

Late to the tee

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I've gotten some push back on what happened at the Lorena Ochoa Invitational so let me give it a bit more explanation.

Angela Stanford, Suzann Pettersen, Minjee Lee and Carlota Ciganda were on a tournament shuttle enroute to the golf course. The driver got lost and consequently, the group got on a road full of traffic and it took well over two hours for them to reach the tournament grounds. The players missed their tee times and under Rule 6-3, they should be disqualified. If we look at Decision 6-3a/1.5 we can get some guidance.

The Decision states that a player being lost, heavy traffic, a major accident on the highway or even the player's car breaking down are generally not "exceptional" enough for the Committee to waive the penalty of disqualification. It also goes on to say that there is no hard and fast rule and the proper action depends on the circumstances in each case and must be left to the determination of the Committee.

The fact that the players left hours ahead of their tee times to get to the course and the fact that the shuttle was run by the tournament with a hired or volunteer tournament driver has some bearing in this determination. It was not the player in control, it was the tournament. Now if they only hit heavy traffic and were late, I would have a different answer. Traffic is a normal everyday occurrence and they had the choice to get on an earlier shuttle. It is the player's responsibility to ensure that she allows enough time to reach the course and make allowances for possible delays. In this case I think the Committee has some culpability in having a driver who is going to get lost and get them way off course.

We usually only allow medical emergencies as "exceptional" but the Committee used some common sense and looked at all these special circumstances to make the right decision in my opinion.