



Setting the Terms of the Competition (with Sample Wordings)

2023 Rules of Golf Update

Introduction

[Section 5A](#) of the Committee Procedures in the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf details how to set Terms of the Competition. That information is replicated in this document, but sample Terms of the Competition have also been included.

There are many different permutations as to how a golf competition can be set up and run and so there are many different ways in which a Committee may write the Terms of the Competition. The sample Terms of the Competition provided in blue text in this document are therefore just a few examples of how such Terms may be written, and they are by no means intended to be a complete list of options available. Ultimately it is a matter for the Committee to write the Terms of the Competition as they see fit and it is a matter for the Committee to interpret those Terms.

Section 5A – Setting Terms of the Competition (with sample Terms of the Competition included)

Terms of the Competition determine the structure of each competition including who may enter, how to enter, what the schedule and format of the competition will be and how ties will be decided. It is the responsibility of the Committee to:

- Set clear and concise terms for each competition.
- Make these terms available to players in advance of the competition.
- Interpret the terms should any questions arise.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, the Committee should avoid altering the Terms of the Competition once the competition has started.

It is the responsibility of each player to know and follow the Terms of the Competition.

(1) Eligibility

The Committee may make Terms of the Competition that restrict who is eligible to play.

a. Gender Requirements A competition may be limited to players of a specific gender.

Sample Wording – Women & Girls' Championships

“Competitors must have been female at birth or had the female sex assigned prior to puberty and meet the conditions of the [specify organising Committee] fair competition policy, including pre-clearance as stated below.

Any transgender women or women with differences in sexual development (46 XY DSD) who wish to enter the Championship or any qualifying competition are subject to the [specify organising Committee] fair competition policy and must apply for pre-clearance from [specify organising Committee] to compete in the Championship or qualifying competition. Application for pre-clearance must be made in writing to [email address] as early as possible and in no event not less than 6 weeks prior to the Championship or qualifying competition.

The [specify organising Committee] reserves the right to carry out a confidential case-by-case evaluation of whether any competitor's participation is likely to lead to unfair competition at any time either prior to, during or after the Championship if it determines that such an evaluation is or becomes necessary. The Committee reserves the right to disqualify any competitor who does not meet the requirements for entry to the Championship, who does not comply with the requirements set out in [specify organising Committee] fair competition policy or where it determines that the competitor's participation in the Championship would lead to unfair competition.”

Sample Wording - Men's and Boys' Championships

"The Championship shall be open to male players, non-binary players, transgender women and women with differences in sexual development (46 XY DSD)."

b. Age Limits A competition may be limited to players within a specific age range. If so, it is important to specify the date on which the players must be of age. Some examples are:

- For a junior competition where players must not be older than 18, the Terms of the Competition might state that a player must be 18 or younger on the first day of the year or another date such as the final scheduled day of the competition.

Sample Wording – Junior Competition

"The Championship shall be open to players under the age of [specify age] at [specify date]."

- For a senior competition where players must be 55 or older, the Terms of the Competition might state that a player must have reached his or her 55th birthday on or before the first day of the competition.

Sample Wording – Senior Competition

"The Championship shall be open to players have reached the age of [specify age] before [date of first day of the competition]."

c. Amateur Status A competition may be limited to amateur golfers only, professional golfers only or may allow all players to compete against each other. When a competition is open to all players, the Committee should ask players to identify their status (for example, "amateur") in advance of the competition, such as on an entry form.

Sample Wording – Competition Limited to Amateurs

"The Championship shall be open to players who have Amateur Status in accordance with the current Amateur Status Rules of R&A Rules Limited."

Sample Wording – Competition Limited to Professionals

"The Championship shall be open to the leading 50 players from the 2019 [specify professional tour] money list."

Sample Wording – Prize Money Allocation

"Prize money will be allocated to professional golfers. If an amateur golfer wins the championship, the 1st place prize money will be allocated, proportionately, to the professional golfers who make the cut."

d. Handicap Limits The Committee may set restrictions and/or limits on the handicaps eligible for entry or use in a competition. These may include:

- Setting upper or lower limits on handicaps.

Sample Wording – Limits on Handicaps for Women & Girls

"The Championship shall be open to players who hold a current Handicap Index® based on ratings for women of not more than [insert number] at date of entry, as issued by an Authorised Handicapping Body. In the absence of a Handicap Index®, a current equivalent exact handicap based on ratings for women, as issued by a recognised Handicap Authority, of not more than [insert number] at date of entry will be accepted."

