October Tournaments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10/1/17</td>
<td>Die Hard Tournament</td>
<td>Cottonwood CC (Glendive)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/17</td>
<td>Oktoberfest</td>
<td>Marias Valley GC (Shelby)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/17</td>
<td>Red, White, and Blue 4 Person</td>
<td>Bridger Creek GC (Bozeman)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/1/17</td>
<td>World’s Toughest GC</td>
<td>Polson Bay GC (Polson)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/2/17 - 10/3/17</td>
<td>PNWPGA (WMC) Chapter Champ</td>
<td>Northern Pines GC (Kalispell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/6/17</td>
<td>Oktoberfest</td>
<td>Old Works GC (Anaconda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/7/17</td>
<td>Ironman Open</td>
<td>Big Sky GC (Big Sky)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/7/17</td>
<td>Oktoberfest</td>
<td>Livingston GC (Livingston)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/7/17</td>
<td>Oktoberfest Scramble</td>
<td>Indian Springs Ranch GC (Eureka)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8/17</td>
<td>MCC Toughest Golf Course Scramble</td>
<td>Missoula CC (Missoula)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/14/17</td>
<td>2nd Annual</td>
<td>Pine Meadows GC (Lewistown)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/14/17</td>
<td>Iron Man</td>
<td>Village Greens GC (Kalispell)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/20/17</td>
<td>NFL Tailgate</td>
<td>Old Works GC (Anaconda)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/31/17</td>
<td>Montana Season Ends</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2017 Handicap Season For MSGA Concluding Soon

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

With the “official” golf season coming to an end Montana, it is a time of reflection for the 2017 season. The summer was filled with smoke and devastation from wildfires around Montana, putting a dampering on recreation activity, and drastically altering the economies of our neighbors. There has already been snowfall in parts of the state and before we know it, thoughts of nine holes after work will be a distant memory – for a while.

While the official season for Montana runs April 1 through October 31, we at the MSGA hope that your golf season isn’t over, just that the reporting of scores in Montana is finished starting November 1. Even though it is conceivable that one could play golf in January, the hard winter ground would and lack of greens-keeping would not allow for true golf scoring conditions.

With this said, scores can and should be reported if you are playing in the winter months in an area that is in-season. How does this apply to snowbirds? Handicap reporting is not subjected to the calendar only, but think of it as in-season and out-of-season. When playing out of state, the status of the season at your home club is irrelevant.

If the player is a member of a club in Arizona (for example) as well as Montana, they should make sure that all their scores are reflected in their scoring history at BOTH clubs. You can do this by either logging into your MSGA account, using the MSGA smartphone app, or by linking your in and out-of-state memberships together. If you need help or more information about any of these options, please feel free to contact support@msgagolf.org. Handicap revisions continue every 2 weeks during the off-season to accommodate those playing out-of-state.

A complete listing of regions and their season dates can be found online via: http://www.usga.org/handicapping/education/revision_schedule/Handicap-Revision-Schedule.

We hope that the 2017 active season was just that for you – active! Hopefully you can also get a few swings in while on a vacation to a warmer climate this winter. In the meantime, enjoy October, and break out the hats, gloves, and thermals – we still have a few days left... make them count!
Montana Competes in USGA’s Final Women’s State Team Championship

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

In the final playing of the USGA’s Women’s State Team Championships at The Club at Las Campanas (Santa Fe, New Mexico) on September 26-28, Montana was represented by Sable Kerzmann of Colstrip and Ashley Griffith and Sue Matson, both of Laurel.

Kerzmann shot the low round of day one for Montana with an 89 (+17), followed by Griffith at 93 (+21) and Matson at 94 (+22). On day two it was Griffith who paced Montana with an 89, but she was the only team member to improve as Kerzmann shot 99 and Matson closed with 102. The tournament had a cut after two rounds and Montana did not advance.

