

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. Stakes defining areas of the course can be treated as immovable obstructions.

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. 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.
2. The cup of the golf hole should be inserted in such a way that the entire ball does not fall below the surface of the putting green and can be easily retrieved by handling the ball only.

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 and locker room facilities will be closed. Limited essential access (for example to use the toilets) may be allowed by the club/facility.
- Clubs/facilities to communicate in advance with golfers to advise on social 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 social 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.
- Clubs/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 by handling the ball only.
- Good practice for golfers to always carry hand sanitizers with them and refrain from touching their faces.

DURING THE ROUND

Guidance and reminders should be provided by clubs/facilities to golfers to ensure that they keep at least five metres apart during the round.

TEEING AREAS

- Inform golfers that they should only make their way to the tee once the group in front is leaving the teeing area.
- Remind golfers to keep two metres apart at teeing areas due to the normal close proximity of golfers to one another when tee shots are being played.

GENERAL

- Remind golfers to stay more than two metres apart when walking, searching for a ball or playing shots.
- Remind golfers not to touch stray balls.
- Each group to carry sanitizers. It is recommended that sanitizer is applied after each hole played.
- Golfers may not share scorecards and 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 two metres apart on the putting greens and not to touch the flagstick, not to share pitch mark repairers and always only handle their own equipment such as clubs and balls.

AFTER THE ROUND

Score entry by the golfer using their HNA App and not done at the club. Remind golfers that social distancing is as important after a round as it is during the round, so when the round is completed they must leave the course and the club/facility immediately so that there are no gatherings around the clubhouse area.

Sanitize or return rental equipment for sanitizing in accordance with guidelines at the club.

RULES OF GOLF RELATED MATTERS

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

FORMS OF PLAY AND SCORING

1. It is recommended that non-competition play is used during the initial period of golf being played,

and that stroke play competitions involving players in different groups are avoided. (Refer to the GolfRSA guidelines for facilities.)

2. If competitive stroke play or match play is played, a method of scoring needs to be used that does not require any handling or exchanging of scorecards. (Use HNA App.)
3. For competitive rounds, committees may choose to allow methods of scoring in stroke play and match play that do not strictly comply with Rule 3.3b, or do not comply with the normal methods used under Rule 3.3b. For example:
 - Players may enter their own hole 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 assign an individual to rake bunkers, they can declare bunkers "waste areas" that are raked each morning during standard maintenance procedures and encourage members to smooth with their foot/club upon exiting.

FLAGSTICK

- Golfers are always required to leave the flagstick in the hole and not to 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.
- As a temporary provision, flagsticks that do not meet the specifications in Part 8 of the Equipment Rules, can be used.

HOLE AND 'HOLED'

- The hole liner (sometimes referred to as the hole 'cup') is to be set in a way that means 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.

Please note that modifications to the Rules of Golf during Covid-19 are for handicapping purposes only and should not be used for formal competitions, of which we expect very little of at the present time.