In this final part of our series, we will break down the last set of major Rules of Golf changes that went into effect as of January 1, 2019. You can review Parts 1-4 from our previous issues at www.msgagolf.org/newsletter-archive. There is a full table of major changes listed at www.msgagolf.org/2019-rules-changes.

These and other changes are 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RULE</th>
<th>New in 2019:</th>
<th>(Old Rule:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Maximum score” alternative in stroke play</td>
<td>Score maximum set by Committee - may be fixed, related to par, or related to the player’s handicap</td>
<td>Must hole out at every hole or disqualified</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standards of conduct</td>
<td>Players expected to play in the spirit of the game; can be disqualified for serious misconduct</td>
<td>Etiquette section published, wasn’t part of the Rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Code of player conduct</td>
<td>Committee can set own standards for conduct, and can set penalties or disqualification</td>
<td>Could disqualify for serious breach of etiquette, but lesser penalties not allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intent to lift a ball</td>
<td>With good reason, can mark and lift ball to identify and examine; no need to first announce intention</td>
<td>Must announce intent and give opportunity to observe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution for damaged ball</td>
<td>Only allowed if cut or cracked</td>
<td>Allowed if cut, cracked, or “out of shape”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Player’s reasonable judgment</td>
<td>When determining a spot, point, line, area, or other location, reasonable judgment is accepted, even if later shown to be wrong from video</td>
<td>Player penalized if wrong estimate made</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Local Rule: Alternative to stroke-and-distance relief</td>
<td>If in effect, alternative for ball lost outside of penalty area or out of bounds; 2 stroke penalty (click diagram for details)</td>
<td>Stroke-and-distance relief, play from previous spot; 1 stroke penalty</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Handicapping FAQs**

*Emily Hulsey, MSGA Handicap and Website*

**WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MY TREND AND OFFICIAL HANDICAP INDEX?**

Your Trend Index is simply a running calculation of your Handicap Index between revisions. Because your Trend can potentially change after each score is posted, it is a useful tool to indicate the trend of your golfing game. However, it is not an official number. At the time of the next handicap revision (on the 1st and 15th of each month), your Trend Index becomes your Official Handicap Index. This will likely change in 2020 when daily revisions are introduced with the World Handicap System. Education about the WHS will begin later this season. We will keep you updated with any changes.

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**Congratulations to our NEWEST WINNERS!**

**FEBRUARY'S DRAWING:**

- Six Flags Over Texas - Allen Barth, Baker
- $200 cash - Paul Curnow, Billings

**MARCH'S TRIP PRIZE is Branson, Missouri**

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Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

The Mining City has a significant void after the tragic passing of Butte Coroner and Montana Tech Head Golf Coach, Lee LaBreche.

LaBreche, who was 55, had been suffering from a case of influenza and passed away leaving behind his wife, Kim, daughter, Aleesha, and brother, Rick. In addition to his familial devotion, LaBreche was a larger-than-life figure in Butte in both stature and involvement in the community. He was often carrying multiple cell phones as his contributions were both deep and wide. As the county coroner for Silver Bow County the past 22 years, LaBreche was the man on the scene for many of life's most difficult circumstances. Always jovial and generous with time, LaBreche had a sense of service beyond just his occupational duties.

LaBreche joined the Montana Tech Golf Program in 2012 as an assistant coach and took over head coaching duties in 2015. He was beloved by players and respected for conveying his love of the game to his players and the Butte Community. An avid golfer himself, LaBreche served as the president of Butte Country Club and could be found often on the course working on his single-digit handicap and encouraging others.

Montana Tech Athletic Director, Matt Stepan, said, “We stand in shock as a campus and Butte community. Our hearts go out to the many that knew and loved Lee. Together we will do all that we can to help the LaBreche family through this tragic time, as Lee has done for so many others in his lifetime.”

LaBreche graduated from Butte Central High School and taught math and physical education for over 10 years and coached defense for many years at Butte Central. Never one to shy away from contributing, in addition to his coroner and golf coach role, he joined the Butte Central Catholic Education Foundation as director of the Maroon Activities Center a year and a half ago. Butte Central Catholic Schools president and football coach, Don Peoples Jr., lamented LaBreche's passing: “The kids loved him. He was a real passionate guy. He was fun to be around and really enjoyed life – there is no question about that.”

