players for instructions ten minutes prior to their scheduled tee-time. Introduce yourself to the players and make sure they meet each other.
- Coordinate with MGA staff and keep them informed about players not reporting to the Starting Tee for their scheduled tee-time.
- Call the players attention to the notices on the starting table, particularly the conditions established for the competition.

### ***Specifically Point Out:***

- That we are playing USGA Rules. Throw in a phrase like, “that means playing it down”, to eliminate any doubts.
  - The color of the tee markers they are playing from.
  - Local Rules and Conditions of Competition.
  - Drop Zones and whether or not they are in effect.
  - Internal Boundaries between holes.
  - One Ball Rule and whether or not it is in effect.
  - Whether or not Electronic Measuring Devices are permitted.
- Distribute the official MGA scorecard to players and markers.
  - Remind players to count the clubs in their bag and to mark their ball with an identification mark.
  - Instruct the players of the order of play.

- Point out Pace of Play policy in effect for the tournament.
- Mark the Pairings with the actual starting time for each group; also mark all Withdrawals (WD's) and Did Not Shows (DNS's).
- Make every effort to keep the tables at the starting tees as clean as possible. It is important that each contestant see and read the notices of the day on the starting table. Committee Members are asked to keep such items as briefcases, jackets, rain gear, food and beverages off these tables.
- Spectators and friends are **not** permitted to sit with Committee Members at the starter's table as such distractions can affect a rules official's performance.

### **Late Appearance for Start of Play**

- Under Rule 6-3a, if the player arrives at his starting point, ready to play, within five minutes of his starting time, the penalty for failure to start on time is **loss of first hole in match play or two strokes at the first hole in stroke play**. Otherwise the penalty for breach of this rule is **disqualification**. Unless the Committee determines that exceptional circumstances have prevented a player from starting on time, there is no penalty.
- The determination as to whether a player has a valid excuse for being late is the sole responsibility of the Rules and Competitions Committee, and all rules officials must refer such matters to a member of this Committee.

## Instructions for “On-Course” Rules Officials

“On-Course” Rules Officials are assigned to cover specific hole(s) on the golf course. Committee Members should determine the most appropriate spot to position themselves on their assigned hole.

- “On-Course” Rules Officials responsibilities include:
  - Find out if your hole has any ball drops, ground under repair, out of bounds, obstructions or water hazards in order to anticipate rulings.
  - Be a ball spotter and inform players with hand signals indicating the status of their ball.
  - Be prepared to assist players in search for their ball.
  - Keep in touch with the field as they play through your assigned hole. Mark the time players arrive at the tee and complete play of the hole.
  - Stay visible but out of the way. Don’t position yourself too close to landing areas, tees or greens.
  - Do not roam your assigned hole. Keep your movement to a minimum.
  - Never drive golf carts in restricted areas.
  - Never leave keys or radios in an unattended golf cart.

# How to Referee

## General

Golf is unique compared to other games and, accordingly, so is the role of the golf referee. In sports such as basketball and football where players are tempted, and often even encouraged, to test the limits of the rules to see what they can “get away with”, referees are employed to call out these infractions and penalize the guilty parties. Referees in most sports play a *reactive* role. But golf is a game played in the true spirit of sportsmanship, in which the players are charged with policing their own behavior and assessing penalties on themselves. As per, referees are employed to assist players in determining questions of fact and applying the Rules of Golf. Referees in golf play a *proactive* role. It is not in the spirit of officiating to wait until a Rule has been breached to assess a penalty, but rather to advise the players in question as to proper procedure so as to *avoid* breaches of the Rules.

Since the principal duty of a referee is to decide questions of fact and apply the Rules of Golf, he plays an important role in the conduct of a match. A referee should be keenly alert at all times in order to observe accurately and interpret correctly all the events that may occur during a round.

Furthermore, there is the delicate matter of the manner in which a referee performs his duties to observe and to interpret. It is the role of the referee to help ensure that a match will be fairly played under sporting conditions. A strong referee understands this role and takes care in approaching it with the proper method. That is, a referee

must avoid being brusque or meddlesome; a referee must sense when to talk to a player and when to be silent. A referee must always strive to achieve a certain balance: he must remain present but not intrusive, helpful but not punitive, observant but not overbearing.

