

Related Rules & Decisions for the Starter

6-3. Time of Starting and Groups

■ a. Time of Starting

The player must start at the time established by the [Committee](#).

■ b. Groups

In stroke play, the [competitor](#) must remain throughout the round in the group arranged by the [Committee](#) unless the [Committee](#) authorizes or ratifies a change.

PENALTY FOR BREACH OF RULE 6-3: Disqualification.

([Best-ball](#) and [four-ball](#) play — see [Rules 30-3a](#) and [31-2](#).)

Note: The Committee may provide in the conditions of a competition ([Rule 33-1](#)) that, if the player arrives at his starting point, ready to play, within five minutes after his starting time, in the absence of circumstances that warrant waiving the penalty of disqualification as provided in [Rule 33-7](#), the penalty for failure to start on time is **loss of the first hole in match play or two strokes at the first hole in stroke play** instead of disqualification.

33-3. Times of Starting and Groups

The [Committee](#) must establish the times of starting and, in stroke play, arrange the groups in which [competitors](#) must play.

When a match-play competition is played over an extended period, the [Committee](#) establishes the limit of time within which each round must be completed. When players are allowed to arrange the date of their match within these limits, the [Committee](#) should announce that the match must be played at a stated time on the last day of the period unless the players agree to a prior date.

6-3a/1.5 Circumstances Which Warrant Waiving of Disqualification Penalty Under Rule 6-3a

Q. A Committee may in exceptional circumstances waive the penalty of disqualification under Rule 6-3a for failure to start on time (Rule 33-7). With reference to the following examples, what circumstances are considered exceptional such that the Committee would be justified in waiving the penalty if the player failed to start at the time laid down:

- (1) The player gets lost on the way to the course.
- (2) Heavy traffic results in the journey to the course taking longer than expected.
- (3) A major accident results in the journey to the course taking longer than expected.
- (4) The player's car breaks down on the way to the course.
- (5) The player was present at the scene of an accident and provided medical assistance or was required to give a statement as a witness and otherwise would not have failed to start on time.

A. There is no hard-and-fast Rule. The proper action depends on the circumstances in each case and must be left to the judgment of the Committee.

Generally, only example (5) constitutes exceptional circumstances which might justify waiving the disqualification penalty under Rule 6-3a.

It is the player's responsibility to ensure that he allows enough time to reach the course and he must make allowances for possible delays.

6-3a/2 Time of Starting; All Competitors Must Be Present

Q. In a stroke-play competition, A, B and C were drawn by the Committee to play together starting at 9 a.m. A and B were present at the appointed time. C arrived at 9:02 a.m. after A and B had played from the teeing ground, but just in time to play in the correct order.

What is the ruling?

A. C is disqualified for failure to start at the time laid down by the Committee (Rule 6-3a) unless circumstances warrant waiving the penalty under Rule 33-7.

All competitors in a group must be present and ready to play at the time laid down by the Committee, in this case 9 a.m. The order of play is not relevant.

If the Committee had adopted the Note to Rule 6-3 as a condition of the competition, the five-minute period would have started at the time laid down by the Committee. Therefore, in this case the time started at 9 a.m. and C would incur a penalty of two strokes, rather than be subject to disqualification.

6-3a/2.5 Meaning of "Time of Starting"

Q. A player's starting time is listed on the official starting sheet as 9:00 a.m. He does not arrive at the 1st tee until 9:00:45 a.m. and claims that, as it is still 9:00 a.m., he is not late for his starting time. What is the ruling?

A. When a starting time is listed as 9:00 a.m., the starting time is deemed to be 9:00:00 a.m. and the player is subject to penalty under Rule 6-3a if he is not present and ready to play at 9:00:00 a.m. Therefore, the player is disqualified unless circumstances warrant waiving the penalty under Rule 33-7. (New)

6-3a/3 Time of Starting; Both Players in Match are late

Q. In a match-play competition with the Note to Rule 6-3 in effect, A and B were to start their match at 9 a.m. A arrives at the 1st tee at 9:01 a.m., but before B, who arrives at 9:03 a.m. What is the ruling?

A. If neither player had circumstances which would warrant waiving the penalty for failure to start on time, each player would incur a penalty of loss of the 1st hole (Note to Rule 6-3). Therefore, in equity (Rule 1-4), the 1st hole is deemed halved and the match would commence on the 2nd hole.

6-3a/4 Time of Starting; Player is Late but Group Unable to Play Due to Delay

Q. A player is assigned by the Committee to a group with a 9 a.m. starting time. He arrives at the first tee at 9:06 a.m. but for whatever reason (e.g., weather, slow play or a ruling) the starting time has been delayed until after he arrives (e.g., 9:10 a.m.). What is the ruling?

A. As the group was unable to start at the time originally established by the Committee and the player arrived before it could do so, the player is not in breach of Rule 6-3a.