The MSGA offers condolences to the LaBreche Family, the Montana Tech golf community, and all of Butte. Lee’s contributions to the game of golf and in support of collegiate golf in Butte will be everlasting.

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**Have a handicap question? CLICK HERE for help.**

Try the MSGA Smartphone APP. Available in the Apple or Android Stores.
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!

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**Cats, Griz Kick of Spring Season in California**

Nick Dietzen, MSGA Communications Director

Golf may not be back in full swing in the Treasure State, but the teams from Montana State University and the University of Montana resumed their 2018-19 season in California at Oak Quarry Golf Club, at the Battle at the Rock Tournament.

MSU concluded the two-day event with a team score of 936, 13th of 15 teams competing. Leading the way for the Bobcats were juniors Delaney Elliott and Kelly Hooper. Hooper was the only Bobcat to shoot below 80 in all three rounds (75-79-76, 230). Elliott tied Hooper for 45th overall with rounds of 81-74-75, 230. Coral Schulz posted 83-73-83 for 239, and T70th, followed by Clare Dittemore with 80-85-79, 244, in T78th, and Sofia Rodriguez Todd rounded out scoring with 87-81-80, 248, for 84th. Lucia Prieto Romano competed as an individual and was T61 with rounds of 84-74-81, 235.

UM finished in 14th place, 14 shots behind MSU. The Grizzlies posted a team total of 950 and were led by Kylie Esh's 77-80-76, 233, good enough for T57. Baylee Barkley shot 81-76-78, 235, for T61, followed by Brooklyn VanBeber at 82-78-80, 240 (T73). Allison Sobol posted 82-84-78, 244, for T78, and Faith D'Ortenzio rounded out scoring with 84-82-81, 247, for T82.

Grand Canyon won the Battle at the Rock team title with 881 strokes over the three rounds. Cal Poly’s Elizabeth Scholtes and USC’s Alyaa Abdughany tied for first individually with totals of 212. Full results can be found here. The Grizzlies play next on March 14-15 at the Lady Thunderbird Invitational in St. George, Utah.

While the Grizzlies wait a month between events, the Bobcats were back in action at the Grand Canyon Invitational in Phoenix. With 20 teams competing, the Bobcats were 19th with a team score of 948. Kelly Hooper was the low individual in T69th after rounds of 81-76-77, 234. Delaney Elliott shot 80-77-78, 235, a shot behind Hooper for T72. Last year, Hooper claimed medalist honors after winning a playoff at the 2018 GCU Invite in Phoenix.

Coral Schulz posted 78-82-81, 241, for 89th, Lilly Navarre shot 81-78-85, 244, for T93, and Hailey Oster shot 88-79-82, 249, for T99. Schulz, who posted a team-best opening round, had a highlight early in the spring season as the sophomore used a seven-iron from 150 out and had no need to putt thanks to her first collegiate ace. Full Results can be found here.


Thanks to a lengthy layoff with not much relief in sight, the Big Sky’s Montana-based squads were thankful to have had some competition despite the lack of outdoor practice opportunities.
Clarifications to Rule Restriction on Caddie Standing Behind Player

USGA News Release

The USGA and The R&A have provided two clarifications to Rule 10.2b(4) regarding restrictions on caddies standing behind players, which take effect immediately.

The purpose of Rule 10.2 is to reinforce the fundamental challenge of making a stroke and to limit the advice and other help a player may receive during a round. Rule 10.2b(4) ensures that aiming at the intended target is a challenge that the player must overcome alone. It states: “When a player begins taking a stance for the stroke and until the stroke is made, the player’s caddie must not deliberately stand in a location on or close to the player’s line of play behind the ball for any reason. If the player takes a stance in breach of this Rule, he or she cannot avoid penalty by backing away.” Exception – Ball on Putting Green: When the player's ball is on the putting green, there is no penalty under this Rule if the player backs away from the stance and does not begin to take the stance again until after the caddie has moved out of that location.

The two clarifications can be summarized as follows:

- Meaning of “Begins Taking a Stance for the Stroke”: If a player backs away from a stance, the player is not considered to have begun “a stance for the stroke.” Therefore, a player can now back away from his or her stance anywhere on the course and avoid a breach of Rule 10.2b(4) if the caddie had been standing in a location behind the ball.

