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- * Rules for players with disabilities has been incorporated into the Rules in Rule 25.
- * The Interpretations are now called Clarifications.
- * The penalty for playing an incorrectly substituted ball is 1 penalty stroke. 6.3b(3)
- * A player may repair or replace a damaged club unless the damage was caused by abuse. 4.1a(2)
- * After a ball is dropped or replaced and is moved by natural forces into another area of the course, the ball is replaced without penalty. 9.3 Exception 2
- * When taking back-on-the-line relief the player must drop the ball on the line. 14.3b(3)
- * When taking back-on-the-line relief the dropped ball may roll 1 club-length in any direction (including forward) after hitting the ground. 16.1c(2), 17.1d(2), 19.2b
- * When a ball played from the putting green hits the player, the player's putter, or an insect (or similar) the stroke counts. 11.1b(2)
- * If a player fails to replay a stroke from a putting green when required (for example, when their ball played from a putting green hits another ball in motion), the penalty is the general penalty not a wrong place penalty. 11.1b, 11.2c, Wrong Place
- * When there is not a spot in the general area immediately behind an embedded ball to use as a reference point for taking relief, the player may find a reference point at the nearest location (no closer to the hole) in the general area. Clarification 16.3b/1
- * The Committee (not the player) is responsible for including the player's handicap on the player's scorecard. 3.3b(4)
- * A player is not allowed to set anything down on the course to assist in determining the line of play (even if the object is lifted prior to the stroke). 10.2b(1), 10.2b(2)
- * When multiple penalties occur (including different penalties), a player is only penalized for the larger of the two penalties unless there an intervening event (a stroke or the player becomes aware of the breach). 1.3c(4)
- * A player is disqualified for giving any information to an opponent which results in a player getting too few strokes or giving to many strokes. Clarification 3.2c(1)/2
- * Multiple markers do not need to certify the hole scores on the scorecard if one marker sees the player play all of the holes. 3.3b(1)
- * A player is permitted to remove an external attachment (ex. a sticker on the clubface) on a club without penalty if the club has not been used. 4.1a(3)
- * A player must not build a club from parts carried by anyone on the course. 4.1b(4)
- * The limitations on green reading material only applies to strokes made on the putting green. Clarification 4.3a/1
- * A player is allowed to practice on any holes not being played on the day of the competition. Clarification 5.2/1

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- * When players agree to play out of turn to gain an advantage, those players are penalized when one of the players makes a stroke out of turn. 6.4b(1)
- * The conditions affecting the stroke that are worsened by a referee may be restored. 8.1d(2)
- * The area behind the player while the player is taking their stance is referred to as the "Restricted Area". 10.2b(4)
- * A player's caddie may stand in the "Restricted Area" prior to the player making their stroke if they are not assisting the player with aim. 10.2b(4)
- * A player is not allowed to set a self-standing putter down to help with alignment. (This change has been delayed until 2025). Clarification 10.2b/1
- * When attempting to correct playing from a wrong place, a player is only required to report the facts to the Committee when the player plays 2 balls. 14.7b(2)
- * An additional minute is the amount of time a player has to identify their ball after the 3 minute search time has elapsed. Clarification 18.2a(1)/3
- * Important Model Local Rule Changes
 - * When a player does not replay a stroke that hits a power line, the stroke counts and the player gets the general penalty. MLR E-11
 - * The Committee may allow relief from immovable obstructions in a penalty area. MLR F-24
 - * The penalty for a breach of the one-ball rule is 1 penalty stroke. MLR G-4
 - * The Committee may restrict the damage to a club before it can be replaced. MLR G-9
 - * The Committee can prohibit the use of green reading material on the putting green. MLR G-12
 - * The Committee can prohibit practice on practice putting greens. MLR I-1
 - * Bad times can be carried over to subsequent rounds in stroke play competition. MLR K-2
 - * The Committee may modify the penalty for a non-certified score card to 2 penalty strokes. MLR L-1

Abnormal Course Conditions

- * Definition: Abnormal Course Condition
- * Abnormal Course Condition includes Animal Holes, Ground Under Repair, Immovable Obstructions, and Temporary Water. Definition
- * Temporary Water must be on the ground, not in a penalty area, and visible before or after a player takes their stance. Temporary Water
- * Water which is only visible during the process of taking the stance is not Temporary Water. Temporary Water
- * Ground Under Repair includes the line and/or stakes marking the area. Ground Under Repair
- * Holes made in preparation of the course and material piled for removal are ground under repair. Ground Under Repair
- * Tracks from maintenance vehicles are not automatically an abnormal course condition. Ground Under Repair/1
- * Animal tracks are not an abnormal ground condition unless they lead to an animal hole. Animal Hole
- * Aeration holes are not ground under repair. Free relief is only allowed when the Committee adopts MLR E-4. 13.1c(2)
- * Abnormal Course Condition Relief:
 - * The General Area - A ball is dropped at the nearest point of complete relief plus 1 additional club-length. 16.1b
 - * A Bunker - A ball is dropped at the nearest point of complete relief plus 1 club-length (in the bunker) or back-on-the-line outside the bunker with 1 penalty stroke. 16.1c
 - * The Putting Green - A ball is placed at the nearest point of complete relief on or off the putting green. 16.1d
 - * Ball Lost In ACC - The estimated point where the ball last crossed the edge of the abnormal course condition is used as the ball's spot for determining the nearest point of complete relief. 16.1e
- * A player is not entitled to relief when their ball is off the putting green and the abnormal course condition is on the putting green. 16.1a
- * A player is not entitled to relief from an abnormal course condition if it is clearly unreasonable to play the ball. 16.1a(3)
- * When a player has interference from an abnormal course condition in a bunker, the player may take free relief in the bunker or back-on-the-line relief (1 penalty stroke) outside the bunker. 16.1c(1) and 16.1c(2)
- * If a player plays a provisional ball and it is determined that the original ball is lost in an abnormal course condition, the player may play either the provisional ball under stroke and distance or take relief under the abnormal course condition Rule. 16.1e

Advice & Help

- * Definition: Advice
- * Advice is information which assists the player or another player in a shot (e.g., club to use, relief to take, how to play shot). Definition
- * Information on the Rules of Golf and publicly available information is not advice. Definition
- * Only a player's caddie, partner, partner's caddie and team advisor may give a player advice. 22.2, 23.5a, 24.4a
- * Asking for advice from or giving advice to anyone else is not permitted. 10.2a
- * In seeking advice a player may:
 - * Look into another players' bag to determine the club the player used (but must not touch the other players' equipment). Advice/2
 - * Ask another player what club they used on a prior hole. Advice/2
 - * Ask a shared caddie what club a competitor or opponent used to play a stroke. 10.2a/1
- * A caddie or partner may touch or stand on the player's line of play (but must move before the player's stroke). 10.2b(1)
- * A caddie or partner may cast a shadow to indicate the line of play (but must move the shadow before the player's stroke). 10.2b(2)
- * An object must not be placed on the ground to assist in taking a stance. 10.2b(3)
- * A player is not allowed to set anything down on the course to assist in determining the line of play (even if the object is lifted prior to the stroke). (2023) 10.2b(1), 10.2b(2)
- * After a player begins to take their stance:
 - * The area behind the player while the player is taking their stance is referred to as the "Restricted Area". (2023) 10.2b(4)
 - * A player's caddie or partner must not stand on an extension of the line of play behind the player to assist the player with aim. 10.2b(4)
 - * A player's caddie or partner may stand in the "Restricted Area" prior to the player making their stroke if they are not assisting the player with aim. (2023) 10.2b(4)
- * During a player's stroke:
 - * The player must not get physical assistance from anyone for protection from the elements (e.g., wind, rain, etc.) 10.2b(5)

