



2026 Rules Volunteer Training

Session 1



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Agenda

- Getting Started
- What to Expect
- Different Refereeing Roles
- Principles of a Good Referee
- The Art of Refereeing



Communication

- Event confirmation has been sent out to you
- Attend the tournaments you are signed up for!
 - Let us know ASAP if you are unable to attend
- Week before the event confirmation email
 - Reach out if your plans have changed
 - Multi-day championships
 - Days you are scheduled will be communicated to you
- Hotel reservations will be communicated earlier
- New volunteer software



Communication

- The Staff Member in Charge (SMIC) will be sending out rules assignments/days scheduled 2-3 days before the event
- The SMIC will be sending the day before the first-round email
 - Rules assignments reminders
 - Notice to Player (NTP) and hole location sheet
 - Important information to know for event (potential weather, areas of potential concern, lunch, etc.)
- Familiarize yourself with the location of the event
 - Google Maps etc.



111th VSGA AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP
BELLE HAVEN COUNTRY CLUB
JUNE 24-28, 2024

RULES OFFICIAL SCHEDULE

Staff Members In Charge: Amanda Braun (804) 928-7926; Josh Coates (804) 304-9132

JUNE 24 (STROKE PLAY QUALIFYING)

Volunteer Coordinator: Cody Feldman

Hole #1 Starter (8:00/12:30): Brian Maloney
Hole #10 Starter (8:00/12:30): Bert Wilson

Scoring: Caleb McCall & Cody Feldman

Zone 1 (#1, 2, 3): Taylor Monfort
Zone 2 (#4, 5, 6): Andy Shulman
Zone 3 (#7, 8, 9): Bill Preston
Zone 4 (#10, 11, 12): John Vogel
Zone 5 (#13, 14, 15): Bruce Nordstrom
Zone 6 (#16, 17, 18): Ed Cochrane
Front Nine Rover: Ken Bedford
Back Nine Rover: Charles Rolan

Brian and Bert will help with relief/roving when finished with starting each wave.

JUNE 25 (STROKE PLAY QUALIFYING)

Volunteer Coordinator: Cody Feldman

Hole #1 Starter (8:00/12:30): Brian Maloney
Hole #10 Starter (8:00/12:30): Bert Wilson

Scoring: Caleb McCall & Cody Feldman

Zone 1 (#1, 2, 3): Ed Cochrane
Zone 2 (#4, 5, 6): Merle Snyder
Zone 3 (#7, 8, 9): Bruce Nordstrom
Zone 4 (#10, 11, 12): Andy Shulman
Zone 5 (#13, 14, 15): Bill Preston
Zone 6 (#16, 17, 18): Taylor Monfort
Front Nine Rover: John Vogel
Back Nine Rover: Ken Bedford
General Rover: Charles Rolan

Brian and Bert will help with relief/roving when finished with starting each wave.



VSGA Amateur/State Open Qualifier
Riverfront GC
June 4, 2024
Rules Official Assignments

Staff Member-In-Charge: Amanda Braun (804) 928-7926

Scoring: Amanda Braun & Quint Dingledine

On-Course Officials

Hole #1 Starter & General Rover: Karl Quinn

7:00 – 7:20 a.m. Groups: Garrett McGehee
7:30 – 7:40 a.m. Groups: Les Flora
7:50 – 8:10 a.m. Groups: Richard Schreiner
8:25 – 8:35 a.m. Groups: Rick Van Orden
8:45 – 9:05 a.m. Groups: Jeff Minnix & Carlisle Wroton
9:15 – 9:25 a.m. Groups: Jim Gallagher



Golf Genius Communication

- We may find it necessary to send out text messages to all rules officials for important updates
 - Weather
 - Important updates to the competition
 - Trouble with radios
- Don't hit STOP

Today 9:57 AM

Hello Larry,

This is a reminder that your tee time on Wednesday for the 2017 Four ball at Hollands Golf Club - East Course is 12:40 PM. Other players in your group are Ned Stark, Michael Day, David Ortiz.

To stop receiving text messages, reply STOP to this message.

STOP

You have successfully been unsubscribed. You will not receive any more messages from this number. Reply START to resubscribe.



