

# UGA VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK FOR TOURNAMENT REFEREES

## UGA Tournament Administration and Officiating

### I. Philosophy of Officiating

When serving as a referee, you are a representative of the UGA with considerable authority. It is important that you look and act professionally. There is ABSOLUTELY NO excuse for a referee to ever be threatening, overbearing or belligerent. On the other hand, it is unprofessional to be overly friendly or folksy. Strike a reasonable middle ground of seriousness, sense of knowledge, and calmness. Maintaining an attitude that suggests an aura of helpfulness and quiet confidence will help avoid confrontation. And, when called to a scene, asking "How can I help you?" can serve to defuse an otherwise tense situation.

Do not rush in making a decision. There is no need to hurry. Ask all pertinent questions to get all the facts. Consult the Official-In-Charge (OIC) or a rover by radio for assistance if you are not sure of the appropriate ruling.

It is sometimes desirable to show or read the pertinent rule/interpretation to the player to offer assurance that you are making the correct ruling. Remember, it is the Rules of Golf that impose the penalties and provide the options, not the referee. The referee is to assist with the understanding and application.

### II. Talking to Players

Generally, a Referee should not approach a player unless asked. Players in a tournament are under a certain amount of tension and you should avoid any actions that unnecessarily add to that tension. Above all be visible, calm, courteous and helpful.

Instances of communication with a player may include:

- To preclude a player from incurring a penalty (Except in a match without a referee)
- To act on any infraction that you observed (Except in a match without a referee) or has been reported to you
- For pace-of-play reasons
- To ask how long a search has been going on if you arrive at the scene while the search is in progress
- When a player acts befuddled and seems to be unsure of how to proceed
- To ask if the player intends to play a provisional ball and whether it can be distinguished from the original

In any case, mere casual conversation should always be avoided. It is important to sense when to talk to a player and when to be silent.

### III. Radio Discipline

Non-essential radio communications or chatter must be kept to an absolute minimum so that effective communications can occur when needed. If you do not have/use a plug-in ear-piece/microphone, train yourself to take the radio with you EVERYWHERE, including EVERY TIME you step out of the cart. Take it with you when looking for a lost ball, making a ruling, having lunch or during a comfort break. Keep the volume up high enough to hear a call but be conscious of not disturbing players. If you are near a player about to play a shot, turn the volume down or off.

Suggestions:

- Keep conversations short
- Press the push-to-talk button BEFORE you begin speaking—not as you begin speaking
- Do not release the push-to-talk button too soon

- Two people cannot talk at the same time. Wait to hear the other person key off before speaking
- Keep the radio microphone pointed out of the wind.
- Do NOT hesitate to use the radio to consult the OIC if you have any doubt about the proper ruling. ALL rulings that involve a player getting a two stroke or disqualification penalty must be communicated to the OIC before proceeding.
- Be aware that there is normally a radio in the golf shop and in the starting and scoring areas. These act as miniature PA systems. Keep conversations professional and do NOT mention players' names over the radio – an exception may be in attempting to locate a player who is late reporting to his or her starting hole. If there is a need to pass on a player's name to the OIC, meet the OIC at a convenient place and provide the information face-to-face or if available speak on a private channel

#### **IV. Pace of Play**

One of the important duties of a referee is to monitor pace of play. You must continually check to determine whether groups are "out of position." "Pace of Play Policy Guidelines" for the event will be provided to you in your tournament packet. It is imperative that you be familiar with the "Pace of Play Policy Guidelines" and carefully implement them when appropriate or directed to do so.

#### **V. Lost Ball Searches and Timing**

- Do not start timing until the player, or his or her side arrives at the scene to begin the search. This does not preclude you from proceeding promptly to the likely area of the ball to begin searching before the player arrives (Note: There may be times when you may want to be sure the player wishes to search for his or her ball before searching, e.g., when the original ball is in deep rough and the provisional is in a good location).
- When the player/side arrives, start the clock and notify the player that the clock has started. You do not have to be at the scene to begin timing. If you are at a distance and see a group searching, start timing immediately. Do not wait until you arrive on the scene. Spectators may participate in the search if they so desire.
- Once a referee arrives at the search, he should ask the player whose ball is lost, how long the search has been going on and determine how much time remains to search for the ball.

#### **VI. Unsportsmanlike Conduct & Serious Breaches of Etiquette**

- For any UGA or USGA event, incidents of unsportsmanlike conduct and breaches of etiquette (e.g., club throwing, foul language, damage to the course, abuse of referees, disrespect of other players, or other displays of temper or disrespect) MUST be reported immediately to the OIC for action or transmission to the UGA for action. Do NOT discuss the conduct or name of the player over the radio. Instead, call the OIC and arrange to meet at a convenient location.