- Examples of When a Caddie is Not “Deliberately” Standing Behind the Ball When a Player Begins Taking Stance for Stroke: As written, the Rule does not apply if a caddie is not deliberately standing behind a player. It is clarified that the term “deliberately” requires a caddie to be aware that 1) the player is beginning to take a stance for the stroke to be played and 2) he or she (the caddie) is standing on or close to an extension of the line of play behind the ball. Several examples are given in the clarification to provide additional guidance.

The complete language to these two clarifications can be found here. These major clarifications confirm the recent rulings given in relation to Rule 10.2b(4). Clarifications provide additional guidance on a Rule based on the circumstances that may arise in applying it. They are part of an ongoing list provided to players and referees.

“Experience has taught us that introducing a new Rule requires us to balance patience with a willingness to act quickly when necessary,” said Thomas Pagel, USGA senior managing director of Governance. “With so many pivotal changes to the Rules this year, we’ve committed to offering any assistance needed in making the Rules easier to understand and apply, without taking away the inherent challenge of playing the game. We appreciate that everyone involved in drafting these clarifications worked together with this same goal in mind.”

David Rickman, executive director – Governance at The R&A, said, “These clarifications are designed to improve the operation of the Rule and give the players more opportunity to avoid a breach while remaining true to the purpose of the Rule. We appreciate that this requires some players and caddies to make an adjustment, but we believe there is widespread acceptance that it is for the player alone to line up a shot.”

A spirit of collaboration has been central to the initiative to modernize golf’s Rules since it began in 2012 and the USGA and The R&A consulted with various entities in the game, including the LPGA Tour, the European Tour, and the PGA Tour, to ensure an appropriate level of guidance has been given through these clarifications.

A full list of clarifications to golf’s new Rules can be found on usga.org/RulesClarifications and will be incorporated into the USGA’s and The R&A’s respective Rules of Golf apps later this year. Golf’s new Rules were finalized in March 2018, following a worldwide comment period and testing. Educational materials can be found at usga.org/rules.
Lee Elder Makes USGA History as Bob Jones Award Recipient

USGA News Release

The USGA will honor Lee Elder with its highest honor, the Bob Jones Award, in a ceremony on June 12, 2019, during the week of the 119th U.S. Open Championship at Pebble Beach (CA) Golf Links. Elder is the first African American to receive the prestigious award.

Presented annually since 1955, the Bob Jones Award recognizes an individual who demonstrates the spirit, personal character, and respect for the game exhibited by Jones, winner of nine USGA championships. “Lee’s perseverance, positive attitude, and generous spirit personifies the ideals that the Bob Jones Award represents,” said Mike Davis, USGA CEO. “His grace and humility demonstrate his extraordinary character, and his work at the community level has paved the way for generations of future golfers. We are thrilled to have the opportunity to honor his incredible sportsmanship in the game.”

After bursting onto the PGA Tour in 1968 by tying Jack Nicklaus and extending him to a five-hole playoff at the American Golf Classic, Robert Lee Elder used his new-found fame to introduce disadvantaged youths to the game through various development programs. Most notably, Elder managed the desegregated Langston Golf Course in Washington, D.C., where he hosted after-school programs aimed at educating youngsters about the game, while also giving them a safe place to spend their afternoons. In 1974, Elder created the Lee Elder Scholarship Fund, which offers financial aid to low-income young men and women to attend college. A pioneering force in the game, Elder overcame personal tragedy and discrimination to become the first African American to play in the Masters Tournament, as well as the first African American to earn a spot on a Ryder Cup Team, serving as an inspiration to countless players who sought to break the color barrier.

“It’s a great honor to receive this award and be recognized in the same vein as Mr. Jones, who did so much for golf, and many others that I’ve admired who have positively impacted the game,” said Elder. “I felt that by setting the right example and serving as a mentor, I would have the ability to leave a lasting impression on people. Even if I could only reach a few of them, I wanted to give all youngsters a chance to learn the game and be a part of it.”

Born the youngest of 10 children in Dallas in 1934, Robert Lee Elder was orphaned at age 9 after his father was killed in action during World War II and his mother, overcome with grief, died three months later. Their deaths forced Elder to interrupt his schooling, and he found work at a nearby golf course, sparking his interest in and cultivating his love for the game. He began practicing in his off hours with a borrowed club and developed his skills further after he began to caddie. At age 12, Elder was sent to live with an aunt in Los Angeles, where his affinity for the game grew through jobs in pro shops and locker rooms, in addition to continuing his work as a caddie.

