

Rules of Amateur Status For Juniors

By the United States Golf Association

Effective January 1, 2004



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Dear Junior:

You most likely have been playing golf for a few years and know quite a bit about the Rules of Golf and how to play the game. While you may know how to take relief from a water hazard or how many clubs you may carry, you may not be fully aware of the Rules of Amateur Status.

When I was playing junior golf in Lakeland, FL, I was not very familiar with the Rules of Amateur Status. As I began to play more at the national level in high school and college, I realized that it was important to keep my amateur status so I would be eligible for major tournaments. After winning the U.S. Amateur Championship in 1975, I was fortunate to play for the United States on the World Amateur and Walker Cup teams. Looking back, I would not change my decision to remain an amateur. To this day, I am thankful for my amateur career and the opportunities it has brought. More so, I appreciate the Rules of Amateur Status that provide the standard for one to remain an amateur.

The Rules of Amateur Status are needed to provide a fair competition for those who play golf simply for the love of the game – that is, the amateur player. Those who make their living by playing golf full-time for prize money are characterized as professionals and have distinct advantages over the amateur player. Because of this, the United States Golf Association and others have historically conducted amateur championships that exclude professional players.

We recognize that some of these Rules may not be easy to understand. It is our hope that this guide will give you a better understanding of them and encourage you to ask a question if you are not sure if some activity is permitted by the Rules.

Keep this guide as a reference. We do not expect you to read it cover-to-cover in one sitting. As you continue to grow as a golfer and become known for your golfing skill, the Rules of Amateur Status will become even more important.

We hope you enjoy the guide and we wish you well in your future amateur career.

Best Wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fred S. Ridley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "F" and "R".

Fred S. Ridley
President, United States Golf Association

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For the Good of the Game

The United States Golf Association (USGA) has served as the national governing body of golf since its formation in 1894. It is a non-profit organization run by golfers for the benefit of golfers. The USGA remains committed to promoting policies and programs For the Good of the Game®.

What Is the USGA?

More than 9,500 private and public golf courses, clubs and facilities make up the USGA.

An Executive Committee of 15 volunteers oversees the Association. More than 1,300 volunteers from all parts of the country also serve on other USGA committees. A professional staff of approximately 350 directs the Association's day-to-day functions from Golf House, the USGA's headquarters in Far Hills, New Jersey.

In 1975, the Association formed the USGA Members Program to help support the game and the USGA. Today, close to 700,000 golfers around the nation are USGA Members.

The USGA acts in cooperation with national, regional, and local golf associations in areas of common interest. The Association also represents the United States in relations with golf associations of other countries.

What Does the USGA Do?

The USGA sponsors programs that benefit everyone who plays the game. These essential services affect all golfers, whether they are amateurs or professionals, public or private course players.

- **Writes and Interprets The Rules of Golf**

The USGA and The R&A of St. Andrews, Scotland, jointly write and interpret the Rules of Golf to guard the tradition and integrity of the game.

- **Produces the Rules of Amateur Status**

The Rules of Amateur Status reinforce the fundamental idea that an amateur is one who plays solely for the enjoyment of the game, without financial benefit.

- **Conducts National Championships**

The USGA conducts golf's national championships. These include the U.S. Open, the U.S. Women's Open, the U.S. Senior Open, the 10 national

amateur championships and the State Team Championships. The USGA also helps conduct four international competitions — the Walker Cup Match, the Curtis Cup Match, and the Men’s and Women’s World Amateur Team Championships.

- **Provides A Handicap System**

Thanks to the USGA Handicap System, all golfers can compete on an equal basis. The USGA Course Rating System ensures that golf courses are rated in relation to all other courses. The USGA Slope System adjusts a player’s USGA Handicap Index according to the difficulty of a course. As a result, no matter whom golfers play with — or where they play — they can enjoy a fair game.

- **Maintains Equipment Standards**

The USGA continually tests golf equipment for conformity to the Rules. Without such rigorous equipment testing and research programs, advances in technology could soon overtake skill as the major factor in success.

- **Funds Turfgrass and Environmental Research**

The USGA funds research that leads to improved grasses and playing surfaces that require less water and maintenance and can better endure diseases and pests. These grasses and playing surfaces can be used in a wide variety of climates. The USGA is also the largest contributor to research on the impact of golf courses on the environment.

- **USGA Turf Advisory Service**

The USGA has 18 skilled agronomists who make annual visits to more than 1,800 golf courses. These experts offer recommendations that help improve golf course maintenance and make it more cost-efficient.

- **Preserves Golf’s History**

To help preserve the game’s heritage, the USGA collects and displays golf artifacts, memorabilia, books, and artwork at the USGA Museum and Library, in Far Hills, New Jersey. The USGA Archives contains the largest golf library in the world and one of the most extensive collections of golf photographic and film media in existence. The Association also sponsors a Traveling Exhibit Program that displays portions of its collection to locations around the nation each year.

- **Ensures Golf’s Future**

The USGA Foundation funds a variety of junior golf, caddie, physically challenged, and education programs that foster the notion that golf is a game for everyone. The USGA has committed more than \$50 million over a 10-year period to support programs that operate for the good of the game.

Section II

What Juniors Need to Know

Why is AMATEUR STATUS so important?

Have you ever thought what your life would be like if you didn’t play golf competitively? What would you do during the summer? What if you couldn’t play on your high school team or were ineligible for a college scholarship? What would life be like on the pro tour as a teenager if you were good enough to qualify?

