USGA Media Center

FAR HILLS, N.J., USA and ST ANDREWS, SCOTLAND (September 7, 2017) - The USGA and The R&A have received comments on the proposed new Rules from more than 22,000 golfers in 102 countries, as well as representatives of golf organizations throughout the world, providing valuable feedback as the organizations work toward their implementation on Jan. 1, 2019.

With the worldwide survey and evaluation period now complete, the USGA and The R&A and their respective committees will continue to review all comments received with the goal of finalizing the new Rules next spring and beginning a comprehensive education program later in 2018.

The USGA and The R&A began an extensive review of the Rules starting in 2012, with the intent of making them easier to understand and apply. A draft of the new Rules – reduced from the current 34 to a proposed 24 Rules – was released in March, beginning the six-month feedback period that was open to the entire golf community.

“After listening to golfers and reviewing the extensive comments, one thing is very clear – we all share a passion for the game and are eager to be a part of this process,” said Thomas Pagel, USGA senior director of Rules and Amateur Status. “We appreciate everyone who took time to provide their thoughts and insights. They have been very helpful and encouraging.”

David Rickman, Executive Director – Governance at The R&A, said, “It is pleasing to see that so many people from different parts of the world have taken this opportunity to engage with the process of modernizing the Rules. We have received insightful comments and suggestions from throughout the professional and amateur game and will take time to consider the feedback in detail. We will then work on finalizing the changes ahead of their implementation in 2019.”

While the feedback will continue to be analyzed over the next few months, several common themes emerged, including:

- Golfers are enthusiastic about the scope and direction of the overall changes, such as pace-of-play improvements, the elimination of penalties and streamlined procedures.

- Golfers provided the most feedback on the proposed Rules changes focused on the putting green (such as putting with the flagstick left in the hole, repairing spike marks and eliminating the penalty for accidentally moving a ball); the creation of “penalty areas” (extending water hazard type relief and eliminating penalties for moving loose impediments and grounding a club); and the new dropping procedures (including the size of “relief areas”).

- Golfers strongly welcomed the new Player’s Edition of the Rules and found it much easier to read and understand.

The current 2016 edition of the Rules of Golf remains in effect when playing, posting scores or competing until the Jan. 1, 2019 adoption of the new Rules.

For more information on the proposed new Rules of Golf, seeusga.org or 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.

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 140 countries and with the consent of 153 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 www.randa.org.

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