### **Before Play Begins**

The procedure of a referee before a match will depend a great deal upon the experience of the players. If both are seasoned veterans who have played in matches with referees, it is usually sufficient to ask each player to identify the ball he will be using and whether he has counted his clubs; the referee should note the brand of ball of each player and the distinctive mark used by each player to identify his ball. If the players are inexperienced, it is a good idea to remind them of the duties of a referee. Principally that he has not been assigned just to impose penalties, but rather to be of assistance to the players, and that they should call on him whenever they may be doubtful as to the correct procedure. Identification of the player's ball can become very important, and the referee should not depend wholly upon the player to decide this question of fact. Be particularly alert when a play puts a second ball into play under the Rules. The referee should ask whether the player will be able to identify the two balls. It is in the player's best interest to be cooperative, as a ball that a player is unable to identify becomes a lost ball (see Definition of "Lost Ball").

### **The Observer**

A referee should become acquainted with the observer, if one has been appointed, and ensure they have coordinated their roles

appropriately (see Definition of “Observer”). Usually it is best for the observer to work ahead of the match as much as possible. The referee should stay close to the players at all times so that he can be readily available to answer questions at any time.

By stationing himself usually in the area where the ball may be expected to come to rest, an observer will be in a position to determine questions of fact which the referee, from his position near the players, would not be able to assess. For example, it is always useful to know before going forward whether a player’s ball is out of bounds or in a water hazard.

Since the play of each ball should be observed, when both players are in difficulty on opposite sides of the hole it is desirable for the observer to station himself by one of the balls if possible. Preferably, he should watch the ball to be played first, so that he can more easily resume his normal position ahead of play.

To help ensure fair play, it is a duty of a referee to guard against potential interference by spectators. Such interference occurs most frequently around the putting green. An observer can be of great assistance by moving spectators away from places where a ball may go, asking spectators to be alert, and reminding them to be respectful of other play on the course. Very often an observer is in a better position to communicate to spectators, making their services indispensable to the referee.

## **On The Tee**

On each teeing ground the referee should station himself in a position to determine whether players have teed within the limits of the teeing ground. Knowledge of this information is pertinent should a player claim his opponent played his ball from outside the teeing ground and request the opponent replay his tee shot. Although a referee cannot initially instruct a player to play from within the limits of the teeing ground, there is no reason for him to watch a player tee and play his ball from outside the limits without giving him a warning such as “Your ball is a little ahead of the markers.”

This brings up the question of the referee’s ethical position when he sees a player about to commit an infraction of the Rules. As has been said, a referee is assigned to a match for the purpose of ensuring that it will be played under sporting conditions. A referee should step in and advise a player if he is about to breach a Rule with or without intent to do so. It would be contrary to the spirit of fair play that pervades golf should a referee fail to inform a player of his rights and obligations under the Rules and then call a penalty for a breach he could have prevented.

The following are a few of many examples of situations and the suggested procedure to which this policy might be applied:

1. Lifting a loose impediment in a hazard: the referee should advise the player that his ball is in a hazard.
2. Improper dropping procedure: The referee should call attention to what the player is doing wrong.

3. Play of a second ball without stating the purpose: The referee should ask the player if it is his intention to play the ball provisionally.
4. Incorrect order of play in foursomes: The referee should ask the player if he is playing in correct order.

### **Determining Who is Away**

After players have left the teeing ground, the referee should proceed to a position between the two balls, arriving there ahead of the players in order to save some time by deciding which ball is away before they are ready to play.

Around the putting green, the order of play can be of great interest to the players. Again, to avoid delay, the referee should arrive at the putting green ahead of the players, and if there is any doubt he should proceed at once to the hole to see who is away. If the matter cannot be determined visually, the distance to each ball should be paced off. To resolve any further doubt, the referees should be equipped with a string, such as "Gotcha String", or tape for accurate measurements. For short distances the flagstick may be used, but there is less danger of doing damage to the putting surface by the using string or tape. In any case, measurement should, if possible, be made just to one side of the line of the player's putt.

Whenever it is impractical to decide which ball is away anywhere on the course, the matter should be determined by the tossing of a coin.

## **Being in Position to See Ball Played**

After the tee shot, one of the very important questions of fact which may confront a referee is whether a ball has been moved by the player. To determine this, the referee (or his observer) should always be in a position to have clear view of the ball before and after address. This allows him to determine whether a ball has in fact moved, or if it merely oscillated and returned to its original position.

