



For Immediate Publication

## **THE R&A AND USGA ANNOUNCE NEW RULES OF GOLF FOR 2012**

Significant changes include amended Rule on ball moving after address

First-ever joint publication of the Rules by golf's governing bodies

24 October 2011, St Andrews, Scotland: The R&A and the United States Golf Association (USGA) today announced the publication of the new Rules of Golf for 2012-15.

Changes in the Rules – which for the first time have been designed, published and presented jointly by golf's governing bodies – include exonerating a player from penalty if it is known their ball was moved by the wind after address.

Following an exhaustive, four-year review of golf's 34 playing Rules, nine principal Rules have been amended to improve clarity and ensure penalties are proportionate. Significant changes include:

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

Commenting on the revisions to the Rules of Golf supported by Rolex, The R&A's Director of Rules and Equipment Standards David Rickman said: "The key point is that the Rules of Golf will remain fundamentally the same. We have undergone a pretty extensive review although what has come out of that has been relatively modest.

"The Rules of Golf are constantly evolving and our hope is that what we have produced for 2012 is clear, informed by common sense and reflective of the demands of the modern game."

USGA Senior Director of Rules of Golf Thomas Pagel said: "We have produced a unified code of the Rules of Golf for 60 years and although the context has been the same, we often found the perception that there were different Rules in place depending upon where you were to play the game.

"Now the book will not only have the same content, but it will also be presented in a uniform fashion with similar formatting and covers; this will truly be a single code governing the Rules of the game that reflects the strong collaboration between The R&A and USGA."

The most significant change (Rule 18-12b) will see an end to situations like the one witnessed during the final round of this year's Open Championship when Northern Ireland's Rory McIlroy was penalised when his ball was moved on the 7th green by the wind after he had addressed it.

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

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

There has been a unified code of golf since 1952 but until now The R&A and the USGA have published the same rules in separate editions, thereby giving the impression to some that the rules were different. However, this year sees identical publications with only some spellings and respective logos changing depending whether the edition serves the US and Mexico or the rest of the world.

Golfing legend Arnold Palmer welcomed the announcement of a jointly published edition of the Rules. He said: "What has happened with The R&A and the USGA is wonderful. In the years I have been associated with the game and got to know The R&A and what their efforts are and having lived with the USGA all my life, one of the things I have always thought is we should be closer together."

## **ENDS**

### **Notes to editors**

- The complete text of all changes to the Rules and video summaries of the changes can be found at [www.randa.org](http://www.randa.org)
- The R&A will publish in English a total of 2.6 million copies of the Rules of Golf 2012-15, with 1.8 million printed in the UK and 800,000 in Australia. The UK print run will cover Great Britain & Ireland and all international deliveries, excluding Australia and New Zealand. The book will be delivered to 95 worldwide destinations as far away as the Falkland Islands. Approximately 900,000 copies will be distributed among 3,600 clubs and societies in Great Britain & Ireland in late October/early November.
- Copies of The R&A Rules of Golf are reproduced under licence in 36 languages, in addition to English: Bengali, Bulgarian, Chinese (Mandarin), Croatian, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Estonian, Finnish, French, German, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Lao, Latvian, Lithuanian, Norwegian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, Swedish, Thai, Turkish and Vietnamese.
- Rolex's relationship with The R&A dates back to 1978 when the company first began to support The Open Championship. In addition to the Rules of Golf, Rolex also support the Amateur Championship, the Walker Cup and the Junior Open. Rolex also sponsors the British Golf Museum and this year became the presenting patron of the Senior Open Championship.
- Companion publications to the Rules of Golf, Decisions on the Rules of Golf 2012 – 2013 and Golf Rules Illustrated 2012 - 2015 are published next month (November 2011) by Hamlyn and are available from The R&A, high street and online bookstores.

### **Notes to website editors**

The code to upload the videos relating to the New Rules of Golf for 2012 are provided in the attachment to this release.

### **About The R&A**

Based in St Andrews, The R&A organises The Open Championship, major amateur events and international matches. Together with the United States Golf Association, The R&A governs the game worldwide, jointly administering the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status, Equipment Standards and World Amateur Golf Rankings. The R&A's working jurisdiction is global, excluding the United States and Mexico.

The R&A is committed to working for golf and supports the growth of the game internationally and the development and management of sustainable golf facilities. The R&A operates with the consent of 143 organisations from the amateur and professional game and on behalf of over thirty million golfers in 128 countries.

### **About the USGA**

The USGA conducts the U.S. Open, U.S. Women's Open and U.S. Senior Open, as well as 10 national amateur championships, two state team championships and international matches. Together with The R&A, the USGA governs the game worldwide, jointly administering the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status, equipment standards and World Amateur Golf Rankings. The USGA's working jurisdiction comprises the United States, its territories and Mexico. The USGA is a global leader in the development and support of sustainable golf course management practices. It serves as a primary steward for the game's history and funds an ongoing "For the Good of the Game" grants program. Additionally, the USGA's Course Rating and Handicap systems are used on six continents in more than 50 countries.

### **Contact**

Communications Department

The R&A

+44 (0) 1334 460000

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

[media@randa.org](mailto:media@randa.org)

Daniel Hubbard

Assistant Director, Communications

United States Golf Association

(908) 234-2300, extension 1136

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

[DHubbard@usga.org](mailto:DHubbard@usga.org)