Ball Deflected

- * A ball played from off the putting green which is accidentally deflected by any person or any object on or off the putting green is played as it lies without penalty. 11.1a
- * A ball played from on the putting green which is accidentally deflected by any person, animal, or movable obstruction on the putting green is replayed except when the ball is deflected by the player, the person attending the flagstick, the club used to make the stroke, the flagstick, another ball at rest, or a ball-marker. 11.1b Exception 2
- * In all other situations for a ball played from on the putting green which is accidentally deflected, the ball is played as it lies. 11.1b, 13.2b(2)
- * When a ball played from the putting green hits the player, the player's putter, or an insect (or similar) the stroke counts. (2023) 11.1b(2)
- * A deliberately deflected ball is never played as it lies. 11.2c
- * A ball played from off the putting green which is deliberately deflected and would have come to rest off the putting green is dropped at the estimated spot where the ball would have come to rest. 11.2c(1)
- * A ball played from off the putting green which is deliberately deflected and would have come to rest on the putting green is placed at the estimated spot where the ball would have come to rest. 11.2c(1)
- * A ball played from on the putting green which is deliberately deflected is replayed. 11.2c(2)
- * In stroke play when both balls are on the putting green, there is a 2 stroke penalty for the player whose ball hits another ball. 11.1a Exception
- * A ball in motion other than on the putting green that is picked up by an animal is dropped at the location it was picked up. (2023) 11.1b/3
- * A ball in motion on the putting green that is picked up by an animal is placed at the location it was picked up. (2023) 11.1b/3
- * In match play, there is no penalty for deliberately deflecting a ball that has no chance to be holed. 11.2a Exception
- * When a deflected ball is not replayed when required to do so, the player is penalized the general penalty but not a wrong place penalty. (2023) Wrong Place, 11.b(2)

Ball Holed

- * Definition: Holed
- * A ball is holed when:
 - * It is at rest in the bottom of the cup. Definition
 - * It is embedded in the side of the hole and completely below the lip of the hole. Definition
 - * It is leaning against the flagstick and partially below the lip of the hole (unless it is embedded). 13.2c, Holed/1
- * For a ball that is on the lip of the hole, the player has a reasonable amount of time to reach the hole plus 10 seconds for the ball to fall into the hole. If the ball falls into the hole after that amount of time, the ball is holed with 1 penalty stroke. 13.3a
- * Any strokes made after the ball is holed do not count in the player's score. 6.5/1
- * A player has until they start the following hole to finish playing the current hole or in the case the final hole, until the player returns their scorecard. 3.3c

Ball Moved

- * Definition: Moved, 9.2a/1, 9.4b/1
- * A ball is not deemed to have moved if it returns to its original position. Moved
- * A ball can be moved by: 9.2b(1)
 - * Natural Forces (wind, water, and gravity) Natural Forces
 - * The player (including their caddie and partner) 9.4
 - * An opponent (including the opponent's partner and their caddies) 9.5
 - * An outside influence. 9.6
- * A ball that is moved by natural forces, must be played as it lies unless the ball lies on the putting green and has been lifted and replaced. In that case the ball is replaced. 9.3, 9.3 Exception 1
- * After a ball is dropped or replaced and is moved by natural forces into another area of the course, the ball is replaced without penalty. (2023) 9.3 Exception 2
- * When natural forces cause a player's equipment to move the player's or opponent's ball, the ball must be replaced without penalty. Clarification 9.2b/1
- * A player may only make a stroke at a moving ball when: 10.1d
 - * The player has begun their backswing. 9.1b
 - * The ball is falling off of a tee. 6.2b(5)
 - * The ball is moving in water in a penalty area or temporary water.
- * If a moved ball is not replaced the penalty is the general penalty for playing from a wrong place. 14.7a
- * There is no penalty when anyone accidentally moves a ball in the teeing area, on the putting green, or during a search. 6.2b(5), 9.7b Exception, 7.4
- * There is no penalty to the player when a ball moves while marking/lifting a ball, measuring, removing an obstruction, or determining a relief area by swinging. 9.4b Exception 4
- * When a ball is moved by another person, the ball must be replaced (on the spot or estimated spot) by the person who moved the ball or the player. 14.2b(1)

Ball-Marker

- * Definition: Ball-Marker
- * A ball-marker is an artificial object used to mark the spot of a ball to be lifted, such as a tee, a coin, a club, or an object made to be a ball-marker. Definition
- * A ball-marker must be placed immediately behind, in front of, or to the side of a ball. 14.1a, 14.1a/2
- * There is a 1 stroke penalty for deliberately lifting a ball-marker without replacing the ball or marking its spot. 9.7b
- * A ball-marker must be lifted prior to making a stroke. 14.1a
- * A player must not lift an opponent's ball-marker without permission. 9.7b
- * A ball does not need to be marked when it is lifted under a Rule and is not required to be replaced. 14.1a
- * A ball-marker that is in a position to assist another player may be moved. 15.3c
- * There is no penalty when a ball-marker on the putting green is accidentally moved by anyone. The ball-marker is replaced. 9.7b Exception
- * There is no penalty for causing a ball marker to move while lifting/replacing a ball or measuring. 9.7b Exception
- * There is no penalty when a ball in motion hits a ball-marker. The ball is played as it lies. 11.1b Exception 2

Balls

- * The same ball must be used for the entire round unless:
 - * The player is between holes. 4.2c(2), 6.3a
 - * The ball has become cut or cracked (but not scuffed). 4.2c(2)
 - * Play has stopped and is resumed. 5.7d(1)
 - * The ball has been played by another player. 6.3c(2)
 - * Another ball may be played under a Rule. 6.3b(1)
- * Unless the "One-Ball Rule" is in effect, nothing in the Rules prevents a player from changing the make and/or model of the ball when substituting another ball.
- * The penalty for a breach of the "One-Ball Rule" has been changed from a 2 stroke penalty to a 1 stroke penalty. (2023) MLR G-4
- * A ball may be cleaned when it lies on the putting green and when it has been lifted from anywhere on the course except: 14.1c
 - * To determine if it is damaged. 4.2c(1)
 - * To identify the ball (May be cleaned only to the extent necessary for identification). 7.3
 - * When it interferes with another player. 15.3b(2)
 - * To see if relief is allowed (No penalty if relief is allowed). 16.4
- * A player may borrow a ball from another player.
- * It is advised, but not required for the player to put an identification mark on their ball. 6.3a
- * When a ball breaks into pieces the player after a stroke must cancel the stroke and play another ball from where the last stroke was made. 4.2b
- * A player must not make a stroke at a non-conforming ball. 4.2a(1)
- * A player must not make a stroke at a ball whose characteristics were deliberately altered, such as heating or applying a substance (other than cleaning). 4.2a(2)

