Guidance for Players and Officials on Proposed Rule 14-1b

Draft Rule:

14-1b Anchoring the Club

In making a stroke, the player must not anchor the club, either "directly" or by use of an "anchor point."

Note 1: The club is anchored "directly" when the player intentionally holds the club or a gripping hand in contact with any part of his body, except that the player may hold the club or a gripping hand against a hand or forearm.

Note 2: An "anchor point" exists when the player intentionally holds a forearm in contact with any part of his body to establish a gripping hand as a stable point around which the other hand may swing the club.

Explanation #1 – Basis for Prohibition on Direct Anchoring of Club

Q. Rule 14-1b provides that, in making a stroke, the player must not directly anchor the club. What is the basis for this prohibition?

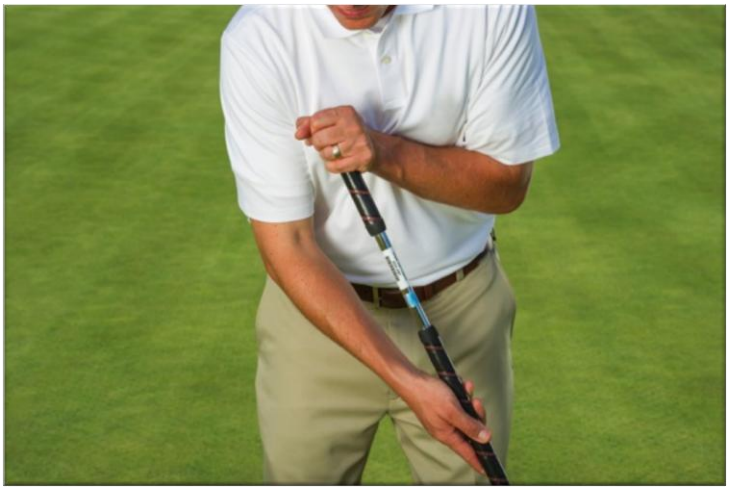
A. A stroke is a fundamental element that defines the game of golf and is meant to involve the player freely swinging the entire club at the ball. Anchoring the club relieves the player from making a free swing by restricting the movement of the club as if it were physically attached to the player's body and thereby providing extra support and stability for the stroke.

Explanation #2 – Meaning of Anchor Point

Q. Rule 14-1b provides that a player must not anchor the club during a stroke by using an "anchor point." In Note 2, which defines "anchor point," what does it mean "to hold a forearm in contact with any part of the body to establish a gripping hand as a stable point around which the other hand may swing the club?"

A. The narrow purpose of the anchor point restriction is to prevent the player from using a forearm as an indirect means of creating the same effect as the club or a gripping hand being held against his body. Using a forearm to "establish a gripping hand as a stable point around which the other hand may swing the club" means that each gripping hand is able to work independently of the other and for a different purpose. The top gripping hand is removed from the swing and is stabilized by its forearm being held against the body, effectively anchoring the club as if attached to the body and creating a stable point. Using only his other hand, the player is able to make a stroke by moving the lower portion of the club around this stable point. The practical effect of such a stroke using an anchor point is the same as a stroke with the club or a gripping hand directly anchored.

To illustrate, the following styles of grip involve the use of an “anchor point” and therefore strokes made with such styles of grip are in breach of Rule 14-1b:



A player using a chest-length putter intentionally holds a forearm against his side or chest such that the gripping hand attached to that forearm is held in a stable position in front of his chest. His other hand grips down the shaft, enabling that lower hand to swing the club around the stable point established by the upper gripping hand.

A player using a shorter putter intentionally holds a forearm against his thigh such that the gripping hand attached to that forearm is held in a stable position in front of his waist. His other hand grips down the shaft, enabling that lower hand to swing the club around the stable point established by the upper gripping hand.

