



# Rules of Amateur Status

as approved by United States Golf Association  
and the R&A Rules Limited  
Effective January 1, 2012

## Foreword – To the 2012 Rules of Amateur Status

### **Foreword to the 2012 Rules of Amateur Status**

Amateurism in sport is much less common today than in the past. As the governing authorities for the Rules of the game, the United States Golf Association ("USGA") and R&A Rules Limited ("The R&A") have, therefore, conducted a fundamental review of the Rules of Amateur Status ("the Rules") over the past four years.

The USGA and R&A have concluded that the distinction between amateur and professional golf should be maintained and that the wholesale removal of the limits and restrictions placed on amateur golfers is not in the best interests of the modern game. In particular, it is agreed that because amateur golf is largely self-regulating, both in terms of the playing Rules and handicapping, uncontrolled financial incentive could place too much pressure on these important features and could be detrimental to the integrity of the game.

The fundamental aims of the new Rules are:

- an internationally accepted position that is in the best interests of the game;
- a modern Code that, where appropriate, is faithful to the traditions of the game;
- a Code that has longevity and is enforceable; and
- a Code that works for all aspects of the game (i.e., club golf, elite amateur golf and professional golf (at its various levels)).

Through appropriate limits and restrictions, the Rules are intended to encourage amateur golfers to focus on the game's challenges and inherent rewards, rather than any financial gain.

The USGA and R&A believe that this new Code strikes the right balance in preserving the traditional character of the amateur game while acknowledging that young, talented golfers may need more support. At the same time, it recognizes that varying social and economic conditions create different challenges for individuals and organizations from country to country and that emerging golfing countries, in particular, may need more liberal and flexible structures to help the game develop. The principal changes are summarized on pages 7 and 8.

It is against that background that the USGA and R&A have formulated these new Rules of Amateur Status.

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# Principal Changes Introduced in the 2012 Code

## Rules of Amateur Status

### Definitions

#### Amateur Golfer

The Definition is amended to establish more clearly that an “amateur golfer,” regardless of whether he plays competitively or recreationally, is one who plays golf for the challenge it presents, not as a profession and not for financial gain.

#### Golf Skill or Reputation

A time limit of five years is introduced for the retention of “golf reputation” after the player’s golf skill has diminished.

#### Prize Vouchers

The Definition is expanded to allow prize vouchers to be used for the purchase of goods or services from a golf club.

### Rules

#### Rule 1-3 Amateurism; Purpose of the Rules

Rule 1-3 is amended to re-state why there is a distinction between amateur and professional golf and why certain limits and restrictions are needed in the amateur game.

#### Rule 2-1 Professionalism; General

The existing Rules on professionalism are consolidated and re-formatted into new Rule 2-1.

#### Rule 2-2 Professionalism; Contracts and Agreements

National Golf Unions or Associations – New Rule 2-2(a) is added to allow an amateur golfer to enter into a contract and/or agreement with his national golf union or association, provided he does not obtain any financial gain, directly or indirectly, while still an amateur golfer.

Professional Agents, Sponsors and Other Third Parties - New Rule 2-2(b) is added to allow an amateur golfer, who is at least 18 years of age, to enter into a contract and/or agreement with a third party solely in relation to the golfer's future as a professional golfer, provided he does not obtain any financial gain, directly or indirectly, while still an amateur golfer.

#### **Rule 4-3 Subsistence Expenses**

New Rule added to allow an amateur golfer to receive subsistence expenses to assist with general living costs, provided the expenses are approved by and paid through the player's national golf union or association.