The answers to those questions may become real if you lose your amateur status. Tournaments for juniors not only have an age limit, but almost all also require that contestants be amateurs, as do the rules for high school and college competition. Understanding the USGA Rules of Amateur Status (Rules) will only help you in the future as you improve your game and begin to be successful.

Having success may lead you to gain “golf skill and reputation,” magic words in terms of your amateur status. Success also may lead you to be recognized as a golfer (more on this later). Like everything else in life, with greater success comes increased visibility and responsibility to yourself, those who support you and those who wish to be just like you.

Therefore, a junior golfer with a higher profile is encouraged to be even more familiar with the Rules to avoid any accidental violations. Not knowing the Rules will not excuse you from any violations of the Rules, nor from consequences, which may include losing your amateur status.

Who is an AMATEUR?

Every player is born an amateur and remains an amateur until he violates the Rules or chooses to give up his amateur status. An amateur plays the game for recreation and fun as well as for the thrill of competition and does not make money by teaching the game, playing it, or as a result of his golf celebrity.

Who is a JUNIOR GOLFER?

A junior golfer is an amateur golfer who has not reached either the September 1 following graduation from high school or his 19th birthday, whichever comes first.

Are you a JUNIOR GOLFER?

As an example, if either of the following describes you, then you are not a junior golfer:

- graduated high school and the September 1 following the graduation has passed (e.g., it is now the April after high school graduation) or;
- are a 19-year old who is in high school.

(Please note that this definition is used solely for applying the USGA Rules of Amateur Status. It does not answer whether one is eligible to enter a junior competition. Check with those in charge of the specific competition for the age requirement of entering that competition, as it may vary from one tournament to the next.)

The Rules apply to amateurs of all ages. However, there are some Rules that are specific to juniors. The following will help you learn a little about the Rules as well as answer some questions you may have. The complete Rules may be found in the back of this brochure, in the back of the USGA Rules of Golf and on the USGA's web site, <http://www.usga.org>.

Section III

Questions and Answers

EXPENSES

A junior golfer may accept a reasonable amount of expenses to play in an amateur golf competition or exhibition or to improve golf skill, but not into an Open or a Pro-Am. Amateurs who are older and no longer juniors may not accept expenses. The expenses may come from any source except an agent but they may not be paid to cover a sponsorship. One example of a prohibited sponsorship is an agreement between a player and a department store where the player receives support for his golf activities in exchange for his promotion of the store.

Other occasions when an amateur may receive expenses are when he is participating in team competitions among school or college teams, golf club or golf association teams, or competitions among teams of athletic organizations such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes and the YMCA. The expenses in these team competitions must be paid by the group being represented.

What you need to know about EXPENSES

- Q.** What makes up a player's reasonable expenses?
- A.** Expenses include transportation such as airfare or a bus ticket, and lodging, meals, entry fee, and caddie/cart and practice fees. The expenses a player receives must be reasonable, such as a coach airfare, not a first class ticket.
- Q.** The local car dealership is offering to help with my expenses for the summer. Is this okay, and if so, may I wear a hat for it or put its logo on my bag?
- A.** Yes, you may accept help from the car dealership. However, there may be no advertising of the dealership's assistance. The car dealership may not advertise that it has helped you, nor may you wear the logo of the dealership. (See also Section on Golf Skill and Reputation.)
- Q.** May I solicit local businesses for help with my expenses?
- A.** Yes, juniors may receive expenses from any source, except a professional agent or sponsor, and there are no restrictions on how those expense monies are obtained. However, there may not be an oral or written agreement with the source paying the expenses. (See also Section on Professionalism.)

- Q.** My mom wants to travel with me to the U.S. Junior, but it is expensive to travel across the country. What may she do?
- A.** Your family also may receive outside help with expenses for one parent or legal guardian to accompany you, but only to amateur competitions.
- Q.** What should my family do if there is a question about how our expenses are paid?
- A.** It is recommended that your family keep receipts or a log of the expenses received, as well as a record of how the money is spent, in case a question is raised.
- Q.** In addition to receiving expenses for playing in tournaments, may my family also receive help to send me to golf camp?
- A.** Yes, juniors may accept expenses for practice or to receive instruction, including golf camps.
- Q.** I'd like to play in the PGA Tour's Pro-Am in my town. I know this is not an amateur-only event. Is there a way I may play without losing my amateur status?
- A.** Yes. You may play in the Pro-Am as an amateur. Additionally, the entry fee to a Pro-Am is not considered an expense. Therefore, you may have the entry fee to a Pro-Am waived or paid by another source such as a local business. However, the other costs associated with playing in the Pro-Am such as travel and/or accommodations are expenses, and your family may not accept outside help with them because the Pro-Am is not limited to amateurs.
- Q.** What may I do for any events that I play in that are not amateur only, such as a Pro-Am or my state open?
- A.** If you are playing in a competition that is not limited to amateurs, you may not accept expenses. Also, your family may not accept outside help for the family to attend the event. If you or your family were to accept such expenses, you would lose your amateur status. In this case, the payment of expenses must come from the family's own resources, such as an immediate family member or a legal guardian.
- Q.** May a hotel offer reduced rates for a competition?
- A.** Yes, a reduction of rates is permissible provided the reduction is reasonable and available to all players. For example, a 5-Star hotel may not offer a room for \$40 a night. A hotel may not offer complimentary accommodations to junior golfers who are staying to participate in an event not limited to amateurs such as an Open or Pro-Am. However, junior golfers may accept complimentary accommodations to amateur-only competitions.