In the mid-1990’s, the USGA created both the Men’s and Women’s State Team Championships. Each state was invited to send its three best players, and 43 states sent women’s teams to compete for the new title at the Lake Buena Vista Club. State associations were given the option to choose their teams by any method, with one restriction: current members of college teams were ineligible because of NCAA bylaws.

After a two-year review process with state and regional golf associations, it was announced in March 2017 that the USGA would retire its State Team championships at the end of the 2017 season. Pennsylvania won the inaugural championship, but Georgia owns the most titles with four. The Women’s State Team consisted of three-player teams, with all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico eligible to field teams. The championship consisted of 54 holes of stroke play, 18 three consecutive days. The best two scores for the team count toward the team score, with the third score acting as a tiebreaker.

The newly created Amateur Four Ball Championships replaced the State Team Championship in the championship rotation for upcoming seasons.

Golf Becomes a Life-Changing Game for Native-American Kerzmann

Tom Mackin, Freelance Writer from Arizona (Courtesy USGA)

Golf can open doors to many worlds. No one knows that better than Sable Kerzmann. A member of the Northern Cheyenne Tribe, she grew up on a reservation near the small, southeast Montana town of Colstrip. The 31-year-old played in her third USGA Women’s State Team Championship at The Club at Las Campanas last week, alongside teammates Ashley Griffith and Susan Matson. But her journey to the USGA championship level has been an improbable one.

Kerzmann, a standout setter in volleyball at Colstrip High School, picked up golf only after pleading from a friend. “My freshman year, there were only three girls on the golf team, so they needed one more to have an official team,” she recalled. “I had never played golf before, but my friend Emily begged me. She thought I could at least swing a club and hack it down the fairway.”

Despite scores in the 120s, she returned to the team the following year, improving dramatically with scores in the low 90s. “That’s when I thought maybe this golf thing could be something,” said Kerzmann, who played and practiced at Ponderosa Butte, a nine-hole course in Colstrip. But when a schedule change moved golf to the fall season, she had to choose between golf and her first love, volleyball.

“My dad thought the best route to get my college paid was through golf,” she said. “He told me, ‘Sable, women’s golf in Montana just has so many untapped resources for college and a lot of women don’t take advantage of that.’” During her senior year in 2004, her team won the Montana State Class A team championship title, the first, and thus far only, state golf title in the school’s history.

“Colstrip has 2,000 people and I grew up on the reservation in Busby. It’s kind of a small, ...Continued on the next page
KERZMANN ... from previous page
desolate little area,” she said. “We rode the bus 50 miles each way to school every day. That was normal. I would play or practice in season and get home around 8:30 p.m. Then do homework and get up at 5:30 in the morning. They were long days.” The grueling schedule paid off with a partial scholarship to Miles Community College in Miles City, Montana. There, Kerzmann earned all-conference honors in 2004 and all-conference academic in 2005 and 2006. She took her first plane ride to an NAIA championship in British Columbia, and played in another championship in Southern California while six months pregnant with her first daughter, Kyla. She had a second daughter, Kamryn, a year later, and started working as an emergency room nurse on the reservation for the Indian Health Service.

Then came her debut for Montana in the 2009 USGA Women’s State Team Championship at Sycamore Hills Country Club in Fort Wayne, Indiana. “When I qualified, I had no idea what this tournament was about,” she said. “It was a huge eye-opener for me. I played with Dori Carter from Georgia the first two days, not knowing who she was. I didn't play badly, but I remember specific times throughout those two days when I was struggling and she would say: ‘It’s OK. Don’t stress about bad shots. Just go on to the next shot.’ She was really encouraging. After I got home, I found out she won the individual championship and her team won the overall title that year. And she’s played on the LPGA Tour since 2010. But she still took the time to be kind to me.”

Kerzmann played in the championship two years later at The Landings Club in Savannah, Georgia, and has also played in 11 Montana Women’s Amateurs. Married with two young children, she has little time to practice, and with 12-hour shifts at work, golf currently serves as an escape from the harsh reality of the emergency room.

