



## REGULATIONS GOVERNING THE ISSUE OF PRIZES – Under the Rules of Amateur Status

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*The following is for the information of golf clubs, event organisers, and amateur golfers in general. It covers regular golf competitions as well as longest drive, putting, hole-in-one, and other similar events.*

### A. THE GOVERNING BODY

Golf Australia (GA) is the governing body for the Rules of Amateur Status in Australia. The Rules of Amateur Status are formulated by the international governing bodies for golf – The R&A and the United States Golf Association. GA implements the position of The R&A and the USGA.

### B. AMATEUR STATUS

Amateur Status is a global condition of eligibility for playing in golf competitions as an Amateur golfer. A person who acts contrary to the Rules may forfeit their status as an Amateur golfer and as a result be ineligible to play in Amateur competitions.

Golf is almost unique in all of sport in that it features an effective system of handicapping which enables any player to compete on equal terms (and on the same field of play) with any other player. This benefit arguably is golf's greatest asset. It is reliant not only upon the robustness of the handicap calculation formulas but upon the confidence a competitor has in the integrity of the handicaps of their fellow players.

It is GA's experience that significant financial incentive in the amateur game leads directly to real or perceived handicap manipulation and to players losing faith in the integrity of the handicaps of other players. If left unchecked, this would do substantial damage to the experience of hundreds of thousands of Australian club golfers as well as to the game itself.

Through appropriate limits and restrictions, the Rules of Amateur Status are intended to ensure amateur golfers focus on the game's challenges and inherent rewards, rather than on financial gain. They also protect golf clubs of limited financial means from having to expend increasing amounts of revenue in order to compete with the prize offerings of other competition organisers.

At the elite level, the Rules of Amateur Status create a category of golf that GA believes to be the most effective possible high performance pathway for the next generation of the game's stars. GA believes its high performance program compares favourably with that of any other sport in Australia. There are few other high-profile global sports that have had the constant influx over the years of emerging young Australian stars as has golf on the world stage. The development tier that elite amateur competition provides is an integral component of GA's high performance program.

### C. CONFORMING & NON-CONFORMING PRIZES

- **Maximum Prize Value – \$1200.** In Australia, the maximum retail value of a prize or prizes that can be accepted by an amateur golfer for any event or series of events in any one tournament, exhibition, or event is \$1200. (Exception: See section C.vi regarding hole-in-one competitions.)
- **Amateurs Playing for Prize Money.** Money prizes of any amount cannot be accepted by amateur golfers (exceptions: see section C.vi regarding hole-in-one competitions, and also section D). In fact it is a breach of the Rules to play in a competition where cash or its equivalent is on offer to amateur golfers – a breach is not restricted to winning such a prize (although note section C.v.4 and section D).
- **Prize Money to Charity.** An amateur golfer may participate in an event where prize money or its equivalent is donated to a recognised charity, provided the approval of Golf Australia is obtained in advance by the organiser.

#### i) Symbolic Prizes

Symbolic prizes are exempt from the above prize limits. Symbolic prizes are considered to have value only to the recipient. They may be awarded as prizes even if the value exceeds \$1200, provided they are permanently and distinctively engraved. Trophies made of gold, silver, ceramic, glass or the like that are not permanently and distinctively engraved are not considered to be symbolic prizes and are subject to the normal prize limits.

Symbolic prizes or awards must not be used as a means to circumvent the Rules.

Prizes for functional purposes such as watches, music systems, luggage, golf bags, clothing or other merchandise, are not symbolic prizes even if they are permanently and distinctively engraved or marked.

#### ii) Retail Value

This is the normal recommended selling price at which merchandise is available to anyone at a retail source over a reasonable period of time. Specially-discounted or short-term offers, or those restricted to certain customers, do not fall within this definition.

#### iii) Prize Vouchers

The guidelines on prize vouchers are as follows:

- If the value of the voucher is, say \$200, the organising committee may, at its discretion, issue two vouchers for \$100, four vouchers for \$50, etc, if it considers that these would be simpler to administer.
- The Rules permit organising committees to offer vouchers (up to a value of \$1200) for any of the following:
  - **Note: The Rules do not permit cash prizes of any amount to be on offer for amateur golfers except as described in section C.vi regarding holes-in-one, and in section D.**
  - Goods & services from a pro shop or clubhouse (including food & beverage, whether packaged or unpackaged).
  - For crediting to a club account (including to pay for items that have been purchased prior to the winning of the voucher). Vouchers may also be redeemed for use of a practice area, competition fees, coaching, golf cart hire, green fees.
  - Membership fees.
  - For any specific item (or for items generally) from a retail outlet (includes for example Myer or David Jones).
  - Gift cards or gift vouchers or the like for redemption at any retail outlet.
  - Goods available from a butchery, bakery, grocery, etc.
  - Electricity accounts, telephone accounts and other utilities.
  - Petrol.
  - Feel free to contact us with queries on other items.

#### iv) Team Competitions

In a foursome, four-ball or other team competition, each player may individually accept a prize up to the limit of \$1200, however the players may not jointly accept one prize worth over the limit of \$1200.

#### v) Miscellaneous pertinent R&A Decisions

1. A prize (irrespective of value) of an expenses paid trip to compete in a golf competition cannot be accepted. (With GA approval, certain events qualify for the sponsor to pay the expenses of competitors in handicap events – contact GA for further details.)
2. A prize of a place in a Pro-Am can be accepted provided the Pro-Am's normal entry fee does not exceed the prize limits.
3. The cumulative value of all prizes, other than for a hole-in-one, won by one golfer relating to the overall tournament (eg gross, net, first nine, nearest-the-pin), must not exceed the prize limits.