## **Improving the Lie**

Referees should be acutely perceptive to potential breaches of Rule 13-2. If a player has improved his lie by smoothing out irregularities, as in sandy soil, or if he has improved his stance or area of intended swing, the referee must call a penalty. It should be noted that Rule 13-2 permits grounding the club only lightly.

Occasionally, a player may be careless in his observance of this Rule. If there has been no breach, the referee is still encouraged to caution the player so as to minimize the possibility of future infractions. The referee can accomplish this by pointing out to the player that although no breach has occurred, he wants to assure himself that the player is familiar with the Rule.

Knowledge of Rule 13-2 is crucial for a referee especially when a player's ball comes to rest in bushes or small trees. Here the referee must determine how much the player may disturb the interfering growth in the process of fairly taking his stance to play the stroke. Generally speaking, the referee can be guided by the principle that anything occupying the space in which the player wishes to stand may be moved to one side but not stepped upon or moved more

than necessary for the player to take his position. The referee should watch the player and guide him in his actions.

### **In a Hazard**

Another challenge for the referee occurs when he must decide whether a player has touched the surface of the ground or water with his club or otherwise before playing from a bunker or water hazard. Whether or not he has achieved an advantage, Rule 13-4b is specific in stating that the ground in a hazard must not be touched with the player's hand or club. If the referee observes a few grains of sand fall from the top of a sandy ridge in the bunker, he may assume that it was caused by the motion of the air and not the club; but if the backward movement of the club leaves any mark upon the ground, it is clear that a breach has occurred.

### **On the Putting Green**

On reaching the putting green, the referee should select a position from which he can watch the play without interference to the gallery.

More decisions are likely to be required on the putting green than on other parts of the course. If a ball has been displaced, the referee should locate the spot from which it has been moved. When a ball is lifted due to interference with play, the referee should assure himself that it is correctly replaced. A possible difficulty here is the player's failure to measure over from a ball-marker placed to one side of the location of the ball. When a ball mark is repaired by a player, the referee should be sure that it is a ball mark and that the repair does not extend beyond the damage made by the impact of

the ball. The referee must watch to see that players do not touch the lines of their putts except for the removal of loose impediments or movable obstructions, or to repair ball marks or to lift the ball. When a ball stops on the lip of the hole, the referee may have to decide, first, whether it overhangs the edge of the hole, and second, whether the player has used the allowable “ten seconds” to determine whether the ball is at rest. If the ball falls in after the ten-second period has expired, the player incurs a penalty stroke – Rule 16-2.

One especially sensitive situation on the putting green relates to the concession of putts. Important matches have been lost when a player, after missing a putt for a win, removes his ball from near the hole without holing out and without concession by the opponent. In such a case, the referee should make certain whether the putt has been conceded.

### **Handling Awkward Situations**

Referees may at times be faced with an awkward situation. Since these situations can differ so greatly from one to the other, there is no set formula for addressing them. However, it is important and helpful to proceed with tact and good judgment, and to adhere to the following suggestions.

First, be firm and positive, but take plenty of time. It is always wise to consult the “Rules of Golf” book. Even if the referee is certain of the Rule, it may help to let the players read it. Frequently, in reaching a decision, it is crucial to determine the player’s intent. Before any discussion can develop, the first order of business often

should be the determination of this fact. To inquire about the player's intention can be very useful as a routine approach to any questionable action, as, for example, if the player should appear to test the depth of sand in a bunker or to touch the line of his putt when there are no visible loose impediments to be removed.

Finally, there are the difficult questions of fact raised by casual water and interference by an obstruction. To be deemed casual water, a temporary accumulation of water must be visible on the surface of the ground before or after the player takes his stance, under normal pressure of that player's weight. As for interference by an obstruction, the interference must be physical for the player to invoke the Rule. The Rule is not intended to cover mental interference or interference established by wild contortions.

### **Stroke Play**

With two important exceptions, the procedure a referee should follow for stroke play is very similar to that for match play. He should work with his observer, follow play, and call penalties with the same alertness as for match play. He should be equally interested in ensuring that the part of the competition for which he is responsible is fairly played under sporting conditions.

