

R&A



# Rules of Amateur Status

Effective 1 January 2008

  
**ROLEX**



The R&A is golf's world rules and development body and organiser of The Open Championship. It operates with the consent of more than 130 national and international, amateur and professional organisations, from over 120 countries and on behalf of an estimated 30 million golfers in Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific and The Americas (outside the USA and Mexico). The United States Golf Association (USGA) is the game's governing body in the United States and Mexico.



# Rules of Amateur Status

as approved by  
R&A Rules Limited

Effective 1 January 2008

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## Preamble

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The R&A reserves the right to change the Rules of Amateur Status and to make and change the interpretations of the Rules of Amateur Status at any time.

In the Rules of Amateur Status, the gender used in relation to any person is understood to include both genders.

## Definitions

The Definitions are listed alphabetically and, in the *Rules* themselves, defined terms are in *italics*.

### Amateur Golfer

An “amateur golfer” is one who plays the game as a non-remunerative and non-profit making sport and who does not receive remuneration for teaching golf or for other activities because of *golf skill or reputation*, except as provided in the *Rules*.

### Committee

The “Committee” is the appropriate *Committee* of the *Governing Body*.

**Note:** In Great Britain and Ireland, the *Committee* is the Amateur Status Committee of the *R&A*.

### Golf Skill or Reputation

It is a matter for the *Governing Body* to decide whether a particular *amateur golfer* has *golf skill or reputation*.

Generally, an *amateur golfer* is only considered to have *golf skill* if he:

- (a) has had competitive success at a local or national level or has been selected to represent his national, regional, state or county union or association; or
- (b) competes at an elite level.

*Golf reputation* can only be gained through *golf skill* and does not include prominence for service to the game of golf as an administrator.

### Governing Body

The “Governing Body” for the Rules of Amateur Status in any country is the national union of that country.

**Note:** In Great Britain and Ireland, the *R&A* is the *Governing Body*.

### Instruction

“Instruction” covers teaching the physical aspects of playing golf, i.e. the actual mechanics of swinging a golf club and hitting a golf ball.

**Note:** *Instruction* does not cover teaching the psychological aspects of the game or the etiquette or Rules of Golf.

### Junior Golfer

A “junior golfer” is an *amateur golfer* who has not reached a specified age as determined by the *Governing Body*.

**Note:** In Great Britain and Ireland, a *junior golfer* is an *amateur golfer* who has not reached his 18th birthday in the year prior to the event.

### Prize Voucher

A “prize voucher” is a voucher or gift certificate issued by the Committee in charge of a competition for the purchase of goods from a professional’s shop or other retail source.

### R&A

The “R&A” means R&A Rules Limited.

### Retail Value

The “retail value” of a prize is the price at which the prize is generally available from a retail source at the time of the award.

### Rule or Rules

The term “Rule” or “Rules” refers to the Rules of Amateur Status as determined by the *Governing Body*.

### Symbolic Prize

A “symbolic prize” is a trophy made of gold, silver, ceramic, glass or the like that is permanently and distinctively engraved.

### Testimonial Award

A “testimonial award” is an award for notable performances or contributions to golf as distinguished from competition prizes. A testimonial award may not be a monetary award.

## Rule 1 Amateurism

### 1-1. General

An *amateur golfer* must play the game and conduct himself in accordance with the *Rules*.

### 1-2. Amateur Status

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

### 1-3. Purpose and Spirit of the Rules

The purpose and spirit of the *Rules* is to maintain the distinction between amateur golf and professional golf and to keep the amateur game as free as possible from the abuses that may follow from uncontrolled sponsorship and financial incentive. It is considered necessary to safeguard amateur golf, which is largely self-regulating with regard to the *Rules* of play and handicapping, so that it can be fully enjoyed by all *amateur golfers*.

### 1-4. Doubt as to Rules

A person who wishes to be an *amateur golfer* and who is in doubt as to whether taking a proposed course of action is permitted under the *Rules* should consult the *Governing Body*.

An organiser or sponsor of an amateur golf competition or a competition involving *amateur golfers* who is in doubt as to whether a proposal is in accordance with the *Rules* should consult the *Governing Body*.

## Rule 2 Professionalism

### 2-1. General

Except as provided in the *Rules*, an *amateur golfer* must not take any action for the purpose of becoming a professional golfer and must not identify himself as a professional golfer.

