



Newsletter February 2006
Volume VII, Edition 2

Improve Your Golf Game
Easily & Quickly



Play "In the Zone" with Joan

INTEGRITY

There will be no golf in the North Carolina mountains today. Mother Nature has created a winter wonderland by covering the golf courses with a few inches of fluffy white snow. The nor'easter blizzard predicted for the east coast will force golfers inside for awhile to contemplate the warm, sunny days of spring to come. This is an excellent time to read and learn the official rules of the game of golf.

The United States Golf Association (USGA) together with the Royal & Ancient Golf Club (the R&A) in St. Andrews, Scotland write "THE RULES OF GOLF." These two organizations work together to guard the integrity and tradition of the game by interpreting and maintaining the Rules of Golf. They are also the joint owners and authors of the book, "Decisions on the Rules of Golf."

Every four years the USGA & R&A review, revise, and clarify "The RULES OF GOLF" so they can be more easily understood and applied. All changes are

by complete agreement on both sides. Their deciding factor in making a change is always, "Are the changes good for the game?"

The "DECISIONS ON THE RULES OF GOLF" is published every two years, the latest version effective on January 1, 2006. The R&A and USGA receive thousands of questions yearly from all levels of golfers around the world, asking to clarify the rules for on-course incidents. The 2006-2007 Decisions book includes 37 new decisions, 66 revised decisions and 8 decisions were withdrawn. The book contains 1,200 individual decisions in Q&A format.

The original rules of golf were written down in the 1770's. The Royal & Ancient Golf Club was considered to be the rules authority beginning in the 1880's. Since 1952 the R&A and USGA organizations have worked closely together to produce a uniform code of rules so that wherever the game is played the same rules apply.

"THE RULES OF GOLF" is published every four years. The "DECISIONS ON THE RULES OF GOLF" interprets those rules. It is published every two years. Because of the complex nature of the game of golf, making a small change in a rule can affect many other rules. The Decisions book can be very helpful in understanding the changes.

Both books can be purchased through the USGA on their website www.USGA.org or by calling the USGA Order Department at 1-800-336-4446.

There are 34 Rules in "THE RULES OF GOLF." Also in the book is Appendix I, covering Local Rules and the Conditions in a Competition. Both of these topics are informative for the tournament committee as well as the golfer. Appendices II and III describe the parameters for legal clubs and balls. Included in the book are 10 rules defining Amateur Status (see below) and an Appendix outlining the Policy on Gambling.

Many golfers choose to play "social golf" which means bending the rules to avoid counting all their shots. Mulligans, a breakfast ball, do-overs, hand mashies, gimmes, and not taking penalty shots cannot be found anywhere in the Rules. They undermine the integrity of the game and the uniqueness of the only sport where the player is the sole referee. Even when a rules official is present, the player is totally responsible for making the rules decision by him/herself.

Playing by "social rules" takes some of the tension out of playing. However, when faced by a tournament situation where you have to play by the Rules, your brain has not been trained to play under these conditions. Tension and anxiety can arise from having to count your first tee shot, or make a three-foot putt that you normally would pick up. Just as you train your body physically, it is as important to train your mind to do the same procedure every time you

play. In order to “play in the zone” your mental, emotional, physical games must be habitual so you can play automatically.

From a mental/emotional standpoint, there is nothing more upsetting on the golf course than disagreement between players about the interpretation of a rule. I have seen championship golfers fall apart when confronted by an opponent who called them on a rule. When you are playing in a competition, you can very easily get distracted from your game plan by a rules infraction. It is important that you know what the procedures are and what your options are so you won't get emotionally involved in the resolution. Take your time to make the best decision. When you watch the professionals on TV, notice the care they take to make a decision, after they have been helped by the USGA Rules official.

“People are disturbed not by things but by the view they take of them.”

---Epictetus, c 200 AD

My recommendation would be that you read the Rules book and keep it in your golf bag. Use it whenever a question comes up. If you aren't sure about the interpretation of the rule, you may play a second ball in stroke play, but you must first declare your intention to play two balls. In match play, you must agree with your opponent on the ruling before you tee off on the next hole. At the end of the round, check your decision with the DECISIONS ON THE RULES OF GOLF when you get back to the clubhouse so you will know exactly what to do if the situation arises again.

Some of the principal changes for 2006-2007 concern the Rules of Amateur Status and perhaps would be of relevance to you, your friends, or family:

- **Rule 3-2a, Exception**
Amended to allow an amateur golfer to accept a prize of any value for a hole-in-one made while playing golf.
- **Rule 4-2b**
Amended to provide that junior golfers may accept expenses to only junior competitions without having to go through their state or regional golf association. (see Rule 4-2C).
- **Rule 4-2c**
Amended to allow amateur golfers of any age to accept expenses, provided the reimbursement is made through the player's state or regional association.
- **Rule 4-2f**
Introduced to allow an amateur golfer to accept expenses to participate in an exhibition to aid a charity.

- **Rule 4-2g**
Introduced to allow amateur golfers to accept expenses to a sponsored handicap (i.e., not gross) competition, provided the USAGA first approves the competition.

- **Rule 5-2b**
Introduced to allow amateur golfers to receive compensation for giving instruction in programs that have been approved by the USGA.

- **Rule 6-6**
Amended to allow an amateur golfer to accept membership or privileges in a club or at a course without full payment provided the offer is not made as an inducement to play for that club or course.

There are a total of 110 changes to the 2006-2007 Rulebook. A noteworthy change is that you are now allowed to use distance-measuring devices, if agreed to by the local committee. Another change concerns using the “croquet-style” method of positioning your feet to avoid stepping on someone’s line on the putting green. It is no longer a penalty.

Give the book a reading. I think you will find it interesting and a confidence builder. It can also be fun to discuss the rules with other golfers off the course to see what their interpretation of a rule is. And you can go to the www.USGA.org site and take a quiz to see how well you know the Rules.

Entrain Your Heart & Brain for Peak Performance

© Copyright PMI 2006. All Rights Reserved.

Improve your golf game NOW by listening to PMI self-hypnosis CDs & tapes in the privacy of your home. Order today at www.pmi4.com/cart

One on One: Call 828-697-0666 or contact [Joan](#) today to ask about personal coaching in person or by phone. Learn what is missing in your game to achieve your peak performances.

If this monthly mental instruction newsletter has been helpful to you, please forward it to your friends so they can have more fun playing the game of golf while lowering their scores. Download previous PMI

newsletter issues by logging on to the Archived Newsletter Page at www.mastermindgolf.com

If you have a question or need help with your mental game, email Joan at info@mastermindgolf.com Also, please share with us how this website information has helped you improve your performance.