- Q.** Private housing is offered at my state girls' junior championship. Is this permitted?
- A.** You may stay in private housing at no charge provided it is offered to all players, even if on a space-available basis.
- Q.** My junior tour provides all our meals during their events. Is this practice okay?
- A.** Yes, as long as the meals are provided for all players at no extra cost.
- Q.** May I accept expenses for a future event as a prize?
- A.** Yes. Only juniors may accept expenses as prizes. However, the expenses must be for strictly amateur competitions.
- Q.** The local golf course in my town has a student or junior membership. May I apply for this membership at the lower rate?
- A.** If the student or junior membership is open to other than outstanding players, then paying the lower dues is permitted. The club may even offer this membership free of charge to junior golfers of any skill level. See related question under Golf Skill or Reputation.

For additional information on Expenses, refer to Rule 4.

Use of GOLF SKILL OR REPUTATION

Generally an amateur golfer is only considered to have golf skill, as the Rules define it, if he has been successful at the local level – by winning the state amateur, for example – or competes at the national level, as a contestant in the U.S. Junior, for example. A junior may presently not have golf skill or reputation, but have it at a later time as a result of his most recent play. Sometimes it may be difficult to determine if a junior does have golf skill or reputation. Golf skill or reputation is gained as one becomes more successful and notable as a golfer. Golf reputation may only be gained through having golf skill.

A junior who does have golf skill or reputation must not use that skill or reputation to promote, advertise, or sell anything, or to receive a financial gain. A prominent junior may not allow his name or likeness to be used for the advertisement or sale of anything. Even if a direct payment is not received, there may be an indirect benefit for appearing in an advertisement.

There is a higher standard expected of an amateur of golf skill or reputation as he is more visible as a golfer, and therefore, has added responsibility.

Who has GOLF SKILL OR REPUTATION?

The following are examples of single accomplishments that will not result in a junior having golf skill or reputation:

- Winning your club's Junior Championship;
- Winning your city's Par-3 Challenge for ages 12 and under.

The following are examples of single accomplishments that will result in a junior having golf skill or reputation:

- Winning your State Junior Amateur Championship;
- Participating in the U.S. Junior or the U.S. Girls' Junior Championship.

The above should be viewed only as examples, as the decision may be different for each junior.

What you need to know if you have GOLF SKILL OR REPUTATION

Q. The local gym where I work out would like to include me as a golfer in one of its upcoming ads. I will not receive any payment for doing so. Is this permitted?

A. No. Appearing in any advertisement, even if you are not paid, will violate the Rules.

Q. My mother has created a personal logo for me. May I sell shirts or hats with the logo?

A. No. Doing so is considered advertising, from which you are prohibited.

Q. I've been asked to be a guest on a local radio show. The radio station has offered to pay me for my time. Is this payment permitted?

A. You may accept payment for broadcasting, or for writing, provided you are the author of the commentary, that golf instruction is not included, and the arrangement is not a disguised way of paying for participation in a golf competition or for expenses that otherwise may not be paid.

Q. I'm interested in pursuing a broadcasting career. May I work at the local radio station to get experience?

A. You may accept payment or compensation for part-time broadcasting or for writing only if you are the author of the commentary and golf instruction is not included.

Q. I just won our state junior championship, and the course where the tournament was played would like to offer me privileges there. Is this arrangement permissible?

A. Yes, you may accept what is called an "honorary membership" for an outstanding performance, such as winning at least a state championship, or a strong record from a significant international team competition. The arrangement must be made without any time limit and at no charge to

anyone. There are no age requirements under the Rules for one to accept such a membership.

Q. My high school team practices at Winding River Golf Course during the season. The course has offered for us to play and practice there during the off-season. Is this okay, or would our team be considered to be accepting membership contrary to the Rules?

A. This arrangement for privileges is permitted. But if the players were to accept membership in the club without full payment, a violation would occur, provided the honorary aspect in the above question does not apply. See related question under Expenses.

Q. Our high school is conducting a fundraiser and has asked the top two players of the team to station themselves on a par 3 and play in a contest when each group comes through. May I participate without affecting my amateur status?

A. Yes, because the event is a fundraiser for the school, and this also would apply if it were for a charity.

For additional information on Use of Golf Skill or Reputation, refer to Rule 6.

Other Issues Relating to Golf Skill or Reputation

Common Questions about EQUIPMENT

Q. I've heard I may accept equipment without payment. Is this true?

A. Yes. Amateurs of any skill level may receive equipment without payment provided no advertising is involved.

Q. Will you please explain what is meant by "no advertising involved" under the equipment rule?

A. An amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation may accept golf balls, clubs, merchandise, clothing or shoes free of charge or at a discounted rate from a manufacturer, provided no advertising is involved. With regard to golf bags, it is permissible for the bag to bear the name of the manufacturer in large letters, but if it does, the player must not allow his own name to appear on the bag in large letters. If he does, he may be deemed to be advertising the merchandise of that manufacturer and may forfeit his amateur status. The same applies to bag covers and other luggage.

It is important to note that an amateur who has golf skill or reputation must not put his own name in large letters on a golf bag that he has purchased himself which contains a manufacturer's logo. If the amateur does not have golf skill or reputation, such arrangement is permitted.

Q. Is it permissible for a well-known junior to carry a golf bag or wear apparel including a hat with a commercial logo on it?