**Note 1:** Actions by an *amateur golfer* for the purpose of becoming a professional golfer include, but are not limited to:

- (a) accepting the position of a professional golfer;
- (b) receiving services or payment, directly or indirectly, from a professional agent;
- (c) entering into a written or oral agreement, directly or indirectly, with a professional agent or sponsor; and
- (d) agreeing to accept payment or compensation, directly or indirectly, for allowing his name or likeness as a player of *golf skill or reputation* to be used for any commercial purpose.

**Note 2:** An *amateur golfer* may enquire as to his likely prospects as a professional golfer, including applying unsuccessfully for the position of a professional golfer, and he may work in a professional's shop and receive payment or compensation, provided he does not infringe the *Rules* in any other way.

### 2-2. Membership of Professional Golfers' Organisations

#### a. Professional Golfers' Association

An *amateur golfer* must not hold or retain membership of any Professional Golfers' Association.

#### b. Professional Tours

An *amateur golfer* must not hold or retain membership of a Professional Tour limited exclusively to professional golfers.

**Note:** If an *amateur golfer* must compete in one or more qualifying competitions in order to be eligible for membership of a Professional

Tour, he may enter and play in such qualifying competitions without forfeiting his Amateur Status, provided, in advance of play and in writing, he waives his right to any prize money in the competition.

## Rule 3 Prizes

### 3-1. Playing for Prize Money

An *amateur golfer* must not play golf for prize money or its equivalent in a match, competition or exhibition.

**Note:** An *amateur golfer* may participate in an event where prize money or its equivalent is offered, provided that prior to participation he waives his right to accept prize money in that event.

(Conduct contrary to the purpose and spirit of the Rules – see Rule 7-2)

(Policy on gambling – see Appendix)

### Rule 3-2. Prize Limits

#### a. General

An *amateur golfer* must not accept a prize (other than a *symbolic prize*) or *prize voucher* of retail value in excess of £500 or the equivalent, or such a lesser figure as may be decided by the *Governing Body*. This limit applies to the total prizes or *prize vouchers* received by an *amateur golfer* in any one competition or series of competitions, excluding any hole-in-one prize (see Rule 3-2b).

#### b. Hole-in-One Prizes

The limits prescribed in Rule 3-2a apply to a prize for a hole-in-one. However, such a prize may be accepted in addition to any other prize won in the same competition.

#### c. Exchanging Prizes

An *amateur golfer* must not exchange a prize or *prize voucher* for cash.

**Exception:** An *amateur golfer* may submit a *prize voucher* to a national, regional, state or county union or association and thereafter be reimbursed from the value of that voucher for expenses incurred in

participating in a golf competition, provided the reimbursement of such expenses is permitted under Rule 4-2.

**Note 1:** The responsibility to prove the *retail value* of a particular prize rests with the Committee in charge of the competition.

**Note 2:** It is recommended that the total value of prizes in a gross competition, or each division of a handicap competition, should not exceed twice the prescribed limit in an 18-hole competition, three times in a 36-hole competition, five times in a 54-hole competition and six times in a 72-hole competition.

### 3-3. Testimonial Awards

#### a. General

An *amateur golfer* must not accept a *testimonial award* of *retail value* in excess of the limits prescribed in Rule 3-2a.

#### b. Multiple Awards

An *amateur golfer* may accept more than one *testimonial award* from different donors, even though their total *retail value* exceeds the prescribed limit, provided they are not presented so as to evade the limit for a single award.

## Rule 4

## Expenses

### 4-1. General

Except as provided in the *Rules*, an *amateur golfer* must not accept expenses, in money or otherwise, from any source to play in a golf competition or exhibition.

### 4-2. Receipt of Expenses

An *amateur golfer* may receive reasonable expenses, not exceeding the actual expenses incurred, to play in a golf competition or exhibition as follows:

### a. Family Support

An *amateur golfer* may receive expenses from a member of his family or a legal guardian.

### b. Junior Golfers

A *junior golfer* may receive expenses when competing in a competition limited exclusively to *junior golfers*.

### c. Individual Events

An *amateur golfer* may receive expenses when competing in individual events provided he complies with the following provisions:

- (i) Where the competition is to take place in the player's own country the expenses must be approved by and paid through the player's national, regional, state or county union or association.
- (ii) Where the competition is to take place in another country the expenses must be approved by both the player's national union or association and the national union or association in the country in which the competition is to be staged. The expenses must be paid through the player's national, regional, state or county union or association or, subject to the approval of the player's national union or association, by the body controlling golf in the territory he is visiting.