#### vi) Hole-in-one Prizes

There is no limit to the value of a prize (includes cash prizes) that may be offered for achieving a hole-in-one provided in all cases that the length of the shot is at least 50 yards. For the avoidance of doubt, there is no limit to the value of a prize that may be offered for achieving a hole-in-one with a shot of at least 50 yards in any of the following circumstances:

- A putt.
- A hole-in-one achieved in an amateur competition.
- A hole-in-one made during contests held outside a round of golf.
- A hole-in-one made in a multiple-entry contest, or in a contest conducted other than on a golf course (e.g., on a driving range, golf simulator, or putting green).
- **Note:** Players competing for cash prizes in a hole-in-one contest of less than 50 yards are not considered to be “playing for prize money”. Consequently only a player who accepts such a prize will be considered to have breached the Rules.

### **vii) Long-Driving, Putting, Non-Conforming Hole-in-One Competitions, and Similar Events**

The retail value of prizes that can be accepted for such competitions is \$1200.

### **D. RAFFLES, PRIZE DRAWS, SWEEPSTAKES, GAMBLING**

The Rules do not apply to raffles or prize draws run in conjunction with a golf event provided that:

- It is a genuine draw.
- It is open to a substantial number of people.
- Golf skill is not a factor in being able to participate in the draw. If a raffle or prize draw is limited to players to have achieved a certain standard in a golf event or a specific feat (such as a longest drive or nearest-the-pin), golf skill would be an entry requirement and when the retail value of such a raffle or draw prize is added to any other prize won by the same person in the same event, this must not total an amount in excess of \$1200. Exception: The limits do not apply to entrants in a raffle who have qualified by making a hole-in-one.
- It is not a subterfuge for circumventing the Rules (for example as would be the case where a prize draw is structured or used to lure elite-level players to compete in an event).

Forms of gambling or wagering where there is a requirement for players to participate (eg compulsory sweepstakes) or that have the potential to involve considerable sums of money (eg calcuttas and auction sweepstakes – where players or teams are sold by auction) may be considered by a Governing Body to be contrary to the purpose of the Rules (Rule 7-2). Prize offerings for events such as nearest-the-hole competitions may in some circumstances be considered to be analogous to a sweepstake.

It is not practical to define unacceptable forms of gambling or wagering precisely, but features that would be consistent with unacceptable gambling or wagering include:

- non-players being able to participate in the gambling or wagering;
- amounts of money that could be considered excessive; and
- reason to believe that the gambling or wagering has given or may give rise to abuses of the Rules of play or manipulation of handicaps to the detriment of the integrity of the game.

An amateur golfer's participation in unacceptable gambling or wagering may be considered contrary to the purpose of the Rules (Rule 7-2) and may endanger their Amateur Status.

### **E. SCOPE OF THE APPLICATION OF THE RULES**

The Rules do not apply to a challenge that is not normally encountered on a golf course provided that challenge is being staged in conjunction with an event where golf is not the major factor in attracting people to the event as a whole. For example, if the challenge involves pitching a ball into a bucket or striking a moving target and it is being staged at a carnival or fund-raising event, the Rules of Amateur Status would not apply. However if the same challenge was being held at a golf equipment exhibition, the Rules of Amateur Status would apply.

### **F. NON-CONFORMING PRIZE DONATED TO CHARITY BY SPONSOR**

If an amateur golfer wins a prize that does not conform with the Rules of Amateur Status, they may suggest that the competition organiser or the sponsor donates the prize to a recognised charity. The competition organiser or the sponsor must be under no obligation to do so, and if they do, the golfer must not benefit directly or indirectly from the donation (for example, the golfer would be breaching the Rules of Amateur Status if they were to claim the donation as a tax deduction).

### **G. BREACHES OF RULES**

Breaches of Amateur Status Rules will be handled by GA or the relevant State authority, whether or not the golfer is a member of an affiliated club. If GA is satisfied that an amateur golfer has knowingly breached the Rules by accepting an illegal prize, the golfer's amateur status will be forfeited. A period of up to two years awaiting reinstatement applies for accepting a prize of excessive value.

### **H. AFFILIATED CLUBS**

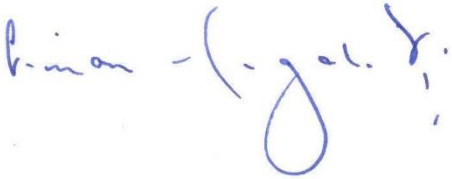
When GA or the relevant State authority receives advice that an improper prize is on offer at an affiliated club, that club will be requested to have the prize withdrawn, irrespective of the time and cost invested by the organiser in promoting the event, or the worthiness of any charity involved.

Where an affiliated club is aware of, but makes no effort to discourage, a competition on its course for an excessive prize (other than for a non-conforming hole-in-one competition), the relevant State authority would consider appropriate sanctions on that club, the ultimate being one of disaffiliation.

Clubs are urged to ensure that outside users of their facilities provide management with copies of entry forms and publicity releases as well as a list and value of all prizes that are proposed to be on offer. A copy of this document should be provided to the organiser.

**If any doubt exists as to the legality of any prize, details should immediately be sent to the relevant State authority or to GA for clarification so as to avoid any embarrassment.**

GA hopes this resource is useful to all interested parties and we strongly urge club officials and event organisers to familiarise themselves with the contents.



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