A. Such a bag may be carried or apparel worn in the following circumstances:

- If the logo is a normal part of the bag, hat or clothing.
- If she won it as a prize and, if it carries a company name other than the manufacturer's name on it, she is not an employee of the company.

Q. I received a new driver from a manufacturer, but I do not like it. Is it okay to sell it on an online auction?

A. No. Amateurs may not sell any equipment that was received free of charge, including equipment won as a prize.

Q. The junior tournament I played in last week gave out shoes, a shoe bag, and a golf shirt to each contestant. Are these gifts permissible?

A. Yes. Tee gifts awarded to all players in a competition are permissible, even if they bear the event's name or the name of the junior tour.

SCHOLARSHIPS

An amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation must not use that skill or reputation to gain the benefits of a scholarship or grant-in-aid other than in accord with the regulations of the organizations governing athletes at academic institutions such as the NCAA, NAIA, AIAW, NJCAA, etc.

Juniors are encouraged to check with the governing organization regarding any questions on how scholarships are administered. (See related question under Prizes.)

PRIZES

The Rules place a limit on the value of prizes to ensure that an amateur is not making a profit as the result of success on the golf course. The retail value of the prize, which is the price at which the prize is generally available at the time of the award, is used to define the limit.

Not only is there a maximum value on the prize that may be won, but there also is a restriction on the types of prizes. For example, Rule 3-1 prohibits an amateur from playing for prize money. If an amateur participates in an event where prize money is awarded, he must waive his right to any prize money prior to participating in the event. If this waiver is made, it may not be cancelled; rather it must stand throughout the competition. Again, the waiver must be made before participating in the competition.

Examples of prizes that are a breach of the Prize Rule:

- A vacation with a retail value that exceeds \$750.

- Prizes that are equivalent to money such as stocks and bonds, or anything that may easily be exchanged for money.
- Selling golf equipment that was won as a prize, or receiving cash in exchange for a gift certificate.
- Accepting expenses as a prize to the State Open, because it is not an amateur-only event.

In addition to prizes won as a result of a competition, an amateur also may be awarded a prize for a number of notable performances or for contributions to golf. Such awards are known as testimonial awards. These awards must also not hold a retail value greater than \$750. More than one testimonial award may be accepted, as long as it is not accepted to avoid the \$750 limit.

What you need to know about PRIZES:

Q. What are examples of prizes that are acceptable under the Rules?

- A.**
- Merchandise with a retail value not greater than \$750.
 - Gift certificates of not more than \$750 for the future purchase of merchandise.
 - Driving range use of up to \$750.
 - Use of golf carts up to \$750, provided it is not used in a competition.
 - Green fees at a public course of up to \$750, provided they are not used in a competition.

It is important to remember you must not accept a cash prize of any amount.

Q. What are examples of prizes that would cause me to lose my amateur status?

- A.**
- Transportation expenses of any amount to a competition that is not limited to amateurs such as an Open or Pro-Am.
 - A spot in a Pro-Am of a retail value greater than \$750.
 - Cash

Q. Will you please clarify how the exception for a hole-in-one applies?

A. Kathy won a tournament, for which the first-place prize is merchandise of a retail value of \$750. During that same tournament, she also made a hole-in-one, the prize for which is merchandise of a retail value of \$750. She may accept both prizes.

Q. I've entered an event that will be awarding cash prizes for a hole-in-one, closest to the hole, and longest drive. Will I lose my amateur status for simply playing in the event?

A. No. Rule 3-1 does not apply to such contests as they are not a match, tournament or exhibition. Rather, Rule 3-2 does. Therefore, only the player who wins and accepts the cash prize(s) would forfeit her amateur status.

- Q.** The junior tour I play on gives scholarships as prizes. Are these scholarships considered the equivalent of money?
- A.** No. It is permissible to accept a scholarship or grant as a prize provided its value does not exceed \$750. Additionally, the scholarship money must not be paid to the player. The scholarship must be administered directly with the school. The tournament organizers may hold the money in a fund in the junior's name for use at a later time. Juniors are encouraged to check with the governing collegiate athletic association to determine if there is a limit on the amount of scholarship money that may be awarded.
- Q.** May I accept a prize with a retail value of \$750 or less that has been donated by a golf equipment manufacturer?
- A.** Yes. (See also Section on Equipment.)
- Q.** My father and I were partners in our city's four-ball championship. The winning prize was a gift certificate to the local travel agent for \$1,000 for each of us. May I let my father accept my gift certificate so I will not lose my amateur status?
- A.** No. If you win a non-conforming prize, you may not accept it in the name of a relative to avoid losing your amateur status. However, you may ask that the amount over \$750 be donated to a charity.
- Q.** My teammate Carrie and I won our state's high school challenge, and the prize was \$2,000 for the winning school's athletic program. Is this prize okay, since it is going to the school?
- A.** Yes. Since you are not directly accepting the prize, and the money is going to the school, the prize is permissible.
- Q.** The crystal trophy that is awarded for first place has a retail value greater than \$750. Will I lose my amateur status for accepting it?
- A.** No. A trophy that is made of gold, silver, ceramic, glass or something similar that is intended for display purposes only and has no significant practical value is known as a symbolic prize. There is no dollar limit on symbolic prizes.
- Q.** My club holds a skins game once a month and my father's friends try to talk me into playing on their team. What is the USGA's stance on skins games?
- A.** If participation in the "skins" portion of the competition is not optional (i.e., you are essentially required to pay an entry fee to be used to award cash prizes in the skins game), then you would likely be considered to be playing for prize money and thus in violation of Rule 3-1.
- If participation in the "skins" portion of the competition is optional (i.e., there is an optional cash side pool in which you could contribute if

you wished in order to be eligible for the "skins" prizes), involves a nominal amount of money, and is not advertised, the arrangement would appear to constitute gambling. Gambling is casual betting among friends who provide their own money for the wagers. Additionally, it is important that the amount of money involved when gambling is a small amount. Gambling itself under such circumstances is not a violation of the Rules.

