



## COVID-19 RELATED GUIDANCE ON THE RULES OF GOLF

The R&A has received a number of enquiries from organisers of golf competitions seeking guidance on the Rules of Golf in view of the Covid-19 outbreak. The purpose of this communication is to provide some guidance on the Rules of Golf.

It is not the purpose of this communication to make recommendations or offer guidance in relation to the playing of golf at this time. Please refer to the appropriate body in your country for such guidance.

### Scoring in Stroke Play (Rule 3.3b)

In view of concerns around handling and exchanging scorecards (which may be in paper or electronic form as already provided in the Rules), on a temporary basis, Committees may choose to allow methods of scoring in stroke 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 Committee provided the Committee can accept the scores in another way.

### Flagsticks

Committees may choose to adopt the following policies on a temporary basis:

- Requiring that players leave the flagstick in the hole at all times. 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.
- Not have flagsticks at all.

### Hole

No modifications to the Definition of *Hole* are offered, but if a Committee chooses not to follow the requirements in the Definition of *Hole*, which may also have an impact on the Definition of "*Holed*", the Committee should consult its national association for guidance on whether scores submitted in such circumstances are acceptable for handicapping purposes.

### Bunkers

If rakes have been removed from the course, or if the Committee has requested that rakes not be used, it is recognised that bunkers may not be smoothed as well as when there are rakes on the course. But it is recommended that no modification is made to the Rules of Golf in such circumstances, and that players are requested to smooth bunkers using their feet or a club.

If, as a result of there being no rakes, the Committee decides to introduce a Local Rule relating to bunkers, the Committee should consult its handicapping authority for guidance on whether scores submitted under such Local Rule are acceptable for handicapping purposes.