



20th March 2020

COVID-19 RELATED GUIDANCE ON THE RULES OF GOLF

GolfRSA has received several enquiries from golf clubs and provincial unions seeking guidance on the Rules of Golf and it's continued playing in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The R&A has provided guidance on this matter and GolfRSA has decided Committees will be allowed to use any or all of the following options to keep people playing golf and allowing players to record their scores for handicapping purposes. It is a matter for each Committee to make it clear which of these Local Rules apply to play on the course, otherwise the Rules of Golf will continue to apply.

It should be noted that the purpose of The R&A guidance is not to make recommendations in relation to the playing of golf at this time.

While golf clubs remain open for play, GolfRSA continue to encourage all clubs to follow the restrictions around the COVID-19 outbreak, as directed by the South African Government.

SCORING IN STROKE PLAY (RULE 3.3B)

R&A Guidance:

In view of concerns around handling and exchanging scorecards, on a temporary basis, Committees may choose to allow methods of scoring in stroke play that do not strictly comply with Rule 3.3b, or do not comply with the normal methods used under Rule 3.3b.

For example:

- Players may enter their own hole scores on the scorecard (it is not necessary for a marker to do it).
- It is not necessary to have a marker physically certify the player's hole scores, but some form of verbal certification should take place.
- It is not necessary to physically return a scorecard to the Committee provided the Committee can accept the scores in another way.

GolfRSA Position: The current processes for score entry in South Africa remain unchanged. Golfer's should open their rounds and enter their scores on the HNA applications i.e. terminal, phone app or internet as it is currently done.

When recording scores for handicapping purposes GolfRSA would also allow for the "Most Likely Scores" on a hole to be recorded as prescribed in the World Handicap System.

FLAGSTICKS

R&A Guidance:

Committees may choose to adopt the following policies on a temporary basis:

- Requiring that players to always leave the flagstick in the hole. It is a matter for the Committee to decide whether it establishes this policy by way of a Code of Conduct or Local Rule, and whether it provides a penalty under the Code of Conduct or for a breach of the Local Rule.
- Not have flagsticks at all.

GolfRSA Position: A Committee may adopt a Local Rule requiring players to always leave the flagstick in the hole.

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HOLE

R&A Guidance:

No modifications to the Definition of *Hole* are offered, but if a Committee chooses not to follow the requirements in the Definition of *Hole*, which may also have an impact on the Definition of "*Holed*", the Committee should consult its national association for guidance on whether scores submitted in such circumstances are acceptable for handicapping purposes.

Golf RSA Position: It would be permissible for course staff to position the hole liner/cup so that a part of it is above the surface. This would result in a ball rebounding off the liner/cup rather than falling into the hole. In this situation a ball would be considered "holed" if it hits the liner/cup. It is expected that players take due care when "holing out" under this interim rule i.e. not "bashing" a ball at a hole liner/cup.

Golf RSA Position on Hole-in-one

While this COVID-19 Rule, regarding the **Hole**, is in effect a "hole-in-one" will not be official (**prize cannot be won**) but it will count for scoring purposes.

BUNKERS

R&A Guidance:

If rakes have been removed from the course, or if the Committee has requested that rakes not be used, it is recognised that bunkers may not be smoothed as well as when there are rakes on the course. But it is recommended that no modification is made to the Rules of Golf in such circumstances, and that players are requested to smooth bunkers using their feet or a club.

GolfRSA Position:

The Committee may choose to adopt the following Local Rule relating to bunkers. The following Local Rule **will be acceptable** for handicapping purposes.

MODEL LOCAL RULE FOR BUNKERS – DUE TO COVID-19

When a player's ball lies in a bunker, the player may take free relief **once** by placing the original ball or another ball and playing from the relief area.

Reference Point: Spot of the original ball.

Size of the Relief Area: One club length but must not be closer to the hole and must remain in the bunker.

Please note that modifications are for **handicapping purposes only** and should not be used for formal competitions, of which we expect very little of at the present time.

For any queries, please contact:

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Kind regards



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