It is recommended that you not play in these events so your amateur status is not even brought into question.

- Q.** I like to play in the monthly Scramble at my club. The winning team receives prize money. Will this affect my amateur status?
- A.** You may play in scrambles at your local club. However, if cash prizes are being awarded, you must irrevocably waive your right to any prize money prior to participating in the event. Additionally, your partners may not accept the cash prize that you would have won.

It is recommended that you not play in these events so your amateur status is not even brought into question.

For additional information on Prizes, refer to Rule 3.

PROFESSIONALISM

An amateur must not take any action for the purpose of becoming a professional golfer and must not identify himself as a professional golfer. Additionally, an amateur must not apply for or receive benefit from membership in any organization of professional golfers.

An example of an action that is prohibited:

- applying for a professional's position, but you may apply for an assistant professional's position.

Additional examples that apply only for players of golf skill and reputation:

- Receiving services from or being paid by a professional agent or sponsor. This includes accepting a loan from an agent or sponsor.
- Making an oral or written agreement with a professional agent or sponsor.
- Agreeing to accept payment or compensation for allowing one's name or likeness to be used for any commercial purpose (See Section on Golf Skill and Reputation).

There are two exceptions to the above Rule that amateurs may do without losing their amateur status:

- Applying unsuccessfully for the position of assistant professional.
- Entering and playing in any stage of a competition to qualify for a professional tour, provided the player first waives his right to any prize money.

What you need to know about PROFESSIONALISM

- Q.** What type of job may I have at a golf course without losing my amateur status?
- A.** You may work as a caddie, shop clerk, golf club repairman, greenkeeper, course ranger, starter, course manager, or director of golf. However, remember that while working at a golf course, you must not give or help give any lessons or instruction, including at a clinic or day camp, even if there is no direct payment. (See Section on Instruction.)
- Q.** May I take the PGA's Playing Ability Test?
- A.** Participating in the PAT will not cause you to lose your amateur status. You will be in violation of the Rules when you either first identify yourself as a professional or file an application for membership in a professional organization such as the PGA of America.
- Q.** In my job, I perform the normal duties of a shop clerk, give no instruction and otherwise do not violate the Rules except my title is "Assistant Professional." Have I forfeited my amateur status?
- A.** Yes. You have identified yourself as a professional.
- Q.** Will you please explain the exception for playing in a tour qualifying school?
- A.** An amateur may attempt to qualify for a professional tour, provided he first waives his right to any prize money. (See Section on Prizes.)
Please note that this Rule applies only to tour qualifying schools and does not apply to a qualifier for a particular event such as a Monday qualifier for an event on a professional tour. To maintain your amateur status in a qualifier for a professional tour, you must enter as an amateur and irrevocably waive your right to receive prize money.
- Q.** I'd like to enroll in a college that has a program that will teach the aspects of professional golf. Will doing so cause me to lose my amateur status?
- A.** No. Being in a program such as Professional Golf Management that has the purpose of preparing you to become a golf professional does not, by itself, cause you to lose your amateur status. However, if you take it a step further and accept an Assistant Professional's position, or receive payment for giving instruction, then a violation will occur.
- Q.** May my family take out a loan to help pay for my expenses?
- A.** You or your family may accept a loan from an outside source provided the loan is made without any special condition other than allowing you to defer payment until you become a professional. The loan must entail no obligation on your part other than to repay it. Specifically, when you become a professional, you must be legally free to execute an agreement

with a sponsor, agent or group that were not those advancing the loan. The loan must carry a reasonable interest rate.

Please note that if you have golf skill or reputation (discussed earlier) a higher standard applies to you and you may not accept a loan from a professional agent or sponsor, commercial or otherwise.

For additional information on Professionalism, refer to Rule 2.

INSTRUCTION

An amateur golfer must not receive payment in any form for giving instruction in playing golf. Payments may not be made directly or indirectly such as exchanging something of value for instruction. Instruction is defined as the physical aspects of playing golf, which means the actual mechanics of swinging a golf club and hitting a golf ball. It does not cover the psychology of the game or the Rules or Etiquette of Golf.

Examples of when INSTRUCTION is permitted

- Q.** Our golf coach is paid for giving instruction. Is this permitted?
- A.** Employees of schools and colleges may receive payment for giving instruction provided that the amount of time spent giving instruction is less than 50 percent of her total time in the performance of all duties as such an employee. In this situation, the golf instruction is just one part of the coach's job as an educator.
- Q.** How does the Rule apply for a counselor at a camp?
- A.** A camp counselor may receive payment for giving instruction provided that the amount of time spent giving instruction is less than 50 percent of her total time spent in the performance of all duties as the counselor. Camps that fall under this exception which permits payment are overnight camps, even if only devoted to golf, or a day camp in which there are activities other than golf.
- Q.** May I receive payment for giving instruction in writing?
- A.** Payment for giving instruction in writing is permitted provided your ability or reputation as a golfer was not the major reason you were asked to write the instruction or your work is sold.

