Rules of Golf 2019 - Major Changes (Part 3)
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website Coordinator

We continue this month with Part 3 of our series, breaking down the next set of Rules of Golf changes. These changes went into effect as of January 1, 2019. If you are a snowbird, remember to pay attention to the change date. You can review Parts 1 & 2 from our previous issues on our website at www.msgagolf.org/newsletter-archive.

These changes are also listed in more detail on the USGA website. You can get your free copy of the Player's Edition of the Rules of Golf 2019 by clicking here. The USGA Rules of Golf 2019 smartphone app is also available for download. A full table of changes will be listed on the MSGA website at the end of this series.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RULE</th>
<th>New in 2019:</th>
<th>(Old Rule:)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unattended flagstick</td>
<td>No penalty, option to remove</td>
<td>Loss of hole/2-stroke penalty if ball hits flagstick</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching sand in bunker</td>
<td>No penalty to move debris or touch sand; except can't touch sand with club around ball, test sand, make practice swing, or in backswing of stroke.</td>
<td>Loss of hole/2-stroke penalty (with exceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unplayable ball in bunker</td>
<td>May take relief outside bunker back on the line from the hole, 2 penalty strokes</td>
<td>No relief option (other than from previous stroke)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Penalty area definition expanded</td>
<td>Red and yellow marked “penalty areas” now cover water, and also desert, jungle, lava rock, thick woods, etc</td>
<td>Committee can only mark an area of water as “water hazard”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Expanded use of red-marked penalty area</td>
<td>Committees now able to mark all penalty areas as red so that lateral relief always allowed (but can still use yellow when appropriate)</td>
<td>All water hazards marked yellow (with exceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touching ground in penalty area</td>
<td>No penalty to move debris, touch ground/water with hand or club</td>
<td>Loss of hole/2-stroke penalty (with exceptions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opposite side relief for red penalty areas</td>
<td>Not allowed, unless Local Rule</td>
<td>Always allowed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Congratulations to our NEWEST WINNERS!

DECEMBER'S DRAWING:
Golf in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho - Justin Arney, Billings
$200 cash - Cindy Curnow, Billings

** JANUARY’S TRIP PRIZE is Bigfork, Montana **

Handicapping FAQs
Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website

Is There A Handicap Adjustment For Age?

Age does not define a player’s ability. An adjustment can’t be made on the basis of age, because not all golfers are equal. The Handicap Index already takes into consideration the player’s best Handicap Differentials, which is based on a math formula, not age or gender.

My Handicap Index Is Already Established From The Forward Tee at my Golf Club. Why Do I Have to Adjust it if I Play A Different Set of Tees?

A Handicap Index isn't established from a particular set of tees. It's based off of your scores and the course rating of the tees you played. It's a portable number that can be taken from tee-to-tee and course-to-course and converted to a Course Handicap for the tees that you are playing that day.

Have a handicap question? CLICK HERE for help.

ONE NETWORK IN 2019

Regardless of handicap vendor, all Associations will be converted to one network before June 1, 2019 (this date has changed).

Here are the benefits:
• ONE network # - multiple states
• ONE handicap record - no linking
• Accessible by anyone in ONE place
• Centralized handicap calculation
• All handicap vendors, same network
• Invisible to golfers, no software or program change

DO YOU HAVE A GHIN# or other record outside the MSGA?

If so, we need to link your records, if this hasn't been done already! With the merge to one network in 2019, this needs to be completed soon to eliminate problems and confusion for both you and anyone searching your record.

Just email your information to support@msgagolf.org, and we’ll set you up!

Montana’s Official Golf Season:
April 1 to October 31

Off-season scores played in Montana should not be posted. Scores played where it is in-season are valid and should be posted, via the online handicap system, smartphone app, or membership linking.

Want to see something in the newsletter?
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