Elder’s competitive career began in 1950 at an amateur event conducted by the United Golf Association (UGA), which provided competitive opportunities for African American players. After a stint traveling with famous golf hustler Titanic Thompson and two years in the Army, Elder played professionally, quickly establishing himself as the top player on the UGA circuit with wins in 18 of 22 tournaments in 1966. He easily qualified for the PGA Tour in 1967 and went on to finish his career with four PGA Tour wins and eight PGA Tour Champions wins. Elder stared down discrimination throughout his career, most notably by accepting Gary Player’s invitation to play in the South African PGA Championship in 1971, in the hope that a desegregated event would help end apartheid policies in South Africa. Elder also declined an invitation to the Masters that was based on growing legislative pressure rather than his own merit, and instead earned his spot with his first PGA Tour win at the Monsanto Open in 1974.

Congratulations to our newest Ace Club Members!

Did you get a hole-in-one? Go to www.msgagolf.org to see how to get your MSGA Hole-in-One Certificate!

Scott Dean, 8/1/18, Larchmont GC, Hole #7, 150 yds, 8 Iron

msgagolf.org/golf-etiquette-101
**MARK NEWELL ELECTED TO SECOND TERM AS USGA PRESIDENT**

Mark Newell, of McLean, Virginia, has been elected to serve a second term as the 65th president of the USGA. The election took place at the Association's Annual Meeting in San Antonio, Texas, on February 23, 2019.

Newell will continue to lead the 15-member volunteer USGA Executive Committee, which serves as the policy-making board and provides strategic direction and oversight to the Association through its full-time staff, based in Liberty Corner, New Jersey. “It’s an honor to be elected to a second term and have the opportunity to give another year of service to the game as USGA president,” said Newell, who begins his seventh year on the Executive Committee. “Our collective commitment to impact and focus on ensuring the game’s future has never been stronger. It’s an exciting time to be a part of the USGA.”

Stuart Francis of Hillsborough, California, was named president-elect, to ensure committee leadership succession and continuity. Beginning his fifth year on the governing board, Francis chairs the USGA Championship Committee and serves on the Equipment Standards Committee. Three new committee members were also elected. Anthony (Tony) Anderson of Chicago, Illinois; Deborah Platt Majoras of Cincinnati, Ohio; and Fred Perpall of Dallas, Texas, join the Executive Committee. They assume seats vacated by retiring members Gregory Morrison, Mark Reinemann, and Clifford Shahbaz. Two current members of the Executive Committee were elected to serve as officers. Martha Lang will serve as secretary, and Thomas Barkin as treasurer. Other current members elected to continue their service are: Michael Bailey, Stephen Beebe, Paul Brown, Kendra Graham, Robert Kain, Nick Price, Sharon Ritchey, and William Siart. Dick Shortz has also been elected to continue his service as general counsel.

“The 15 volunteers who comprise the USGA Executive Committee represent an inspiring commitment to our mission to serve the best interests of the game, for all who love and play it,” said Mike Davis, USGA chief executive officer.

**THE USGA AND THE R&A RELEASE 2018 DRIVING DISTANCE REPORT**

The USGA and The R&A have released the 2018 Annual Driving Distance Report, containing driving-distance data from seven men’s and women’s professional golf tours around the world. This is the fourth annual distance report issued by the game’s governing bodies, completed in an effort to monitor current trends in driving distance.

The 2018 data show that driving distances on these seven tours increased by an average of 1.7 yards, beyond the previous year’s gain of more than 3 yards. The full report, which can be found via this link, summarizes data provided by the PGA TOUR, LPGA Tour, PGA European Tour, Ladies European Tour, Japan Golf Tour, Web.com Tour, and PGA TOUR Champions Tour based on available data at the time of publication. Introduced in 2015, the report includes data starting with the 1968 PGA TOUR season. The average driving distance is typically measured on two holes at each tournament and usually results in nearly 40,000 shots being measured over the course of a season on some tours.

The USGA and The R&A continue to be diligent in studying the long-term effect of distance on the game of golf, a global focus first expressed in their Joint Statement of Principles delivered in 2002. In that document, the organizations reinforced their commitment to ensure that skill is the dominant element of success throughout the game, and that all factors contributing to distance would be considered on a regular basis.

The 2018 report represents one set of data among the already substantial collection of information currently being studied within the context of the ongoing Distance Insights project, which was launched last May to provide a comprehensive and definitive study of the past, present, and future impacts of distance at all levels of the game globally.