

Inside the ropes: Board approves use of laser rangefinders in 2006 LGA Championships

By Carr McCalla

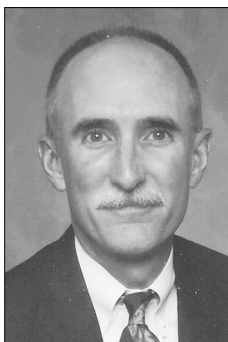
The Louisiana Golf Association Board of Directors, at their spring meeting in mid February, approved the use of electronic distance measuring devices (EMDs) in all 2006 LGA Championships. This means that the Committee in charge of each LGA Championship will utilize a local rule that allows competitors to use electronic devices that measure distance. In making this decision, the LGA follows the lead of many other state, regional, and provincial golf associations in North America in sanctioning this local rule.

MORE ON LASER RANGEFINDERS

Here's some good news for those of you that waited until the dust cleared to decide whether you would purchase an electronic distance measuring device (EMD). As mentioned in the above paragraph, the LGA will utilize the local rule allowing the use of these devices in our Championship events in 2006. In anticipation of this occurrence, and because we feel most local tournaments will allow the use of EMDs by local rule, the LGA recently entered into a partnership with Bushnell, Inc., to provide the Bushnell Pinseeker Tournament Edition laser rangefinder at a substantial discount to anyone purchasing the device through the fulfillment website at www.Rangefindergolf.com. And here's some even better news; if you're a participant in the LGA Handicap Network, you'll receive an even bigger discount by virtue of this partnership.

We anticipate the fulfillment website (www.Rangefindergolf.com) will be live for purchases by early to mid March. We'll keep you posted as to the exact date on our website at www.LGAgolf.org, and we'll have a link to www.Rangefindergolf.com as soon as they're up and running. Simply log on and you'll be prompted on how to purchase the Bushnell Pinseeker Tournament Edition at the lowest price available (\$100 under the MSRP). If you're a LGA Handicap Network participant, you'll receive an additional \$50 discount! You'll simply have to select the LGA as your participant golf association and enter your eight-digit LGA Handicap Network number. If you're not a LGA Handicap Network participant you can still purchase the device at \$100 below MSRP by selecting the LGA as your participating association and following the prompts.

In addition to being able to purchase the Pinseeker Tournament Edition at a tremendous discount, you'll also be supporting the LGA and all aspects of our great game in Louisiana. The LGA will receive a small rebate for each unit purchased, which will be reinvested into junior golf and other initiatives to grow the game in Louisiana. And your golf professional and/or facility will also receive a small rebate (provided you indicate your home club/course and they have an account with Bushnell). It's a win-



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win-win! The USGA Handicap Committee has recently announced that EMDs capable of measuring anything other than distance cannot be used for posting a score for handicapping purposes. This announcement reflects an important change in policy for the USGA and its Handicap Committee. In the past, one could post a score for a round completed while using an EMD that measured any number of variables, including gradient, wind speed, distance, etc. The recent decision by the Handicap Committee changes that.

Prior to Jan. 1, 2006, the Rules of Golf did not allow the use of EMDs in any circumstance. With the change that allows the Committee in charge of a competition the flexibility of utilizing a local rule that allows the use of EMDs, the Rules Committee has, in essence, met the Handicap Committee halfway. The Handicap Committee has adopted similar language, for their policy on the use of EMDs relative to posting a score for handicapping purposes, to the language recommended by the Rules Committee when the local rule allowing the use of EMDs in competition is in effect. With the new Handicap Committee's policy and language mirroring that of the Rules Committee, the rules for playing the game and the rules for posting a score for handicapping purposes are consistent for the first time in years, a simplification long overdue.

Confused? Don't be. All you really need to know is that you can use an EMD that measures distance (and distance only) when playing a non-tournament round and posting that score for handicapping purposes. When playing in a tournament competition you must be sure and check to see if the committee in charge of the competition has put the local rule into effect allowing the use of EMDs. If it has, you may use an EMD that measures distance (and distance only) in that competition. If it hasn't, you cannot use any EMD (you must rely on sprinkler heads, 150-yard markers, and hole-location sheets, i.e., the old-fashioned way) in the competition.

WHAT QUALIFIES AS AN EMD?

Electronic Distance Measuring Devices can take a number of forms. The most familiar ones are laser rangefinders (such as Bushnell's Pinseeker Tournament Edition), Global Positioning Systems (GPS), and course mapping systems. More and more cart fleets are being fitted with GPS and many of those systems may be utilized when the local rule allowing the use of EMDs is in effect. A note of caution as some of the GPS may be set up to measure not only distance, but other variables as well. If playing in an event that is utilizing the local rule allowing the use of EMDs, take care to check to be sure the GPS systems in use only measure distance. Laser Rangefinders also take many forms. The Bushnell Pinseeker Tournament Edition is a truly portable device. It does not need reflectors nor does it require bouncing a signal off a satellite or mapping a course prior to an event. You can take it anywhere and it will allow you to compete on an even playing field with anyone that has any other type of EMD. While we don't want to give the impression of overly promoting the Bushnell device, we did do

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