Bunkers

- * Definition: Bunker
- * A bunker is a specially prepared area of sand, which is often a hollow from which turf or soil was removed.
Definition
- * Bare walls, stacked turf, and lips are not part of a bunker. Definition
- * Loose impediments and movable obstructions may be removed from bunkers. 15.1a, 15.2a
- * A player may not touch (test) the sand in the same bunker that the player's ball is in, unless in anger, for balance, measuring, or leaning on a club. 12.2b(1), 12.2b(2)
- * A player may touch (test) the sand or take a practice swing in another bunker. 12.2b(1)
- * When a player's ball is buried in a bunker, the player is allowed to remove enough sand to see part of the ball. 7.1b
- * Once the ball has left the bunker, the player may rake and touch the sand without restriction. 12.2b(3)
- * The player may rake a bunker prior to their shot in care for the course, but not if the shot may go in the bunker. 8.1b(9)
- * The lie of the ball may be improved when "fairly" removing a loose impediment or movable obstruction from a bunker. 8.1b(2)
- * The lie of the ball may be worsened (and not repaired) when marking a ball or searching for a ball in a bunker. 8.1d(2) and 8.1d(2)/3
- * Practice strokes after the hole is completed are not allowed from bunkers. 5.5b

Caddie

- * Definition: Caddie
- * A caddie is someone who helps the player by transporting the player's clubs and assisting the player with the Rules. Definition
- * A player is only allowed one caddie at a time, but may change caddies during a round or between rounds. 10.3a(1)
- * A player is responsible for the actions of their caddie during a round and while play is suspended and is considered to be aware of any information known by the caddie. 10.3c
- * Players on the same or different sides may share a caddie. 10.3a(2), 10.2a/1
- * A caddie may mark and lift a player's ball on the putting green without the player's permission. 10.3b(1)
- * A caddie may not concede a stroke, replace a ball when the caddie did not mark it, drop a ball for a player, or stand behind the player while lining up a shot. 10.3b(3)

Changing Relief Options

- * When a player proceeds (drops a ball) under a permitted a Rule, the player must continue under that Rule.
- * A player may only change relief options within a Rule before a ball is dropped for the first time or when a ball is dropped outside the relief area.
- * A player may not change relief options after a drop which:
 - * Hits the player or their equipment before hitting the ground.
 - * Is dropped incorrectly (e.g., from the wrong height or with spin).
 - * Lands in and rolls out of the relief area.
- * A player may always change the drop location when taking back-on-the-line relief because only the location is changing, not the relief option.
- * When a player has put another ball into play under a Rule which involves known or virtual certainty and prior to playing the stroke learns the ball is in a wrong place, the player must abandon the ball and drop (Rule 15.2b, Rule 16.1e, Rule 17.1c) or place (Rule 9.6) any ball in the correct location using any of the relief options under the appropriate Rule but must not play the original ball from a wrong place. 14.5a
- * When a player drops a ball under Rule 17.1 (other than 17.1d(1)) and the wrong reference point was used:
 - * If the ball is known to be in the penalty area, the player must abandon the dropped ball and drop a ball under any relief option using the correct reference point.
 - * If the ball is found outside the penalty area, the player must continue with the dropped ball.

Clubs

- * A player is allowed to carry 14 clubs. Clubs carried by a spectator and non-conforming clubs count towards the club limit. 4.1b(1)
- * A player who starts with less than 14 clubs may add clubs during the round, but must not add or borrow a club from anyone on the course or build a club using components carried by anyone on the course. 4.1b(1) and 4.1b(4)
- * A club is not counted as added until that club or another club is used. 4.1b(1)
- * Partners may share clubs if the total number of clubs is no more than 14. Foursomes: 22.5; Four-Ball: 23.7
- * In stroke play, the penalty for carrying too many clubs is a 2 stroke penalty per hole (4 stroke maximum).
- * In match play, the penalty for carrying too many clubs is a match adjustment penalty (2 hole maximum). A match adjustment penalty is not a loss of hole, it is when the status of the match is increased or decreased by the number of holes involved. It is possible to be 4 up after 2 holes. 4.1b(1)
- * A damaged or broken club may be used. 4.1a(1)
- * A player may repair or replace a damaged club unless the damage was caused by abuse. (2023) 4.1a(2)
- * A player must not build a club from parts carried by anyone on the course. (2023) 4.1b(4)
- * A player is not allowed to make a stroke with a non-conforming club. 4.1a(1)
- * A player is not allowed to make a stroke with a club that has been altered (other than being restored to its original condition). 4.1a(3)
- * A player is permitted to remove an external attachment (ex. a sticker on the clubface) on a club without penalty if the club has not been used. (2023) 4.1a(3)

Conditions Affecting Stroke

- * Definition: Conditions Affecting the Stroke, Lie
- * The lie of the player's ball at rest, the area of intended stance, the area of intended swing, the line of play and the relief area where the player will drop or place a ball. Definition
- * The player may not alter these areas prior to a stroke, drop, or replace except to the extent allowed by the Rule (e.g., fairly remove loose impediments, fairly take stance, teeing area, etc.). 8.1, 8.1a/6, 8.1a/8
- * A player who deliberately worsens the conditions affecting another player's stroke is assessed the general penalty. 8.3b
- * When the conditions affecting the player's stroke are altered while play has been suspended, the player must accept the changed conditions. That is, the original lie of the ball is not recreated. 5.7d(1), 8.1d(1)
- * While a ball is in motion, a player must not deliberately move any object to affect where the ball might come to rest other than: 11.3
 - * A tended or removed flagstick,
 - * A ball at rest on the putting green,
 - * The equipment of any player.
- * A player may restore the conditions affecting the stroke:
 - * That were worsened by any person (other than the player) or an animal 8.1d(1)
 - * That were worsened by a referee. (2023) 8.1d(2)
 - * That were improved by the player to avoid a penalty 8.1c(1)

Conduct/Etiquette

- * Players are expected to act with integrity, consideration to others, and to take care of the course. 1.2a
- * A player may be disqualified for violating the "Spirit of the Game". 1.2a/1
- * A player is disqualified for deliberately failing to apply a penalty which they know they have incurred. 1.3b(1)
- * When two or more players agree to ignore a Rule that they know applies they are both disqualified (even if they have not yet acted on the agreement). This applies to both stroke play and match play. 1.3b(1), Clarification 1.3b(1)/1
- * In match play, the players may agree on how to decide a Rules issue as long as they do not deliberately agree to apply a Rule incorrectly. 1.3c(3), 20.1b(1)
- * The Committee may establish a Code of Conduct which includes 1 stroke, general, and disqualification penalties. 1.2b
- * Committee Procedures 5I lists standards which may be adopted in the Code of Conduct that include:
 - * Not raking bunkers or replacing divots
 - * Unacceptable language
 - * Abuse of clubs
 - * Being disrespectful towards other players, referees or spectators.

