



**GOLF AUSTRALIA
RULES OF GOLF & AMATEUR STATUS COMMITTEE
MEETING – THURSDAY 23 APRIL 2009
AT METROPOLITAN GOLF CLUB, MELBOURNE, VICTORIA**

SUMMARY

Present from the Committee: John Buckley (Chairman), Ian Read, Robert Crosby, Frank Gal, Jenny Hoff, John Hopkins, Andrew Langford-Jones

In Attendance: Simon Magdulski (Manager – Rules & Handicapping), Therese Ritter (Manager – Championships), David Greenhill (Director of Golf, VGA)

GENERAL

1. Welcome and Determination of Positions on Committee

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Robert Crosby who was attending his first meeting. He also advised that the Committee positions of Frank Gal and Jenny Hoff were due to be declared automatically vacant at the time of the 2009 Golf Australia AGM as a result of the expiration of their designated terms and in accordance with the Committee Charter.

2. Previous Meeting Summary

This was agreed.

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3. Rules & Referee Accreditation

3.1 Report on R&A Referees School – St Andrews

Australia's representatives at the 2009 R&A Referees School (which was held in St Andrews from 3-6 February), Frank Gal and David Greenhill, reported on their experience and impressions. Both viewed the school as providing an invaluable development opportunity and felt it would position them to make material improvements to Australian systems and training. Both made particular note of the knowledge and professionalism of The R&A personnel and how their friendly and interactive manner helped to encourage a rewarding experience and a dynamic conducive to effective and enjoyable learning.

3.2 Report on Development of GA Club Level Resources

Frank Gal and Jenny Hoff, the Committee's representatives on the Rules Accreditation Review Group, provided an update on the development of GA Club Level Resources and noted that these items are now available for official release. In keeping with this, Simon Magdulski advised that the first *Complete Club Level Rules Accreditation Resources* CD was to be distributed to Member States at the conclusion of the meeting.

3.3 Report on Development of GA State Level Resources

Frank Gal and Jenny Hoff provided an update on the development of GA State Level Resources and noted that these items will soon be ready for release to Member States.

The Committee additionally discussed whether, in special circumstances, Member States should have the flexibility to allow course attendees to re-submit to the designated examination process after the passing of only a short space of time. The Committee decided to allow this flexibility in a fashion that will be detailed within the Course User's Guide for State Associations.

3.4 Report on Development of GA Advanced State Level Rules & Competitions School

It was noted that the first annual GA Advanced State Level Rules & Competitions School is to be held from 18-20 January 2010 in Melbourne. It will be jointly constructed and presented by The R&A and GA. Presenters will include; Grant Moir (Director – Rules of Golf, The R&A), Simon Magdulski (Manager – Rules & Handicapping, GA), Trevor Herden (Director – Championships, GA), and Andrew Langford-Jones (Director of Tournaments, PGA Tour of Australasia).

The School will be attended by approximately 10-15 people. Attendance will be via invitation only. Invitees will be determined after consultation with Member States.

The school will provide a mechanism for educating golf officials and also for achieving uniform development of skill sets in the areas of advanced Rules delivery and elite Competition management across all States and organisations. By doing this, the School should achieve its primary objective of improving the quality and delivery of all state and national events.

GA had noted that there currently is no mechanism for training and calibrating state level officials in the areas of rules and competitions. It is anticipated that Member States and their events should receive a significant benefit from the creation of such a development opportunity.

The Committee additionally noted with pleasure the involvement of The R&A in a co-operative venture of this type with GA.

3.5 General

The Committee noted the importance of attracting a greater number of younger people into the areas of elite competition management and refereeing. It noted the positive trend at state and national level in this respect over the past twenty years and expressed its desire to see a strong continuation of this trend.

4. Decisions on the Rules of Golf – production of 2010-2011 Edition

It was noted that GA is continuing to work with The R&A in an effort to secure the arrival in Australia of the shipment of 2010-2011 Decisions books at an earlier point than has occurred previously.

5. 2009 Men's Australian Open – Refereeing

The Chairman will discuss with the Director – Championships and the Manager – Rules & Handicapping the strategy moving forward for the structure of refereeing at the Men's Australian Open.

6. 2010 GA Hard Card

6.1 Elite Level

The only confirmed amendment at this point to the 2010 GA Hard Card is for there to be explicit explanation as to which breaches of etiquette are liable to initiate a penalty of disqualification. There have been various problems in recent GA events where competitors have displayed a lack of attention to course care requirements; GA is consequently looking to make a clearer statement as to the ramifications of such carelessness.

6.2 Club Handicap Competition Level

GA is to establish a Review Group (which will comprise national and state officials) with a view to standardising the advice provided to clubs regarding local rules and competition conditions.

7. Distance Measuring Devices

Given the expanding functionality of measuring devices (into areas The R&A may consider to be grey or to contravene what is permissible if the relevant local rule is in place), GA is becoming ever-more reluctant to offer any advice on specific items. Commercial liability considerations and international consistency have both contributed to the adoption of this position. With mobile phones now able to be used as an operating platform for distance measurement software, an added layer of difficulty is added to the assessment task.

To date, very few devices have been submitted to The R&A or USGA for determination regarding conformance. This is of concern to GA as it is mindful that club committees will be significantly benefited from the provision of guidance as to what is and what isn't permissible under the local rule. With this in mind, GA will continue to communicate with The R&A regarding potential mechanisms for providing such guidance.

8. Most Recent R&A Rules of Golf Committee Meeting Minutes

These were noted and discussed.

9. Query Regarding Pairs Event Featuring Groups With No Marker – Broken Hill Golf & Country Club (submitted to GA via GSA & WGV)

Broken Hill Golf & Country Club has asked if there is any way in which a Four-ball event may feature some pairs playing by themselves.

In considering this query, the Committee noted that one of the consequences of such a procedure would be that any pairs playing by themselves would be unable to satisfy the requirements of Rule 6-6a and 6-6b regarding the involvement of a marker. Hence, the procedure described would not be compatible with the Rules of Golf.

The Committee noted that the following options are available to Broken Hill Golf & Country Club moving forward:

- Continue to allow such a procedure but advise all competitors that the competition is a novelty event where no handicapping will take place.
- Continue to allow such a procedure but advise those pairs competing without a marker that they will not be able to participate in the competition and that their scores will not be used for handicapping purposes.
- Cease to allow such a procedure.

It was also noted that such a procedure as outlined above would not prevent the players in question from competing in a concurrent singles competition (in the event of one being conducted).

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10. GolfCash

[The R&A considers GolfCash to be fundamentally about promoting the winning of cash amongst individual golfers who do not generally know each other, in a format which is not incidental to the game itself, thereby undermining the integrity of the game. The GolfCash operating platform is a website. GolfCash provides for any handicap golfer to contribute to a prize money pool with the winners being determined by net scores.]

It was noted that GolfCash had written directly to The R&A to challenge The R&A's determination that the GolfCash model contravened the Rules of Amateur Status. The R&A's Amateur Status Committee considered the GolfCash submission, and confirmed its earlier determination.

GolfCash has given no indication that it intends to make any amendments to its model and continues to make representations on its website to the effect that this model conforms with the Rules of Amateur Status. This is of particular concern to Golf Australia, not only because of the potential for players to inadvertently take action that could threaten their Amateur Status, but also as these Rules act as a significant protection mechanism for the integrity of handicap golf.

Golf Australia will now seek legal advice so as to fully explore the avenues available to it to ensure the protection of the Rules of Amateur Status and handicap golf.

FUTURE MEETINGS

11. Next Meeting

Wednesday 23 September 2009 at the Interstate Series in Melbourne.