

The Golf Rules Review

An Intermittent Communique by the 2020 WWGA Golf Rules Maven

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How to Get Disqualified in a Golf Tournament

The worst penalty in golf is disqualification. It sounds scandalous, but rarely is. It often occurs for the most innocent of reasons. The Golfer unwittingly made a mistake and it can't be corrected. Here are 10 rule breaches that result in a disqualification. The first 2 have happened to players from The Woods.

1. Practicing on the course on the day of the Tournament.

- This is not allowed in stroke play because all players do not have an equal chance of doing so. Please don't play a hole or two on the way to the Club House for the Tournament. Also don't practice on any greens other than the practice putting green.
- In stroke play competition over multiple days, you are allowed to practice on the course each day following the completion of all play for that day.
- If play is suspended (e.g. rain) no practice is allowed in the course during a Stroke Play Tournament unless allowed by the committee.
- In Match Play, you are allowed to practiced on the course before the start of your match, because both players have an equal chance to doing so.

2. Not holing out. In all stroke play tournaments you must hole out for the score to count. Exceptions would be in a Maximum Tournament where the player may stop (or not even play) when reaching the Maximum set for a hole. Examples of not holing out are:

- Giving Putts. This most often happens in a team event where the players who are used to giving putts during their casual play carry it over to a Tournament.
- Playing and holing out with the wrong ball and not correcting the mistake before starting the next hole.
- Teeing off from the wrong tee box and not correcting it before starting the next hole. This happened once during a Mason-Dixon tournament. It was an unfamiliar course for the players and the course wasn't well mark. The players just got mixed up and played the holes out of order.

3. Turning in an incorrect scorecard with a lower score on a hole than what was actually incurred or **failing to sign your scorecard** before it is turned in.

- The easiest way to turn in an incorrect score is not taking penalty strokes you have incurred.
- Golfers are responsible for accurately recording the scores for each hole. The Pro is responsible for the correct addition of the scores for the round. Usually the players exchange cards with their opponents which prevents inaccurate hole scores.
- If you sign a scorecard with a higher score on a hole that what occurred, the higher score stands.

Q&A – Should I post my score into GHIN if I have been disqualified.

That depends. Post your score if you played a round or have enough scores to post for a 18 or 9 hole round but were disqualified for the following:

1. Practicing on the course.
2. Not holing out. Use par plus your handicap strokes for that hole you did not hole out, provided you have at least 7 good holes to post a 9 hole score or 14 good holes to post an 18 hole score.
3. Turning in an incorrect scorecard. Record the actual score in GHIN.
4. Misrepresenting your handicap.
5. Stopping or delaying play or player misconduct provided you have played enough holes to post into GHIN.

Consult with the Pro regarding posting your score if you were disqualified because you have agreed to **not** follow a rule or not take penalties you know that exist.

Do not post a score in GHIN anytime you have used non-conforming equipment. This includes range finders with slope adjustments. This applies whether you were playing in a tournament or not.

Unfortunate Disqualifications

- A golfer at The Woods was disqualified for practicing on a few holes near his house prior to the start of a tournament.
- A foursome at The Woods was disqualified for giving putts during a stroke play/scramble tournament.
- At the Victorian Open Championship in Australia, the leader, Nick Gillespie shot a course record of 65 in the first round. In his excitement, he forgot to sign his scorecard and was disqualified.
- This past March, on a mini-tour event, 14 golfers in a field of 60 were disqualified for playing from the wrong tee. The hole was backed up and one person started at the 222 yards which the scorecard showed, the tee marker however was at 204. 13 players followed error of the first player.
- Jim Furyk was disqualified once for missing his tee time. His phone battery died and he overslept.

How to Get Disqualified from a Golf Tournament (cont.)

4. **Misrepresenting your handicap** by not posting all your scores prior to a tournament. In Match Play, if too high of a handicap is declared in error, the player is disqualified only when it affects the number of strokes they give or receive.
5. **Missing your starting time** is grounds for disqualification.
 - Tee times are exact time. Players who are 5 minutes or less late get a 2 stroke penalty applied to the 1st hole or in Match Play, loss of the 1st hole .
 - Any lateness more than 5 minutes the penalty is disqualification
 - The penalties can be waived by the Committee due to exceptional circumstances.
 - If play is stopped by the committee during a tournament (e.g rain), then the same rules for Tee times apply for the time set by the Committee to resume play.
6. **Players agreeing to deliberately not follow a rule** and or agree to not take penalties they know exist.
7. **Playing with equipment (balls, clubs, and gloves) that do not conform to USGA standards or using foreign substance on your clubs.** For the most part reputable manufacturers' equipment is in compliance. Most clubs don't do much in this area unless it was called to the Pro's attention. Using a range finder which provides distances adjusted for slopes is not allowed and is grounds for disqualification.
8. **Unreasonable delay in play** has graduating penalties from 1 stroke for the first offences to 2 strokes for the second and disqualification for the third offence. Short delays dues to illness, injury or seeking help from a referee are okay.
9. **Stopping play** unless:
 - Play is suspended by the Committee.
 - In Match Play, both players agree to stop play.
 - When you reasonable believe you are in danger from lightning, you may stop. You don't need to wait for the Committee to suspend play, but you do need to report it to the Committee as soon as possible.
10. **Serious player misconduct** can result in Disqualification
 - Deliberately giving misinformation to mislead other golfers.
 - Deliberately causing damage to the Green.
 - Changing the course set up such as moving tee makers or boundary stakes.
 - Deliberately distracting other players while they are making their stroke.
 - Repeatedly refusing to mark a ball at rest when it interferes with another players balls.
 - Repeatedly using vulgar or offensive language.
 - Not playing according to the Rules of Golf and potentially gaining a significant advantage.
 - Throwing a club at another player (but not if they were tossing their club towards their bag and the club accidently hits another player).