Disability Rules

- * The Rules of Golf provide for modifications to the Rules for players with disabilities. Rule 25.1
- * Disabilities included in Rule 25 are: Rule 25.1
 - * Players who are blind. Rule 25.2
 - * Amputees. Rule 25.3
 - * Players who use assistive mobility devices. Rule 25.4
 - * Players with intellectual disabilities. Rule 25.5
- * The Rules do not provide modifications for players who are short or deaf. Rule 25.1
- * Modifications for players who are blind include: Rule 25.2
 - * One aide may assist the player to help with taking a stance, aiming, giving advice, and lifting a ball on the putting green but the aide must not carry the player's clubs. Rule 25.2a, Rule 25.2b, Rule 25.2e
 - * An object may be placed on the ground to assist the player in aiming or taking a stance, but the object must be removed prior to the stroke. Rule 25.2c
 - * The player's caddie or aide may stand on an extension of the line of play behind the player's ball before and during the stroke. Rule 25.2d
 - * The player may touch the sand in a bunker before and during the stroke but not during a practice swing. Rule 25.2f
 - * The player may have anyone drop, place or replace their ball. Rule 25.2h
- * Modifications for players who are amputees include: Rule 25.3
 - * The player may anchor the club (if they are unable to hold the club). Rule 25.3b
 - * The player may replace their ball by hand or by using another piece of equipment (such as their club). Rule 25.3d
 - * The player may have anyone drop, place or replace their ball. Rule 25.3c
- * Modifications for players who use assistive mobility devices: Rule 25.4
 - * One aide may assist the player to help position the player for a stroke, giving advice, and lifting a ball on the putting green but the aide must not carry the player's clubs. Rule 25.4a, Rule 25.4b, Rule 25.4c, Rule 25.4j
 - * The player may replace their ball by hand or by using another piece of equipment (such as their club). Rule 25.4e
 - * The player may have anyone drop, place or replace their ball. Rule 25.4a
 - * The player is allowed a 4 club-length relief area when taking lateral relief from a penalty area or unplayable lie. Rule 25.4m

Disability Rules

- * For unplayable ball relief in a bunker, the player is only penalized 1 stroke (rather than 2) for taking back-on-the-line relief outside the bunker. Rule 25.4n
- * The player's assistive mobility device must not be across the line of play. Rule 25.4i
- * Modifications for players with intellectual disabilities: Rule 25.5
 - * One aide may assist as would the player's caddie (including giving advice and lifting a ball on the putting green) but the aide must not carry the player's clubs. Rule 25.5b, Rule 25.5c, Rule 25.5d

Dropping

- * Definition: Drop
- * A ball must be dropped from knee height. The player does not need to be standing. 14.3b(2)
- * A ball may be dropped by the player or the player's partner. 14.3b(1), 22.2, and 23.5a
- * A dropped ball must land in and end up in the relief area (normally 1 club-length; 2 club-lengths for lateral relief options). The relief area for a drop zone is the entire drop zone. 14.3b(3)
- * After a ball is dropped or replaced and is moved by natural forces into another area of the course, the ball is replaced without penalty. (2023) 9.3 Exception 2
- * When taking back-on-the-line relief the player must drop the ball on the line. The player does not pick a reference point on the line. The spot where the ball first hits the ground creates the relief area. (2023) 14.3b(3)
- * When taking back-on-the-line relief the dropped ball may roll 1 club-length in any direction (including forward) after hitting the ground. (2023) 16.1c(2), 17.1d(2), 19.2b
- * A dropped ball can hit a player or any equipment after it lands but not before. 14.3b(2)
- * A dropped ball does not need to land on the ground, it may land in a bush. Clarification 14.3c/1
- * A dropped ball can always be substituted. 14.3a
- * A ball is properly dropped when it: 14.3b
 - * Is dropped by the correct person.
 - * Is dropped from knee height.
 - * Is dropped without spin.
 - * Does not hit the player or equipment before hitting the ground.
 - * Lands in and stays in the relief area.
- * A player is allowed 2 drops. A drop counts towards the 2 drops when it meets the first 4 prior requirements but does not stay in the relief area. 14.3c(1)
- * When a ball does not remain in the relief area after 2 drops, the player must place a ball where the ball struck the ground on the second drop. 14.3c(2)
- * A dropped ball must remain in the relief area and in the same area of the course where the ball first strikes the ground. 14.6b, 17.1d, 19.2b
- * A dropped ball must not be deliberately deflected if there is a reasonable chance it will remain in the relief area. 14.3d
- * A dropped ball may be deliberately deflected while it is still in the relief area when there is no reasonable chance it will remain in the relief area. 14.3d Exception

Embedded Ball

- * Definition: Embedded
- * In order for a ball to be embedded it must: 16.3a(2)
 - * Be in it's pitch mark from the current shot.
 - * Have been airborne from the current shot.
 - * Not be in a penalty area, bunker, or putting green.
- * A ball can only be embedded in the general area. It cannot be embedded in a penalty area, a bunker, or on a putting green. 16.3a(1)
- * A player is only allowed embedded ball relief if the player would have a play on the ball if the embedded condition did not exist. 16.3a(1) Exception
- * A ball cannot be embedded on a drop. 16.3a(2)
- * All of the ball does not need to be below the surface of the ground. Definition
- * The relief for an embedded ball is a drop within 1 club-length from the spot immediately behind the embedded ball no nearer the hole. 16.3b
- * When there is not a spot in the general area immediately behind an embedded ball, the player may find a reference point at the nearest location (no closer to the hole) in the general area. (2023) Clarification 16.3b/1
- * The pitch mark cannot be repaired before the ball is dropped unless it does not affect the player's next stroke. 8.1a(3), 8.2b Exception
- * A player may use the same ball (and clean it) or substitute another ball. 16.3b

Flagstick

- * Definition: Flagstick
- * There is no penalty if a ball strikes a flagstick left in the hole or accidentally hits a flagstick removed from the hole. 13.2a(2), 13.2b(2)
- * There is no penalty if a ball accidentally hits the person attending the flagstick. 13.2b(2)
- * A player must not deliberately position the flagstick (in or out of the hole) to affect the movement of the ball. 13.2a(3), 13.2a(4)
- * A player may leave the flagstick uncentered in the hole, but may not uncenter the flagstick if it is centered. 13.2a, 13.2a(1)/1
- * A player may not remove the flagstick with the intent to affect the movement of a ball. 13.2a(3), 13.2a(4)
- * A player may hold the flagstick while putting. 13.2b(1)/1
- * A ball is holed when it is leaning against the flagstick and partially below the lip of the hole (unless it is embedded). 13.2c, Holed/1