Players May Request a Ruling

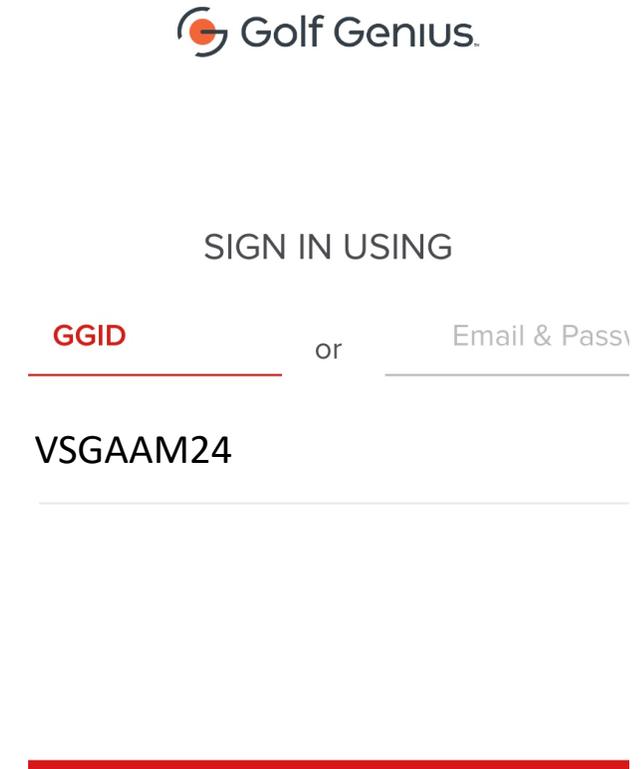
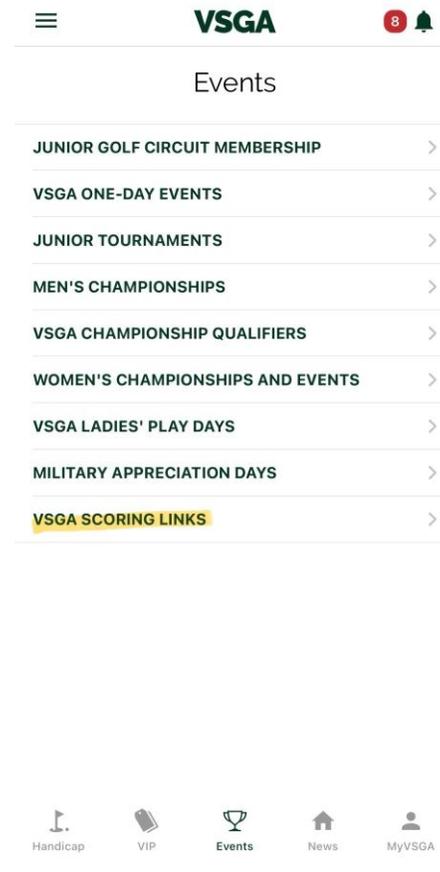
- Golf Genius has a feature that players can request a ruling through the app.
- A group often can't find a rules official close to their group
- A message will be sent to all officials
 - Player: The player who initiated the request
 - Callback Number: The phone number of the golfer who initiated the request
 - Course: The course where the request took place
 - Hole: The hole of the request
 - Location: The location of the request
- Radio to everyone who is taking the request





How Can I Access Event Information?

- My VSGA App
- VSGA website
- GGID (Golf Genius)
- Scan QR code





Questions





Uniform/Attire





New Rules Official Shadowing

- We would like any new VSGA rules officials to shadow for their first event(s)
 - You will ride along with an official who has been with the VSGA for multiple events. We will let you know who that official is prior to the event
 - We will let you shadow more than one event if needed until you feel comfortable going around by yourself
- Ask questions!