Sample Wording – Limits on Handicap for Men & Boys

"The Championship shall be open to players who hold a current Handicap Index® based on ratings for men of not more than [insert number] at date of entry, as issued by an Authorised Handicapping Body. Entrants that are relying on the handicap criteria set out above but who do not hold a Handicap Index® must hold a current equivalent exact handicap, as issued by a recognised Handicap Authority, that would demonstrate an equivalent playing ability to a Handicap Index® based on ratings for men of not more than [insert number] at date of entry"

- In team formats, such as Foursomes or Four-Ball:
 - Limiting the maximum difference between partners' handicaps. The Committee may also choose to reduce the handicap for the player with the higher handicap to meet the requirement, or
 - Limiting the maximum total handicaps of partners. The Committee may also choose to reduce the handicap for one or both players to meet the requirement.

Sample Wording – Handicap Limits for Team Formats

"The maximum difference between partners' handicaps must not exceed [specify handicap]."

“The handicap of the player with a higher handicap for a team with partners’ handicap difference exceeding [specify handicap] will be reduced so the difference does not to exceed [specify handicap].”

“The maximum total handicaps of partners must not exceed [specify handicap].”

“The handicap for teams exceeding a total handicap of [specify handicap] will be reduced to meet the maximum handicap of [specify handicap] by reducing the handicap of the player with the higher handicap.”

- For a multi-round competition played over one day or consecutive days, specifying whether each player will play the entire competition with the handicap as of the first round, or if the player will use their revised handicap for each round. It is recommended that the player’s handicaps remain unchanged between such rounds.

Sample Wording – Guidance on Handicap Change

“Players whose Handicap Index has been adjusted during the duration of [specify event] will play with the handicap as at the first day of the competition.”

“Players whose Handicap Index has been adjusted during the duration of [specify event] will play with the revised handicap for each round.”

- e. Residence and Membership Status** The Committee may limit entry to players who reside in or were born in a specific county, state, country or other geographic area. It may also require that all players are members of a specific club, organization or golf union.

Sample Wording – Limits on Countries

“The Championship shall be open to nationals of [specify country].”

“The Championship shall be open to nationals of the country of whose national golf authority is affiliated to [specify organisation].”

Sample Wording – Requirements on Members of Club

“The Championship shall be open to members of [specify clubs].”

“The Championship shall be open to members of clubs affiliated to [specify organisation] and each player may only represent one club.”

(2) Entry Requirements and Dates

The way to enter the competition and the starting and ending dates for entry should be specified.

Examples include:

- Method of entry, such as completing an online entry form, returning an entry form by mail or entering names on a sheet any time before the player's start time.

Sample Wording – Method of Entry

“Entries must be submitted [specify method of entry], this must be done at least [specify date] prior to the first day of the competition.”

- How and when any entry fee is to be paid.

Sample Wording – Entry Fee

“Entry fee of [specify amount of entry fee] must be paid, [specify how and when entry fee is to be paid].”

- When entries must be received. The Committee can stop accepting entries on a specific date or allow players to enter up to the day of the competition.

Sample Wording – Entry Closure

“Entries will close at [specify time] on [specify date].”

- The procedure to be used in determining the field when the competition is oversubscribed, such as accepting entries in the order received, through a qualifier or based on lowest handicaps.

Sample Wording – Entry Oversubscribed

“In the event of an entry oversubscription, entries will be accepted [specify procedure to be used in determining the field, for example ‘in the order in which they are received until the limit is reached, at which time a waiting list will be compiled with the same procedure in place’].”

(3) Format, Including Handicap Allowance

The following points in relation to the format of the competition should be specified where required:

- Dates of play or, if it is a match play event over a long period of time, the final date by which each match must be completed.
- Form of play (for example, match play, stroke play or stroke play qualifying for match play).
- Number and order of holes in a round.
- Number of rounds, including whether there will be a cut.
- If there is to be a cut, when it will be made, if ties for the final position will be broken and how many players will continue play in later rounds.

Sample Wording – Match Play Format

“The Championship shall be decided by match play over [specify number (and order) of holes] holes from [specify date] to [specify date].”

Sample Wording – Stroke Play Format

“The championship shall be decided by strokes over [specify number of rounds] rounds of [specify number of holes] holes stroke play from [specify date] to [specify date]. The players returning the [specify number of players] lowest scores, and anyone tying for the place over the first [specify number of holes] holes shall qualify for the final [specify number of holes] holes.”

