

GIVING RULINGS - SOME DO'S and DON'TS

- as taken from Golf Canada –

DO:

- On arrival, ask the player calmly (for example), “How may I help?” or “May I assist you?” or something similar.
- Take and retain the initiative. Ask questions until you understand the situation and why you were called. Identify in your own mind what the player is/was trying to do, and which Rule(s) applies to the situation. Ask other players or spectators if that is necessary to ascertain the facts.
- Only when you are certain of it, give the player your ruling. If you don't know the ruling, call the Lead Referee.
- Only give a player their options when they ask.
- If the ruling permits the player to lift his ball, or specifically does not allow him to lift the ball, say so. If the player is not allowed to clean the ball when lifted, advise the player of this before he has lifted it.
- If the ruling involves dropping or placing of a ball and the player does so correctly and all other requirements of the applicable Rule have been met, state “That ball is in play”. Otherwise guide the player to proceed as required by the Rules.
- If the player is unhappy with the ruling and you believe it would help to maintain a good climate between player and official, call for a second opinion from the Chief referee or show the player the applicable Rule in the Rule Book, whichever is the more likely to keep things calm.
- If you have said all you wish to say, retreat a little, but stay at hand to see the next stroke made. This is particularly advisable if the player is agitated.
- Have your Rule Book with you at all times, together with the Local Rules and Conditions of Competition.
- Prevent a breach occurring if you can do so without distracting others.
- Time a ball search when you see one starting (or as soon as possible even after it has started). Help in the search if not needed elsewhere.

DON'T

- Say more than the player needs to know, e.g. don't quote the rule number.
- Be over - familiar with the player, even if you know them well. Don't make jokes. Don't imply to the player that they have played a poor shot, have a “problem”, ought to know the Rules (by now) etc.

- Raise your voice, show impatience, or get excited or aggressive with the player.
- Give a ruling until you know what is right in the circumstances.
- Give advice to the player or imply which option they should adopt.
- Touch the player's ball or clubs, insert tees to help them set out the permitted area for a drop, or move movable obstructions for them.
- Position yourself in an intrusive manner, overly close to the player when they are at address, or to their line of play and don't move when they are about to play.
- Go into a bunker unless it is absolutely necessary.
- Leave your radio volume loud when close to players so that they can hear it or be distracted.