Arrival to Event

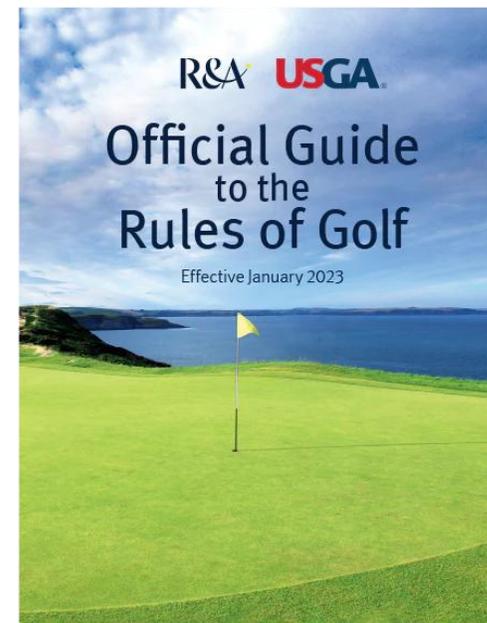
- Arrive 20-30 minutes early to assignments
- Carts will have signs for each official
 - Review Rules Official Packet
- Introduce yourself
- If reasonable, ride the golf course or holes you'll be monitoring
 - Identify any trouble areas
 - Ask questions before something happens
- Make sure you have all necessary items





Items for Refereeing Bag

- Earpiece (Motorola SL300)
- *The Official Guide to the Rules of Golf* and the USGA Rules App on phone (expert mode)
- Coin, tees
- Umbrella and rain gear (if needed)
- Towel
- Sunscreen
- Snacks and water
- VSGA name badge
- Watch, stopwatch, or phone for these functions
- Binoculars





What the VSGA Provides

- VSGA Terms of the Competition
- Notice to Players (“Local Rules” sheet)
- Pace of Play Time Chart (“Raguzzi”)
- VSGA Pace of Play Policy
- Hole Location Sheet
- Rules Assignments
- Radio
- Air Horn



LOCAL RULES AND TERMS OF THE COMPETITION FOR 2026 VSGA QUALIFIERS AND CHAMPIONSHIPS

The Rules of Golf as approved by the United States Golf Association and R&A Rules Limited govern play. These Local Rules and Terms of the Competition are in effect at all VSGA championships and qualifying rounds. See applicable championship or qualifying round notice to players and entry application for modifications or additions to these Local Rules and Terms of the Competition. Complete text of the Rules and Local Rules may be found in the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf, effective January 2023.

Unless otherwise noted, the penalty for breach of a Local Rule is the general penalty.

Out of Bounds — Defined by the line between the course-side points of white stakes at ground level. When fences or walls define out of bounds, a ball is out of bounds when it is beyond the fence/wall defining the boundary of the course (see Model Local Rule A-2.2). When roads define out of bounds a ball that comes to rest on or across a road is considered to be out of bounds even if it lies on another part of the course (see Model Local Rule A-5).

Penalty Areas — When a penalty area is defined on only one side, it extends to infinity. When a penalty area is connected to the out-of-bounds edge, the penalty area extends to and coincides with out of bounds — Model Local Rule B-2.2 is in effect to provide an additional relief option.

Ground Under Repair — Defined by white lines, unless otherwise provided for in the *Notice to Players*.

- French drains are ground under repair.
- Ground under repair may include areas of unusual damage, including areas where spectators or other traffic has combined with wet conditions to affect materially the ground surface, but only when so declared by an authorized member of the Committee.
- When immediately adjacent to an immovable obstruction, such an area is part of that obstruction.

Animal Near Ball — Model Local Rule E-13 is in effect.

Relief from Seams of Cut Turf — Model Local Rule F-7 is in effect.

Immovable Obstructions Adjacent to Artificially-Surfaced Roads and Paths — Deemed to be a continuation of the road and/or path.

Immovable Obstructions Close to Putting Green — Model Local Rule F-5.2 is in effect. Relief under this Local Rule is only allowed when both the ball and the immovable obstruction lie in an area cut to fairway height or less.

Immovable Obstructions Close Together — Immovable obstructions within or adjacent to each other (e.g. scorecard length), including but not limited to sprinkler heads near putting greens, are considered to be a single obstruction. Consult a referee with questions.

