

Helping Junior Golfers With Expenses Information from USGA

The good news for junior golfers today is that there are many opportunities for them to hone their games by competing against other junior golfers on tours devoted to junior golfers or in local, state and national competitions limited to junior golfers. The bad news is that it can be very expensive to travel around the country to participate in several competitions. Fortunately, the USGA Rules of Amateur Status allow junior golfers to receive help with these costs.

Under the Rules, a junior golfer is defined as an amateur golfer who has not reached (i) the September 1 following graduation from secondary school or (ii) his 19th birthday, whichever comes first. So unless a golfer is 19 and in high school or 18 and in college, he should become familiar with the Rules that apply to junior golfers receiving expenses. It should be noted that while these age limits are used when applying the Rules of Amateur Status, Committees which conduct junior competitions may use different age limits for determining who is eligible to participate in their competitions.

The Rules allow a junior golfer to receive any amount of financial support directly from a family member or legal guardian. If a junior golfer is asked by his grandparents what he would like for his birthday, he may suggest help with expenses to compete in golf tournaments.

A junior golfer may also receive funds directly from sources other than family members when the funds will be used to cover expenses in competitions limited to junior golfers (e.g., the U.S. Junior Amateur Championship).

If a junior golfer wishes to receive funds to participate in a competition that is not limited to junior golfers (e.g., the U.S. Amateur Championship), he may still receive financial support from sources other than family members, but the funds must be approved by and paid through the golfer's state or local golf association. The forms to be completed by the sponsor and junior golfer when the expenses are to be paid through the state or local golf association can be found on the USGA's website at: <http://www.usga.org/Rule-Books/Rules-of-Amateur-Status/Amateur-Status/> under Individual Tournament Expenses.

A player's expenses associated with a competition normally include transportation, lodging, meals, entry fees and caddie/cart and practice fees. He should ensure that any expenses he wishes to have funded are reasonable. He may not receive funds for general living costs that are not associated with a competition.

Although a junior golfer may receive financial support from sources other than family members, he must not promote or advertise the source of any expenses received. Therefore, a junior golfer may not publically recognize the donor of the expenses or wear or carry anything that has the donor's logo. The junior golfer could issue a generic statement thanking his supporters such as "Tom Smith thanks those who have supported him in golf competitions." Also, a junior golfer must not accept expenses, directly or indirectly, from a professional agent or any similar source under any circumstances.

As it is recognized that some parents may be concerned about their son or daughter traveling to a competition, the Rules allow one parent or legal guardian to accept expenses from an outside source to accompany the junior golfer to the competition.

While the USGA Rules of Amateur Status allow junior golfers to receive and use funds from sources other than family members as described above, in some cases state high school athletic associations and the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) may prohibit or limit the receipt and use of such funds. Therefore, before accepting or using funds from a source other than a family member, the junior golfer should check with his high school athletic association and the NCAA to determine if receipt and use of such funds could affect his high school or collegiate eligibility. He may contact the NCAA at:

National Collegiate Athletic Association
700 W. Washington Street
P.O. Box 6222
Indianapolis, IN 46206-6222
Phone: 317-917-6222
Website: www.ncaa.org

A junior golfer should also maintain detailed records of any funds received from sources other than family members and how those funds were used in case the USGA, NCAA or local high school athletic association wishes to review the sources and uses of the funds.

If you have additional questions concerning junior golfers receiving expenses, contact Bernie Loehr, Director, Amateur Status and Rules of Golf at the USGA at: 908-234-2300 (x1238).