

Gentleman,

Recently, there was a issue as to whether or not golf balls that state “PRACTICE” on the ball are legal for tournament play or not. Per the USGA Decisions on the Rules of Golf and Rule 5-1 / 4, it is up to the Tournament Committee to allow or disallow balls that are labeled “X-Outs”, or “Refurbished”.

(5-1/4) Status of “X-out,” “Refurbished” and “Practice” Balls

Q. What is the status of “X-out,” “refurbished” and “practice” balls?

A. “X-out” is the common name used for a golf ball that a manufacturer considers to be imperfect (usually for aesthetic reasons only, e.g., paint or printing errors) and, therefore, has crossed out the brand name. A “refurbished” golf ball is a second-hand ball that has been cleaned and stamped as “refurbished.”

In the absence of strong evidence to suggest that an “X-out” or “refurbished” ball does not conform to the Rules, it is permissible for such a ball to be used. **However, in a competition where the Committee has adopted the condition that the ball the player plays must be named on the List of Conforming Golf Balls (see Note to Rule 5-1), such a ball may not be used, even if the ball in question (without the X’s or without the “refurbished” stamp) does appear on the List.**

In most cases, “practice” balls are simply listed, conforming golf balls that have been stamped “Practice,” in the same way that golf balls often feature a club or company logo. Such balls may be used even where the Committee has adopted the condition that the ball the player plays must be named on the List of Conforming Golf Balls. (Revised)

At our last Board Meeting on May 13th, the issue was discussed and voted upon that the HAGA would **not allow** balls labeled as “X-Out”, “Refurbished”, or “Range” to be used in HAGA competitions. Our reason for this decision dealt mainly with the many factors that could cause a golf ball to be considered an “X-out” or Range ball, which not only include blemishes and paint imperfections, but ball compression. The penalty for use of a ball labeled as “X-Out”, “Refurbished” or “Range” ball in an HAGA event is disqualification for the use of a non-conforming ball as determined by the Committee.

Balls labeled as “Practice” are conforming and permissible for use in HAGA events.

If you have any comments or questions concerning the Committee’s decision, please feel free to contact me or attend our next Board meeting.

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