Limited Free Relief From Immovable Obstructions in Penalty Areas — Model Local Rule F-24 is in effect. Relief from interference by sprinkler heads and utility boxes within one club-length of the edge of the penalty area is allowed Under Rule 16.1b, but only when the ball touches or lies on the obstruction or the obstructions interferes with the area of intended swing.

Temporary Immovable Obstructions — Model Local Rule F-23 is in effect. Any air-circulation fans and tents on the course are temporary immovable obstructions. Relief procedure may be taken on either side of the TIO.

White-Lined Areas Tying Into Artificially Surfaced Roads and Paths — White-lined areas of ground under repair and the artificially surfaced roads, paths or other identified obstructions that they are connected to are a single abnormal course condition when taking relief under Rule 16.1.

Wood Chips and Mulch — Are loose impediments.

Integral Objects — Include cables, rods, wires or wrappings when closely attached to trees; and artificial walls and pilings when located in penalty areas and bunkers.

An exposed bunker liner may be treated as ground under repair, but interference does not exist if the liner interferes only with the player's stance.

Relief From Aeration Holes — Model Local Rule E-4 is in effect.

List of Conforming Driver Heads — Model Local Rule G-1 is in effect.

Missing Player or Marker Certification — Model Local Rule L-1 is in effect.

Pace of Play — See vsqa.org for complete pace of play policy.

- **Timing** — When a group is being timed, each player in the group is expected to play all strokes within 40 seconds. Timing begins when it is the player's turn to play and nothing is obstructing his/her play.
- **Penalties** — One bad time - warning; a second bad time - one stroke penalty; a third bad time - additional two stroke penalty (three total); a fourth bad time - disqualification.

Stopping and Resuming Play — Model Local Rule J-1 is in effect. All practice areas are closed during an immediate suspension for a dangerous situation until the Committee has declared them open. Players who practice on closed practice areas will be asked to stop practicing; failure to comply might result in disqualification.

- Immediate suspension: one prolonged airhorn note.
- All other suspensions: three consecutive short airhorn notes.
- Resumption of Play: two short airhorn notes.

When Competition Is Final — The competition is final when the trophy has been presented to the winner or, in the absence of a prize ceremony, when all scores have been approved by the Committee. The result of a match is final when the Committee has approved the result.



Prior to the Round

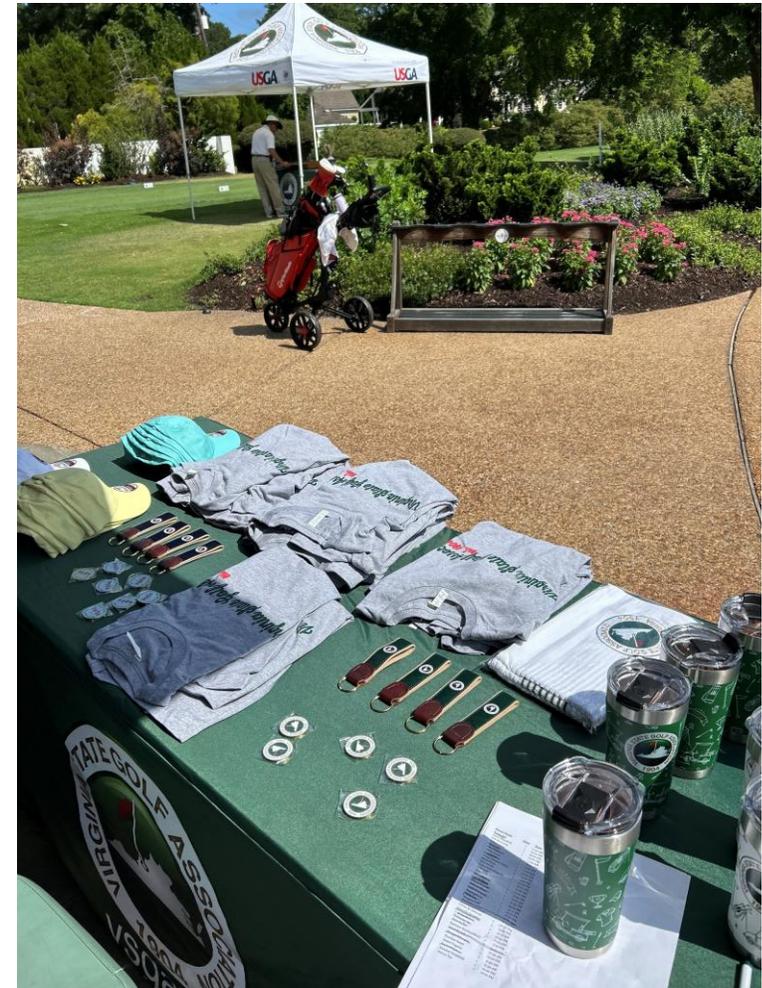
- Review your assignments
 - Bring up questions you have to the SMIC
- Review any specific rules for the competition
 - Notice to Players with Local Rules
 - Format
 - Pace of play
- Make sure to test your radio