A junior golf program started four years ago on her reservation is attracting more players, thrilling Kerzmann. “Basketball is the sport people think of typically when it comes to Native Americans, but for kids who are not good at basketball, there really wasn't another outlet,” she said. “Academics is one way, but a lot of the schools are lacking in that area. So I really push golf big time, especially with middle school kids.”

“I’m trying not to be the pushy mom, but it’s not easy because I know what golf has done for me.” That list includes a college education, travel well beyond her small-town Montana roots, and an introduction to worlds vastly different than the one where she was raised. “I could not have even imagined doing the things I have done through golf,” she said. “I feel so honored to be playing in this championship. It’s beyond anything I ever dreamed. I don’t know why it means more this time. Maybe because I’m a little bit older now, so I’m more mature and more settled. This time, it means a lot.”

High School AA and A State Champions Crowned
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

Class AA

If you have been following golf news in Montana this summer, you have become familiar with a few names. Most frequently, two juniors from the Treasure State have made indelible marks on not only several trophies, but likely their names will be in the record books for a long time.

Joey Moore of Billings and Ryggs Johnston of Libby have not only been consistently atop leaderboards for the past few seasons, but as state champions, both in junior events as well as prep competitions, it is not surprising that each claimed state titles as the high school golf season concluded for class A and AA this fall.

Moore, a senior from Billings West, successfully defended his AA state championship and did it in record breaking fashion – breaking his record from last year. Competing at Buffalo Hill Golf Club in Kalispell, Moore made an eagle on hole eighteen to best his previous year's total by one and cruise to victory. Moore’s rounds of 67-66, 133, were 13 shots better than his nearest competition, Duncan Hollar of CMR.

It was Hollar’s CMR team that took home the team hardware as the Rustlers won going away with rounds of 298-305, 603. Tying for second was Billings West and Great Falls High, 25 shots behind the champions at 628. ...Continued on the next page
HIGH SCHOOL ... from previous page

A.J. Grande of Glacier and Rylan Periman of Great Falls High tied for third at 148 and CMR's Ben Kaul took fifth at 149. Full results for the boys' competition can be found here.

Also competing at Buffalo Hill, the girls showcased some excellent golf with some excitement coming from internal team competition at Bozeman High School. The Hawks exhibited nearly unprecedented dominance in the high school golf scene, not only claiming the team trophy by a whopping 86 shots, but also placing four out of five golfers in the top five, and all five players in the top eight.

Bozeman was the prohibitive favorite going into the tournament, but the individual medalist was a bit of a surprise, as number three player Laurel Ward opened with the low round on day one and would not relinquish her lead. She bested her teammates with rounds of 76-79, 155, to win the state championship.

Teammates Annika Danenhauer, 161, and Kameryn Basye, 163, came in second and third, respectively, with Billings West's Carrie Carpenter in fourth at 163 and Bozeman's Cora Rosanova and Missoula Sentinel's Emily Garden tying for fifth at 170. Full results of the girls' competition can be found here.

Class A

Ryggs Johnston came into his junior season having won back-to-back state championships in the Class B ranks, not only winning, but in record-setting fashion. This fall, with his Libby High School team moving into the Class A ranks, there was little doubt that the accomplished junior player would have no problem adjusting.

Johnston proved that it was the same results, different tournament name, as Johnston again collected a state tournament medal as low individual and put his name atop the record books at the same time. At Sidney Country Club, Johnston opened with 68 and closed with 66, for a 134 total, breaking the decade old record set by Sam Krause of Whitefish.

Johnston was a dozen shots clear of Liam Clancy of Billings Central who shot 146. Carson McDaniel of Polson came in third at 152 and Tristan Belue of Hardin was fourth at 156. Rounding out the top five was Carson Hackman of Laurel at 157. While Johnston posted the record setting effort, his Loggers did not have the requisite four scores to compete for the team title and the Locomotives of Laurel captured the team trophy by virtue of their two-day 654. In second was Polson at 663 and Billings Central finished third at 666. Full results can be found here.

The girls from Sidney used a little home course knowledge and some good play to easily win on the girls side with a team total of 722, outdistancing second place Fergus (Lewistown) who shot 773. Whitefish earned third place at 815.