<u>Explanation #3 – Interpretive Guidelines for Identifying an Anchor Point</u>

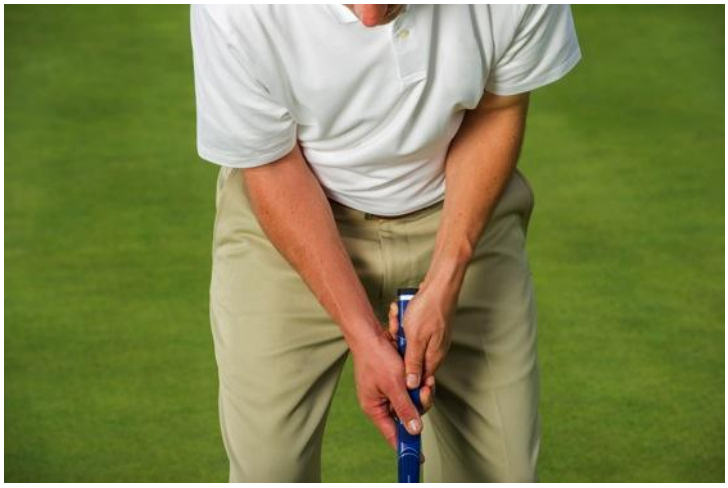
Q. Rule 14-1b does not prohibit all strokes made with a forearm intentionally held against the body, but only those in which an anchor point is established. When a player intentionally holds a forearm against his body during a stroke, how should it be determined whether an anchor point has or has not been established?

A. An anchor point exists when (i) the top gripping hand serves as a stable point for securing the club in place rather than swinging it and (ii) the bottom gripping hand is held down the shaft and used to swing the club around that stable point. The following two guidelines will assist in making this determination.

1. If the hand attached to the player's forearm holds the club with an inverted grip, an anchor point is deemed to exist. An inverted grip means any grip other than the traditional style in which the gripping hand hangs below the player's wrist. A style of inverted grip commonly used with longer putters is where the thumb side of the hand is on the top and the little finger side of the hand is on the bottom, as shown in both photographs in Explanation #2. When a player's top hand grips the club in any such inverted fashion, it is clear that the hand is being used as an anchor point rather than for swinging the club.

2. If the player does not use an inverted top gripping hand and his gripping hands are touching one another, it is deemed that an anchor point does not exist. Where the hands are in contact with one another, they can work together in unison in swinging the club. There is no anchor point as defined in Note 2 of Rule 14-1b, because a hand is not intentionally converted into a separate stable point that is effectively attached to the body while the other hand is used independently to swing the club.

   To illustrate, the following style of grip does not involve an anchor point and, therefore, a stroke made with that style of grip is not in breach of Rule 14-1b:



   The player grips the club with hands touching one another, while intentionally resting one or both forearms against his sides.

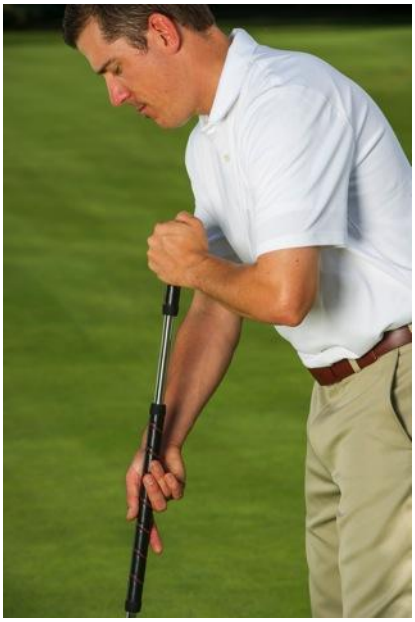
   If a player who intentionally holds his forearm against his body and stabilizes the top gripping hand does not use an inverted top gripping hand and grips the club with his hands separated rather than touching one another, a determination will be required whether he has established that top hand as a stable point around which the other hand may swing the club. If the player's gripping hands are very close to one another although not touching, it may be possible to conclude that an anchor point does not exist. If his gripping hands are substantially far apart, it is almost certain that an anchor point exists.

   To avoid all doubt and potential penalty, the player who chooses to hold a forearm against his body and stabilizes the top gripping hand should maintain contact between his gripping hands, and the

player who chooses to hold the club with his hands separated should avoid holding a forearm against his body and stabilizing the top gripping hand.

Explanation #4 – No Effect on Strokes Made Without Anchoring

Q. If none of the club, gripping hand or forearm is intentionally held against the player's body, is he permitted to make a stroke while holding the club with an inverted top gripping hand and/or gripping the club with his hands separated and with the intent of maintaining his top hand as a stable point around which the other hand may swing the club?