Registration/Swag

- Assist with player registration
 - Championships
 - Player checks in
 - Choice of one swag item
- VSGA tablecloth
- Alpha sheet
- Swag items nicely laid out





Breaks

- Days are long and typically hot
- Make sure to find spots in the shade or sun if it's cold!
- Drink plenty of water
 - Rovers will be asked to ride around with water coolers for players
- On tournament days lunch is provided
- Make sure to radio that you are grabbing lunch
 - If possible, have another official cover area
 - Please limit how long your lunch break is (to-go box/grab-n-go options)
 - If the weather is a bit extreme that day (cold, extreme heat, rain) feel free to eat your lunch inside



Questions





Roles of Referees

- On-Course Referee
- Match Play Referee (Assigned to a match)
- Observer in Match Play
- Rover
- Starter
- Scorer





On-Course Referee

- Most common role for an official
- Will have a golf cart
- May be assigned to a hole, zone, or asked to move around
- Responsible for responding to Ruling requests and monitor Pace of Play
- Used in both stroke play and match play





On-Course Official During Match Play

Officials who are not assigned to a match do not have the authority to intervene in the match, except when:

- Player or Opponent asks for help with the Rules or requests a Ruling (Rule 20.1b(2))
- Code of conduct issue (Rule 1.2)
- Players agree to ignore any Rule or penalty they know applies (Rule 1.3b(1))
- Pace of Play Issue (Rule 5.6)
- A player arrives late to the tee (Rule 5.3)
- A player's search for a ball reaches three minutes (Rule 5.6a)



Referee Assigned to a Match

- Responsible for acting on any breach of the Rules that you see or are told about
- **SHOULD** intervene if you see a player:
 - Is about to break a Rule
 - Play out of turn
 - Play from outside the teeing area
 - Has already broken a Rule, etc.
- At the conclusion of each hole, announce the match score.





Observer in Match Play

- Assigned to a match to assist the Referee in any way requested
- Main responsibility is knowing the location of the player's balls at all times
- Should only communicate with the Referee (not the players) and notify the Referee if a Rules breach is observed



Rover

- Provide support to on-course officials
- Available for second opinions when requested
- Administer pace of play and time players if needed
- Give breaks to on-course officials
- Help coordinate course evacuations, suspensions, and resummptions of play





Starter

- Responsible for ensuring that players start on time and that scorecards and rules sheet are distributed to players
- Explain necessary items from the Notice to Players, answer any questions
- Announce each play on the tee before they tee off.





Scorer

- Responsible for ensuring that all official scorecards are properly handled and any disputes are settled prior to player leaving the scoring area
- Note the finish time of each group
- Make sure the player AND marker have certified each scorecard
- Make sure player checks hole-by-hole scores along with marker
- Players are not responsible for addition





Additional Opportunities

The VSGA Junior Golf Circuit is expanding and our coordinators could use additional help during 9- and 18-hole events.

Responsibilities could include:

- Starting
- Rules
- Pace of Play
- Scoring



Scan the QR code to view the Junior Golf Circuit schedule.