Sample Wording – Stroke Play going into Match Play Format

“The qualifying rounds of the Championship will be stroke play over [specify number of rounds] rounds of [specify number of holes] holes from [specify date] to [specify date]. The [specify number of players] lowest scores over the [specify number of holes] holes and ties for the place will compete in the match play stage of the Championship.”

- Which teeing areas are to be used. For handicap competitions, the Committee may specify which tees all players must use or that the tees to be used are dependent on the player’s handicap, gender and /or age. Alternatively, the Committee may allow each player to choose which tees they wish to play from.

Sample Wording – Teeing Areas

“The Championship shall be played from the [specify teeing area].”

“Competitors may select whether to play from the [insert tee options available, for example white, green or blue] tees.”

- Stroke index allocation, such as the order of holes at which handicap strokes are to be given or received.

Sample Wording – Stroke Index Allocation

“The stroke index allocation for the championship is as per the [specify index, for example ladies’ index] provided on the Club Scorecard.”

“The stroke index allocation for the championship is as below;”

Example of a 9 Hole Stroke Index Allocation									
Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

Stroke Index	5	3	2	6	4	8	1	9	7
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- If there will be multiple flights or draws and how they will be organized, **see Section 5G(1)**.

Sample Wording – Draws after Cut

“For the final [specify number of holes] holes, the pairings and starting times shall be determined in accordance with the qualifying scores, players with the lowest scores starting last.”

- What prizes will be awarded (including who is eligible to win those prizes). For competitions involving amateur golfers, the Committee should ensure that prizes for amateurs are allowed under the Rules of Amateur Status.

Sample Wording – Prizes

“The Championship Cup will be presented to the winner. The winner will be [specify championship] Champion and will receive [specify prize].”

(4) Terms for Other Forms of Play

a. Alternative Scoring Methods

When the form of play is Stableford, Maximum Score or Par/Bogey, the Terms of the Competition may need to specify certain aspects in relation to how points will be scored, or the maximum number of strokes that a player can score on each hole.

b. Stableford

Stableford is a form of stroke play where points are awarded to a player for each hole by comparing the player's score to the fixed target score for the hole. The fixed target score is par unless the Committee sets a different fixed score (see Rule 21.1b).

If the Committee decides to set a different fixed target score, it may set it in the Terms of the Competition as bogey, birdie, or some other fixed score.

Sample Wording – Different Fixed Target Score for Stableford

“The target score for the Championship is set as [specify target score]”

c. Maximum Score

When the form of play is Maximum Score, the Terms of the Competition should specify the maximum number of strokes a player can score on each hole (see Rule 21.2).

- The maximum may be set in one of the following ways:
- Relative to par, such as two times par,
- A fixed number, such as 8, 9 or 10, or
- With reference to the player's handicap, for example net double bogey.

Sample Wording – Maximum Score

“The maximum score for a player can score on each hole is [specify maximum score].”

“Players should pick up their ball when they reach the maximum score allocated, the maximum score for this Championship is [specify maximum score].”

When considering what maximum to set for a Maximum Score competition, the Committee should consider the following:

- The maximum par for the holes being played. For example, for a par 3 course it may be appropriate to set the maximum score per hole to be a fixed score of 6; however if there are par 5's on a course then it would not be appropriate to have a fixed score as low as 6.

- The standard of the golfers taking part. For example, for a beginners' competition the maximum score should give the players a reasonable opportunity to complete the holes but be at a level to encourage players to pick up when they have had real difficulty on the hole.
- Whether scores are to be submitted for handicap purposes. Where the Committee wants a competition to count for handicap purposes, the maximum hole score should not be set lower than net double bogey.

d. **Par/Bogey**

When the form of play is Par/Bogey, the Terms of the Competition should specify the fixed score against which the player's score on a hole is compared to determine whether the player wins or loses a hole. For a Par competition, the fixed score would normally be par, and for a Bogey competition the fixed score would normally be bogey (one over par).

Sample Wording – Par/Bogey

“The fixed score for the Championship is [specify fixed score].”

e. **Other Forms of Play**

There are many other forms of play such as Scrambles and Greensomes. See [Section 9](#) of the Committee Procedures in the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf and/or RandA.org for more information on these and other forms of play.

f. **Team Competitions**

When the form of play involves a team competition, the Committee should consider if additional Terms of the Competition are required. Examples include:

- Any restrictions on coaches or advice givers (see Model Local Rule [Section 8H](#)).