The first adjustment a referee must make in covering stroke play concerns the difference in the Rules for match play and stroke play. The following are some of the most important differences: in stroke play, a stroke must be replayed if the ball is not played from within the teeing ground; determination of the order of play becomes less

important; concession of putts is eliminated; and the play of every hole must be completed.

The second important point of difference in stroke play in relation to match play is that the referee is not burdened with an absolute necessity of reaching all decisions on the course. By having the competitor take advantage of the right in stroke play to complete the play of a hole with two balls (Rule 3-3), the referee can pass the final decision to the Committee in charge of the competition. It is for this reason that the Rules give the Committee the right to limit a referee's duties in stroke play (Rule 33-1). The Committee may even wish to go further and to retain for itself the right to make all decisions.

## Instructions for Scorecard Collection Officials

- Mark the time that players complete play and be visible in order to invite them to the Scorecard Collection Area.
- Remind players of their responsibility to report their hole-by-hole scores and the requirement that the player **and** their marker must sign the scorecard.
- Inform players about the number of qualifying spots. **Do not guess the cut line** as this can create confusion. If there is a playoff, remind players to remain near the score board for any announcements.
- Inquire if there were any Rules issues that possibly occurred during the round.
- Request that players remain in the scorecard collection area while tallying each players score. If a discrepancy exists and is due solely to an addition mistake, have the player correct the total. ***Any other error on the scorecard should be promptly brought to the attention of a member of the Rules and Competitions Committee.***
- Each scorecard should be initialed by the Scorecard Collection Official with a colored pen to indicate that the card is an official scorecard and that the total score has been verified.
- All scorecards, including those marked “No Card” or “Withdrawal” must be sent to the Scoreboard for posting.
- Keep caddies and spectators away from the scorecard collection area.

## Instructions for Scoreboard Calligraphers

- **Scoreboard Calligraphers** are assigned to post scores from the official scorecards onto the scoreboard.
- Their responsibilities include:
  - Double-check the addition of the Scorecard Collection Official.
  - Make sure your handwriting is legible.
  - Indicate that the score has been posted on the scoreboard by checking the appropriate spot on the official scorecard.
  - Do not guess the cut; this can create confusion.



# **Applying the Rules**

## APPLYING THE RULES

Rules Decisions relating to play on the course should be made by an MGA Committee Member provided they are **absolutely sure** of their ruling and only after consulting their Rules of Golf book. It is a good officiating technique to point out to the player the applicable Rule of Golf in the book.

Each Committee Member should highlight a Rules of Golf book that they will carry with them to each tournament. A personalized Rules of Golf book will increase familiarity with the Rules and facilitate locating the applicable rule quickly. Committee Members should also seriously consider purchasing a current copy of Decisions on The Rules of Golf book. The better informed a rules official is, the better they can serve the game of golf.

Issues with the following Rules are most frequently encountered by officials at a golf tournament. Consequently, Committee Members should be thoroughly familiar with these Rules and their points of emphasis:

- Lifting, Dropping and Placing (Rule 20)
- Obstructions (Rule 24)
- Casual Water, Ground Under Repair (Rule 25)
- Water Hazard (Rule 26)
- Ball Lost or Out-of-Bounds; Provisional Ball (Rule 27)
- Ball Unplayable (Rule 28)

Rules Decisions relating to any of the following matters may be made **only** by the Rules and Competitions Committee:

- Disqualification
- Penalty for delay in start of play
- Slow play
- Scorecard infractions

The MGA's guidelines for officials to apply The Rules of Golf are as follows:

- Don't intrude in a situation. Ask if you can be of assistance.
- Determine the facts of the situation and confirm with the players involved.
- Walk a player through their alternatives and explain their options.
- Once you've communicated your ruling, step away, but stay close enough to observe procedure.
- If a rules official is unable to reach a decision on the course, they should advise the player in stroke play to proceed under the second ball provision (Rule 3-3).
- Remember that we're trying to prevent penalties, **not** assess them.
- Radio transmission should be kept brief and to the point.
- **Use your radio earpieces** as players should **never** hear Committee Member conversations.



# **Pace of Play**

## PACE OF PLAY

MGA Committee Members on the course should be aware of a player's ***Pace of Play*** (see official MGA Pace of Play Policy on following page).