Four-Ball

- * Definition: Four-Ball
- * A form of play where sides of two partners compete, with each player playing their own ball. A side's score for a hole is the lower score of the two partners on that hole. Definition
- * A ball may be marked, lifted, dropped, or replaced by the player or their partner. 23.5a
- * When a player creates a penalty with the partner's ball, the penalty normally applies to the partner. However, when the action benefits both players or is to the disadvantage of an opponent, both players are penalized. 23.5a, 23.9a
- * When a player in a four-ball match has been disqualified for a hole (e.g., played a wrong ball), the player may continue to provide advice to their partner but may not play any strokes which could assist their partner. 23.9a(2)/1
- * A breach of too many clubs (Rule 4.1b) is a penalty to the side (both players). 23.9a(2)
- * Only one score for the side for each hole is required on the scorecard, but the score must be associated with the correct player. 23.2b(1)

Foursomes

- * Definition: Foursomes
- * A form of play where two partners compete as a side by playing one ball in alternating order on each hole.
Definition
- * The Committee may decide which player tees off the first hole of the round. 22.4a
- * A ball may be marked, lifted, dropped, or replaced by the player or their partner. 22.2
- * Penalty strokes are disregarded in determining the side's order of play. 22.3

How Many Strokes?

- * There will be questions on the Rules Exam where you will be required to calculate the score for a player or a side.
- * Remember to count all talent strokes and all penalty strokes.
- * It is very important to know when there is a breach of 2 penalties when only 1 penalty is assessed or both penalties are assessed. 1.3c(4), Clarification 1.3c(4)/1, Clarification 1.3c(4)/2
- * It is very important to know which Rules are 1 stroke penalties and which are 2 stroke penalties. 1.3c(2)
- * Common One Stroke Penalties
 - * Penalty Area Relief 17.1d, 17.2a, 17.2b
 - * Ball Lost or Out of Bounds 18.2b
 - * Unplayable Ball 19.2, 19.3a
 - * Substituted Ball 6.3b(3)
 - * Moving Ball or Ball-Marker 9.4b, 9.5b, 9.7b, 15.1b
 - * Ball Dropped In Wrong Way and Played From Relief Area 14.2b, 14.3c
 - * Lifting Ball When Not Allowed 4.2c(1), 7.3, 15.3b(2), 16.4
 - * Cleaning Ball When Not Allowed 14.1c
- * Less Common One Stroke Penalties
 - * Marking/Lifting/Replacing Improperly 14.1a, 14.1b, 14.2b
 - * Abnormal Course Condition Relief from Inside Bunker to Outside Bunker 16.1c(2)
 - * First Breach Unreasonable Delay 5.6a
 - * Ball Overhanging Hole - Wait Time 13.3a
 - * Removal of Loose Impediment 15.1a Exception
 - * Stroke and Distance Anytime 18.1

Inapplicable Rule

- * There are times when a player will proceed under a Rule which does not apply to the situation at hand. As an official, you must decide if there is another Rule which is applicable in the circumstance.
- * When a ball is put into play under an inapplicable Rule (and prior to a stroke), the player may lift the ball and correct the error without penalty unless the ball is put back into play at the location of the prior stroke. Rule 18.1 (Stroke and Distance) takes precedence over Rule 14.5a. 14.5a, 18.1
- * Once a player has made a stroke at a ball put into play under an inapplicable Rule, the Committee must decide what Rule applies. Section 6c(8) of the Committee Procedures provides examples of rulings when a player has made a stroke at a ball played under an inapplicable Rule.
- * When a player makes a stroke at a ball under an inapplicable rule, it is likely the player played from a wrong place unless the player played from the location of the prior stroke 14.7a, 18.1
- * Keep in mind the Committee can never rule that the player took unplayable ball relief. Only the player can declare their ball unplayable. 19.1

Loose Impediments

- * Definition: Loose Impediment
- * A loose impediment is a natural loose object (e.g., stick, stone, leaf, banana peel). Definition
- * Attached spider webs are loose impediments. Definition
- * Live insects are loose impediments. Definition
- * Sand and loose soil are not loose impediments. Definition
- * Loose impediments can be removed from anywhere on the course, including bunkers and penalty areas. 15.1a
- * Rather than removing a loose impediment, a player may break the loose impediment. 15.1a
- * Loose impediments cannot be removed while another ball is in motion. 11.3
- * On a putting green and in a teeing area, there is no penalty for causing a ball to move while removing a loose impediment. 15.1b, 13.1d(1), 6.2b(6)
- * For a ball that lies in the general area, a bunker, or a penalty area. A player must not deliberately remove a loose impediment that, if moved when the ball was at rest, would have been likely to have caused the ball to move. 15.1a Exception 1

Lost Ball

- * Definition: Lost
- * A player's ball is lost if it is not found within 3 minutes of searching for it. Definition, 18.2a(1)
- * Time spent identifying a ball and playing a wrong ball does not count as part of the player's 3 minute search time. 18.2a(1)/1
- * Time spent playing a provisional ball does count as part of the player's 3 minute search time. Lost/1
- * A player is not required to search for their original ball, but if a ball is found the player must promptly attempt to identify it. 18.2a(1)
- * A player's ball is considered lost and out of play (a wrong ball) when a provisional ball is played from a point nearer the hole than where the original ball is thought to be (not where the original ball is found). 18.3c(2)
- * A player's ball is considered lost and out of play (a wrong ball) when another ball (other than a provisional ball or second ball) has been put into play under any Rule. 18.3c(2)
- * A ball may not be declared lost. Definition
- * Local Rule E-5 allows an alternative to playing under stroke and distance for a ball that is lost.

Marking/Lifting/Replacing

- * Definition: Mark, Replace
- * A ball lifted under the Rules to be replaced must first be marked. 14.1a
- * A ball-marker may be placed immediately behind, in front of, or to the side of a ball. 14.1a, Clarification 14.1a/1
- * A ball-marker must be an artificial object. Ball-Marker
- * A caddie may mark and lift a player's ball on the putting green without the player's permission. 10.3b(1), 14.1b Exception
- * A caddie may only replace a ball if they were the person who marked and lifted it. Rule 14.2b(1)
- * A ball does not need to be marked when it is lifted under a Rule and is not required to be replaced. 14.1a
- * A ball may be lifted by any means. 14.1a/1
- * A ball must be replaced by placing it into its original position. Replace
- * After a ball is dropped or replaced and is moved by natural forces into another area of the course, the ball is replaced without penalty. (2023) 9.3 Exception 2
- * A ball may be replaced only by the player (Rule 14.2b(1)), the player's partner (Rule 22.2, Rule 23.5a), or the person who lifted or moved it (Rule 14.2b(1)).