Contributing to Sidney's team victory were the top two finishers – Tierney Messmer led going into the final day after a first round 80, two clear of her teammate Kaelyn Volk. It was Volk who shot the lower final round, but only by one shot as her 76 gave her a second place finish at 158, with Messmer winning at 157. Kinsey Irvin of Fergus was third at 161, Tricia Joyce of Butte Central was fourth at 167, and Courtney Ockler of Frenchtown rounded out the top five at 176. Full Results can be found here.
Collegiate Ranks Begin 2017-18 Season
Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

NCAA D1

University of Montana

The U of M Grizzlies compete in four fall events and, with three tournaments under their belts, the emerging squad is looking to find consistency. Most recently, at the Wyoming Cowgirl Desert Intercollegiate, played at the Classic Club in Palm Desert, California, the Grizzlies finished seventh out of twelve teams. Senior Hailey Hoagland of Butte led the way for the Griz, finishing 12th overall, thanks to three rounds in the 70s. Hoagland shot 74-77-79, 230. Fellow senior, Kari Opatz, was next with a steady 78-77-79, 234, showing. Baylee Barckley (junior) was next 82-81-78, 241, followed by sophomore Caylyn Villatora's 76-83-86, 245, and Teigan Avery of Kalispell rounded things out for U of M as the sophomore shot 89-77-80, 246.

Montana's best effort of September was at the Loyola Invitational, concluded at the Flossmoor Country Club in Flossmoor, Illinois. The Grizzlies finished third out of eleven teams. Barckley put together a phenomenal tournament tying for second overall, thanks to rounds of 77-76-74, 227, five shots out of first. Opatz collected a top-10 finish after rounds of 80-78-77, 235, put her in ninth. The veteran Hoagland posted 79-85-75, 239, finishing in 15th. Avery's 80-86-81, 247, was next, followed by freshman Faith D'Ortenzio's 88-82-89, 259.

To begin the season, the Grizzlies co-hosted the Battle at Old Works in Anaconda, finishing fifth of eight teams in their home state. Barckley earned medalist honors for the tournament after a two-under-par three-day total of 214 at Old Works. Barckley was both consistent and brilliant, posting 70-72-72, besting Natalie Roth of North Dakota State by one shot. Hoagland posted the low round of the fall to-date for the Grizzlies with a second round 69. Her 78-69-75, 222, total earned 12th overall. Opatz shot 77-77-72, 226, followed by D'Ortenzio at 75-81-78, 234, and Avery rounded out scoring for U of M with 80-85-77, 242.

The Grizzlies will wrap up their fall schedule at the Pat Lesser Harbottle Invitational in Tacoma, Washington, on Monday and Tuesday, October 16-17.

Montana State University

The Montana State Bobcats competed in three events this fall and saw success and room for growth during their fall slate. In their third and final event of the fall, the Bobcats finished T7th of 14 teams at the Rose City Collegiate at Langdon Farms Golf Club in Aurora, Oregon. The Bobcats tied a program record in their second round with a one-over-par team total (289). Individually, sophomore Delaney Elliott was the top finisher in T16th after rounds of 76-72-75, 223. Senior Jaylee Tait fired rounds of 75-78-74, 227, followed by sophomore Kelly Hooper's 75-73-81, 229, and Clare Dittemore, a junior, shot 78-71-80, 229. Lilly Navarre, a sophomore rounded out scoring for the Bobcats with 81-73-76, 230.

Earlier in September, the Bobcats competed at the Cougar Cup at Palouse Ridge Golf Club in Pullman, Washington. MSU finished sixth of nine teams, with Hooper leading the way and finishing just outside the top-ten with rounds of 74-76-76, 226, to finish 11th. Tait shot 74-79-75, 228, to tie for 14th, followed by Elliott's 79-73-82, 234. Dittemore posted 79-78-80, 237, and Whitefish's Coral Schulz, a sophomore, rounded out play for the Bobcats with 81-73-76, 230.