- The most obvious indication of possible slow play is when there is more than one hole open ahead of a playing group.
- Determine whether the group in question started play on time and check their elapsed time.
- Advise a member of the MGA Championship Department staff of the situation and follow their recommendation.
- When directed by an MGA Championship Department staff member to contact a group of players who appear to be playing slowly, remember that there may be a justified reason for their place in the field. Ask them to account for the open hole(s) and to attempt to close the gap.
- MGA Committee Members must use **extreme** tact when approaching a group of players about slow play. ***There is no more delicate subject for a rules official.***
- Keep the MGA Championship Department staff informed as the situation continues. **Do not penalize the players.** This is the province of Rules and Competitions Committee.

## **Pace of Play – Stroke Play vs. Match Play**

- Stroke Play – Every Referee is expected to be aware of pace of play. The Referee should time how long a ruling, a search for a lost ball or other legitimate delay takes with his/her hole and note any time of delay, reason and the player (s) involved in case the group is in breach of the Pace of Play Policy.
- Match Play – The Referee may encourage the players to speed up when they are approaching being out of position. A Referee shall time how long a ruling, search for a lost ball or other legitimate delay takes and inform the OIC/SIC.

# MGA PACE OF PLAY POLICY

It is a condition of the competition that "the player shall play **without undue delay** and in accordance with any **Pace of Play (PoP) guidelines** that the Committee may establish" and with the prescribed **penalties for slow play**.

It is the player's responsibility to know their group's position relative to the published PoP and to ensure they play within the maximum scheduled limits. Failure to play within the PoP guidelines will result in a penalty unless the penalty is appealed and the Committee upholds the appeal. Appeals will only be considered if the player(s) have been: delayed by the Committee or; delayed by circumstances beyond control of the player or the group or; delayed because of another player in the group.

## Definition of "Out of Position"

The first group to start will be considered **Out of Position** if the group is behind the schedule prepared by the Committee. Any subsequent group is out of position when it:

- a) is taking more than the maximum scheduled time to play, and
- b) reaches a par-3 hole that is clear of all play and all players in the preceding group have played their strokes from the teeing ground of the next hole or
- c) reaches a par-4 or par-5 hole which is clear of all play or becomes clear of all play before all players in the group have played all of their strokes from the teeing ground.

**Warnings** - When practicable, the Committee will advise a group that it is Out of Position. The Committee will give a group advance notification that it is to be timed; however, an individual player may be timed without having first received a warning.

## Timing

When a group is Out of Position, each player must:

- a) play any stroke within 40 seconds after the timing of such stroke begins and
- b) play all of his strokes on a given hole in an aggregate time that does not exceed the average time per stroke (30 seconds) by more than 10 seconds.

### **Example:**

Average time per stroke: 30 seconds

<u>Score on hole</u>	<u>Average</u>	<u>Penalty</u>
3	90 seconds	101 seconds
4	120 seconds	131 seconds
5	150 seconds	161 seconds

**Note:** For these purposes, tap-in putts of less than two feet will not count as part of a player's score for the hole, but the player will be given an additional 10 seconds to complete the hole if that condition applies.

The timing of a player's stroke will begin when he has had reasonable opportunity to reach his ball, it is his turn to play and he can play without interference or distraction. On the putting green, timing will begin after a player has had a reasonable amount of time to mark, lift, clean and replace his ball, repair his ball mark and others on his line of putt and remove loose impediments on his line of putt. Time spent determining yardages as well as time spent looking at the line of putt will count as part of the time taken for the next stroke.

## Penalties

If a group is being timed, any player who takes more than 40 seconds to play a stroke or exceeds the average amount of time allotted for total strokes taken is subject to the following penalties:

### **Stroke Play:**

- One bad time exceeding the allotted time: **warning**
- Second bad time: **one stroke penalty**
- Third bad time: **additional two stroke penalty**
- Fourth bad time: **disqualification**

### **Match Play:**

- One bad time exceeding the allotted time: **warning**
- Second bad time: **loss of hole penalty**
- Third bad time: **disqualification**

If a group being timed regains its proper position, any previous bad timing will be carried over for the remainder of the round in the event that the group requires additional timing. Also, if a ruling or other uncontrollable delay causes a group to lose its position, the group is expected to regain its position within a reasonable time



**Evacuation Plan,  
Discontinuance/  
Resumption of Play**

## **EVACUATION PLAN, DISCONTINUANCE/RESUMPTION OF PLAY**

MGA Staff and Club Staff will monitor for potential inclement weather. Play will continue until the air-horns are sounded indicating play is suspended:

- **ONE PROLONGED NOTE**, for a dangerous situation (e.g., lightning).
- **THREE CONSECUTIVE NOTES**, repeated for a non-dangerous situation (e.g., darkness, course is unplayable).
- **TWO SHORT NOTES**, repeated signal resumption of play.