Match Play

- * Definition: Match Play
- * Match play is a form of competition where holes are won or lost. The winning player is the player who has won more holes than the other player. A player can win a hole by taking fewer strokes, concession, or a loss of hole penalty. Definition and 3.2a(1)
- * In match play strokes, holes, and the match can be conceded. When a concession is made, it cannot be withdrawn for any reason. 3.2b(1)
- * A concession can be made while a ball is in motion. The concession applies to the next stroke. 3.2b(1)
- * A match that is tied can be extended one hole at a time. Such an extension is the same round, not a new round. 3.2a(4) and 5.1
- * Players can agree that a hole is tied, but one of the players must have made a stroke. 3.2a(2)
- * A player must tell their opponent about a penalty as soon as reasonably possible, unless the opponent is aware of the penalty. 3.2d(1)
- * Players cannot agree to waive a penalty, however a player can tell an opponent that they have breached a Rule but will not enforce the penalty. (2023) Clarification 3.2d(4)/1
- * Each player has a right to know the number of strokes their opponent has taken. 3.2d(1) and 3.2d(1) Exception
- * When a player becomes aware of a rules violation by their opponent, the player has until either player tees off the following hole to make a claim. This is true even if the violation occurred at a previous hole. 20.1b(2)
- * In match play, there is no penalty for a player's ball striking another player's ball on the putting green. 11.1a
- * There is no penalty for accidentally marking an opponents ball. 9.7b Exception
- * The general penalty in match play is loss of hole. General Penalty

No Play Zones

- * Definition: No Play Zone
- * A No Play Zone is a part of the course where the Committee has prohibited play. Relief must be taken. 2.4
- * A No Play Zone can be defined as either a penalty area or as an abnormal course condition. 2.4
- * Abnormal Course Condition
 - * Objects growing within a No Play Zone, but extending outside an abnormal course condition are part of the abnormal course condition. Ground Under Repair, No Play Zone/1
 - * A player must take relief when a player's ball lies in No Play Zone or the No Play Zone interferes with the player's stance or swing. 16.1a(1), 16.1a(2)
- * Penalty Area
 - * Objects growing within a No Play Zone, but extending outside a penalty area are not part of the No Play Zone. Penalty Area, No Play Zone/1
 - * When a player's ball is in a No Play Zone in a penalty area, the player must take penalty relief outside the penalty area. 17.1e(1)
 - * When a player's ball is in a penalty area and a No Play Zone interferes with the player's stance or swing, the player may take free relief in the penalty area or penalty relief outside the penalty area. 17.1e(2)
- * A player is not entitled to relief from a No Play Zone when it is clearly unreasonable to play the ball. 16.1a(3), 17.1e(2)

Obstructions

- * Definition: Obstruction, Movable Obstruction
- * There are 2 types of obstructions. Movable and immovable. Both are artificial objects which can be on or off the golf course. Definition
- * A movable obstruction is an object which can be easily removed (e.g., bench, soda can, rake, golf cart, equipment). An immovable obstruction is an object which cannot be easily removed (e.g., cart path, sprinkler head). Definition
- * Objects defining penalty areas and ground under repair are movable obstructions. Objects defining out of bounds (walls, fences, etc.) and tee markers in the teeing area are not obstructions. Boundary Object
- * A movable obstruction can be removed from anywhere on or off the course, including bunkers and penalty areas. 15.2a(1)
- * Except for a removed flagstick and equipment (including another player's ball), a movable obstruction cannot be moved while a ball is in motion. 11.3, 15.2a Exception 2
- * A ball that hits an obstruction is played as it lies, except when a ball played from the putting green hits a movable obstruction on the putting green the stroke is cancelled and replayed. 11.1b
- * For a ball that lies on a movable obstruction (e.g., chair, blanket), the obstruction is removed and a ball is dropped within 1 club-length of its original position. 15.2a(2)
- * A player is entitled to free relief (nearest relief plus 1 club-length) from an immovable obstruction when the obstruction is on the course and it interferes with the player's stance, swing, or ball except when the ball lies in a penalty area or when it is clearly unreasonable to play the ball. 15.2a(2), 16.1a(3)
- * A ball that moves while removing a movable obstruction is replaced without penalty. For example when removing a penalty area stake. 15.2a(1)
- * A player does not get line of sight relief or mental interference from an immovable obstruction. 16.1a(1)
- * A ball dropped for relief from an immovable obstruction must land in and come to rest in the relief area (1 club-length). 16.1b
- * When a player has interference from an immovable obstruction in a bunker, the player may take free relief in the bunker or back-on-the-line relief (1 penalty stroke) outside the bunker. 16.1c(1) and 16.1c(2)

Opponent

- * Definition: Opponent
- * An opponent is the person a player competes against in a match. Definition
- * An opponent is not an outside influence. Outside Influence
- * There is no penalty for a player's ball hitting their opponent or their opponent's equipment. 11.1a
- * A player may ignore a Rules violation by their opponent, but only without an agreement or discussion with the opponent. 3.2d(4), Clarification 3.2d(4)/1
- * When a player becomes aware of a rules violation by their opponent, the player has until either player tees off the following hole to make a claim. This is true even if the violation occurred at a previous hole. 20.1b(2)
- * A player must tell their opponent about a penalty as soon as reasonably possible, unless the opponent is aware of the penalty. 3.2d(2)
- * At any time an opponent may ask the player the number of strokes the player has taken. 3.2d(1)
 - * During The Play Of A Hole - The answer must be given before the opponent takes an action (makes a stroke or concedes a stroke).
 - * Between Holes - Before either player makes a stroke to begin a new hole or before the result of the match is final.
- * An opponent and player may not agree to ignore a Rule of Golf. 3.2d(4)
- * A player has the option of requiring an opponent to re-play a stroke when it is played out of order, provided no other player has played a stroke. 6.1b(1), 6.4a(2)
- * A player may not mark and lift an opponent's ball without the opponent's permission. 9.5b
- * Opponents can agree to resolve a Rules issue without a Rules Official and that decision is conclusive. 20.1b(1)

Order of Play

- * Definition: Honour
- * In gross and handicap stroke play competitions, the lowest gross score has the honor. 6.4b(1)
- * In match play the player or side that won the prior hole plays first. 6.4a(1)
- * The order of play after the tee shot is the location of the ball (even if it's in a penalty area) farthest from the hole. 6.4d(1)
- * When a provisional or stroke and distance ball is played from the tee, it is played after the other players have teed off. After the tee shot, provisional and stroke and distance balls are played immediately. 6.4c
- * In stroke play, there is no penalty for playing out of order, unless the players did so to gain an advantage. 6.4b(1)
- * In match play, a shot played out of order can only be recalled only when no one else has played. 6.4a(2)
- * Partners in four-ball match play can play in any order. 23.6
- * In foursomes, the Committee can determine which player plays the 1st tee shot. 22.4a