Examples of when INSTRUCTION is not permitted

- Q.** A shop clerk at a golf course is paid to clean clubs, operate the cash register and organize the golf carts. She occasionally gives lessons at the course but is not specifically compensated for this service. Is she an amateur?

A. No. She has violated Rule 5-1. No employee of the course may give instruction at the course and remain an amateur even if she is not directly compensated for the lessons. Giving lessons becomes part of the employee's job duties, for which she is paid normal wages.

Q. The professional at our course has asked me if I could work part-time this summer to help instruct youngsters in the junior clinics and camps. May I do so without forfeiting my amateur status?

A. No. Amateurs of any age or skill level can not help in this manner. In view of the previous question, the USGA does not believe that it can relax the Rules in this way. The giving of golf instruction for compensation is a primary act of professionalism and should be limited to professional golfers. In this case, the clinic is an extension of the services provided by the professional.

For more information on Instruction, refer to Rule 5.

Enforcement of the RULES & REINSTATEMENT

If the USGA receives information that a player who claims to be an amateur has possibly acted contrary to the Rules of Amateur Status, it will conduct an appropriate investigation. Either the staff will make a decision, or it will forward the facts to the Amateur Status Committee for review.

If it is determined that the player in question has forfeited his amateur status, he is entitled to apply for reinstatement to amateur status.

The preceding information is only a summary of the Rules of Amateur Status. Juniors are encouraged to contact their state high school athletic association or the governing collegiate athletic association for information on high school or college eligibility. These policies may vary between each body.

While the USGA makes every effort to make the Rules of Amateur Status clear and easy to understand, we recognize that situations may arise that require interpretation. Any junior golfer in doubt as to any procedure is encouraged to contact the USGA Amateur Status Department by calling (908) 234-2300 or sending an e-mail to rules@usga.org.

Notes

Rules of Amateur Status

Preamble

The United States Golf Association 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

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.

Golf Skill or Reputation

Generally, an *amateur golfer* is only considered to have golf skill if he has had competitive success at the local level or competes at the national 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. It is a matter for the USGA to decide whether a particular *amateur golfer* has *golf skill or reputation*.

Instruction

“*Instruction*” covers 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 the psychological aspects of the game or the Rules or Etiquette of Golf.

Junior Golfer

A “*junior golfer*” is an *amateur golfer* who has not yet reached (i) the September 1 following graduation from secondary school or (ii) his 19th birthday, whichever shall come first.

Retail Value

The “*retail value*” of a prize is the price at which it is generally available 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 USGA.

Symbolic Prize

A “*symbolic prize*” is a trophy made of gold, silver, ceramic, glass or the like that is intended for display purposes only and has no significant utilitarian value.

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

Definitions

All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed alphabetically in the Definitions section – see page 19.

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. Doubt as to Rules and Appeal Process

Any person who considers that any action he is proposing to take might endanger his amateur status may submit particulars to the staff of the United States Golf Association for an advisory opinion. If dissatisfied with the staff's advisory opinion, he may, by written notice to the staff within 30 days after being notified of the advisory opinion, appeal to the Amateur Status and Conduct Committee, in which case he shall be given reasonable notice of that Committee's next meeting at which the matter may be heard and shall be entitled to present his case in person or in writing. In such cases the staff shall submit to the Committee all information provided by the player together with staff's findings and recommendation, and the Amateur Status and Conduct Committee shall issue a decision on the matter. If dissatisfied with the Amateur Status and Conduct Committee's decision, the player may, by written notice to the staff within 30 days after being notified of the decision, appeal to the Executive Committee, in which case he shall be given reasonable notice of the next meeting of the Executive Committee at which the matter may be heard and shall be entitled to present his case in person or in writing. The decision of the Executive Committee shall be final.

Rule 2. Professionalism

Definitions

All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed alphabetically in the Definitions section – see page 19.

2-1. General

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: Such actions include applying for a professional's position; directly or indirectly receiving services or payment from a professional agent or sponsor, commercial or otherwise; directly or indirectly entering into a written or oral agreement with a professional agent or sponsor, commercial or otherwise; and agreeing to accept payment or compensation for allowing one's name or likeness as a player of *golf skill or reputation* to be used for any commercial purpose.

Exception 1: Applying unsuccessfully for the position of assistant professional.

Exception 2: Entering and playing in any stage of a competition to qualify for a professional tour, provided the player first waives his right to any prize money.

2-2. Professional Golfers Organization

An *amateur golfer* must not apply for or receive benefit from membership in any organization of professional golfers.

Rule 3. Prizes

Definitions

All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed alphabetically in the Definitions section – see page 19.

3-1. Playing for Prize Money

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

Note: A player may participate in an event in which prize money or its equivalent is offered, provided that prior to participation he irrevocably waives his right to accept prize money in that event. (See USGA Policy on Gambling for explanation of playing for prize money.)

3-2. Prize Limits

An *amateur golfer* must not:

- a. Accept a prize (including all prizes received in any one tournament or exhibition for any event, or series of events, in which golf skill is a factor) of a *retail value* greater than \$750 (except for symbolic prizes);

Exception: Hole-In-One Prizes

The limit prescribed in Rule 3-2a applies 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.

- b. Accept a prize of money or the equivalent of money;
- c. Convert a prize into money;
- d. Accept expenses in any amount to a golf competition (except as provided in Rule 4); or
- e. Because of *golf skill or reputation*, accept in connection with any golfing event:
 - (i) money, or
 - (ii) anything else, other than merchandise of nominal value provided to all players.

