

## Aguilar Penalised Four Strokes in Turkey



There was an unusual breach of Rules at the Turkish Airlines Open in Belek, Turkey last week. Chilean, Felipe Aguilar, who has won over 30 events in Chile and who celebrated his 40th birthday last week, has been playing on the European Tour since 2006. So, it was surprising that he was unaware that players are not permitted to switch one club for another during a

round of golf if they start with a full complement of 14 clubs. To be fair to him there was a mitigating factor, in that his round started on Friday and was suspended because of bad weather, resuming on Saturday morning.

Reports suggest that it was Aguilar's fellow competitor, Magnus Carlsson, who noticed the different club in Aguilar's bag and asked him if he had made a switch. So, before signing his card Aguilar asked a Rules official if he had committed a breach (duh!). It was this part of Rule 4-4a that Aguilar breached; *The player must not start a stipulated round with more than fourteen clubs. He is limited to the clubs thus selected for that round, except that if he started with fewer than fourteen clubs, he may add any number, provided his total number does not exceed fourteen.*

Note that he did not have more than 14 clubs in his bag at any one time, but the effect of switching one club for another while play was suspended, was that he had carried 15 different clubs during his stipulated round.

So, why was the penalty 4 strokes? This paragraph from the penalty statement under Rule 4-4a explains;

*Stroke play – Two strokes for each hole at which any breach occurred; maximum penalty per round – Four strokes (two strokes at each of the first two holes at which any breach occurred).*

The maximum penalty of four strokes applied because Aguilar had carried the switched club for all of the six holes he played on Saturday morning to complete his round. Because he was not aware that he was carrying a club in breach of a Rule the penalty of disqualification did not apply, even though he may have used the switched club. If he had realised that he was carrying a club that he should not have, before finishing his round, he would have had to declare it out of play, as Rule 4-4c prohibits the player from using the club for the remainder of their stipulated round;

*Any club or clubs carried or used in breach of Rule 4-3a(iii) or Rule 4-4 must be declared out of play by the player to his opponent in match play or his marker or a fellow-competitor in stroke play immediately upon discovery that a*

*breach has occurred. The player must not use the club or clubs for the remainder of the stipulated round.*

Ironically, when Aguilar was informed of his breach, he was also told that he was disqualified. It was not until 10 minutes later that this mistaken ruling was corrected and that the penalty incurred was not disqualification, but was a four-shot penalty. The penalty eventually cost Felipe Aguilar 16 places on the final leaderboard, from 48th= to 64th=.