USGA Media Center

FAR HILLS, N.J., USA, and ST. ANDREWS, SCOTLAND (Oct. 26, 2015) – The R&A and the United States Golf Association (USGA) have announced the latest revisions to the Rules of Amateur Status for golfers, which take effect on Jan. 1, 2016.

The Rules of Amateur Status will be published within the 2016 edition of the Rules of Golf, a collaborative work by The R&A and the USGA that applies to all golfers around the world.

Among the most significant changes to the 2016 Rules of Amateur Status are the following:

- *Prize Money to Charity* - New Rule 3-1b enables an amateur golfer to participate in an event where prize money or its equivalent is donated to a recognized charity, provided the approval of the governing body is first obtained in advance by the organizer.
- *Golf-Related Expenses* - New Rule 4-3 clarifies that an amateur golfer may receive reasonable expenses, not exceeding actual expenses incurred, for non-competition golf-related activities. Former Rule 4-3 becomes Rule 4-4.
- *Reinstatement to Amateur Status* - The recommended guidelines on periods awaiting reinstatement are amended to provide that a period in breach of the Rules of up to six years (previously up to five years) should result in a period awaiting reinstatement of one year.

Thomas Pagel, senior director of Rules of Golf for the USGA, said, “The new Amateur Code continues to provide appropriate limits and restrictions to encourage the amateur golfer to focus on the challenge of the sport, rather than on any financial gains. We also want to make it easier for golfers to return to the amateur sport if they no longer wish to play professionally.”

David Rickman, The R&A’s executive director of Rules and Equipment Standards, said, “After the fundamental review of Amateurism conducted in the previous Rules cycle, we have had a period of consolidation and have continued to develop the uniform Code. The new Code provides flexibility in terms of supporting recognized charitable causes, while remaining faithful to the principles of Amateurism.”

Additional Comments on Prize Money to Charity

Until now, an amateur golfer has been prohibited in all respects from playing for prize money or its equivalent in a match, competition or exhibition. However, from Jan. 1, 2016, under new Rule 3-1b, an amateur golfer will be able to participate in an event where prize money is offered and donate any winnings to a pre-determined recognized charity, provided the approval of the governing body is obtained in advance by the organizer of the event.

This change has been made to reflect the growing number of charitable golf exhibitions organized around the world in aid of worthwhile causes and disaster relief agencies. As long as the organizer seeks prior approval from the governing body, an amateur golfer may donate any prize money to the identified charitable cause without compromising their Amateur Status.

For a full text of the 2016 Rules of Amateur Status,click here.

About The R&A

Based in St. Andrews, The R&A runs The Open, elite amateur events, international matches and rankings. Together The R&A and the USGA govern the sport of golf worldwide, operating in separate jurisdictions but sharing a commitment to a single code for the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status and Equipment Standards. The R&A governs worldwide, outside of the United States and Mexico, with the consent of 152 organizations from amateur and professional golf and on behalf of over 30 million golfers in 138 countries.

The R&A is committed to working for golf and supports the growth of the sport internationally and the development and management of sustainable golf facilities.

For more information about The R&A visit www.RandA.org.

About the USGA

The USGA conducts the U.S. Open, U.S. Women's Open and U.S. Senior Open, as well as 10 national amateur championships, two state team championships and international matches, attracting players and fans from more than 160 countries. Together with The R&A, the USGA governs the game worldwide, jointly administering the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status, equipment standards and World Amateur Golf Rankings. The USGA's reach is global with a working jurisdiction in the United States, its territories and Mexico, serving more than 25 million golfers and actively engaging 150 golf associations.

The USGA is one of the world's foremost authorities on research, development and support of sustainable golf course management practices. It serves as a primary steward for the game's history and invests in the development of the game through the delivery of its services and its ongoing "For the Good of the Game" grants program. Additionally, the USGA's Course Rating and Handicap systems are used on six continents in more than 50 countries.

For more information about the USGA, visit usga.org.

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