#### **VII. Starter Duties**

After attaining some experience, you may be assigned as a Starter. This is an important position for two reasons:

- The significance of the duties involved
- Establishing the first impression of the entire Rules Committee as well as a proper tone of professionalism for subsequent player-Referee interactions throughout the tournament

#### **The Duties of The Starter Include:**

1. Arrive at the tee 15 minutes before the first starting time. Make sure the starting area is set up and secure, and the starter's box has all the necessary documents.
2. Five to seven minutes before the first starting time (or immediately after the previous group has left the tee) call the next group to the tee: "May I please see the players for the \_\_\_\_ starting time." This should provide enough time to accomplish the remaining duties listed below. If any player is not at the starting tee three minutes before their starting time, please make a call on the radio to UGA Staff or a Rover with the player's name and their starting time, so they can be located and notified.

3. Hand each player his or her own card so that he may check his or her name and handicap if applicable. Then you should oversee the exchange of the scorecards with other players insuring that no player keeps his or her own card. For example, A keeps B's; B keeps C's and C keeps A's
4. Indicate to players that there are pencils, tees, and felt-tip pens for marking balls available in the Starter's box should they need them.
5. Hand out "Notice to Players" and other pertinent information which may be provided.
6. Provide the players with any special instructions or information. Typically, such information will be provided to you by the OIC (Note: It is important to provide each group with the same information.)
7. Tell players the order-of-play (order listed on the pairings sheet).
8. Starting. When the starting time arrives, and the fairway ahead is clear, announce "First to play, from \_\_\_\_\_ (Hometown), \_\_\_\_\_(Name)." Then call each player in order by hometown, and name, by saying, "Next to play..." Do not allow play of any group to start before the listed starting time. Should a player be late for his or her starting time, inform the OIC or a Rover so they may report to the starting tee to speak with the player and issue any penalty necessary.
9. Note on the Starter's pairings sheet the actual starting time of each group, any player no shows and any player penalties incurred.
10. Provide a radio announcement to all Referees when tee times are completed, along with any deviations from the original starting times. Starting time deviations may be involved in pace-of-play decisions.

The demeanor of the Starter should be that of complete and assured professionalism. It is not your function to befriend players or to entertain them with idle chatter. Be serious, but not overbearing. Greeting the players, by offering a "Good Morning Gentlemen (or Ladies)," is certainly in order. Convey a sense that you are organized, know what you are doing and then do it simply and directly. As the Starter, you are "in control." Act the part and set a proper tone for the event.

### **VIII. Scorer Duties**

Presiding at the Scorer's table is one of the more important duties of a Referee. More player disqualifications occur there than anywhere else. Therefore, one of your primary functions at the Scorer's table is to help prevent player disqualifications. First, you should review all aspects of Rules 3.3 to prepare yourself. Then, taking the following actions at the Scorer's table can help prevent player disqualifications.

1. Do NOT permit a player to submit a score card without first checking to ensure that: (1) It is the player's scorecard; (2) Two signatures are present, the player's and the marker's; (3) The scores are legible; (4) Scoring began on the player's assigned starting hole and (5) The player has checked his or her hole by hole scores.
2. Ask the player if he played a second ball under Rule 20.1c(3) or a wrong ball under Rule 6.3c. If a player played a second ball under Rule 20.1c(3), the player MUST bring the matter to the attention of the Committee before signing and submitting the scorecard for the round; failure to do so is an automatic player disqualification for the round. The query regarding a wrong ball under Rule 6.3c is to ensure that the player properly corrected his or her mistake in a timely manner to avoid disqualification. And, in both cases, the queries and discussion serve to ensure that a serious breach did not occur.
3. Add the individual hole scores to get a total for the front side, back side, and total score for the round; then check and recheck the totals. Confirm the totals with the player.
4. Any issues regarding pace of play or potential penalties should be brought to the attention of the OIC or a Rover before the players return their scorecard.

## **IX. Course Setup Duties**

Being assigned to set up the course before a tournament is one of the most trusted positions of a referee. You are the one assigned to ensure that the course is ready for play and there are no issues that need to be resolved. A referee should take their time and not feel rushed in setting up the course, as it is important to make necessary changes before play has commenced on that hole. The duties of course setup include:

1. Setting the tee markers at the yardage designated by the committee. It is extremely important that the appropriate set of tee markers are placed at the correct yardage for each hole. Take care in ensuring that the tee markers are facing the right way and directing the player towards the proper landing zone. The use of a T-square is recommended. Crooked tees are one of the things most quickly noticed by players and can affect their view of the professionalism of the event.
2. Once the tee markers have been set, place a small identifying mark behind the tee, so if the tee markers are moved, they can be replaced where they should be. The identifying mark should be confirmed between both referees before setting up the course. For consistency sake, the mark should be a small dot placed at the back/outside point of the tee marker. Special care should be taken to ensure that no paint is sprayed onto the tee marker.
3. On each hole, the referee should remove rakes from the bunkers and place them in a way that least affects play. They should also check for any abnormal course conditions that might not be marked and ensure that course marking stakes are upright, and no course marking is missing. They should also pay special attention to any course markings instituted by the course that have not been listed on the "Notice to Players" sheet and notify the OIC immediately.
4. Finally, the referee should swap out the course flags with the UGA flags on the putting green and ensure that the hole location matches the one printed on the "Notice to Players."