If interested, please contact Kent Holubar at kholubar@vsga.org



Questions





Principles of Being a Good Referee

- **Getting the Ruling right** – Even the most knowledgeable Referees will have a moment of hesitation or second-guessing. Every event has a *Rules Committee* for a reason – help is only a radio call away. There is no shame in double checking a Ruling before giving it.
- **Professionalism** – Referees may be the only representative a player interacts with during the whole event. Keep a calm, professional demeanor at all times.
- **Being Prepared** – Knowing the Rules, reviewing the Notice to Players & Hand Card, Pace of Play Policy, etc. is important to ensure you're prepared for any questions or situations that may arise.
- **Being Adaptable** – You may not always get the assignment or event you want, or may be asked to do something different or new.
- **Being Open to Feedback** – There is always room for improvement!



A Good Referee Should...

Representation of the VSGA

- Interactions
 - Club staff and members
 - Players
 - Spectators/parents/coaches
- Your interactions leave a lasting impact
- Any issues at the event should be brought to the attention of the SMIC



A Good Referee Should...

- Interact with players in a professional, friendly, and concise manner
- Remove sunglasses when interacting with players
- Stay aware of surroundings





A Good Referee Should...

Positioning

- Be discreetly available
- “Visibly invisible”
- Park golf cart off the path and out of the way
- Be visible enough so players can easily call you into a rules situation





A Good Referee Should...

Communication:

If there is any doubt, reach out

- Players are allowed to request a second opinion
- Referees can also ask for second opinions
- Use radio for clarification if not 100% certain on ruling





Radio Etiquette

- Recommended to use an earpiece.
 - Radio: Motorola SL300
- Be smart where you store/carry your radio.
- Avoid “stepping on” someone when they are speaking.
- Allow conversation in progress to finish before starting a new conversation.





Radio Etiquette

- Avoid casual chitchat on the radio.
- In windy conditions or when moving in a cart, cover the microphone to shield it from the wind.
- Answer any radio calls for you or your assigned area.
- When suspension of play is imminent, keep the radio clear.
- Radio conversations should be conducted as if ANYONE is listening!





A Good Referee Should Not...

- **Distract Play**
 - By driving a cart, speaking on the radio nearby, using a radio without an ear piece, having loud conversations
- **Be positioned in a bad place**
 - On or close to an extension of the line of play behind the player or on the other side of the hole
 - In the landing zone (better to be short of or beyond landing zone)



A Good Referee Should Not...

- Go onto the putting green or into a bunker
- Move, attend, or replace the flagstick
- Rake a bunker for a player
- Touch, handle, or carry player equipment
- Initiate casual conversation with players





A Good Referee Should Not...

- Mark or lift or otherwise touch a ball in play
- Run or jog on the course
- Be positioned in a bad place
- Involve spectators in a ruling
- Escalate tension when interacting with players





Questions





Being a Referee/Rules Official

Golf is a Different Game

“Hours of boredom, moments of terror.” – Mike Shea – PGA Tour

- More than one ball
 - Up to 100+ players in a wave
 - Multiple balls in motion at one time
- More than one arena
 - 18 holes (arenas)
 - Dimension very different week to week (hole to hole)
- More than one day
 - Hours vs. days (retrospective penalties)
 - Differing conditions





Art of Refereeing

- Not all about the rules, but how to officiate
- About applying the rules accurately and...
 - Professionally/Calmly
 - Effectively
 - Efficiently



