



Memo

To: Match & Competition Committees
From: Simon Magdulski
Date: 22 July 2009
Subject: Concurrent Four-ball and Singles Competitions

Up until the start of 2008, the Rules of Golf did not permit the playing of four-ball stroke play competitions in conjunction with singles competitions.

The 2008-2009 Decisions on the Rules of Golf includes a new Decision (31/1 – page 471) which clarifies that this restriction has been lifted.

Important Points for Players and Committees to note when Four-ball and Individual Stroke Play Competitions are being Conducted Concurrently (as contained in Decision 31/1):

- Whenever possible, the Rules of Golf are applied only to the competition affected. For example, where A and B are partners in the four-ball and B moves A's ball without authority under the Rules, in the four-ball competition A incurs a penalty stroke (Rule 18-2a), but incurs no penalty in the individual competition. B incurs no penalty in either competition.
- When it is not possible to separate the competitions, the four-ball competition takes precedence when applying the Rules of Golf.
- The exception to this is with Rule 8-1 (Advice). If both partners are playing in the individual competition, they may not exchange advice. If just one partner is playing in the individual competition, they may exchange advice.

Score Card Requirements

It is strongly recommended by both The R&A and GA that each competitor/side be issued with a separate score card; ie each individual should be issued their own score card, and each pair be issued a further separate card. If this recommendation is not followed, each competitor must still ensure they sign the card on which their individual score for the round has been recorded, and that this score is also attested by a marker.

Guidelines for Handicappers when Individual Competitions are Played Concurrently with Four-ball Stroke Play Competitions

Under GA handicapping regulations, if a player competes in the singles competition, the singles score returned **MUST be used for handicapping purposes**. The Committee should advise **all** players that they must adhere to the Rules of singles competition, particularly with regard to Rule 8-1 (Advice), although note the above exception. If a player contests the four-ball competition only, the GA four-ball handicapping regulations apply.

'2-Ball' Competitions

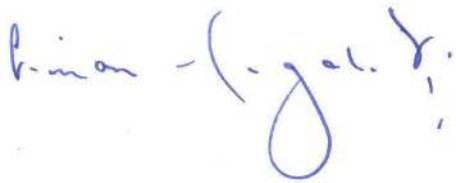
Some Committees have for some time conducted competitions played under individual stroke play Rules where the scores of two fellow competitors are matched to also produce a better-ball score. This additional component (generally referred to as a '2 ball') did not fall under the umbrella of the Rules and was treated as a novelty event. The new R&A Decision should make this practice largely redundant.

Note: SWINGERS

Please note that a separate set of considerations is attached to 'Swingers'. A 'swinger' is a player who is a member of two separate pairs in a four-ball competition. The specific objective of this practice is to avoid having somebody being left without a partner. The R&A has determined that such a practice would breach the Rules of Golf for the play of the four-ball competition due to the player being a fellow-competitor and a partner simultaneously in that competition.

Where a Committee decides to allow 'swingers' in a four-ball competition, it may choose from two options regarding the four-ball results. It may clarify that all pairs involved will be ineligible to win prizes in the four-ball competition and that their scores are ineligible for four-ball handicapping; OR it may consider the four-ball event to be a 'novelty event' where no four-ball handicapping will take place at all. However any 'swinger' competing in a concurrent singles competition will not be breaching the Rules of singles stroke play by being a 'swinger'; and their singles score must be processed for handicapping purposes.

This Memorandum replaces all previous advice on the subject of four-ball stroke play competitions being played in conjunction with singles competitions.



Simon Magdulski
Manager – Rules & Handicapping

*Email – simonm@golfaustralia.org.au
Direct phone – (03) 9626 5023*