Other Equipment

- * Definition: Equipment
- * Equipment includes the player's ball, clubs, tees, and anything the player is carrying. Definition
- * Distance measuring devices are allowed unless prohibited by the Committee. 4.3a(1)
- * Resin, powder, and drying agents are allowed. 4.3a(5)
- * A towel or handkerchief may be wrapped around the grip. 4.3a(5)
- * Using a weighted donut or swing aid during the round is not permitted. 4.3a(6)
- * Using a non-conforming tee is treated the same as an equipment penalty. 6.2b(2)
- * Using grass is an accepted method of gauging wind direction, using string or yarn is not allowed. 4.3a(2)
- * Listening to a radio is only permitted for short periods of time. 4.3a(4)
- * Putting an alignment aid or club on the ground for aiming is the general penalty, it cannot be undone. 10.2b(3)
- * Using equipment in a manner not generally accepted (e.g., holding a ball while putting) is not permitted. 4.3a
- * The penalty for using equipment not allowed is the general penalty for the 1st infraction and disqualification for the 2nd infraction. 4.3 Penalty Statement

Out of Bounds

- * Definition: Out of Bounds, Boundary Object
- * Out of Bounds stakes should be white, but are not required to be white. Definition
- * When stakes or fences are used to define out of bounds, the lower course-side points on the stakes define the OB line. Definition
- * The out of bounds line extends upwards and downwards. Definition
- * A ball that crosses out of bounds but lands on the course is still on the course unless the Committee determines otherwise. Definition
- * A ball is out of bounds when all of the ball is on the OB line/stakes or beyond the OB line/stakes. In other words, when any part of the ball is on the course the ball is in bounds. 18.2a(2)
- * A ball that comes to rest out of bounds is out of bounds even if natural forces bring the ball back onto the course. 18.2a(2)
- * A ball played from out of bounds is a wrong ball. Wrong Ball
- * Out of Bounds stakes cannot be removed. If one is removed when it affects the players stroke it must be put back into place before the stroke. 8.1a(1), 8.1c(1)
- * The penalty for hitting a ball out of bounds is stroke and distance. 18.2b
- * Local Rule E-5 allows an alternative to playing under stroke and distance for a ball that is out of bounds.

Pace of Play

- * A player is responsible for starting on time. 9:00:01 is late for a 9:00:00 tee time. Only in extraordinary circumstances (or a course delay) may the player tee off late. 5.3a, 5.3a Exception 3
- * Penalties for slow play during a round are: 5.6a
 - * 1 penalty stroke for the 1st violation
 - * the general penalty for the 2nd violation
 - * disqualification for the 3rd violation
- * In stroke play, there is no penalty for playing out of turn to save time. 6.4b(1)
- * In match play, there is no penalty for playing out of turn to save time when the players agree. 6.4a(2) Exception
- * A player is allowed a short delay in waiting for a ruling, but must not stop play. 5.6a
- * A player may stop play if they feel they are in danger of lightning. 5.7a
- * In match play, players may agree to suspend play, but must not delay the competition. When one player wishes to resume play, the agreement is terminated and play must continue. 5.7a
- * When a round has been suspended, players are allowed a reasonable amount of time to decide if they want to complete play of the current hole. 5.7b(2)
- * When a round has been suspended, once a player's ball is marked and lifted the player may not resume play until play is resumed. 5.7b(2)

Partner

- * Definition: Partner, Side
- * A partner is someone who plays together with another player in either match play or stroke play. Definition
- * A partner is not an outside influence. Outside Influence
- * In any format, a player may mark, lift, replace and drop the partner's ball. Foursomes: 22.2; Four-Ball: 23.5a
- * Partners may share clubs as long as the total number of clubs is no more than 14. Foursomes: 22.5; Four-Ball: 23.7
- * If a player plays their partner's ball, the penalty is to the player, not the partner. 23.9a Exception
- * When a player creates a penalty with the partner's ball, the penalty applies to the partner. 23.5b
- * In four-ball, partners may play in any order. 23.6
- * In four-ball, only one score needs to be clearly identifiable on the scorecard. 23.2b
- * In foursomes, the Committee may decide which partner tees off first. 22.4a
- * In foursomes, the partner to hit second must be either on the 1st tee on time or in the area where the partner's tee shot is expected to come to rest. 22.4b
- * A side has completed a hole (e.g., can practice) when both players have completed the hole. 23.3c

Penalty Areas

- * Definition: Penalty Area
- * There are 2 types of penalty areas, Yellow and Red:
 - * Yellow Options
 - * Play ball as it lies 17.1b
 - * Stroke and Distance 17.1d(1)
 - * Back-on-the-line using the point where the ball last crossed into the margin of the penalty area. 17.1d(2)
 - * Red Options
 - * Same as Yellow plus lateral relief (2 club-lengths) using the point where the ball last crossed into the margin of the penalty area. 17.1d(3)
- * The margin of a penalty area extends upwards and downwards. Definition
- * A ball is in the penalty area when it touches the penalty area line. 17.1a
- * It must be known or virtually certain (95%) to take relief from a penalty area. 17.1c, Known or Virtually Certain
- * Loose impediments and movable obstructions can be removed from a penalty area. 15.1a, 15.2a(1)
- * A player may ground their club and touch the water in a penalty area. 17.1b
- * A ball played from a penalty area which does not leave the penalty area, may be played under stroke and distance or using any of the penalty area relief options from the stroke which put the ball in the penalty area. 17.2a
- * A player may not declare their ball unplayable in a penalty area, take abnormal course condition, or embedded ball relief. 17.3

Penalty Rules

- * When more than one penalty occurs simultaneously only the larger of the two penalties counts. For example, a player improves the area of their intended swing and the ball moves. (2 PS + 1 PS) = 2 PS. When the penalties are the same, the penalties are not added together (1 PS + 1 PS) = 1 PS. For example, a player lifts their ball and cleans the ball when not allowed. 1.3c(4)
- * When multiple penalties occur (including different penalties), a player is only penalized for the larger of the two penalties unless there is an intervening event (a stroke or the player becomes aware of the breach). (2023) 1.3c(4), Clarification 1.3c(4)/1
- * A player does not receive multiple penalties for the continuation of the same penalty (e.g., advice for the same shot, multiple practice strokes, improving area of intended swing, etc.). 1.3c(4)
- * However, when there is an intervening event, both penalties count. For example, between practice swings in a bunker, a player is told that is not permitted (2 PS + 2 PS) = 4 PS. 1.3c(4)
- * Capped Penalties
 - * Carrying more than 14 clubs. 4.1b(1)
 - * Sharing clubs when total exceeds 14 clubs. 4.1b(2)
 - * Replacing clubs. 4.1b(3)
- * Graduated Penalties:
 - * Equipment 4.3a, 4.3b
 - * Practice on Course Before or Between Rounds 5.2
 - * Non-Conforming Tee or Teeing Ball in Wrong Way 6.2b(2)
 - * Pace of Play 5.6a
- * Penalties that apply to the next hole when discovered between holes:
 - * Practice 5.5a, 5.5b, 5.5c
 - * Pace of Play 5.6a
 - * Caddies 10.3a

