

# **USGA'S 2012 REVISIONS TO THE RULES AS PRESENTED AT THE AGA'S ANNUAL FALL MEETING ON NOVEMBER 3, 2011**

## RULE AMENDMENTS

### **Time of Starting**

Prior to 2012, a player was disqualified for being late for his/her starting time unless the "five minute grace" period was adopted as a Condition of Competition. In 2012, the rule is amended to state that if a player arrives within five minutes after the starting time, the penalty is loss of hole in match play or two strokes at the first hole in stroke play.

### **Rule 18-2b, Ball Moving After Address**

A New Exception states that if it is virtually certain that the player did not cause his/her ball to move after the ball was addressed, the player is not penalized under this Rule.

If wind, water or some other agency (other than gravity) caused the ball to move after address – no penalty.

### **Rule 13-4, Ball in Hazard; prohibited Actions Addition to Exception 2:**

"At any time, the player may smooth sand or soil in a hazard provided this is for the sole purpose of caring for the course and nothing is done to breach Rule 13-2 with respect to his next stroke."

## REVISED DEFINITION

### **Addressing the Ball**

Revised to state that a ball has been addressed when the player has grounded the club immediately in front of or immediately behind the ball.

*(Formerly the player had addressed the ball when the player had taken his/her stance and grounded the club. In a hazard, the player had taken his/her stance).*

## NEW DECISION

### **Competitor Unaware of Penalty Returns Wrong Score**

A decision clarifies that if the competitor could not reasonably have known or discovered the facts resulting in the breach of the Rules, the Committee would be justified in waiving the disqualification and adding the penalty strokes to the score for the hole.

## NEW TERMINOLOGY

### **Meaning of "Sole Purpose" of Caring for the Course**

A player is permitted to take actions defined in the Etiquette Section as long as the intent is for the sole purpose of caring for the course and not intentionally influencing the movement of a ball or the physical conditions affecting play (actions such as raking bunkers, replacing divots, smoothing the ragged edge of a hole or tapping down spike marks).

## CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

### **Rule 13.2, Improving Lie, Area of Intended Stance or Swing or Line of Play**

The rule states that a player must not improve the lie, area of intended stance or swing or line of play. The rule describes examples of prohibited actions and permitted actions by a player.

#### **Meaning of "Improve"**

Clarifies that "improve" means to change for the better so the player gains a potential advantage for the position or lie of the ball, area of intended stance or swing, line of play or the extension of the line of play or area where the ball will be placed or dropped.

#### **Meaning of "Known or Virtually Certain"**

There must be "knowledge or virtual certainty" that a ball that cannot be found lies in a water hazard or it must be considered lost somewhere other than in the water hazard.

"Virtual certainty" implies some doubt as to the location of the ball but also means that, based on all readily available information, there is nowhere the ball could be except in the water hazard.

## CLARIFICATION FOR DMD'S

### **Distance Measuring Devices**

"When the Local Rule is in effect, the device must be limited to measuring distance only" and must not have features that are contrary to the Local Rule.

A multi-functional device with a distance measuring application that meets the listed limitations may be used, however, when the distance-measuring application is used, there must not be applications installed on the device that would be in breach of the Rules.