The *Governing Body* may limit the receipt of expenses to a specific number of competitive days in any one calendar year and an *amateur golfer* must not exceed any such limit. In such a case, the expenses are deemed to include reasonable travel time and practice days in connection with the competitive days.

**Exception:** An *amateur golfer* must not receive expenses, directly or indirectly, from a professional agent (see Rule 2-1) or any other similar source as may be determined by the *Governing Body*.

**Note:** An *amateur golfer* of *golf skill* or *reputation* must not promote or advertise the source of any expenses received (see Rule 6-2).

#### d. Team Events

An *amateur golfer*, may receive expenses when he is representing:

- his country,
- his regional, state or county union or association,
- his golf club,
- his business or industry, or
- a similar body

in a team competition, practice session or training camp.

**Note 1:** A “similar body” includes a recognised educational institution or military service.

**Note 2:** Unless otherwise stated, the expenses must be paid by the body that the *amateur golfer* is representing or the body controlling golf in the country he is visiting.

#### e. Invitation Unrelated to Golf Skill

An *amateur golfer* who is invited for reasons unrelated to *golf skill* (e.g. a celebrity, a business associate or customer) to take part in a golf event may receive expenses.

#### f. Exhibitions

An *amateur golfer* who is participating in an exhibition in aid of a recognised charity may receive expenses, provided that the exhibition is not run in connection with another golfing event in which the player is competing.

#### g. Sponsored Handicap Competitions

An *amateur golfer* may receive expenses when competing in a sponsored handicap competition, provided the competition has been approved as follows:

- (i) Where the competition is to take place in the player's own country, the annual approval of the *Governing Body* must first be obtained in advance by the sponsor; and

- (ii) Where the competition is to take place in more than one country or involves golfers from another country, the approval of each *Governing Body* must first be obtained in advance by the sponsor. The application for this approval should be sent to the *Governing Body* in the country where the competition commences.

## Rule 5

## Instruction

### 5-1. General

Except as provided in the *Rules*, an *amateur golfer* must not receive payment or compensation, directly or indirectly, for giving *instruction* in playing golf.

### 5-2. Where Payment Permitted

#### a. Schools, Colleges, Camps, etc.

An *amateur golfer* who is (i) an employee of an educational institution or system or (ii) a counsellor at a camp or other similar organised programme, may receive payment or compensation for golf *instruction* to students in the institution, system or camp, provided that the total time devoted to golf *instruction* comprises less than 50 percent of the time spent in the performance of all duties as such an employee or counsellor.

#### b. Approved Programmes

An *amateur golfer* may receive expenses, payment or compensation for giving golf *instruction* as part of a programme that has been approved in advance by the *Governing Body*.

### 5-3. Instruction in Writing

An *amateur golfer* may receive payment or compensation for golf *instruction* in writing, provided his ability or reputation as a golfer was not a major factor in his employment or in the commission or sale of his work.

## Rule 6 Use of Golf Skill or Reputation

### 6-1. General

Except as provided in the *Rules*, an *amateur golfer* of *golf skill* or *reputation* must not use that skill or reputation to promote, advertise or sell anything or for any financial gain.

### 6-2. Lending Name or Likeness

An *amateur golfer* of *golf skill* or *reputation* must not use that skill or reputation to obtain payment, compensation, personal benefit or any financial gain, directly or indirectly, for allowing his name or likeness to be used for the advertisement or sale of anything.

**Exception:** An *amateur golfer* of *golf skill* or *reputation* may allow his name or likeness to be used to promote:

- (a) his national, regional, state or county union or association; or
- (b) subject to the permission of his national union, (i) any golf competition or other event that is considered to be in the best interests of, or would contribute to the development of, the game or (ii) a recognised charity (or similar good cause).

The *amateur golfer* must not obtain any payment, compensation or financial gain, directly or indirectly, for doing so.

**Note:** An *amateur golfer* may accept golf equipment from anyone dealing in such equipment provided no advertising is involved.

### 6-3. Personal Appearance

An *amateur golfer* of *golf skill* or *reputation* must not use that skill or reputation to obtain payment, compensation, personal benefit or any financial gain, directly or indirectly, for a personal appearance.

**Exception:** An *amateur golfer* may receive actual expenses in connection with a personal appearance provided no golf competition or exhibition is involved.

### 6-4. Broadcasting and Writing

An *amateur golfer* of *golf skill* or *reputation* may receive payment,

compensation, personal benefit or any financial gain from broadcasting or writing provided:

- (a) the broadcasting or writing is part of his primary occupation or career and golf *instruction* is not included (Rule 5); or
- (b) the broadcasting or writing is on a part-time basis, the player is actually the author of the commentary, articles or books and *instruction* in playing golf is not included.