### **Discontinuance of Play**

1. Referees will be alerted via radio by MGA staff prior to any discontinuance of play.
2. MGA staff will sound the air-horns. During the countdown, Referees may notify players that the air-horn is about to sound (to prevent the horn going off in a player's backswing).
3. Referees should inform players as to the type of discontinuance. For a dangerous situation, do not allow any player to play a stroke (see Note to Rule 6-8b).
4. If discontinuance is for a non-dangerous situation, players may elect to stop play or finish the hole they are playing (Rule 6-8b).

5. Upon discontinuance of play, Referees are to assist by directing players, caddies and volunteers to the appropriate course evacuation site – see Course Evacuation Plan.
6. Proceed to designated evacuation shelter with players in your group and keep them informed during the suspension.

### **Resumption of Play**

1. Once the suspension is declared over and play is to resume, return to the appropriate evacuation vehicle parked at the designated clubhouse area.
2. The group will return to their course position and wait for instructions over the radio. Assist players in getting their balls back in play, if necessary.
3. After all players are in position, MGA officials will be directed to sound the air-horns.
4. **TWO SHORT NOTES** of the air-horns, *repeated*, will signal resumption of play.

### **Discontinuance of Play and Resumption of Play Procedures for the Following Day**

In the event that play is suspended for the day prior to the completion of a round and will be resumed on a following day, please proceed as follows:

1. DO NOT collect all three competitors score cards, if during stroke play.
2. Inform players when play will resume, when practice facilities will be open and where they need to report for transportation back onto the golf course (if necessary) the next morning.
3. Return the official match play score card (if in match play) to MGA Staff.
4. Check with MGA staff to confirm whether or not you will be able to resume with the group/match the next morning.
5. Return the following morning and retrieve the official match play score card (if in match play) to MGA Staff.

## **Suspension/Resumption of Play Reminders**

### **Practice:**

- When play is suspended for a dangerous situation, all practice areas are closed until the Committee has declared them open. [Condition of Competition]
- During a suspension of play for a dangerous situation, after the Committee orders the practice areas opened, a player may practice on the practice range. [Rule 7-2]
- During a suspension of play for a dangerous situation, after the Committee orders the practice areas opened, if a player is between the play of two holes, he/she may practice putting or chipping on or near the putting green of the last hole played,

the practice putting green or the teeing ground of the next hole to be played [Rule 7-2].

- During a suspension of play other than for a dangerous situation, unless the Committee orders the practice areas closed, a player may practice on the practice range. [Rule 7-2]
- During a suspension of play other than for a dangerous situation, unless the Committee orders the practice areas closed, if a player is between the play of two holes, he/she may practice putting or chipping on or near the putting green of the hole last played, the practice putting green or the teeing ground of the next hole to be played. [Rule 7-2]
- While waiting to resume play of a hole not yet completed, either during the suspension or after resumption has been ordered, a practice stroke may not be played on the course. [Rule 7-2]
- When the Committee orders play resumed at a specific time and that time has occurred, all practice on practice facilities (except any practice putting green) by players who discontinued play must cease and those players are limited to practicing in accordance with Rule 7-2. [Decision 7-2/12]

### **Clubs:**

- When the player resumes play, he/she is limited to the clubs selected for the round that was suspended except that, if he/she started with fewer than 14 clubs, he/she may add any number provided his/her total number does not exceed 14. [Rule 4-4a].
- If while play is suspended, a club is damaged as a result of any action other than abuse and the club is unfit for play by being

substantially damaged, it may be replaced with any club. [Rule 4-3a and Decision 4-3/1]

