



tee time

February 2017

NEWSLETTER OF THE WELLINGTON GOLF REFEREES ASSOCIATION INC.



THE YEAR AHEAD

Our **WGRA Annual General Meeting** will be held at Shandon on Monday 27 March at 7pm. Please come along. The business part of the meeting is usually short and sweet but we invariably have some lively discussion on Rules incidents which have come up during the year.

RULES OFFICIALS SCHEDULE 2017

Wellington Golf Men's Interclub

Otaki Cup

28 Jan 17	At Masterton	Shandon vs Miramar PBGC vs BFHGC RWGC vs Judgeford
18 Feb 17	At Shandon	RWGC vs Masterton BFHGC vs Judgeford PBGC vs Miramar
25 Feb 17	At RWGC	Judgeford vs Miramar BFHGC vs Masterton PBGC vs Shandon

04 Mar 17	At Boulcott	Miramar vs RWGC Judgeford vs PBGC Masterton vs Shandon	(Rescheduled from 4 Feb)
11 Mar 17	At Judgeford	Miramar vs BFHGC Shandon vs RWGC Masterton vs PBGC	
01 Apr 17	At Miramar	Shandon vs BFHGC Masterton vs Judgeford RWGC vs PBGC	
29 Apr 17	At PBGC	BFHGC vs RWGC Miramar vs Masterton Judgeford vs Shandon	

Duncan Cup: Venues and Teams TBA

Playing Dates:

- 06 May 17 Playoffs
- 13 May 17 Semi's
- 20 May 17 Finals

Bill Stratford has emailed his specific requests for officials.

2017 RULE 18-2 CHANGE

You will by now no doubt be aware of the change to Rule 18-2 that came into effect on 1 January this year. Clearly the change came about as a result of the furore that erupted following the Dustin Johnson incident at last year's US Open. Because the change was evidently considered urgent, it has been issued as a Local Rule for adoption by individual clubs or tournament committees rather than waiting for the next iteration of the Rules of Golf, due in 2020 (2019? See the following story on upcoming rules changes).

The change applies to accidental moving of the ball on the green by the player, partner, caddie or equipment. If such accidental movement occurs, the ball is to be replaced without penalty. Note that Rule 18-3 is unchanged: in match play if an opponent causes the player's ball to move, the opponent incurs a one-stroke penalty.

MARCH ANNOUNCEMENT COMING: FUTURE RULES CHANGES

In late January, the Golf Channel and Golfweek magazine reported that the USGA and R&A Rules Project team are looking at including the following changes to the Rules of Golf:

- Reducing search time for lost balls from five minutes to three
- Allowing players to repair spike marks on greens
- Emphasizing the use of red stakes for water hazard
- Eliminating the use of club lengths when taking relief and allowing players to drop from any height rather than shoulder-length

Reporter Tim Rosaforte, speaking on the Golf Channel, said that the USGA and R&A are planning an announcement about the rules changes in March in order to seek feedback, and that he has been given to understand that the changes could come as early as 2019 rather than 2020. It probably hasn't escaped your notice that the current set of Rules and Decisions books are simply 'Effective January 2016' rather than '2016-2019', thus giving the ruling bodies flexibility in the timing of the next iteration.

Stop press! In a further update on 4 February, Golf Digest reported as follows: (Quote)

"What's expected to be revealed is nothing short of the biggest restructuring of the Rules in decades. "It doesn't fundamentally change how you think golf is played," Davis said. "What it does do is fundamentally change the understanding of the rules, why they are the way they are, and how they'll be communicated."

That includes a re-organization of the Rules that is expected to blow up the current 34-rule structure.

Published reports last month acknowledged officials at the European Tour, privy to an early review of the USGA/R&A work, had begun talking about potential changes with members of the tour. Among those discussed were changing how players dropped a ball when taking relief, eliminating club length as a measurement for taking relief, decreasing the time players can search for a lost ball from five to three minutes, allowing players to repair marks left by shoe spikes on greens and altering the emphasis on yellow and red stakes for water hazards.

USGA officials would not say whether these are among the updates, but acknowledged that literally all rules have been reviewed.