3-3. Testimonial Awards

a. General

An *amateur golfer* must not accept a *testimonial award* of a *retail value* greater than \$750.

b. Multiple Awards

An *amateur golfer* may accept more than one *testimonial award* from different donors, even if their total *retail value* exceeds \$750, provided they are not presented so as to evade the limit for a single award.

Rule 4. Expenses

Definitions

All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed alphabetically in the Definitions section – see page 19.

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 or to improve golf skill.

4-2. Receipt of Expenses

An *amateur golfer* may receive 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 from their own resources (see Note to Rule 2-1).

b. Junior Golfers

A *junior golfer* may accept expenses to play in an amateur golf competition or exhibition or to improve golf skill (see Note to Rule 2-1).

c. Golf Club and Golf Association Team Competitions

An *amateur golfer* representing a golf club or golf association in a team practice session (within limits fixed by the USGA) and/or team competition between or among golf clubs or golf associations may accept expenses through one or more of the golf clubs or golf associations involved. Additionally, a member of a visiting team in such a team competition between or among golf associations may accept expenses to

the national Amateur Championship of the host association when the championship immediately precedes or follows the team competition.

d. Team Competition Conducted by an Athletic Organization

Subject to the approval of the USGA, an *amateur golfer* in a team competition conducted by an athletic organization may accept expenses.

e. School, College or Military Teams

An *amateur golfer* representing a recognized educational institution or military service may accept expenses from an educational or military authority to (1) team events or (2) other events that are limited to representatives of recognized educational institutions or military services.

f. Business or Industrial Teams

An *amateur golfer* representing a business or industrial golf team in business or industrial golf team competitions may accept expenses within limits fixed by the USGA. (A statement of such limits may be obtained on request from the USGA.)

g. 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, a guest in a club-sponsored competition, a winner of a random drawing, etc.) to take part in a golf event or to improve golf skill may accept expenses.

Note 1: Except as otherwise provided in Rule 4-2, acceptance of expenses from an employer or other vocational source is not permissible.

Note 2: Business Expenses – It is permissible to play in a golf competition while on a business trip with expenses paid, provided that the golf part of the expenses is borne personally and is not charged to business. Further, the business involved must be substantial, and not merely a subterfuge for legitimizing expenses when the primary purpose is golf competition.

Note 3: Private Transport – Acceptance of private transport furnished or arranged by a tournament sponsor, directly or indirectly, as an inducement for a player to engage in a golf competition or exhibition shall be considered accepting expenses under Rule 4.

Rule 5. Instruction

Definitions

All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed alphabetically in the Definitions section – see page 19.

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, etc.

An *amateur golfer* who is an employee of an educational institution or system may receive payment or compensation for *golf instruction* to students of the

institution or system, provided that during a year 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.

b. Camps, etc.

An *amateur golfer* who is a counselor at a camp or other similar organized program may receive payment or compensation for giving *instruction* to those in his charge, provided that during a year the total time devoted to golf *instruction* comprises less than 50 percent of the time spent in the performance of all duties as such a counselor.

c. Instruction to Junior Golfers

An *amateur golfer* may receive expenses, not exceeding the actual expenses incurred, for giving golf *instruction* to *junior golfers* as part of a program that has been approved by the USGA.

5-3. Instruction in Writing

An *amateur golfer* may receive payment or compensation for *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

Definitions

All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed alphabetically in the Definitions section – see page 19.

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.

Note: An *amateur golfer* may accept 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, except that reasonable expenses actually incurred may be received if no golf competition or exhibition is involved.

6-4. Broadcasting and Writing

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 broadcasting concerning golf, a golf event or golf events, writing golf articles or books, or allowing his name to be advertised or published as the author of golf articles or books of which he is not actually the author.

Exceptions:

1. An *amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation* may receive payment or compensation for broadcasting or writing as part of his primary occupation or career, provided instruction is not included (Rule 5).
2. An *amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation* may receive payment or compensation for part-time broadcasting or writing, provided:
 - (a) the player is actually the author of the commentary, articles or books;
 - (b) *instruction* is not included; and
 - (c) the payment or compensation does not have the purpose or effect, directly or indirectly, of financing participation in a golf competition.

6-5. Membership and Privileges

An *amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation* must not accept membership or privileges in a club or at a course without full payment for the class of membership involved when such membership or privileges are offered because of the player's *golf skill or reputation*.

Exception: Membership or privileges may be accepted by an *amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation* when they have been awarded (1) as purely and deservedly honorary, (2) in recognition of an outstanding performance, (3) without any time limit and (4) at no charge to anyone.

6-6. Scholarships

An *amateur golfer of golf skill or reputation* must not use that skill or reputation to gain the benefits of a scholarship or grant-in-aid other than in accord with the regulations of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, the Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women, the National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics, the National Junior College Athletic Association or other similar organizations governing athletes at academic institutions.

Rule 7. Conduct Detrimental to Golf

Definitions

All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed alphabetically in the Definitions section – see page 19.

An *amateur golfer* must not take any action, including an action relating to golf gambling, which is considered detrimental to the best interests of the game.

Rule 8. **Procedure for Enforcement of the Rules**

Definitions

All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed alphabetically in the Definitions section – see page 19.