Sample Wording – Advice Giver

“Each team may appoint one person who may give advice to members of that team. The person must be an amateur golfer in accordance with the Rules of Amateur Status as approved by R&A Rules Limited. If appointed, the person must be identified to the Committee prior to giving advice.”

Model Local Rule H-2

“Each team may name [one/two] advice giver[s] whom players on the team may ask for advice and receive advice from during the round. The team must identify each advice giver to the Committee before any player on the team begins his or her round.

[The team may change its advice giver during the round, but must tell the Committee when it is doing so.]

[The advice giver must not point out a line of play [or walk on the putting green] when the ball of a team player lies on the putting green.]”

Model Local Rule H-4

“The advice giver has the same status as a member of the side in relation to each member of his or her team.”

Model Local Rule H-5

“Rule 10.2 is modified in this way:

Where two players from the same team are playing together in the same group, those players may ask for advice and receive advice from each other during the round.”

- In match play:
 - The order in which the team members will play, for example, if it must be in handicap order, or if it will be decided by the team captain.
 - If tied matches will be acceptable or if they must be played until a winner is determined.
 - The number of points awarded for winning or tying a match.
 - In competitions with multiple teams, how the winner would be determined if two or more teams are tied at the end of the competition.

- If some matches are completed while others cannot be completed on the arranged day due to poor light or weather, the Terms of the Competition should clarify how the completed and incomplete matches will be treated. For example, the Committee could count completed matches to stand as played and incomplete matches to be treated as a tie or replayed on a later date. Or, that all matches are to be replayed, and each team is free to alter its original team.
- If any remaining matches will be played to a conclusion once a team has won the match or competition.
- Specify what the result of an individual match will be if one or more players are unable to start or finish a match for any reason (such as illness). For example, the Committee could state that the result of such a match will be a tied match, or a win for the opponent. If holes up and down are taken into consideration for countback purposes, the Committee may also decide to specify a score for the match, for example 6&5.

Sample Wording – Team Match Play

“The team members will play in the order determined by the captain which must be submitted to the Committee no later than 30 minutes before the team’s first tee time. If the team order is not submitted in time, they will play in alphabetical order.”

“The team will play in handicap order. If two or more players have the same course handicap, the captain must decide on the order for those players. The team captain’s must swap their team order no later than 10 minutes before the start of the match.”

“In the event of a tie for a match, the match will end in a tie.”

“In the event of a tie for a match, the match is extended one hole at a time until a winner is determined.”

“A win shall count one point; a half shall count half a point; a lost match shall count zero.”

“The Committee reserves the right to reduce or cancel any round, suspend or postpone play, cancel the competition or come to an equitable decision to achieve a result.”

“In the event of any cancellations, the result of completed matches will stand as played and incomplete matches will be treated as a tie.”

“In the event of any cancellations, the result of completed matches will stand as played and incomplete matches will be replayed on a later date.”

“In the event of any cancellations, all matches are to be replayed, and each team is free to alter its original team.”

“All matches must be played to a conclusion/result even if the outcome of the Championship is determined.”

“In the event of a team playing without a full team, or in the event of a player conceding their match to their opponent (for example due to illness or injury), the conceded game will be won by 5&4.”

“If a player becomes unwell or has to retire during a game, their opponent is considered to have won any subsequent holes not played, but not by more than 5&4.”

- In stroke play:
 - The number of scores to count in each team's total score.
 - If the scores to be counted will be based on 18 holes or on a hole-by-hole basis.

Sample Wording – Team Stroke Play

“Teams will consist of [specify number of players] players for the Championship. The total of the [specify number of scores counted] lowest scores by players of each team shall constitute the team score for that round. The total of such team scores for the [specify number of rounds] rounds shall be the team’s score for the Championship.”

“Teams will consist of [specify number of players] players for the Championship. The lowest score for hole from each team shall constitute the team score for that round. The total of such team scores for the [specify number of rounds] rounds shall be the team’s score for the Championship.”

- How a tie in the overall competition will be decided, for example by a play-off, a method of matching scores (see Section 5A(6)) or considering discarded scores.

