

Understanding the Rules of DMDs

Beginning on January 1, 2019, distance-measuring devices (DMDs) are allowed under the Rules of Golf. Take a look below to see what types of functions on your DMD are allowed under the Rules.

WHAT'S THE RULE?

Rule 4.3a allows the use of distance-measuring devices so long as the player does not access any information that is prohibited under this Rule (details below). The first breach of this Rule means the player gets a loss of hole penalty in match play or two penalty strokes in stroke play. A second breach of Rule 4.3 during the same round results in disqualification. NOTE: A golf course or the Committee in charge of a competition does have the option to prohibit the use of distance-measuring devices by Local Rule.

TYPES OF DEVICES

STAND-ALONE DEVICES

Common stand-alone devices include laser rangefinders, handhelds and watch-style GPS units.



Laser rangefinder



GPS watch



Handheld GPS unit

MULTI-FUNCTIONAL DEVICES

Common multi-functional devices include mobile phones and tablets.



Mobile phone



Tablet



PLAYER ACTIONS

A player may use a device that is capable of operating a prohibited function, provided these specific functions are not accessed by the player during the round. "Access" is interpreted to mean that the player has viewed or otherwise used the information generated by a prohibited function, or the player uses a device where such output is displayed.

WHAT CAN I ACCESS?



Distance between two points (actual)



Pre-published information (e.g., swing tips or advice on playing the hole)



Scorecard



Local weather information or alert for nearby lightning



Chart showing average club distances, obtained from prior rounds, for a wide range of clubs

WHAT CAN'T I ACCESS?



Displays of effective playing distances (e.g., slope-based and other plays-like distance information)



Club recommendation



Processed or analyzed club distances from current round



Gauged or measured variable environmental conditions, such as wind speed or altitude



Analysis or display of swing, set-up or other swing mechanics



USE ADDITIONAL CARE

If a device is readily viewable by the player (e.g., the player is wearing a multi-functional watch) and information is being displayed that, if accessed, would result in a breach of the Rules, the player is considered to have "used" the information generated by a prohibited function, even if the player has not actually viewed it.

