

## Hang in there!

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For reasons that no one can adequately explain, we've seen several occurrences this year when a playoff has been required for the final spot or spots in a tournament only to have one or more of the potential contestants on the road home. Perhaps the most noteworthy of these lapses came in U.S. Open sectional qualifying at Columbus, OH, when Kirk Triplett and Justin Rose failed to wait around until the tournament had concluded and, as a result, missed a chance to play in the Open at Winged Foot. Both thought their scores were too high to make a playoff but learned to their regret that failure to follow the dictum of that famous philosopher, Yogi Berra — "It ain't over until it's over" — can be costly.

Indeed, the whole routine of closing out a tournament round and the tournament itself should be of supreme importance to every contestant. For the purpose of this article, let's focus on stroke play events. Rule 6-6a begins, "After each hole the marker should check the score with the competitor and record it." Many troubles begin here. Although *The Rules of Golf* do not mandate this procedure (the operative word is *should*), it's a good one to follow because mistakes are less likely to occur if you're keeping score hole by hole. Moreover, at SCGA championships where live scoring is in place, contestants are asked for their scores at various spots on the course and this procedure is greatly simplified if the scores have already been registered on the card.

### You don't play from a "tee box"

Modern golfers commonly think of a "tee box" as the area where you tee up the ball at the start of a hole. WRONG! On page 15 of *The Rules of Golf*, this area is defined as the "teeing ground," and is defined as "a rectangular area two club-lengths in depth, the front and sides of which are defined by the outer limits of two tee-markers."

*The Rules of Golf* also define a "tee" as "a device designed to raise the ball off of the ground." Modern-day tees are made from wood, plastic, corn, brush, whatever. When I started caddying back in the 1930s, sand was used to build a mound for raising the ball off the ground. Wood tees were an expensive luxury in the Depression days. Surprisingly, plastic tees were available even back then.

Adjacent to the teeing grounds, boxes containing sand and a pail of water were placed for the players' convenience. These were called "Tee Boxes." Private clubs usually featured "white sand" in the *Tee Boxes*.

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Once a player's round is complete, Rule 6-6a continues, "the marker must sign the score card and hand it to the competitor. If more than one marker records the scores, each player must sign for the part for which he is responsible." If for some reason (e.g., injury, illness, running out of golf balls), you're forced to withdraw from a tournament prior to completing a round, you must initial the scores of the competitor for whom you've been a marker. Whoever marks the rest of the way initials the remainder of the scores.

Rule 6-6b says "After completion of the round, the competitor should check his score for each hole and settle any doubtful points with the Committee." What's a doubtful point? Usually it relates to a ruling or a situation where a competitor played a second ball under Rule 3-3 (remember that when you use 3-3, you must report the facts to the Committee even if you score the same on both balls).

Note, also, that the competitor is only responsible that the score for each hole is correct; the Committee is responsible for the addition (Rule 6-6d). However, the SCGA recommends that you total your scores so that if there's a discrepancy, you can correct the error (see below).

Rule 6-6b continues, "[The competitor] must ensure that the marker or markers have signed the score card himself and return it to the Committee as soon as possible." The concept of "returning the score card to the Committee" varies from tournament to tournament. At the SCGA, many competitors hand their cards to the officials at the scoring table and ask them to verify the totals to make sure they agree with the player. If there's a discrepancy, the competitor still has a chance to correct a problem, even on an individual hole score. However, once the competitor has left the scoring table, the score card is deemed to have been turned in; any discrepancies discovered after the player has left the table cannot be corrected. Other tournaments may have different rules on what constitutes "turning in the score card" and it's the competitor's responsibility to understand and follow that tournament's procedure.

It's very important to understand all of Rule 6-6 since the penalty for violating most sections of this rule is disqualification.

Finally, don't "pull a Triplett." Wait until the tournament is completed or until your score is mathematically out of contention for a playoff. You may think you have no chance to get in a playoff, only to discover on the way home that everyone in the last four or five groups shot a jillion and suddenly the score you thought was hopeless became a contender.

Moreover, remember that scorers — as is the case with competitors — are human, and occasionally a score card gets changed after it's posted on the board. The official in charge of the event should declare at the end of the tournament, "The tournament is complete and the board is official" (or similar language). Only at that point should you pack up and head for home.