**Note:** An *amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation* must not promote or advertise anything within the commentary, article or books and must not lend his name or likeness to the promotion or sale of the commentary, article or books (see Rule 6-2).

### 6-5. Grants, Scholarships and Bursaries

An *amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation* must not accept the benefits of a grant, scholarship or bursary, except one whose terms and conditions have been approved by the *Governing Body*.

### 6-6. Membership

An *amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation* must not accept an offer of membership in a Golf Club or privileges at a golf course, without full payment for the class of membership or privilege, if such an offer is made as an inducement to play for that Club or course.

## Rule 7

## Other Conduct Incompatible with Amateurism

### 7-1. Conduct Detrimental to Amateurism

An *amateur golfer* must not act in a manner that is detrimental to the best interests of the amateur game.

### 7-2. Conduct Contrary to the Purpose and Spirit of the Rules

An *amateur golfer* must not take any action, including actions relating to golf gambling, that is contrary to the purpose and spirit of the *Rules*. (Policy on gambling – see Appendix)

## Rule 8 Procedure for Enforcement of the Rules

### 8-1. Decision on a Breach

If a possible breach of the *Rules* by a person claiming to be an *amateur golfer* comes to the attention of the *Committee*, it is a matter for the *Committee* to decide whether a breach has occurred. Each case will be investigated to the extent deemed appropriate by the *Committee* and considered on its merits. The decision of the *Committee* is final, subject to an appeal as provided in these *Rules*.

### 8-2. Enforcement

Upon a decision that a person has breached the *Rules*, the *Committee* may declare the Amateur Status of the person forfeited or require the person to refrain or desist from specified actions as a condition of retaining his Amateur Status.

The *Committee* should notify the person and may notify any interested golf union or association of any action taken under Rule 8-2.

### 8-3. Appeals Procedure

Each *Governing Body* should establish a process or procedure through which any decision concerning enforcement of these *Rules* may be appealed by the person affected.

**Note:** If a person, whose *Governing Body* is the R&A, is affected by a decision made by the Amateur Status Committee of the R&A in respect of the enforcement of these *Rules*, that person may raise an appeal of that decision with the R&A Appeals Committee.

## Rule 9 Reinstatement of Amateur Status

### 9-1. General

The *Committee* has the sole authority to reinstate a person to Amateur Status, prescribe a waiting period necessary for reinstatement or to deny reinstatement, subject to an appeal as provided in the *Rules*.

## 9-2. Applications for Reinstatement

Each application for reinstatement will be considered on its merits, with consideration normally being given to the following principles:

### a. Awaiting Reinstatement

The professional golfer is considered to hold an advantage over the *amateur golfer* by reason of having devoted himself to the game as his profession; other persons infringing the *Rules* also obtain advantages not available to the *amateur golfer*. They do not necessarily lose such advantages merely by deciding to cease infringing the *Rules*. Therefore, an applicant for reinstatement to Amateur Status must undergo a period awaiting reinstatement as prescribed by the *Committee*.

The period awaiting reinstatement generally starts from the date of the person's last breach of the *Rules* unless the *Committee* decides that it starts from either (a) the date when the person's last breach became known to the *Committee*, or (b) such other date determined by the *Committee*.

### b. Period Awaiting Reinstatement

#### (i) Professionalism

Generally, the period awaiting reinstatement is related to the period the person was in breach of the *Rules*. However, no applicant is normally eligible for reinstatement until he has conducted himself in accordance with the *Rules* for a period of at least one year.

It is recommended that the following guidelines on periods awaiting reinstatement be applied by the *Committee*:

Period of Breach	Period Awaiting Reinstatement:
under 5 years	1 year
5 years or more	2 years

However, the period may be extended if the applicant has played extensively for prize money, regardless of performance. In all cases, the *Committee* reserves the right to extend or to shorten the period awaiting reinstatement.

## (ii) Other Breaches of the Rules

A period awaiting reinstatement of one year will normally be required. However, the period may be extended if the breach is considered serious.

### c. Number of Reinstatements

A person is not normally eligible to be reinstated more than twice.

### d. Players of National Prominence

A player of national prominence who has been in breach of the *Rules* for more than five years is not normally eligible for reinstatement.

### e. Status While Awaiting Reinstatement

An applicant for reinstatement must comply with these *Rules*, as they apply to an *amateur golfer*, during his period awaiting reinstatement.

