

Relax everybody ... sometimes the Rules change.

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Well, we knew we would get to this “growing pains” stage with the new Rules of Golf and here we are. We will get through it even with all the knashing of teeth on social media. Before 2000, caddies could stand behind players even when they made a stroke. That changed. Now the rules don’t want anybody behind the player for any reason. The Rule doesn’t prohibit “lining up”, that’s the end result. The Rule prohibits being in a certain spot at a certain time... a rule that players and caddies learned under its previous timing (before the stroke). Everybody will get it and with the new penalties by Haotong Li and Denny McCarthy, they are going to learn it pretty quickly it seems.

Interpretation 10.2b(4)/1 says:

Rule 10.2b(4) does not allow a player to have his or her caddie deliberately stand behind him or her when the player begins taking a stance because aiming at the intended target is one of the challenges the player must overcome alone.

There is no set procedure for determining when a player has begun to take a stance since each player has his or her own set-up routine. However, if a player has his or her feet or body close to a position where useful guidance on aiming at the intended target could be given, it should be decided that the player has begun to take his or her stance.

Examples of when a player has begun to take a stance include when:

- The player is standing beside the ball but facing the hole with his or her club behind the ball, and then starts to turn his or her body to face the ball.
- After standing behind the ball to determine the target line, the player takes a step forward and then starts to turn his or her body and puts a foot in place for the stroke.

I truly understand how change can make us all freak out but the concept behind this rule is good and it was wanted by many for many years. Standing behind the player has become common because it used to be permitted. Now it’s not. Things change. Pretty soon we won’t see anybody behind their player anymore which is what we want. Professionals have the skills to get it done themselves.