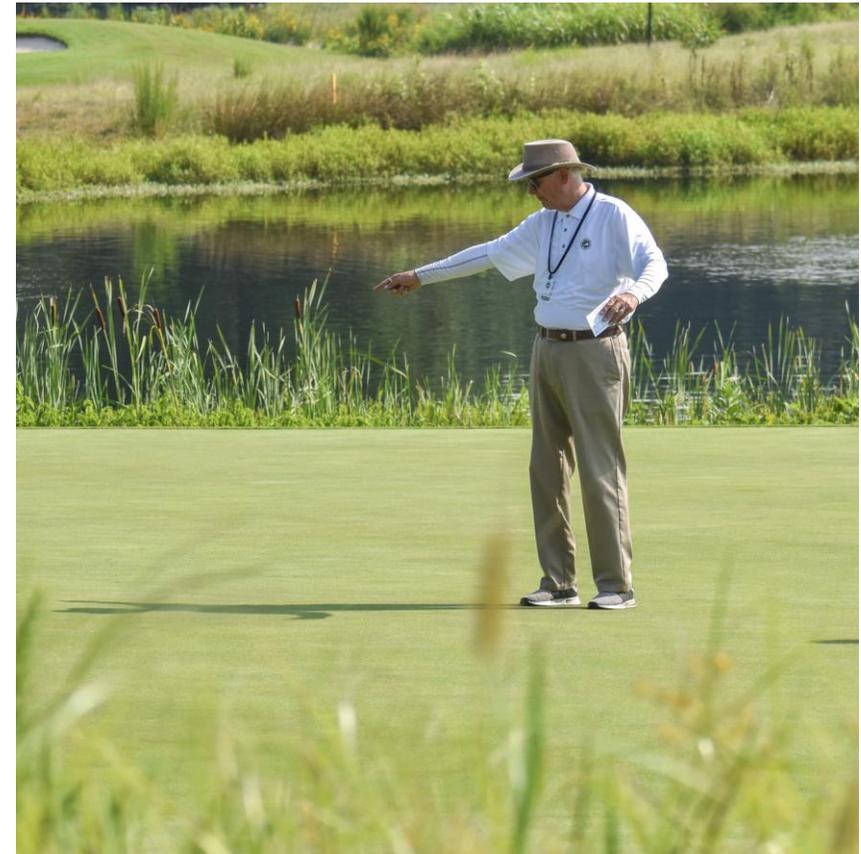


Art of Refereeing

Aspects of a Good Ruling:

- The ruling is correct
- The player is comfortable with the ruling
- No time is wasted completing the ruling

Not all rulings will go as we'd like – use this as a checklist for review





Key Elements of a Good Ruling

- Accuracy
- Efficiency/Timeliness
- Demeanor
- Professionalism
- Outcome





Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Accuracy:

- Ball is played from the correct place, put into play properly, and penalty issued if required
- Consulting over the radio is not a sign of weakness
- Even if you are certain of a rule, it might help to show it or confirm over the radio so the player can hear
- If a player questions a ruling, offer to call another official for a second opinion



Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Efficiency / Timeliness

- Relevant Questioning
- Efficient Language – a ruling is not the time for a Rules workshop
- Reasonable time for decisions
- Properly positioned to reach player when called
- Radio communication succinct and direct



Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Relevant Questioning/Conversation:

- The rules are easy, getting the facts is hard. Don't make assumptions
- Say "tell me (or show me) what happened," (who, what, when, where, why) then **listen**
 - **You have two ears and one mouth for a reason!**
- Repeat back facts to confirm, "Just so I'm clear..."
- Get everyone involved to agree to the facts before giving a ruling
- Be wary of rules requests containing few or no facts



Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Demeanor

- Calm greeting and tone
 - “How can I help?”
- “Open” posture
- Attitude to assist
 - Not here to dish out penalties or “catch” players doing something.
- Listen to the players responses





Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Avoid Imposing Posture

- Hands on hips, arms crossed signify imposition and confrontation
- Arms open, lowered or behind back signal friendly and helpful
- Know your audience, a junior may be far more intimidated by what is normally a reasonable distance – especially if you are taller
- No need to hover



Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Professionalism:

- Eye contact
 - Sunglasses Off
- Fact-based statements
 - A ruling or question about a ruling is not the time for casual conversations or jokes
- Unintrusive
- Avoids negative implications





Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Outcome:

- Complete explanation (without being too “rulesy”)
- Express sympathy for the player when needed
 - It's okay to show that you know it's a tough situation
- Stay to fully complete the ruling
- Player accepts and feel heard
 - Player may not like the outcome, but a good ruling will allow the player to accept it and understand why





Key Elements of a Good Ruling

Outcome:

- If there is a penalty involved, make sure the player is aware of it and tie that into the explanation early – don't throw in the penalty after!
- Be cognizant the player may not have thought a penalty was coming
- Don't use Rules speak/numbers with players – put in layman's terms
- Close out the ruling with the player – “Is there anything else I can help you with?”
- Close out the ruling with the Committee



Questions

Session 2: Thursday, March 12th, 11 a.m.