If during the course setup, something does not match the "Notice to Players," the OIC should be made aware immediately, enabling them to fix the discrepancy as soon as possible.

## **X. Training and Advancement Requirements**

It is the UGA's desire to ensure that we continue to have knowledgeable referees working at our championships. We also want to push our volunteers to strive for more responsibilities at events, such as being the "Official in Charge" or acting as a "Rover". If the volunteer is willing to put in the time, the UGA will do everything it can to provide support and make sure everyone reaches their individual goals.

The UGA have set testing requirements to be able to act in certain capacities as a volunteer. Please remember that the test score is the first qualifier to act in certain capacities. A volunteer will need to shadow a UGA staff member or a referee serving in that desired role before they will be able to do so on their own. The final decision on the readiness of a volunteer will be made by the UGA staff and the referee that was being shadowed.

The UGA will be able to administer the USGA 80-question exam once a year. A volunteer may also go to the USGA Rules of Golf Workshops once a year and take either the 80-question exam or the 100-question exam. As a final option, the UGA will administer its own rules exam to provide volunteers a third opportunity to get their desired score. A volunteer will have potentially three opportunities to get their desired score on a yearly basis.

Any scores obtained will be good for three years. Upon the conclusion of a three-year cycle, a volunteer will be required to recertify and obtain the required score for the desired position. A volunteer may take the exam every year and can count the highest score for the purposes listed below. Volunteers will be required to report their scores directly to UGA staff, by sending a copy of the email that is sent out by the USGA with their score. The required testing scores will be:

**Official in Charge** – Minimum score of 90 on the 100-question exam

**Rules Rover** – Minimum score of 85 on the 100-question exam

**Referee** – Minimum score of 64 on the 80-question exam or 75 on the 100-question exam

**Starter/Scoring/POP Checkpoint** – No minimum score will be required

### **XI. Scheduling**

Scheduling will begin early each year by the UGA staff e-mailing a list of tournaments, including dates and locations. Each Referee must identify/mark those tournaments, including specific tournament dates that they would like to work, and send their marked list back to the UGA Office. The Referee will receive an email with their assignments a week prior to the start of the tournament/s that he signed up for. Please keep in mind that with the growing number of volunteers that we currently have, we may not need everyone that signed up for an event. The UGA staff will consider a variety of factors when selecting who will be a referee at an event, including the referee's proximity to the host course, the number of days previously worked, and other specific needs of the event.

### **XII. Dress.**

Volunteers will be issued one or more distinctive shirts with the UGA logo. You are expected to wear these whenever officiating or conducting UGA business. Men are expected to wear slacks. Ladies are expected to wear slacks, skirts or Bermuda shorts. If you wear a hat on the course, UGA branded hats are preferred and please try to avoid hats with commercial logos. Specific shirt assignments for a given tournament will be emailed out by UGA staff before the tournament. The use of UGA logoed gear to volunteer at non-UGA events or during personal use is discouraged.

### **XIII. Equipment**

#### **A. As a Referee, you will be supplied with:**

- Rules Book (Issued by UGA)
- Official Guide (Issued by UGA)
- Rules Banner
- Airhorn
- Tournament Packets

#### **B. Not supplied but recommended to have:**

- A Stopwatch
- String or Twine
- Rain Gear
- A Golf Tee

If a referee were to lose any of the items given to them, they would be expected to replace it.

### **XIV. Food & Beverage.**

During on-course duty, a meal and beverage "tab" will normally be set-up by a UGA staff member. Volunteers will be provided access to this tab during the day. The UGA would ask all volunteers to be conscientious of what they put on the tab.

### **XV. Prohibited Acts**

- The perception of the UGA by its member clubs and the public is critical to what we try to accomplish as an association. Given the importance of that reputation, we ask that volunteers do not use their status as a UGA volunteer to request complimentary golf. If the host professional has invited you to play following an event, or a volunteer has a personal relationship with that professional, those would be acceptable circumstances under which a volunteer could accept complimentary golf.
- While volunteering at a UGA event, a volunteer should not practice on the practice facilities or on the course before or during the event. *Exception:* Once your assignment has concluded and there are no other players using the practice facilities to warm up for their round, a volunteer may practice on the practice facilities with prior permission from the golf facility.