### **Ball:**

- If the ball was not lifted, he/she may do so and may clean it or substitute another ball. In either case the ball (or substituted ball) is replaced on the spot from which it was lifted – Rule 6-8d(ii).
- When the player resumes play, he/she may substitute a ball at any time prior to his/her next stroke, even if he/she has dropped or placed the original ball according to a relief procedure taken either before or after resumption of play. [Decision 6-8d/3]
- If the spot where a ball is to be placed is impossible to determine [e.g., original ball or ball-marker has been moved], the spot must be estimated and the ball placed on the estimated spot; Rule 20-3c does not apply. [Note to Rule 6-8d]

### **Altered Lies:**

- If the lie of the original ball has been altered through natural causes [e.g. wind, rain and water], the player must accept those conditions; Rule 20-3b does not apply. [Decision 6-8d/1]
- If the lie of the original ball was in a bunker and the bunker has been prepared by the greenkeeping staff, the original lie must be recreated. [Decision 6-8d/2]
- In all cases the ball is placed. [Rule 6-8d(i)]



# **Policies & Procedures**

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## **Fog Policy**

Whether to commence or continue play in a stipulated round when fog is present is a difficult decision. Fog, by its very nature, is not easy to forecast, and it is challenging to predict when it will set in or lift.

From a playability standpoint, it is the MGA's policy to commence/continue play in a stipulated round if the landing zones for all shots to be played are visible to the players. In this regard, tee shots requiring the use of drivers may present the most difficult challenge since such shots cover the most distance. Things such as fairway lines, hazards, trees, etc., in the drive zone must be visible to a large extent. However, the fact that visibility is partially obscured by fog such that the entire flight of the ball is not possible does not generally require a decision to delay/suspend play.

In situations where two separate courses are being used (e.g. U.S. Open Sectional), in the vast majority of cases if one course delays/suspends play, the other must, too. This should apply (i) whether the courses are near each other, and (ii) no matter the reason for delay/suspension (i.e., fog, lightning, etc.). Acting otherwise could present too many scenarios where players are treated differently and perhaps unfairly.

## Squeegee Policy

The following are options available to the Committee in the event of heavy rain creating casual water on any putting green:

- a) squeegee nothing and let the player decide whether to proceed under Rule 25-1b(iii);
- b) squeegee putting green between groups. In some cases it may be necessary to remove the flagstick and squeegee the green while a group is waiting to play;
- c) squeegee putting green (not specific lines of putt/play) after a group has played to green;
- d) at the player's request, squeegee his line of putt (including a reasonable distance beyond the line, i.e. at least 3 feet,) when the ball lies on the green; or
- e) squeegee a player's line of play when casual water on the putting green materially affects the type of shot the player intends to play, e.g., a putt from off the green or a running chip shot, but only on the authority of an MGA Rules Committee official.

Note: In exceptional circumstances any combination of the above may be utilized.

## **“Call-Up” Policy**

When a wait develops on the teeing ground of a par-3 or drivable par-4, the Committee may wish to institute a “call-up” to help alleviate an impending pace of play problem, and should do its best to anticipate such situations. Following are some guidelines to consider regarding a “call-up”.

### **When to Implement**

A “call-up” would be warranted when there is a full group wait on a par-3 or drivable par-4 hole and it is apparent that the wait will increase with subsequent groups. A full group wait occurs when the proceeding group arrives at the tee immediately after the preceding group has left the tee.

### **How to Implement**

When it becomes necessary to implement the “call-up” policy, the following procedure will be put into place by the Referee assigned to the hole in question, in coordination with the walking Referees, if applicable. The Staff in Charge should be notified that a “call-up” is being implemented.

- A Referee should be present at the teeing ground and, if applicable, the walking Referee with the preceding group should be at the putting green.
- The first waiting group (or the group who has played their first strokes and which has yet to arrive at the putting green) should be informed that once all players’ balls come to rest on the putting green, they will be asked to mark and lift their balls and

to step aside to allow the following group to play from the teeing ground.

- Once the following group has played from the teeing ground, the group on the putting green may then replace their balls and proceed to play out the hole.
- If a ball from a following group comes to rest on the putting green and it potentially interferes or assists with play, Rule 22 applies and it should be marked and lifted.
- Once the wait has been eliminated and the relative positions of following groups indicate that a “back-up” is not imminent, the Referee should determine whether or not to discontinue with the “call-up” procedure. The Staff in Charge should be notified that the “call-up” procedure has been discontinued.