USGA Media Center

LIBERTY CORNER, N.J., USA, and ST. ANDREWS, Scotland (Nov. 7, 2022) – The USGA and The R&A have unveiled a regular update to the Rules of Golf as they continue to make the Rules easier to understand and apply. The new Rules will go into effect on January 1, 2023.

The 2023 edition continues the modernization process, with an emphasis on both inclusion and sustainability. For the first time, the modified Rules for players with disabilities have been fully incorporated into the playing rules without the need to adopt a local rule. The governing bodies, supported by longstanding partner Rolex, will also promote digital and mobile app access to the Rules while significantly reducing the production and distribution of more than 4 million printed books.

Several penalties have been relaxed and language has been clarified to help golfers at all levels of play.

Key changes include:

- **Modifications for Players with Disabilities:** The modifications to the Rules for players with disabilities have been made part of the Rules and are in effect for all players who are classified in the categories covered in Rule 25.
- **Handicap Usage in Stroke Play:** With the continued growth of score-posting technology following the adoption of the World Handicap System™, players are no longer penalized for failing to put their handicap on their scorecard in stroke play. The committee will be responsible for ensuring the accuracy of each player's handicap.
- **Club Damaged During Round:** The Rule has been amended to allow a player to replace a club that is damaged during a round, provided the player did not damage it through abuse.
- **Ball Moved by Natural Forces:** A new exception provides that a ball at rest must be replaced if it moves to another area of the course or comes to rest out of bounds after being dropped, placed or replaced.
- **Back-on-the-Line Relief Procedure:** The back-on-the-line relief procedure, often used for penalty area and unplayable ball relief, has been simplified so that the player now drops their ball on the line, and the ball must come to rest within one club-length of where it is dropped.

Golfers will be able to learn more about the major changes and review the official 2023 Rules of Golf by visiting www.usga.org/2023Rules and https://www.randa.org/. Full updates to the official Rules of Golf digital applications will be available starting on January 1.

"The growing popularity of golf continues to guide our decision-making, and modernizing the Rules to promote inclusivity and accessibility is clearly a great step in the right direction," said Thomas Pagel, USGA Chief Governance Officer. "This latest evolution is especially important to the community of golfers with disabilities, and we hope it will encourage more people to play and enjoy the game."

Grant Moir, Director of Rules at The R&A, said, "We are continuing to improve and adapt the Rules of Golf to ensure they are in line with the way the modern game is played. That means making the Rules easier to understand and access for all golfers and making the sport more inclusive and welcoming for golfers with disabilities. We are also working to ensure golf has a sustainable long-term future and making more resources available digitally is key to achieving that goal."

Players are reminded that the current edition of the Rules of Golf (2019) still applies when playing or posting scores for the remainder of 2022.

As an extension of their support of the Rules of Golf worldwide, Rolex has made a commitment to support The R&A's and the USGA's efforts to modernize golf's Rules. The Swiss watchmaker's contribution to excellence in golf is based on a rich heritage stretching back more than 50 years, forged through pivotal partnerships at every level of the game, from the sport's leading professional and amateur competitions and organizations to players at the pinnacle of their sport worldwide.

**About the USGA**
The USGA is a nonprofit organization that celebrates, serves and advances the game of golf. Founded in 1894, we conduct many of golf's premier professional and amateur championships, including the U.S. Open and U.S. Women's

Open Presented by ProMedica. With The R&A, we govern the sport via a global set of playing, equipment, handicapping and amateur status rules. The USGA campus in Liberty Corner, New Jersey, is home to the Association's Research and Test Center, where science and innovation are fueling a healthy and sustainable game for the future. The campus is also home to the USGA Golf Museum, where we honor the game by curating the world's most comprehensive archive of golf artifacts. To learn more, visit www.usga.org.

**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, through R&A Rules Ltd, governs the sport worldwide, outside of the United States and Mexico, on behalf of over 36 million golfers in 144 countries and with the consent of 159 organisations from amateur and professional golf.

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, visit https://www.randa.org/.

---

https://mediacenter.usga.org/2023RulesOfGolfUpdate