In the season's opening event, the Battle at Old Works in Anaconda, Hooper tied for 3rd after an impressive 78-68-72, 218. Her two-over-par tournament was particularly impressive after her opening round 78. Dittemore made the top-twenty, finishing T19 after posting 75-74-77, 226. Elliott shot 79-77-75, 231, Schulz went 79-76-80, 235, and Navarre rounded out play with 79-79-80, 238.

Montana State University returns to action in the spring by traveling to Riverside, California, for the Battle at the Rock from February 12-13.

...Continued on the next page
MSU-Billings

The Yellowjackets men’s team is youthful, but talented, and includes a number of names familiar to golfers in Montana. MSU-Billings kicked off a busy fall at the Saint Martin’s Men’s Invitational at the Olympia Country and Golf Club in Olympia, Washington, where they placed 8th out of 13. Sophomores Caleb Stetzner of Anaconda and Garrett Woodin of Billings paced MSU-B as the pair tied for 18th. Stetzner posted 72-71-75, 218, and Woodin shot 75-70-73, 218. Junior Scott Larson of Kalispell shot 73-78-75, 226, and freshman Caleb Trost of Billings put together rounds of 73-78-78, 229, with fellow Billings freshman Riley Kaercher rounding things out with 79-75-76, 230.

A few days later, the Yellowjackets continued play in Washington at the Western Washington University Invitational in Bellingham, Washington, at Bellingham Country Club. Competing with an ultra-competitive field, the Yellowjackets managed 14th of 16 teams and did not find a player inside the top-50 individuals. Trost was the low man thanks to rounds of 79-72-77, 228. Woodin was one stroke behind at 74-75-80, 229, with Stetzner right behind at 78-75-79, 230. Kaercher shot 81-77-79, 237, and Larson finished with 79-90-71, 240.

The Yellowjackets began October at the Western New Mexico Invitational at the Golf Club of Estrella in Goodyear, Arizona. With 20 teams competing, the Yellowjackets finished 17th. Caleb Stetzner, the Montana State Amateur Champion, put together a solid tournament with rounds of 74-69-70, 213, to finish T14th and earn low finisher for the team. Trost fired 74-72-76, 222, followed by Woodin 74-74-77, 225, then freshman Jayd Dixon contributed 78-78-83, 239, and Kaercher posted 84-79-87, 250.

MSU-Billings will compete in Oregon at the Concordia Invitational and return to Billings for the Mike Grob Cup to round out their fall schedule.

On the women’s side, the Yellowjackets have competed in two tournaments and have two invitationals remaining as well as the Leslie Spalding Cup. Kicking off the fall season, the Yellowjackets placed 7th out of 14 teams at the RMAC Women’s Fall Invitational hosted by Fox Hollow Golf Course in Lakewood, Colorado. Senior Bailee Dexter of Townsend was the low scorer as she posted 79-77, 156, to place T13 individually. Fellow senior Sammy Walter of Billings also managed a top-20 performance with rounds of 79-79, 158, to finish T18. Shealyn Hafer, a junior from Butte, shot 83-77, 160, junior Sarah Schroefer posted 87-79, 166, and freshman Ranae Heisler of Great Falls shot 88-86, 174.

At the Western New Mexico Invitational, again it was Dexter leading the way with 80-71, 151, to finish T12, followed by Hafer’s 77-78, 157, and Schroefer at 77-83, 160. Walter shot 88-84, 172, and Heisler managed 91-86, 177.

NAIA

Frontier Conference Men

The Frontier Conference Fall Season is in full swing and with the bulk of the schedule played in 2017, competition has been fierce and scores have been impressive.