8-1. Decision of a Breach

Whenever information of a possible act contrary to the Definition of an *amateur golfer* by a player claiming to be an amateur shall come to the attention of the United States Golf Association, the staff shall investigate to the extent it believes to be appropriate. If ample precedent exists, the staff is authorized by the Amateur Status and Conduct Committee to make decisions on acts contrary to the Definition of an *amateur golfer*. If ample precedent does not exist, the staff shall complete its investigation of the relevant facts and submit the results of its investigation, with or without a recommended resolution, to the Amateur Status and Conduct Committee.

A player dissatisfied with a decision with respect to his amateur status may follow the procedures set forth in Rule 1-3.

During the appeal process to either the Amateur Status and Conduct Committee or the Executive Committee, the player must abide by the terms of the last decision made.

8-2. Enforcement

Upon a final decision of the Amateur Status and Conduct Committee or the Executive Committee that a player has acted contrary to the Definition of an *amateur golfer*, the Committee may require the player to refrain or desist from specified actions as a condition of retaining his amateur status or declare the amateur status of the player forfeited. The USGA must notify the player, if possible, and may notify any interested golf association of any action taken under this paragraph.

Rule 9. Reinstatement

Definitions

All defined terms are in *italics* and are listed alphabetically in the Definitions section – see page 19.

9-1. Authority and Principles

Either the Executive Committee or its Amateur Status and Conduct Committee may reinstate a player to amateur status and prescribe the waiting period necessary for reinstatement or may deny reinstatement. In addition, the Amateur Status and Conduct Committee may authorize the staff of the USGA to reinstate a player to amateur status and prescribe the waiting period necessary for reinstatement in situations where the acts contrary to the Definition of an *amateur golfer* are covered by ample precedent.

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

a. Awaiting Reinstatement

A professional has an advantage over the *amateur golfer* by reason of having devoted himself to the game as his profession; other persons acting contrary to the Rules of Amateur Status also obtain advantages not available to the amateur. They do not necessarily lose such advantages merely by deciding to cease acting contrary to the *Rules*.

Therefore, an applicant for reinstatement to amateur status shall undergo a period awaiting reinstatement as prescribed.

The period awaiting reinstatement shall start from the date of the player's last act contrary to the Rules of Amateur Status unless it is decided that it shall start from the date of the player's last act known by the player to be contrary to the Rules of Amateur Status.

b. Period Awaiting Reinstatement

A period awaiting reinstatement of two years normally will be required. However, that period may be extended or shortened. Longer periods will normally be required when applicants have played extensively for prize money, regardless of performance, or have been previously reinstated; shorter periods often will be permitted when applicants have acted contrary to the *Rules* for one year or less. A probationary period of one year will normally be required when the applicant's only act contrary to the *Rules* was to accept a prize of *retail value* exceeding \$750.

c. Players of National Prominence

Players of national prominence who have acted contrary to the Rules of Amateur Status for more than five years normally will not be eligible for reinstatement.

d. Status During Period Awaiting Reinstatement

During the period awaiting reinstatement an applicant for reinstatement shall conform with the Definition of an *amateur golfer*.

He shall not be eligible to enter competitions limited to amateurs except that he may enter competitions solely among members of a club of which he is a member, subject to the approval of the club. He may also, without prejudicing his application, enter, as an applicant for reinstatement, competitions which are not limited to amateurs but shall not accept any prize reserved for an amateur.

9-2. Form of Application

Each application for reinstatement shall be prepared, in duplicate, on forms provided by the USGA.

The application must be filed through a recognized amateur golf association in whose district the applicant resides. The association's recommendation, if any, will be considered. If the applicant is unknown to the association, this should be noted and the application forwarded to the USGA without recommendation.

9-3. Objection by Applicant

A person dissatisfied with a decision made with respect to his application for reinstatement to amateur status may follow the procedures set forth in Rule 1-3.

During the appeal process to either the Amateur Status and Conduct Committee or the Executive Committee, the applicant must abide by the terms of the last decision made.

USGA POLICY ON GAMBLING

The Definition of an *amateur golfer* provides that an *amateur golfer* is one who plays the game as a non-remunerative and non-profit-making sport. When gambling motives are introduced, problems can arise which threaten the integrity of the game.

The distinction between playing for prize money, which violates the Rules of Amateur Status, and gambling, which does not, is essential to the Rules of Amateur Status. The USGA urges *amateur golfers* to seek USGA guidance whenever it is unclear whether the prize format constitutes playing for prize money or gambling and, in the absence of such guidance, not to play for cash prizes. Such a course of action would ensure that no one jeopardizes his amateur status.

The USGA does not object to informal wagering among individual golfers or teams of golfers when the players in general know each other, participation in the wagering is optional and is limited to the players, the sole source of all money won by the players is advanced by the players on themselves or their own teams and the amount of money involved is such that the primary purpose is the playing of the game for enjoyment.

On the other hand, organized events open to the general public or designed and promoted to create cash prizes are not approved by the USGA. Golfers participating in such events without first irrevocably waiving their right to cash prizes are deemed by the USGA to be playing for prize money.

The USGA is opposed to and urges its Member Clubs, all golf associations and all other sponsors of golf competitions to prohibit types of gambling such as: (1) Calcuttas, (2) other auction pools, (3) pari-mutuels and (4) any other forms of gambling organized for general participation or permitting participants to bet on someone other than themselves or their teams. The USGA may deny amateur status, entry in USGA Championships and membership on USGA teams for international competitions to players whose activities in connection with golf gambling, whether organized or individual, are considered by the USGA to be contrary to the best interests of golf.

Notes
