

GOLFRSA GOOD GOLF PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Playing Golf Under COVID-19 Restrictions

COURSE SETUP

ON-COURSE ITEMS

1. All rakes and ball retrievers to be removed.
2. Ball washers and drinking fountains to be covered up.
3. It is recommended that clubs position hand sanitizers at strategic places on the course.
4. Benches and bins to be removed, covered or sign-posted in such a way that players do not touch them.
5. All other removable items to be removed.

HOLE AND FLAGSTICK

1. Flagsticks can be retained, but it is strongly recommended that a sign is put on the flagstick stating that it is not to be touched.
2. Clubs should insert a hole liner/plate that restricts the ball from falling into the hole below the surface of the putting green, and so that the ball can be easily retrieved. There are various options in order to do this, such as turn the cup upside down, cut a pool noodle to the right height and wrap it around the bottom of the flagstick, or put in a plate that rests against the top of the cup liner.

PRACTICE AREAS

1. Practice areas, including practice nets, to be closed unless safe sanitizing practices can be guaranteed.
2. The following practices will be a necessity: wash range balls regularly, remove benches/seating and club cleaning facilities, control availability on the range, ensure three- to five-metres spaces between bays, sanitize range buckets after every use and use own towel.

BEFORE THE ROUND

BOOKINGS

(Refer to the GolfRSA Risk Mitigation Guidelines)

- Clubs/facilities to organise a system of booking and allocation of tee times that ensures the safety of staff and golfers.
- The maximum number of golfers in a group per tee time to be confirmed by the club/facility and must be in accordance with the GolfRSA general guidelines and any government requirements.

ARRIVAL AND WAITING TO PLAY

(Refer to the GolfRSA Risk Mitigation Guidelines)

- The clubhouse/facility (ie. halfway house, restaurant, conference/meeting facilities) may open, subject to compliance with the relevant government gazetted regulations.
- Locker rooms will be closed. Limited essential access (for example to use the toilets) may be allowed.
- Clubs/facilities to communicate in advance with golfers to advise on physical distancing requirements that are being applied on arrival at the club/facility, for example not leaving cars until a certain time before their tee time.
- Clubs/facilities to have procedures in place to ensure physical distancing requirements in the area of the professional's shop or starter's building in advance of golfers teeing off.
- Trolleys, carts or other items available for hire, on condition of using safe sanitising practices.
- Facilities to have procedures in place for the practice putting green, for example giving priority of use to the players in the next group due to tee off, remove cups, or using a method of inserting the hole liner to be used that means that all of the ball does not fall below the surface of the putting green and can be easily retrieved.
- Good practice for golfers to carry hand sanitizers with them and refrain from touching their faces.

DURING THE ROUND

Golfers should keep a minimum of 3m apart, and 5m apart during windy conditions (>24km/h).

TEEING AREAS

- Remind golfers to keep 3m apart at teeing areas.

GENERAL

- Remind golfers to stay more than 3m apart when walking, searching for a ball or playing shots.
- Remind golfers not to touch stray balls.
- No sharing of scorecards. Electronic scoring is preferred.

BUNKERS

- With no rakes allowed on the course, remind golfers to make their very best efforts to smooth the sand using their club and/or their feet.

PUTTING GREEN

- Remind golfers to keep 3m apart on the putting greens and not to touch the flagstick and always only handle their own equipment such as clubs and balls.

AFTER THE ROUND

- Score entry by the golfer using HNA App and not done at the club. When the round is completed, there shall be no gatherings around the clubhouse area.
- Sanitize or return rental equipment for sanitizing.

RULES OF GOLF RELATED MATTERS

The R&A released Covid-19 Guidance on Rules of Golf on 29 June 2020. As such, GolfRSA has implemented amendments to the Covid-19 Rules of Golf.

Note: If a committee follows any of the options contained in this guidance, the competition is being played under the Rules of Golf. Modifications to the Rules of Golf during Covid-19 are also for handicap purposes.

Until further notice, the following provisions are considered acceptable on a temporary basis:

FORMS OF PLAY AND SCORING

1. Amateur Competitions may be played, provided players do not have to travel across provincial borders, there are no spectators or prizegivings and all other Risk Mitigation requirements are in place.
2. In competitive stroke play or match play, a method of scoring needs to be used that does not require handling/exchanging of scorecards. (Use HNA App or alternative means for electronic score submission, including the use of scoring devices, which if used shall be sanitized before and after use by the player.)

3. For competitive rounds, committees may allow methods of scoring in stroke play and match play that do not comply with Rule 3.3b, or do not comply with normal methods used under Rule 3.3b. For example:

- Players may enter their own scores on the scorecard (it is not necessary for a marker to do it).
- It is not necessary to have a marker physically certify the player's hole scores, but some form of verbal certification should take place.
- It is not necessary to physically return a scorecard to the club.

BUNKERS

- Should clubs not deploy an assigned individual per hole to rake bunkers, they can declare bunkers "waste areas" that are raked each morning and encourage members to smooth with their foot/club.
- Committees may elect to adopt the Local Rule below:

MODEL LOCAL RULE FOR BUNKERS

When a player's ball lies in a bunker, the player may take free relief once, by placing the original ball or another ball and playing from the relief area.

Reference Point: Spot of the original ball.

Size of the Relief Area: One club length, but must not be closer to the hole and must remain in the bunker.

FLAGSTICK

- Golfers are required to leave the flagstick in the hole and not touch it. It is a matter for the committee to decide whether it establishes this policy by way of a Code of Conduct or Local Rule, and whether it provides a penalty under the Code of Conduct or for a breach of the Local Rule.
- Where necessary, players are permitted to centre the flagstick in a safe manner.
- As a temporary provision, for the purpose of player safety, flagsticks that do not meet the specifications in Part 8 of the Equipment Rules, can be used.

HOLE AND 'HOLED'

- The hole liner (or 'cup') is to be set in a way that all of the ball cannot be below the surface of the putting green, so the ball is considered holed if any part of it is below the surface of the putting green.
- To minimise the need to lift the ball from the hole, it is recommended that the Most Likely Score (MLS) Rule, Rule 3.3 of the Rules of Handicapping, be applied. This does not prevent a player in match play conceding a stroke that is outside this length or allowing a player to putt out should they elect to do so.

NOTE: Treating a ball as "holed" when it has bounced out of a hole (eg: when it has bounced off the flagstick, a tray attached to a flagstick or the hole liner) is not in accordance with the Covid-19 Rules of Golf.