

Amateur Status - R&A Policy for Extended Periods Awaiting Reinstatement for Professional Tournament Players

Effective 9 November 2023

Purpose

As provided in the Guidance Notes for Rule 5, a national governing body should consider the previous performance and success of an applicant for reinstatement when determining a waiting period for reinstatement, and may extend the waiting period based on performance and success as a professional golfer. The principal purpose of extending the wait period is to ensure that such players have to wait additional time before regaining their amateur status and then potentially competing at the highest levels of the amateur game.

It is important to note that this document outlines The R&A's policy for determining periods awaiting reinstatement for professional tournament players in The R&A's role as de facto national governing body administering the Rules of Amateur Status in Great Britain and Ireland.

Other national governing bodies maintain the discretion to apply their own policies in relation to providing additional time on a case-by-case basis.

Process for Reinstatement

The reinstatement process itself supports the purpose of defining who is eligible to compete as an amateur golfer. The recommendations for periods awaiting reinstatement (PARs) have changed over time to facilitate the movement from the professional game back to the amateur game more readily, but it is important to bear in mind that the reinstatement process and assigned waiting periods principally exist for the following reasons:

- To allow time to pass between professional activities and returning to amateur golf;
- To limit the ability to easily change status; and
- To create consequences for actions that result in losing amateur status.

This approach has generally served the game well and should continue to be at the forefront when assessing any guidelines for reinstatement.

In cases where the applicant has either accepted a prize that is not allowed under Rule 3 or has played in a golf competition as a professional, the following factors should be taken into consideration when determining whether an additional waiting period may be merited, waived, or modified:

- The level at which the applicant competed.
- The playing performance of the applicant.
- The duration of time since the applicant last competed.

For such applications, The R&A has adopted the following framework in order to provide appropriate and consistent outcomes in line with the principles of the Rules of Amateur Status:

1. All applications are assessed an initial minimum wait period of 6-months as standard.
2. An assessment of the applicant's playing performance will be made, with success

- based on their average earnings (prize money only) per event.
3. Following that assessment, an additional wait period may be applied, with the average earnings of the applicant per event separating them into performance related brackets, each with a corresponding suggested additional wait period.
 4. The total PAR for the applicant will be calculated using the cumulative total of these two elements, i.e., the minimum wait period + any performance related wait period = the applicant's total PAR.
 5. Finally, an assessment will be made as to whether any mitigating factors, such as the duration of time since the applicant last competed, ill health etc., would merit the additional PAR being either reduced or waived.

Minimum Period Awaiting Reinstatement (6-months)

All non-amateurs who apply for reinstatement having either accepted a prize that is not allowed under Rule 3 or played in a golf competition as a professional will be required to wait a minimum period of 6-months, starting on the date of their last activity as a non-amateur, regardless of how long they were a non-amateur from start to finish.

Playing Performance and Competitive Success Based on Average Earnings Per Event

The various thresholds for dividing the levels of average player earnings and their corresponding wait periods are detailed below:

Less than £700	=	No additional Wait Period (the standard 6-month PAR applies)
£700 - £1000	=	Additional 6-Month Wait Period
£1001 - £1500	=	Additional 12-Month Wait Period
£1501 - £2500	=	Additional 24-Month Wait Period
£2501 - £5000	=	Additional 36-Month Wait Period
£5001 - £10,000	=	Additional 48-Month Wait Period
£10,001 +	=	Additional 60-Month Wait Period

On receipt of an application for reinstatement and the above policy being applied to give a PAR, that PAR will be backdated to run from the date when the applicant ceased any activity that would have precluded them from being an amateur golfer as summarized under Rule 2 of the Rules of Amateur Status as follows:

All golfers are amateurs unless they:

- Accept a prize that is not allowed under Rule 3: Prizes,
- Play in a golf competition as a professional,
- Accept payment or compensation for giving instruction that is not allowed under Rule 4: Instruction,
- Are employed (including being self-employed) as a golf club or driving range professional, or
- Hold membership of an association for professional golfers.

Additional Notes:

1. Currency values are applied based on those at the time of the application for reinstatement (any other approach would be overly complex).
2. In determining average earnings, all tournaments at which prize money was played for will be included in the calculations, but the Amateur Status Committee reserves the right to exclude certain competitions from the calculations if there is evidence that an attempt has been made by the applicant to reduce the average earnings through participation in such tournaments.

Scenario Examples of Applying Additional Wait Periods

The following example scenarios detail the outcomes of additional waiting periods being applied as per the above framework and recommended proposed thresholds and corresponding wait periods.

Scenario 1

A player from the LETAS plays for two seasons on the tour with limited success. During these two seasons and 50% of missed cuts, the player has averaged only £600 per event at the time of submitting an application for their reinstatement to Amateur Status.

- The applicant would receive the initial 6-month minimum PAR as standard.
- As they have averaged less than £700 per event they would receive no additional waiting period based on their performance.

Total PAR = 6 Months.

Scenario 2

A player on the Challenge Tour plays for three seasons attempting to graduate to the DP World Tour. During this time, the player also plays several full DP World events via sponsor invitations and Qualifiers with little success. The player is reasonably consistent in making cuts and generally finishes in the top 50 on the Challenge Tour, however with no wins, the player average £2,150 per event. After failing to attain playing rights in their final season, the player applies to have their Amateur Status reinstated.

- The applicant would receive the initial 6-month minimum PAR as standard.
- As the player has averaged between £1,501 -£2,500 per event, they would receive an additional 24-month waiting period based on their performance.

Total PAR = 30 Months.

Scenario 3

A player on the DP World Tour plays for six seasons with mixed success, winning once in that time in addition to having several top-10 finishes. Overall, the player ends up earning £8,750 per event. The latter part of their time on Tour is hindered by injury and they fail to retain their playing rights for the following season. The player then applies for reinstatement of their Amateur Status.

- The applicant would receive the initial 6-month minimum PAR as standard.
- As the player has averaged between £5,001 - £10,000 in earnings per tournament,

they would receive an additional 48-month waiting period based on their performance.

Total PAR = 54 Months

Scenario 4

A player plays two seasons on the LETAS before earning their card for the LET. After 6 seasons on the LET with varied but generally limited success the player decides to retire from professional golf. During the combined eight seasons as a professional, they average £1,350 per event in earnings.

- The applicant would receive the initial 6-month minimum PAR as standard.
- As the player has averaged between £1,001 - £1,500 per event, they would receive an additional 12-Month waiting period based on their performance.

Total PAR = 18 Months

Second and Subsequent Reinstatements

All non-amateurs who apply for a second reinstatement will be required to wait a minimum period of 12 months as standard, starting on the date of their last activity as a non-amateur. If an applicant for a second reinstatement is subject to an additional waiting period for playing performance, that wait period would be added to the 12-month minimum.

Applicants for a third reinstatement will be eligible for reinstatement and their minimum waiting period will be treated on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the Amateur Status Committee.

Fourth reinstatements will not be permitted.

Denying Reinstatement

In certain specific circumstances, for players of notable distinction, their request for reinstatement may be denied.

This will occur when an applicant has attained a certain standard of prominence or achieved a certain level of accomplishments in the game which makes their return to amateur golf untenable. The following achievements as a professional golfer would prevent reinstatement to amateur status:

- Winner of a men's or women's "major" championship.
- Member of a Ryder Cup or Solheim Cup team (although there is scope for reinstatement if the applicant only appeared once and their period of success as a professional was relatively short).
- Member of World Golf Hall of Fame.
- At the time of application, in the Top 20 of career money earners on the PGA Tour, the DP World Tour or the LPGA.