A. Yes. Rule 14-1b only applies to strokes made with the club anchored, either directly or through the use of a forearm to establish an anchor point. When there is no such anchoring, the body is not used to provide extra support for the stroke and the player is able to freely swing and has to control the entire club. Rule 14-1b does not affect any strokes in which anchoring is not present.

To illustrate, the following style of grip does not directly or indirectly anchor the club and therefore a stroke made with that style of grip is not in breach of Rule 14-1b:

The player holds a chest-length putter without club, gripping hand or forearm held against his body (right).

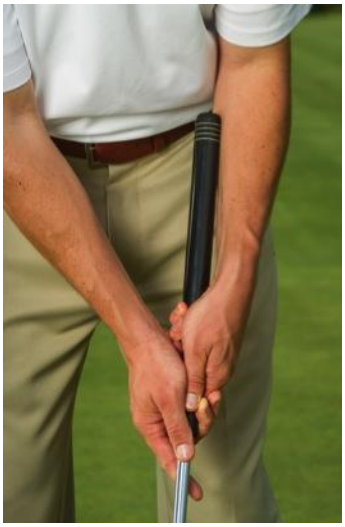
Explanation #5 – Basis for Permitting Contact Between Club, Hand and Forearm

Q. Why does Rule 14-1b permit the player to "hold the club or a gripping hand against a hand or forearm?"

A. The club necessarily touches the player's hands when it is gripped. In various gripping styles, the club also may come in contact with the player's wrist or other part of his forearm during the stroke, such as when the player grips the club below the top of the shaft. Also, it is quite common for a gripping hand to come in contact with the player's wrist or other part of his forearm during the stroke, such as when the hands are reversed (e.g. left hand below right for a right-handed player) and separated. Such contact is merely a consequence of the method of gripping and it does not prevent the player from freely swinging the entire club. Therefore, Note 1 in proposed Rule 14-1b specifies that the player may intentionally hold the club in contact with hands and/or forearms, regardless of the manner of doing so.

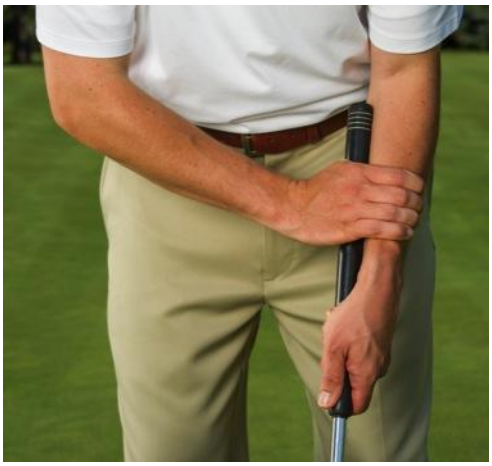
To illustrate, the following styles of grip are permitted under Note 1 and therefore strokes made with such styles are not in breach of Rule 14-1b:

The right-handed player grips the club in a "left hand below right" manner and with the top gripping hand touching the wrist or forearm attached to his lower gripping hand (right).



The player holds a longer putter with his hands down the club and with part of the club against his forearm (left).

The player holds a longer putter with one hand while using the other hand to hold the club against a forearm by gripping that forearm (right).



However, if the club or a gripping hand is intentionally held against the player's upper arm (above the elbow) or any other part of his body, the club is deemed to be anchored and a stroke made in that fashion would be in breach of the Rule.

Note: For all purposes in Rule 14-1b, "forearm" is deemed to be below the elbow and include the wrist.

<u>Explanation #6: Portion of Stroke Anchored</u>

Q. A player directly anchors the club or a gripping hand, or anchors a forearm to establish an anchor point, during some portion of the stroke but not all of it. Is the player in breach of Rule 14-1b?

A. Yes. The Rule does not require the club, hand or anchor point to remain entirely immobile or fixed in one place during the stroke. If the player intentionally holds the club or a gripping hand against his body during any portion of the stroke, or establishes an anchor point during any part of the stroke, he is in breach of the Rule.