An applicant for reinstatement is not eligible to enter competitions as an *amateur golfer*. However, he may enter competitions and win a prize solely among members of a Club where he is a member, subject to the approval of the Club. He must not represent such a Club against other Clubs unless with the approval of the Clubs in the competition and/or the organising Committee.

An applicant for reinstatement may enter competitions that are not limited to *amateur golfers*, subject to the conditions of competition, without prejudicing his application, provided he does so as an applicant for reinstatement. He must waive his right to any prize money offered in the competition and must not accept any prize reserved for an *amateur golfer* (Rule 3-1).

## 9-3. Procedure for Applications

Each application for reinstatement must be submitted to the *Committee*, in accordance with such procedures as may be laid down and including such information as the *Committee* may require.

## 9-4. Appeals Procedure

Each *Governing Body* should establish a process or procedure through which any decision concerning reinstatement of Amateur Status may be appealed by the person affected.

**Note:** If a person, whose *Governing Body* is the R&A, is affected by a decision made by the Amateur Status Committee of the R&A in respect of reinstatement of Amateur Status, that person may raise an appeal of that decision with the R&A Appeals Committee.

## Rule 10 Committee Decision

### 10-1. Committee's Decision

The *Committee's* decision is final, subject to an appeal as provided in Rules 8-3 and 9-4.

### 10-2. Doubt as to Rules

If the *Committee* of a *Governing Body*, other than the R&A, considers the case to be doubtful or not covered by the *Rules*, it may, prior to making its decision, consult with the Amateur Status Committee of the R&A.

## Appendix – Policy on Gambling

### General

An “amateur golfer” is one who plays the game as a non-remunerative and non-profit making sport. Financial incentive in amateur golf, which can be the result of some forms of gambling or wagering, could give rise to abuse of the Rules both in play and in manipulation of handicaps that would be detrimental to the integrity of the game.

There is a distinction between playing for prize money (Rule 3-1), gambling or wagering that is contrary to the purpose and spirit of the Rules (Rule 7-2), and forms of gambling or wagering that do not, of themselves, breach the Rules. An *amateur golfer* or a Committee in charge of a competition where *amateur golfers* are competing should consult with the *Governing Body* if in any doubt as to the application of the Rules. In the absence of such guidance, it is recommended that no cash prizes be awarded so as to ensure that the Rules are upheld.

### Acceptable Forms of Gambling

There is no objection to informal gambling or wagering among individual golfers or teams of golfers when it is incidental to the game. It is not practicable to define informal gambling or wagering precisely, but features that would be consistent with such gambling or wagering include:

- the players in general know each other;
- participation in the gambling or wagering is optional and is limited to the players;
- the sole source of all money won by the players is advanced by the players; and
- the amount of money involved is not generally considered to be excessive.

Therefore, informal gambling or wagering is acceptable provided the primary purpose is the playing of the game for enjoyment, not for financial gain.

## Unacceptable Forms of Gambling

Other forms of gambling or wagering where there is a requirement for players to participate (e.g. compulsory sweepstakes) or that have the potential to involve considerable sums of money (e.g. calcuttas and auction sweepstakes – where players or teams are sold by auction) are not approved.

Otherwise, it is difficult to define unacceptable forms of gambling or wagering precisely, but features that would be consistent with such gambling or wagering include:

- participation in the gambling or wagering is open to non-players; and
- the amount of money involved is generally considered to be excessive.

An *amateur golfer's* participation in gambling or wagering that is not approved may be considered contrary to the purpose and spirit of the Rules (Rule 7-2) and may endanger his Amateur Status.

Furthermore, organised events designed or promoted to create cash prizes are not permitted. Golfers participating in such events without first irrevocably waiving their right to prize money are deemed to be playing for prize money, in breach of Rule 3-1.

**Note:** The Rules of Amateur Status do not apply to betting or gambling by *amateur golfers* on the results of a competition limited to or specifically organised for professional golfers.





The activities of The R&A through all its areas of responsibility are detailed on [www.randa.org](http://www.randa.org). Keep up-to-date with the latest news of rules, championships, golf development and course management and discover the history and the facts and figures behind The R&A's worldwide role.

[www.randa.org](http://www.randa.org)



The Open Championship website at [www.opengolf.com](http://www.opengolf.com) not only covers the four rounds of the championship in words, pictures, video and statistics, it also runs year-round with an archive of past results, a wealth of information and regularly updated news.

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