

# THE RULES - LIFEBLOOD OF GOLF

By

HARVEY RAYNOR  
Tournament Supervisor  
The PGA of America

**R**ules are the lifeblood of golf, particularly, tournament golf. Whether the tournament player be a professional competing on the PGA Tour or an amateur playing in regional events, the Rules of Golf are the mainstay of the competitor.

As the Rules of Golf are important to the competitor, so is the conduct of the tournament golfer important to the public. Imitation is the greatest teacher, whether the imitation be of something good or of something bad.

Thus, when a galleryite sees a fine shot from a trap, chances are he will try to imitate that shot the next time he gets into a similar position.

In the same manner, any golfwear-minded person, after viewing a tournament, will try to dress in attire similar to that worn by his favorite player.

Those are good imitations.

But what happens when a person in the gallery sees his "golf hero" commit a violation to one of the rules of golf?

Certainly, he will think, if a known tournament star does it, so can I.

That's why it's so important for tournament golfers, especially those on the PGA Tour, to be absolutely sure that each rule of golf is obeyed "to the letter."

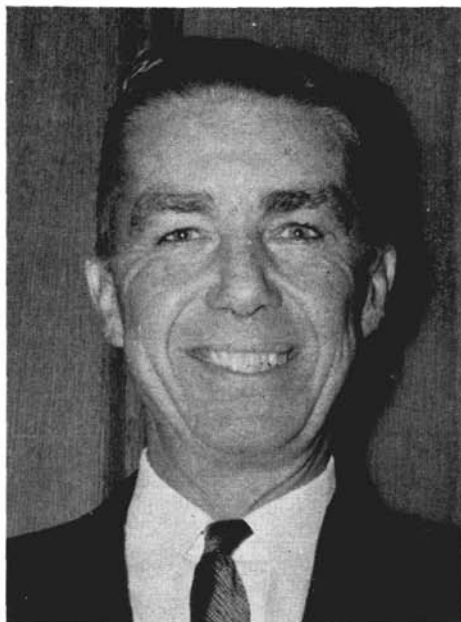
Every violation a tournament player commits is seen not only by his fellow competitors, but by sponsor representatives and officials, the gallery and the press, as well. From there these offenses are discussed in the locker rooms, press rooms and throughout the town.

One of the major reasons for a rule being broken is because the player "just didn't know any better."

The most important book in a golfer's life—and that includes the high handicapper as well as the touring professional—is the Rules of Golf.

For the player who makes his living by playing the PGA circuit, the better he knows the rules, the more money it will save him—and make for him—in the long run.

Many of our PGA Tour players want



Harvey Raynor

some of the rules changed. For instance, the rule regarding the cleaning of the ball on the green and the repairing of ball marks.

The USGA, ruling body of golf in the United States, and its Rules Committee, understands this problem completely. Rules, in most cases, were made for the minority and affect the majority. Such is the case here.

The only reason for not having changed the rule before, is the possibility of giving the "cheater" an advantage when he can get his hands on the golf ball.

It was through examples of careless, or deliberate, improper marking of the golf ball on the green, fixing of everything on the green from ball marks to spike marks, and in many cases, imaginary rough spots which are not ball marks, that the tournament golfers delayed their chance to have these rules changed.

Until every man in the field of any golf tournament assumes the responsibility of warning each man with whom he plays that he intends to call rule violations as called for in the Rule Book, no player can expect the Rules of Golf to be changed.

Here are three of the Rules of Golf which are most often violated:

1. From ground under repair and casual water—the ONLY drop a player has is to the nearest area giving relief from these conditions.
2. The ONLY places one may have two club lengths relief is from a lateral water hazard or from an immovable obstruction.
3. The ONLY proper way to drop a ball is to face the hole and drop the ball over the shoulder. There is no penalty if the ball touches you during the drop.

The USGA, in an effort to educate the American golfers in the rules governing golf, offers the following suggestions on using the Rules Book:

1. Become familiar with key words and special terms.

2. Refer to the Index. Every item in the Rules is listed; many are cross-indexed.
3. Study the Definitions. They are basic.
4. What form of play is involved? Is it match play or stroke play? Single or four-ball?
5. Where did the incident occur?—on the teeing ground, "through the green," in a hazard, or on the putting green? Find the right place in the Index, as the Rules may be different for the same occurrences on different parts of the course.
6. Two Rules may cover different aspects of the same case.
7. Every word means what it says.
8. Carry a Rules Book in your golf bag and use it.

Everyone can benefit by personally taking the responsibility of observing all Rules of Golf.

In the long run, you will enjoy the game of golf more if you play it as it must be played.

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