



# tee time

November 2020

NEWSLETTER OF THE WELLINGTON GOLF REFEREES ASSOCIATION INC.

## Rules Courses

The WGRA ran two Rules courses this year. The Level 1 in August was run on one day rather than the 'one night per week over four weeks' format, and likewise, the Level 2 in September was shortened to one day of presentations and one morning of practicals and the exam. We were very pleased with the outcome. All attendees who sat the tests passed, and a few obtained exceptional results in the Level 2.

**Future courses:** We are planning to run the next Level 1 Rules course at Boulcott's Farm HGC on Sunday 18 April, and the next Level 2 at the same venue on Sunday 13 and 20 June 21.

## Rules Clarifications

As you may know, the R&A and USGA issue Rules Clarifications quarterly. There are no new clarifications in the 1 October 20 update.

## Common Rules Breaches



Some of our referees have noted common breaches of the Rules,

either through ignorance or belief in common Rules myths. It behoves us to gently let folk know when they are breaking the Rules, especially in stroke play when we need a level playing field for a fair outcome. Some common failings are:

**Failure to Mark a Ball before Touching It.** We commonly see players touch or rotate their balls for identification without first marking its position (Rules 7.3, 9.4 and 14.1). The ball must always be marked unless it is to be dropped or replaced in a different position. (Even the best can be caught out: see the second story on Jon Rahm below). **Preferred Lies:** where preferred lies have been authorised by a local rule, technically the ball does not have to be marked before it is lifted BUT IT IS GOOD PRACTICE TO DO SO. If you always mark your ball before lifting it, you are less likely to incur a penalty.

**Ignorance of Yellow versus Red Penalty Area Procedures.** Even seasoned interclub players get this wrong, using the two club-length lateral relief option (Red PA) on a Yellow PA.

**Misunderstanding the Nearest Point of Complete Relief.** The actual NPOCR may be in the rough or even in a tree, which means it may be preferable to not take relief, yet it is not uncommon for players to drop in a position that gives a clear shot but which is clearly not the NPOCR.

**Playing from in Front of the Tee Box or from Wrong Tee.** This incurs a two-stroke penalty in stroke play (and the error must be corrected), but there is no penalty in match play, though the opponent may require the player to re-tee.

**Stroke and Distance.** This is a rule that probably should be better known: you don't always have to play the ball as it lies! Rule 18.1 allows you to

take stroke and distance relief at any time. So, if your putt rolls off the green into an awkward lie or you thin your shot into the face of a bunker, you may simply replay the shot for a one-stroke penalty.

## Unusual Local Rule at Te Marua



*1st Tee Te Marua*

Te Marua has adopted a local rule that allows a drop zone on the red tee (far side of the river) to be used for a ball lost in the penalty area (the river). A provisional ball may be played from the DZ for a ball that may be in the penalty area or lost outside of it. What, I hear you say? The rules don't allow for a provisional ball if the original is lost in a penalty area! Ah, but Model Local Rule B-3 does exactly that in circumstances where it may not be clear whether the ball is in the PA and it would unreasonably delay play if the player had to go forward to check. For that reason, the Club has had this Rule, or something similar for some time.

## Rules Incidents

**Bryson's Drops.** The big-hitting Bryson



*Bryson drops at the Memorial Jul 20*

DeChambeau features in a couple of our incidents. Firstly, he copped criticism from a

number of pundits for the location of his drops during the Memorial Tournament back in July this year. On the 15<sup>th</sup> hole Bryson put his tee ball into a penalty area on the left, then put his next shot OOB on the right. He redropped and again put his shot OOB.

The complaints arose when viewers noticed that his second drop was clearly in a different position to his first. Rules Officials reassured the public that no foul had been committed: under the 2019 Rules (R14.6), players can drop their ball anywhere within a one club-length radius from the reference point, the spot from where the previous shot was played.

**Bryson's Driver Replacement.** On the 7<sup>th</sup> hole



during the first round of the PGA

Championship in August, Bryson's power was too much for his driver, and he managed to snap the head clean off. To my initial surprise, the officials allowed him to replace the driver with a spare from his car. Rule 4.1 is clear: a conforming club damaged during a round cannot be replaced unless the player did not cause the damage, so what was going on? In April 2019 a clarification was issued that added Model Local Rule G-9, which allows for the replacement of a broken club if the damage was not caused by abuse. The PGA had adopted that local rule for its championship.

**Bryson Again: Lost Ball at the Masters.** Bryson again required rules assistance at the US Masters earlier this month. At the Par 4 3<sup>rd</sup> hole in the second round, Bryson pulled his ball left into the secondary rough. Despite a sizable search party, the ball could not be found within the allowed three minutes. Bryson did ask whether he could drop on the basis that his ball

could be considered lost in an Abnormal Course Condition, but while the ground was soft, it was



*Bryson back to the tee at Augusta*

not considered GUR, and nor was there knowledge or virtual certainty that the ball was

located in the area

of the search. So, it was back to the tee.

Unfortunately, he finished the hole with a triple bogey and slid down the leader board.

**Jon Rahm Ball Moved.** Another big hitter, Jon Rahm had an interesting ruling at the Memorial



*Rahm before penalty*

too. During the final round, Rahm flew the par 3 16<sup>th</sup> hole finishing in the rough behind

the green. From there he chipped

in for an apparent birdie, but TV footage showed that while setting up for his shot, he had clearly caused his ball to move.

