



## Guidance on the Use of Video Review at Televised Championships (October 2023 Update)

In 2017, The R&A and the USGA issued a joint statement titled, “Video Review Rules for Televised Competitions” (see Appendix). It is recommended that any committees conducting televised competitions revisit this statement and also consider the following guidance.

### Purpose of Video Review

Video review is intended to be used as follows:

1. To ensure that the Committee does not need to act on any outside intervention from viewers. This is achieved by having a Video Referee (VR) actively monitoring all public video feeds (whether shared on a traditional broadcast or on modern digital forms) in an effort to:
  - Identify and act on any breach of the rules that is observed,
  - Confirm that a player’s action is not a breach, and
  - Assist players where possible, such as to help locate the player’s ball during a search or assist in identifying the point where a ball last crossed the edge of a penalty area.
2. To assist the Committee in reaching correct decisions, either when a ruling is requested on a specific hole or area of the course or an on-course referee requests assistance.

### Use of Video Footage

Committees who have access to video evidence to assist in making a ruling are reminded that the use of video evidence can be limited by various standards in the Rules, particularly the “reasonable judgment” standard in Rule 1.3b(2) and the “naked eye” standard in Rule 20.2c.

The VR should be a member of the committee and it is recommended that they actively monitor only the video footage that is publicly available, even though they may have access to additional video footage that is not available to the public.

The VR should use video not available to the public only when:

1. The VR has been advised of a potential breach of the rules,
2. There is an opportunity to assist a player, such as with a search or identifying a point, or
3. Another member of the Committee has specifically requested assistance.

As with the on-course referees, the VR should not be trying to watch every player play every shot or be actively looking for situations to become involved in. Players are responsible for applying the rules to themselves, and a referee in stroke play (as well as a referee assigned to a match in match play) is responsible for acting on any breach they see or are told about. The presence of a VR does not alter these fundamental principles.

In light of this, it is recommended that the VR show restraint and judgment in terms of inserting themselves into the competition in the same manner that an on-course referee does.

For example, there may be times when an on-course referee will observe part of a rules situation (for example, a player placing a ball next to a penalty area) and will make the assumption that the player has proceeded correctly under the Rules without questioning the player. The VR may encounter similar situations on the broadcast footage and, like the on-course referee, the VR can, and often should, decide not to seek additional information on whether the action observed was a breach of the Rules, despite the fact that it may be easy to do so by reviewing the prior footage that was not available to the public.

However, if a VR observes an action that is likely to be a breach of the Rules, even if this is inadvertently observed on video that was not available to the public, the VR should act in the same way they would if they observed that action on the course by using any available information to determine whether the player has breached the Rules.

It is a matter for each Committee to decide whether this guidance should be used in match play or whether Rules matters should be left to the referee assigned to the match given the unique nature of match play.

# Appendix - 2017 R&A and USGA Joint Statement

## Video Review Rules for Televised Competitions

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In April 2017, the USGA and The R&A established a video review working group that included representatives from the PGA TOUR, LPGA, PGA European Tour, Ladies European Tour and PGA of America. The working group's comprehensive study of the use of video evidence in applying the Rules of Golf was completed in October 2017.

One of the outcomes of the study was an agreement on the new set of video protocols that are summarized in this document. All organizations that participated in the working group have agreed to use this approach to video review and recommend that it be used by other organizations that run televised golf competitions as well.

### 1. Overall Standard for Using Information from Any Credible Source

When facts need to be decided in applying the Rules of Golf, players, referees and the Committee in charge of the competition will continue to consider information from any credible source, including:

- Witnesses on the course, such as other players, caddies, referees, marshals and spectators, and
- Video of the competition that is produced by the broadcast partner.

Consideration of all available evidence remains an essential part of applying the Rules of Golf, because many things happen during play of a round that cannot be seen by the players or referees. (See [Decision 34-3/9\\*](#) of the Decisions on the Rules of Golf for more information on the responsibility of referees and committees in deciding questions of fact.)

### 2. Protocols for the Review of Video Evidence

Although details of the Committee video review procedures may vary by organization or by the nature of the competition, each organization represented on the working group agrees to use these video review protocols:

#### a. Active monitoring of the video broadcast

The Committee will assign one or more of its officials to monitor the video broadcast. This monitoring role will include both:

- A proactive review to identify and help resolve potential Rules issues as they arise, and
- A responsive review when needed, such as to help referees on the course who ask for information on a real-time basis and to help the Committee when it is assessing issues based on something that happened at an earlier time.

This video monitoring should result in prompt identification and resolution of almost all Rules issues that can be seen in a video broadcast. It should also help minimize the number of times an issue arises that has not been seen and needs to be addressed at a later time.

#### b. No monitoring or review of communications from TV viewers

The Committee does not need or want outside intervention by viewers who believe they may have seen a Rules violation on the video broadcast.

Specifically, the Committee will not assign personnel or establish a procedure or practice to facilitate, monitor, review or follow up on viewer inquiries (such as phone calls, emails or texts) that seek to raise possible Rules violations.

Reviewing these “viewer call ins,” no matter how well intentioned they are, will not be part of the process of applying the Rules because they:

- Should be unnecessary given the Committee’s active video monitoring,
- Can be distracting to the officials in charge (as almost all of the issues reported by those who call in turn out to involve a misunderstanding of the Rules or the facts), and
- Create an unhealthy perception of random, inconsistent and/or improperly motivated outside intervention in applying the Rules.

If later information does come to the committee’s attention, such as from the video broadcast being seen by a player or someone working for the competition or from a general public source (such as the media), that information will still be considered as with any other available information. The fact that a potential Rules issue may have been missed during the video monitoring does not mean that the Committee will ignore the information.

#### c. Limitations on use of video evidence

The Committee’s use of evidence from the video broadcast will continue to be limited in the two important ways addressed in Decision 34-3/10\* (which was recently adopted by the USGA and The R&A):

- A player’s reasonable judgment in making certain types of fact determinations will be accepted even if, after the player has made a stroke, video evidence shows that the player’s judgment might have been wrong, and
- Video evidence that shows facts that could not reasonably have been seen with the “naked eye” will be disregarded.

In addition, video that is brought to the Committee from a source other than the broadcast partner will not be accepted as “evidence” unless the Committee is convinced of its reliability. In particular, this means that video from an individual’s camera, smartphone or similar device will not be used.

\* Note these are 2016 Rules of Golf reference.