



Key changes to the Rules of Golf to come into effect 1 January 2012

- **Ball Moving After Address (Rule 18-2b).** A new exception is added which exonerates the player from penalty if their ball moves after it has been addressed when it is *known or virtually certain* they did not cause the ball to move. For example, if it is a gust of wind that moves the ball after it has been addressed, there is no penalty and the ball is played from its new position.
- **Ball in Hazard; Prohibited Actions (Rule 13-4).** Exception 2 to this Rule is amended to permit a player to smooth sand or soil in a hazard at any time, including before playing from that hazard, provided it is for the sole purpose of caring for the course and Rule 13-2 (improving lie, area of intended stance or swing or line of play) is not breached.
- **Time of Starting (Rule 6-3a).** The rule is amended to provide that the penalty for starting late, but within five minutes of the starting time, is reduced from disqualification to loss of the first hole in match play or two strokes at the first hole in stroke play. Previously this penalty reduction could be introduced as a condition of competition.

The most significant change (Rule 18-2b) will see an end to situations like the one witnessed during the final round of this year's Open Championship where Rory McIlroy was penalised when his ball was moved on the 7th green by the wind after he had addressed it.

Padraig Harrington, three-time Major winner and R&A Working for Golf Ambassador, said: "I am delighted with the changes, in particular the ball moving after address. Every time the wind blows I am worried that my ball is going to move and I am worried about grounding my putter, distracting me from trying to hole my putt.

"This change will speed up play, there won't be as many suspensions and players won't be getting penalised or disqualified unfairly. It is definitely giving us players a little bit of a break."

Key changes to the Rules of Amateur Status to come into effect 1 January 2012

Hole-in-One Prizes

There will now be no limit to the value of a prize (includes cash prizes) that may be offered for achieving a hole-in-one while playing a round of golf. This allowance only applies to prizes for holes-in-one (not longest drive or nearest-the-hole), and neither separate events nor multiple-entry events qualify.

Prize Vouchers *(the following list includes some items permitted prior to 2012)*

The Rules will permit competition committees to offer vouchers (up to a value of \$1,200) for any of the following:

- 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, 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 for redemption at any retail outlet. Goods available from a butchery, bakery, grocery, etc.
- Electricity accounts, telephone accounts and other utilities, petrol.
- Note: The Rules do not permit cash prizes of any amount except as described above regarding holes-in-one.
- Contact your State Association with queries on other items.

Contracts and Agreements

- **National Associations.** An amateur golfer will be able to enter into a contract and/or agreement with their National Association, provided they do not obtain any financial gain, directly or indirectly, while still an amateur. (National Associations will be permitted to enter into contracts and/or agreements with amateur golfers on behalf of State Associations.)
- **Professional Agents, Sponsors and Other Third Parties.** An amateur, who is at least 18 years of age, will be allowed to enter into a contract and/or agreement with a third party solely in relation to the golfer's future as a professional golfer, provided they do not obtain any financial gain, directly or indirectly, while still an amateur.

Subsistence Expenses

An amateur will now be allowed to receive subsistence expenses to assist with general living costs, provided the expenses are approved by and paid through the player's National Association.