"Nothing was sacred. Everything was on the table," said John Bodenhamer, USGA senior managing director rules, competitions and equipment standards. "Every aspect of the rules, from the content to how they're delivered, to how they're written, to what they look like in writing, is all going to be different."

Bodenhamer said that the roll out for the newly proposed Rules is expected to take place in March, followed by a six-month comment period where the USGA and R&A will solicit feedback from any and everyone in the golf community. From there, the two governing bodies will regroup to finalize language that will be revealed in late 2017 or early 2018 and go into effect Jan. 1, 2019, a year ahead of the normal timing for Rules changes.

In aiming to make the Rules more easily understandable, the modernization project has focused on using visuals to help articulate the Rules in a more impactful way than mere words. Bodenhamer said that the use photos, images and even video to provide greater explanation has been explored and is likely to be implemented.

Davis, too, stressed a need for technology to help update and deliver the Rules in the 21st century.

“How come we can’t have an instance where someone can [take their phone and] say ‘Siri, I hit my ball into a water hazard. What are my options?’ ” Davis said.” (End of quote)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

I’ve been enjoying reading the incomparable Herbert Warren Wind on golf again recently. Every year he wrote an absorbing essay for the New Yorker magazine on that year’s US Masters. The 1968 Masters is of course best known for the disqualification of the great Argentinian, Roberto de Vincenzo. Roberto, you may remember, famously said ‘What a stupid I am’ after signing an incorrect scorecard, which had a ‘4’ instead of the ‘3’ he had taken at the 17th. The error meant that he missed out on a playoff and Bob Goalby was declared that year’s winner.

Shades of DJ’s US Open ruling last year, HW Wind was scathing in his opinion of the rule involved (Rule 38-3 then, 6-6d now): it is, he said, ‘A very bad rule. Any rule that can create a situation that hurts the winner as well as the loser and makes nonsense of a significant championship must be a bad rule’. He then pointed out that the philosophy behind the rule, the need to enforce absolute trust and honesty, was hardly applicable to modern tournament golf where every action is under the closest scrutiny. Surely, argued Wind, it should be the responsibility of tournament officials as well as the player to see that the correct score is recorded. ‘If an error is discovered, the important thing is to see that it is corrected. No penalty should be imposed. Golf, like every other sport is meant to be a test of athletic ability, not bookkeeping. Nobody wants to go through (this) again, where legality is served but not justice’. It’s hard to argue with that!



A devastated Roberto de Vincenzo at the 1968 Masters

A FINAL WORD

You may have seen these 'Temporary Rules 1941, of the Richmond Golf Club, London'. Ah, the phlegmatic English!

1. Players are asked to collect Bomb and Shrapnel splinters to save these causing damage to the mowing machines.
2. In competitions, during gunfire, or while bombs are falling, players may take cover without penalty for ceasing play.
3. The positions of known delayed-action bombs are marked by red flags placed at reasonably, but not guaranteed safe distance therefrom.
4. Shrapnel/and/or bomb splinters on the Fairways, or in Bunkers within a club's length of a ball may be moved without penalty, and no penalty shall be incurred if a ball is thereby caused to move accidentally.
5. A ball moved by enemy action may be replaced, or if lost or destroyed, a ball may be dropped not nearer the hole without penalty.
6. A ball lying in a crater may be lifted and dropped not nearer the hole, preserving the line to the hole without penalty.
7. A player whose stroke is affected by the simultaneous explosion of a bomb may play another ball from the same place. Penalty, one stroke.

Rules Incidents

We're always interested in sharing interesting Rules incidents in 'Tee Time'. Please send any interesting rulings that you might become aware of to Terry Gardiner: gardfam77@gmail.com

WGRA Executive 2016/2017

President

Bill Stratford – 528 5080

bill.raynor@clear.net.nz

Vice-President

Brian Richmond

yorichmo@paradise.net.nz

Secretary/Treasurer

Michael Phelan

pheelo.mnp@gmail.com

Committee

Bryan Futter – (04) 293 2146

jandbfutter@icloud.com

Murray Radford – 475 5915

murrayradford@xtra.co.nz

Terry Gardiner – 232 3130

gardfam77@gmail.com

Kathy Goodman

kathygoodman58@gmail.com

WGI Rep

Steve Weir, Golf Operations Manager

office@wgi.co.nz