He was unaware since he was looking at the green at the time. While it was technology that picked up the movement, Rahm would certainly have seen it if he'd been watching the ball. He was therefore awarded a two-stroke penalty, which he accepted with good grace. It didn't take the shine off his victory, which was by three strokes rather than five.

### Rahm Brain Fade: Picked Up Ball without Marking.

During the third round of the BMW Championship at Olympia Fields in August, on



the 5<sup>th</sup> hole, Rahm committed an amateur mistake, picking

up his ball on the green without marking it. He still shot a 66 with the one-stroke penalty, which kept him in contention. He later expressed the fervent wish that he wouldn't lose the tournament by one stroke! As it happened, he won the playoff with Dustin Johnston after each had sunk amazing putts.

### Lexi Thompson: Improving Lie?

Lexi Thompson was perhaps lucky to escape



without penalty during the AIG Women's Open second round at Troon in August. She certainly appeared to be moving a tuft of grass behind her ball and therefore improving her lie, but following discussion and viewing the video of the

incident the R&A ruled that there was no improvement since the grass returned to its original position.

### Using the Rules: Collin Morikawa

Collin Morikawa's knowledge of the Rules and persistence paid off at the Tour Championship at East Lake in September. His ball came to rest in front of the 8<sup>th</sup> green in soft conditions. He eventually persuaded the Rules official that the ball was slightly embedded, and he was therefore entitled to a drop. On the sloping ground he was able to place the ball after his second drop and had a much nicer lie from which to chip. He sank his par putt.



*Morikawa convincing the Official at East Lake*

## Rory's Integrity

Rory McIlroy earned praise for his response to a reporter stepping on his ball at the PGA Championship in August. Under Rule 9.6 Rory was able to replace his ball, but he considered the new lie too good and insisted that the ball be pushed further down into the rough. He bogeyed the hole but was roundly praised for upholding the core values of the game. Well done Rory!



## The Original Rules of Golf 1744

The original Rules are a fascinating read: aspects of the Rules haven't changed all that much:

***“1. You must tee your ball within one club's length of the hole.***

***2. Your tee must be on the ground.***

***3. You are not to change the ball you strike off the tee.***

***4. You are not to remove Stones, Bones or any Break Club, for the sake of playing your ball, except upon the Fair Green and that only within a club's length of your ball.***

***5. If your Ball come among watter or any wattery filth, you are at liberty to take out your Ball and, bringing it behind the hazard and teeing it, you may play it with any club and allow your Adversary a Stroke, for so getting your ball.***

***6. If your balls be found anywhere touching one another you are to lift the first ball, till you play the last.***

***7. At Holing, you are to play your Ball honestly for the Hole, and not play upon your Adversary's Ball, not lying in your way to the Hole.***

***8. If you should lose your Ball, by its being taken up, or any other way you are to go back to the Spot, where you struck last, and drop another Ball, and allow your adversary a stroke for the misfortune.***

***9. No man at Holing his Ball is allowed, to mark his way to the hole with his club or anything else.***

***10. If a Ball be stopp'd by any person, Horse, Dog or anything else, the Ball so stopp'd must be played where it lyes.***

***11. If you draw your Club, in order to Strike and proceed so far in the Stroke, as to be bringing down your Club: If then your Club shall break, in any way, it is to be Accounted a Stroke.***

***12. He whose Ball lyes farthest from the Hole is obliged to play first.***

***13. Neither Trench, Ditch or Dyke, made for the presentation of the Links, nor the Scholar's Holes or the Soldier's Lines, shall bee counted a Hazard. But the ball is to be taken out and tee'd and lay'd with any iron club.”***

## Golf is Hard! Tiger at the Masters

Sometimes the pro's give us reason to hope or at least feel better about our own game. Tiger achieved that when he racked up a 10 at the Par 3 12<sup>th</sup> hole at Augusta earlier this month.

Thank you, Tiger!



*Tiger's adventures on 12*

## **WGRA News**

### **Rules Questions or Incidents**

If you have any questions on anything to do with the Rules of Golf, any observations or comments, or rules incidents to share, please do send them to Terry Gardiner at [gardfam77@gmail.com](mailto:gardfam77@gmail.com)

### **WGRA Executive 2020**

#### **President**

Bill Stratford – 528 5080  
[bill.raynor1@outlook.com](mailto:bill.raynor1@outlook.com)

#### **Vice-President**

Brian Richmond  
[yorichmo@gmail.com](mailto:yorichmo@gmail.com)

#### **Secretary/Treasurer**

Michael Phelan  
[pheelo.mnp@gmail.com](mailto:pheelo.mnp@gmail.com)

#### **Committee**

Terry Gardiner – 232 3130  
[gardfam77@gmail.com](mailto:gardfam77@gmail.com)

Kathy Goodman  
[kathygoodman58@gmail.com](mailto:kathygoodman58@gmail.com)

Aine Meek  
[ainemeek@gmail.com](mailto:ainemeek@gmail.com)

Cliff Martin  
[cliff.martin@msn.com](mailto:cliff.martin@msn.com)

#### **WGI Rep**

Steve Weir  
[office@wgi.co.nz](mailto:office@wgi.co.nz)