

PROTECTING THE FIELD - Occasionally, members will ask how best to handle a rules situation with another member of a group who may not be following a respective rule and/or procedure - especially when they do not know the other member.

As most know, it is up to each player to protect the field from a rules standpoint.

Our events often come down to only one stroke separating players from those who win prize money and those who do not.

Most of the time, a player's actions not consistent with the rules is because they do not fully know the actual rule and are proceeding based on their level of understanding - which is very common in the game of golf where most players have never opened a rules book. Therefore, in competitions such as club events, we depend on each player to provide rules guidance as they see needed - especially if it is clear the other player is not following the correct procedure.

"I don't know the other player and I don't want to cause a problem" is a common statement. Well, it's part of the game. How you broach the subject is just as important as the subject itself.

Here are simple tips:

- Before the round starts, the players in your group should agree ahead of time to address any rules issue that arises - this way, nobody feels like "the bad guy."
- Bring up your concern as a question as opposed to a hard accusation. For example, "Are you 100% positive you are following the correct procedure? I'm not sure you are."
- If nobody is 100% certain of the correct procedure, the player should play two balls and let the Committee decide the issue. When playing two balls, the player must - before making a stroke at either ball - 1) announce which

ball he wants to count if the rules allow and 2) inform the Committee when turning in the scorecard.

- If a player chooses not to play two balls and you feel they are wrong, it is your responsibility to everyone playing in the event to bring this to the Committee's attention so they can decide the matter.

Hopefully, these tips will help. "It takes a village" to play this game - let's help and respect each other.