



MALTA GOLF ASSOCIATION INFORMATION BULLETIN

TO ADVISE OR NOT TO ADVISE

The WHS *Rules of Handicapping* direct that for rounds to count towards one's handicapping history they must be individual stroke play rounds played according to the *Rules of Golf*.

Under Rule 10.2a, the *Rules of Golf* stipulate that during a round, a player must not:

- Give advice to anyone in the competition who is playing on the course,
- Ask anyone for advice, other than the player's caddie, or
- Touch another player's equipment to learn information that would be advice if given by or asked of the other player (such as touching the other player's clubs or bag to see what club is being used).

The *Rules* also explain that a player can however seek advice from his caddie or playing *partner* and offer unique definition for a playing *partner* which reads as follows:

Partner: A player who competes together with another player as a *side*, in either match play or stroke play.

Side is then defined as two or more *partners* competing as a single unit in a round in match play or stroke play.

The use of the words in red are very significant to the definition. They relate to a single score returned from a side either playing in a four-ball, foursomes, or similar format.

An aggregate score being returned from two or more players towards a team score is not a single score as each player is returning his own score to the team's score. In such competitions, the players are not partners but they are team members. Rules 24.4b and Rule 24.4c offer the direction:

24.4b Restriction on Advice Giver While Playing

If a team's advice giver is a player on the team, he or she is not allowed to act in that role while playing a round in the competition. While playing a round, the advice giver is treated like any other playing team member for purposes of the restrictions on advice in Rule 10.2a.

24.4c No Advice between Team Members Other Than Partners

Except when playing together as partners on a side: A player must not ask for advice from or give advice to a member of his or her team playing on the course. This applies whether the team member is playing in the same group as the player or in another group on the course.

To revert to the initial sentence of this document, for stroke play team events to be considered qualifying for handicapping purpose, the team members cannot give advice to each other when playing on the course.

Should one require any further clarification on the above matters please communicate by email on golfing@maltagolf.org