Sample Wording – Deciding Ties in Team Competitions

“In the event of a tie, the players in teams tying shall immediately continue to play off hole-by-hole until the winner is decided; the total of the [specify number of scores] lowest scores being the team’s score for each hole. In the event of there being more than two teams tying for the Championship, the teams first losing the play-off hole-by-hole shall discontinue play.”

“In the event of a tie, the result shall be decided over the team scores for the last 18 holes. If the tie is still unresolved, the result shall be decided over the last nine holes, failing which the last six holes, failing which the last three holes. If the tie’s then still unresolved, the result shall be decided over the last six holes of the first nine holes of the last round, failing which the last three holes of the first nine holes. If the tie then be still unresolved the result shall be decided by counting back hole-by-hole, starting with the last hole of the last 18 holes.”

“In the event of tie, the order of finishing will be decided as follows:

- Firstly, by taking into account the non-counting score for the 4th round
- If still tied, the non-counting score for the 3rd round
- If still tied, the non-counting score for the 2nd round
- If still tied, the non-counting score for the 1st round
- If still tied – joint winners will be declared

If less than 3 rounds are completed, (a) above does not apply. If less than 2 rounds are completed, (a) and (b) above do not apply. In any of the above situations, a team returning a non-counting score will always achieve a better position than a team that does not return a non-counting score (e.g., due to disqualification, withdrawal due to illness or injury, or a team that only has two players).”

(5) When Scorecard Has Been Returned

In stroke play, Rule 3.3b holds players responsible for ensuring the accuracy of their hole scores and promptly returning the scorecard to the Committee at the completion of the round.

The Committee should tell players where the scorecards should be returned, have someone available to resolve any potential issues the players might have with the Rules and validate the scores.

When possible, a quiet, private area should be provided for players to use for checking the scores on their scorecards, speaking with a member of the Committee, if needed, and returning their scorecards.

a. Specify When Scorecard Is Considered Returned

The Committee should specify when the scorecard is considered returned. Options include:

- Defining the scoring area and allowing a player to make alterations on their scorecard up until they have left that scoring area. This would mean that, even if the player has handed the scorecard to a referee or recorder, changes could still be made while the player is in the area.
- Providing a box for the player to deposit the scorecard, in which case it is considered returned as soon as the player places it in the box. This approach might not give a player as much protection from returning an incorrect scorecard, but it may be the best method when limited resources are available or many players are finishing at the same time (for example, when there is a shotgun start).

Sample Wording – When Scorecard Is Considered Returned

“The scorecard is considered returned when the player has exited [specify location] with both feet.”

“The scorecard is considered returned when the player has placed it in [specify box] at [specify location].”

b. Requesting Players to Provide Other Information on Scorecards

The Committee may require players to enter their handicap on the scorecard (Model Local Rule L-2).

The Committee may request that players assist the Committee by completing other scorecard related tasks that are the Committee's responsibility. The Committee must not apply a penalty to a player under the Rules of Golf if they fail to comply with these other requests or makes a mistake in doing so, but the Committee may provide a disciplinary sanction for a player who fails repeatedly to comply with such a request. For example, the Committee may ask players to:

- Total the scores or, in a Four-Ball competition, determine the score that counts for the side.
- Enter the points scored for each hole on the scorecard in Stableford.
- Enter whether the hole was won, lost or tied in Par/Bogey.
- Enter specific details on the scorecard such as name, date and name of the competition.

Similarly, the Committee may request that players assist the Committee by entering their scores into a computer system at the end of the round, but there is no penalty under the Rules of Golf if the player fails to comply with this request or makes a mistake in doing so. But the Committee may provide a disciplinary sanction, for example in a Code of Conduct, for a player who fails repeatedly to comply with such a request.

Sample Wording – Requesting Players to Provide Other Information on Scorecards

“Players are requested to total the scores for the side on the scorecard.”

“Players are requested to record the score that counts for the side on the scorecard.”

“Players are requested to enter the points scored for each hole on the scorecard.”

“Players are requested to enter whether the hole was won, lost or tied for each hole on the scorecard.”

“Players are requested to enter the player’s name and date/name of the Championship on the scorecard.”

“If players fail to comply with the above request(s) the Committee may not permit entry into the next eligible competition for the player/member.”

(6) How Ties Will Be Decided

In match play and stroke play, the Terms of the Competition can be used to alter the way in which ties are decided.

a. Match Play

If a match is tied after the final hole, the match is extended one hole at a time until there is a winner (see Rule 3.2a(4)), unless the Terms of the Competition state otherwise.

