

USGA Senior Amateur Championships 2018 Golf Cart Policy Situational Frequently Asked Questions

Question: How is the USGA's 2018 policy different from the Condition of Competition used in previous years?

Answer: In previous years, the player's caddie has not been able to ride in a player's cart during the stipulated round. Under the Automotive Transportation Condition as outlined in Appendix 1-B-8, the player would have been penalized for any infraction by the player's caddie. In 2018, a new golf cart policy will be introduced, and the USGA will now operate with a "one-seat" policy for the Senior Amateur Championships. The player or the player's caddie may ride, but both may not ride at the same time.

Because this is a policy and not a Condition of Competition, it is very unlikely a player or the player's caddie could be in breach of this policy such that there will be a penalty under the Rules of Golf. As a policy, the only tie to the Rules of Golf would be through a disqualification penalty in line with guidance provided in Rule 33-7 and Decision 33-7/8 for serious a serious breach of etiquette. It is recommended that all officials at qualifying sites be well-versed on the new cart policy, Rule 33-7 and Decision 33-7/8 given the significant impact that they could have on a player advancing to compete in the U.S. Senior Amateur and U.S. Senior Women's Amateur Championships.

Question: How should cart policy issues be handled at the qualifier? How does the USGA intend to handle cart policy issues at the championship proper?

Answer: If the player or the player's caddie do not abide by the "one-seat" policy (e.g., they ride in the cart at the same time for an extensive length of time), a member of the committee should remind the player of the policy and politely ask the player and the player's caddie to be respectful of the policy. The committee member should notify the OIC of the warning issued.

If the player and the player's caddie breach the policy again, a member of the committee should thoroughly review the policy with both the player and the player's caddie stressing that a potential disqualification penalty could be imposed if the player and the player's caddie continue to disregard the policy. The committee member should notify the OIC of the warning issued.

If the player and the player's caddie continue to show significant disregard for the policy, it will be up to the discretion of the OIC to disqualify the player for a serious breach of etiquette (under Rule 33-7). Before getting to a point of disqualification, the USGA requests that the player and the player's caddie are spoken to multiple times.

This will be how the USGA will handle cart policy issues at the championship proper.

Question: The policy states that if a player or the player's caddie shows "significant disregard" for the policy that the player will be disqualified under Rule 33-7. What does "significant disregard" mean?

Answer: Please refer to Decision 33-7/8, which outlines the meaning of "serious breach of etiquette." Although disqualification may be imposed for a single act, it is recommended that such a penalty should be imposed only in the event of a further serious breach.

The USGA does not consider a player or a player's caddie inadvertently riding in a cart at the same time as a serious breach, especially for a short distance. "Significant disregard" implies that the player or the player's caddie ride at the same time or together in the same cart multiple times or for extensive distances and, after being reminded that a disqualification penalty could be issued, the player or the player's caddie continue to break the policy by showing disregard to the OIC for his/her request to the player and the player's caddie to follow the policy.

Question: When should an OIC disqualify a player?

Answer: The guidance in Decision 33-7/8 recommends that the OIC and/or a member of the committee discuss the policy with the player and the player's caddie after a breach, and if the player or the player's caddie continue to breach the policy, only then should the penalty of disqualification be considered.

Question: Do OIC's at qualifying sites need to call the USGA prior to disqualifying a player who shows a significant disregard for the cart policy?

Answer: No, the USGA does not need to be contacted prior to the committee imposing a penalty of disqualification; however, the OIC should be fully comfortable with Rule 33-7 and Decision 33-7/8 before disqualifying a player. It is recommended that the disqualification penalty be discussed among the Rules Committee or lead officials onsite prior to issuing the disqualification to ensure that everyone agrees that the player and the player's caddie showed significant disregard for the policy.

After disqualifying a player for this reason, the OIC must email the Championship Directors with the facts of the disqualification. Please contact Tracy Parsons (tparsons@usga.org) for the U.S. Senior Women's Amateur and Greg Sanfilippo (gsanfilippo@usga.org) for the U.S. Senior Amateur.

Question: Will the player receive a one or two-stroke penalty for breaching this policy?

Answer: No, the player will never receive a one or two-stroke penalty under this policy. Because the policy is not tied to the Automotive Transportation Condition outlined in Appendix I-B-8, those penalties do not apply. A player can only be disqualified under Rule 33-7 for a serious breach of etiquette pertaining to this policy.

Question: What happens if another player in the group complains about the player and the player's caddie not following the golf cart policy?

Answer: A member of the committee or the OIC should discuss the issue with the players in the group to determine how the policy is being broken and review the policy with the entire group.

Question: What happens if a player and the player's caddie use the golf cart at the same time throughout the stipulated round and it is not addressed with the player because the committee did not find out the policy was being broken until the player reached the scoring area?

Answer: The USGA recommends that the committee member in the scoring area review the cart policy with the player and the player's caddie. Although unfortunate, it should be handled the same way if the player broke another policy, like the dress code policy. If a player wore jeans at a facility with a strict dress code policy and it was not discovered until the end of the player's stipulated round, it would be addressed with the player, but the player would not be penalized or disqualified.

Question: What happens if a volunteer gives a player or the player's caddie a ride during the stipulated round?

Answer: There is no penalty, although it should be discouraged.

Question: Do the OIC's at qualifying need to follow the two-cart maximum policy that is in effect at the championship proper?

Answer: No, sectional qualifying sites may adjust how many carts are distributed per group. However, it is highly recommended that sites utilize the policy as it will be implemented at the championship so that those players advancing will be prepared and know what to expect when they arrive onsite for the championship. Regardless of how many carts are distributed per group, the player and the player's caddie should not ride at the same time.

Question: Can a caddie request a golf cart?

Answer: No, only a player can request a golf cart. If the player wishes for his or her caddie to ride for the entire stipulated round, it is acceptable provided the player walks during the entire stipulated round since both the player and the player's caddie cannot ride at the same time.

For information on a caddie requesting a cart for an ADA stipulation, please see: <http://www.usga.org/championships-hub/additional-entry-resources/requesting-a-golf-cart.html>.

For further questions regarding the 2018 Golf Cart Policy for the Senior Amateur Championships, please reach out directly to the Championship Directors of the Senior Amateur Championships.

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