The MSU-Northern Invitational was held at Marias Valley Golf & Country Club in Shelby. Sean Benson of Montana Tech earned medalist honors after defeating Rocky Mountain’s Michael Tait in a one-hole playoff. Benson, a junior from Billings, shot rounds of 70-68-73, 211 (-5), while Tait rebounded from a first round 78 to post 67-66 en route to his 211 (-5) total. Tucker Keyes 74-70-74, 218 (+2), and Brandon Barnes 69-76-76, 221 (+5), of Lewis-Clark State College (LCSC) finished third and fourth respectively. Colton Murphy of Rocky finished fifth. ...Continued on the next page
with 76-76-70, 216, helping the Battlin' Bears to the team title with a three round score of 879, three better than LCSC’s 882. Montana Tech finished third at 893. Click for Full Results.

Next, Green Meadow Country Club played host to the Carroll College Invitational in Helena. The Fighting Saints had their best finish at home, finishing second (848) to Rocky (832) over the three rounds, and LCSC was third at 854. LCSC’s Hunter Weitze started off strong and found his name atop the leaderboard with a sterling tournament of 67-70-67, 204. Weitze’s nine-under performance bested Michael Tait of Rocky who shot 66-72-68, 206, good enough for second. Benson was tied for third, with Reece Nilsen of Rocky at six under 207. Ben Gardner of Carroll was fifth at 208. In all, nine players finished below par in Helena. Click for Full Results.

Frontier Conference Women

While the University of Providence may be coming familiarized to college golf fans in Montana, one name that is familiar is Gina Kowolchuk.

Kowolchuk, a senior and defending conference champion shot 73-73, 146, to beat Rocky’s Eryn Ellis (77-70, 147) by one shot to win medalist honors at the MSU-Northern Invite. Rocky easily won the team competition thanks to, not only the play of Ellis, but her teammates secured individual spots two through four as Morgan O’Neil shot 158 and Hayden Flohr shot 160. Rounding out the top five was Jenna Jensen of Northern who shot 162. Rocky’s team total was 629, LCSC finished second at 664 and Carroll College was third at 686. Click for Full Results.

It was more of the same in Helena as Rocky won the Carroll College Invitational with a team score of 574, LCSC was again second at 610, and Carroll third at 631. Kowolchuk had a sizzling first round of 66 and closed with 72 for a 138, best overall two shots better than second place Anna DeMars of Rocky (70-70, 140). Ellis was third at 141 with round of 72-69. Marissa Louder came in fourth with 142 and Flohr of Rocky claimed fifth with 144. Click for Full Results.

Download the handy USGA Rules of Golf App if you are looking for instant access to the official Rules and Decisions. It will allow you to play the game by the Rules and resolve disputes quickly. With this application, you will be able to find important Rules information in seconds, such as: when a ball is considered lost, whether or not you can stand out of bounds when making a stroke, how to proceed when a ball has landed close to a dangerous situation, like a rattlesnake or a beehive. Download the free USGA Rules of Golf app for iOS and Android.

THREE Hole-in-Ones this season!!

Matt Feldman, 9/27/17, Livingston CC, Hole #8, 117 yds, Pitching Wedge
Connie M. Kalberg, 8/30/17, Eagle Bend GC, Hole #16, 106 yds, 7 Iron
Mark Tronson, 8/21/17, Meadow Lark CC, Hole #4, 123 yds, 9 Iron
Sean Benson, 8/20/17, Butte CC, Hole #17, 160 yds, Pitching Wedge
Dennis LaBonty, 8/18/17, Silver Fox GC, Hole #1, 98 yds, Pitching Wedge
Brian Pribe, 8/16/17, Bridger Creek GC, Hole #17, 120 yds, 52 Degree Wedge

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Dennis LaBonty of Polson
USGA AND THE R&A RECEIVE EXTENSIVE FEEDBACK IN GLOBAL PROGRAM TO MODERNIZE GOLF’S RULES

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 January 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 January 1, 2019, adoption of the new Rules.

For more information on the proposed new Rules of Golf, see usga.org or randa.org. In addition to proposing many substantive Rule changes, the Rules Modernization initiative has focused on changing how the Rules are written and presented. This has resulted in a new writing style and format, a reorganization of the Rules and the introduction of a “Player’s Edition” of the Rules. Click the pictures below for more information.

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