The Terms of the Competition should specify if the match may end in a tie or if the play-off method will differ from that specified in Rule 3.2a(4). Options include the following:

- The match ends in a tie,
- The match will be extended starting at a specific hole other than the first hole, or
- There will be a play-off over a fixed number of holes (for example, 9 or 18 holes).

In a handicap match, the stroke index allocation as set by the Committee should be used to determine where handicap strokes should be given or received in extra holes unless the Terms of the Competition state otherwise.

A tie in a match should not be decided by a stroke-play play-off.

Sample Wording – How Ties Will Be Decided in Match Play

“In the event of a tie, the match will end in a tie.”

“In the event of a tie, the match is extended one hole at a time until a winner is determined.”

“In the event of a tie, there will be a play-off over holes [specify holes].”

Stroke Play

The Terms of the Competition should specify whether a competition may end in a tie, or if there will be a play-off or matching of scorecards to determine the winner and other finishing positions.

A tie in stroke play should not be decided by a match.

b. Play-Off in Stroke Play

If there is to be a play-off in stroke play, the Terms of the Competition should set the following:

- When the play-off will be held, for example if it will start at a specific time, as soon as possible after the last group finishes or on a later date.
- Which holes will be used for the play-off and the order in which they will be played.
- The number of holes over which the play-off will be played, for example, if it will be a hole-by-hole play-off or over a longer period such as 2, 4 or 18 holes, and what to do if there is still a tie.
- In the regular form of stroke play, if a play-off for a handicap competition is over fewer than 18 holes, the number of holes played should be used to determine the number of strokes to be deducted. For example, if a play-off is over one hole, one-eighteenth of the handicaps should be deducted from the scores for the play-off hole. Handicap stroke fractions should be applied in accordance with the rules or recommendations contained within the World Handicap System™ publications or other guidance as provided by the handicapping body in the local jurisdiction.
- For play-offs for net competitions where the stroke index allocation is used, such as Four-Ball, Par/Bogey or Stableford competitions, handicap strokes should be applied during the play-off holes as they were assigned for the competition, using the stroke index allocation.
- Players are only required to return a scorecard for the play-off if the Committee issues them to the players.

Sample Wording – Play-off in Stroke Play

“In the event of tie, a hole by hole play-off will be held on holes [specify holes] [specify when the play-off will be held].”

“In the event of tie, a stroke play play-off will be held over [insert number of holes, for example ‘4 holes’], [insert holes to be played, for example ‘the 1st, 2nd, 17th and 18th’]. If still tied, a hole-by-hole play-off will be played over the [insert hole number, for example ‘18th hole’] only until a winner emerges.”

c. Matching Scorecards (Also Known as a Scorecard Count-Back)

If a play-off is not feasible or desired, the Terms of the Competition may specify that any ties will be decided by matching scorecards. Even when the winner of a competition is to be decided by a play-off, other positions in the competition may be decided by matching scorecards. The method of matching scorecards should also provide for what will happen if this procedure does not produce a winner.

One method of matching scorecards is to determine the winner based on the best score for the last round. If the tying players have the same score for the last round or if the competition consisted of a single round, determine the winner based on the score for the last nine holes, last six holes, last three holes and finally the 18th hole. If there is still a tie, then the last six holes, three holes and final hole of the first nine holes will be considered in turn. If the round is less than 18 holes, the number of holes used in matching scores may be adjusted.

If this process does not result in a winner, the Committee could consider the competition a tie, or alternatively could decide the winner by chance (such as tossing a coin).

Matching scorecards is also known as a card count-back or a scorecard play-off.

Additional Considerations:

- If this method is used in a competition with a multiple tee start, it is recommended that the "last nine holes, last six holes, etc." are holes 10-18, 13-18, etc.
- For net competitions where the stroke index allocation as set by the Committee is not used, such as individual stroke play, if the last nine, last six, last three holes scenario is used, one-half, one-third, one-sixth,

etc. of the handicaps should be deducted from the score for those holes. Handicap stroke fractions should be applied in accordance with the rules or recommendations contained within the World Handicap System™ publications or other guidance as provided by the handicapping body in the local jurisdiction.

- In net competitions where the stroke index allocation as set by the Committee is used, such as Four-Ball stroke play, Par/Bogey or Stableford competitions, handicap strokes should be applied consistently with how they were applied for the competition.

Sample Wording – Matching Scorecards in Stroke Play

“In the event of a tie, the result shall be decided over the scores for the last 18 holes. If the tie is still unresolved, the result shall be decided over the last nine holes, failing which the last six holes, failing which the last three holes. If the tie’s then still unresolved, the result shall be decided over the last six holes of the first nine holes of the last round, failing which the last three holes of the first nine holes. If the tie then be still unresolved the result shall be decided by counting back hole-by-hole, starting with the last hole of the last 18 holes. For matching scorecards, the ‘last nine holes, last six holes, etc.’ are holes 10-18, 13-18, etc.”

(7) When the Result of the Competition Is Final

It is important for the Committee to clarify in the Terms of the Competition when and how the result of the competition is final as this will affect how the Committee will resolve any Rules issues that occur after play is complete in both match play and stroke play (see Rule 20).

a. Match Play

Examples of when the Terms of the Competition may state that the result of a match is final include:

- When the result is recorded on an official scoreboard or other identified place, or
- When the result is reported to a person identified by the Committee.

When a match is determined to be final once the result is recorded on an official scoreboard, the Committee may take responsibility for recording the winner's name on the scoreboard or it may pass that responsibility to the players. In some cases the official scoreboard will be a prominent structure and in other cases it might be a sheet of paper in the golf shop or locker room.

In cases where a referee has been assigned by the Committee to accompany a match, any announcement of the result of the match by the referee on the final putting green is not the official announcement unless it was stated as such in the Terms of the Competition.

Sample Wording – When the Result of the Competition Is Final in Match Play

“The result of the match is considered final once the result has been recorded on [specify location].”

“The result of the match is considered final once the result of the match has been reported to [specify Committee member].”

“The result of the match is considered final once reported by [specify Committee member] to the Championship office.”

b. Stroke Play

Examples of when the Terms of the Competition may state the competition to be closed in stroke play include:

- All results have been posted on the scoreboard or noticeboard,
- The winners have been announced at a prize giving, or
- The trophy has been awarded.

In stroke-play qualifying followed by match play, Rule 20.2e(2) stipulates that the stroke-play portion of the competition is closed when the player has teed off to start their first match.

Sample Wording – When the Result of the Competition Is Final in Stroke Play

“The competition is closed when the results have been posted on [specify location].”

“The competition is closed when the winners have been announced at the prize presentation.”

(8) Changing Terms of the Competition After Competition Has Started

The Terms of the Competition set out the structure of the competition and once a competition has started, the terms may be altered only in very exceptional circumstances.

An example of a situation where the Terms of the Competition should not be altered:

- Since players begin a round with the expectation that a certain number of holes will be played and may base their play on that, the number of holes to be played in a round should not be changed once that round has started. For example, if bad weather results in play being suspended after all the players have completed 9 holes of an 18-hole round, the Committee should not announce the results based on only 9 holes.

Examples of situations where there are exceptional circumstances and the Terms of the Competition may be altered:

- If circumstances such as bad weather affect the number of rounds that can be played in the time available, the number of rounds to be played, or number of holes in any rounds not yet started, may be altered to accommodate the circumstances. Similarly, if those circumstances mean the planned format cannot be accommodated in the time available, the format of the competition may be changed.
- The method for deciding ties should not be altered unless there are exceptional circumstances. For example, if the method of deciding a tie for a stroke-play competition was stated to be a hole-by-hole play-off, but bad weather meant such a play-off was not possible, the Committee can change the method of deciding the tie to a scorecard count-back.

Sample Wording – Changing Terms of the Competition After Competition Has Started

“The Championship Committee reserves the right to amend the terms at any time including the right to arrange and/or alter starting times. The decision of the Committee is final in all matters.”

(9) Anti-Doping

The Terms of the Competition may require players to comply with an anti-doping policy. It is a matter for the Committee to write and interpret its own anti-doping policy, although guidance in developing such a policy can usually be provided by the national governing body.

Sample Wording – Anti-Doping

“All players are subject to the provisions of the International Golf Federation's Anti-Doping Policy. Details of the Policy, and the current List of Prohibited Substances and Methods, are available from the International Golf Federation's website (www.igf.com). Players who are taking medication and in doubt as to their clinical status should seek advice from The R&A or the IGF knowing that, should a Therapeutic Use Exemption (TUE) be required this must be submitted to the IGF not later than 30 days before the start of the Championship.