Player

- * The player is responsible for knowing the Rules. This includes the Rules of Golf and Local Rules for the competition. 1.3a
- * The player's judgement will be accepted in applying the Rules. 1.3b(2)
- * The player is responsible for
 - * using conforming clubs 4.1a(1)
 - * having 14 or fewer clubs 4.1b(1)
 - * using a conforming ball 4.2a(1)
 - * having only one caddie 10.3a(1)
 - * being at the first tee on time 5.3a
 - * ensuring the scorecard is signed by the marker and themselves. 3.3b(2)
- * The player is not responsible for ensuring their handicap on the scorecard is correct, adding up the total gross score or applying the player's handicap in a handicap competition. 3.3b(4), Clarification 3.3b(4)/1
- * The player is responsible for the actions of the caddie only during the round. 10.3c
- * A player who knowingly excludes a penalty will be disqualified from the competition, even if the act is discovered after the competition is closed. 20.2e(2)
- * Players must not begin a round with an agreement to ignore any Rule or penalty. 1.3b(1)
- * The Committee can establish a code of conduct for the players that includes penalties. 1.2b

Practice

- * The penalty for practicing during a hole is the general penalty. 5.5a
- * In all forms of play, a player is allowed to practice putting and chipping during a round on (or near) the last putting green played, a practice green, or the next teeing area. But never from a bunker. 5.5b
- * A player is allowed to practice on the course between days of a competition, but not on the same day prior to a stroke play competition. 5.2b
- * A player is allowed to practice on any holes not being played on the day of the competition. (2023)
Clarification 5.2/1
- * A player may not practice on a hole while their partner is still playing the current hole or has teed off the following hole. 6.5/1
- * A practice swing with a pine cone or similar object not representing a golf ball is not a practice stroke.
5.5a/1
- * When play resumes after a suspension, all practice must cease immediately except as provided in 5.5b
5.5c/1
- * The Committee may prohibit practice on the putting green of the last hole played. 5.5b

Provisional Ball

- * Definition: Provisional Ball
- * A provisional ball can only be played when the player believes their original ball might not be found (outside of a penalty area) or is out of bounds. 18.3a
- * The player must announce (by using the word "provisional" or some other clear indication) to anyone that the ball is being played provisionally. 18.3b, 18.3b/1
- * The provisional ball retains its status as a provisional ball until it is played from a point beyond where the original ball is likely to be at which point it becomes the ball in play. 18.3c(2)
- * If the original ball is found within 3 minutes or there is known or virtual certainty that the original ball is in a penalty area, the provisional ball becomes a wrong ball and must not be played. 18.3c(3)
- * If the provisional ball is taken out of the hole before the original ball is found within 3 minutes, the provisional ball is holed. 18.3c(2)/3
- * When a provisional ball is not identifiable from the original ball, the player must pick one ball as the provisional ball and the other ball is considered lost. 18.3c(2)
- * A player is not required to search for their original ball, but if a ball is found the player must promptly attempt to identify it. 18.2a(1)
- * Strokes and penalty strokes only attributable to the provisional ball do not count in the player's score if the original ball is found. 18.3c(3)

Putting Greens

- * Definition: Putting Green
- * The putting green is an area specifically prepared for putting. Definition
- * Almost all damage to the putting green (not natural imperfections or aeration holes) can be repaired prior to any shot. 13.1c
- * Dew, frost, and water may not be removed from the putting green or the hole. Loose Impediment
- * There is no penalty to anyone for accidentally moving a ball or ball-marker on the putting green. The ball or ball-marker must be replaced. 9.4b Exception 3, 9.7b Exception, 13.1d(1)
- * When a ball on the putting green moves after it has been lifted and replaced, it must be replaced without penalty. 9.3 Exception 1, 13.1d(2)
- * Interference from a wrong green occurs from stance, intended swing, or ball. Relief must be taken. 13.1f(1)
- * The ball may strike a flagstick left in the hole, a removed flag, or the person attending the flagstick if accidental without penalty. The ball is played as it lies. 13.2a(2) and 13.2b(2)
- * When a ball played from the putting green accidentally strikes any of the following on a putting green, the ball is played as it lies. 11.1b(2)
 - * The player or their club,
 - * The flagstick or the person holding the flagstick, 13.2a(2) and 13.2b(2)
 - * A ball-marker or another ball at rest,
 - * A loose impediment.
- * When a ball played from the putting green accidentally strikes a person, animal, or movable obstruction other than the above, the stroke is cancelled and replayed without penalty. 11.1b(2)
- * When a ball played from the putting green is deliberately stopped or deflected the player must replay the stroke with the original or another ball from the spot where the stroke was taken. The person stopping or deflecting the ball gets the general penalty. 11.2c(2) and 11.2b
- * The line of play may be touched for repair or in pointing out the line of play. 10.2b(2)
- * A player's caddie or partner must not stand behind the player to assist in lining up their putt. 10.2b(4)
- * A player must not set anything down on or off the putting green to indicate the line of play. The penalty is immediate. 10.2b(3)
- * An opponent or another player (not partner) may stand behind the player while the player is putting but it is not proper etiquette.
- * A player may lift their ball on the putting green while another ball is in motion to prevent it from being hit. 11.3 Exception
- * See Situations > Deflected, Situations > Ball Holed for more information regarding actions on the putting green.

Referee

- * Definition: Referee
- * A referee must rule on all matters seen or brought to their attention. 20.1b(1)
- * In match play, a referee not assigned to a match may only rule on matters brought to their attention by the players, not on any other issues (excluding code of conduct, unreasonable delay, time for search, late to first tee, and agreeing to ignore a Rule) which the referee sees. 20.1b(1)
- * A referee may ask the Committee for assistance before making a ruling. 20.2b
- * An incorrect ruling by a referee can be corrected. 20.2d

Regression

- * Regression occurs when a player plays a shot from within a penalty area and the shot doesn't leave the penalty area, goes into another penalty area, or goes out of bounds.
- * In all of these cases the player always has the option (with 1 penalty stroke) to proceed according to the penalty area rule based on the shot which entered the penalty area, regardless of how many shots occurred from within the penalty area.
- * For example, if a player hits their tee shot into yellow penalty area and leaves their 2nd shot in the same penalty area, the player may:
 - * Play the ball from the new location in the penalty area.
 - * Drop the ball in the penalty area under stroke and distance with respect to the prior shot with 1 penalty stroke.
 - * Drop the ball outside the penalty area using back-on-the-line relief with 1 penalty stroke from where the original shot entered the penalty area.
 - * Or, hit again from the tee under stroke and distance with 1 penalty stroke with respect to the original shot which entered the penalty area.
- * For a shot hit out of bounds from a penalty area, the player may:
 - * Drop the ball in the penalty area under stroke and distance with 1 penalty stroke. At this point, for an additional penalty stroke, the player still has the last 2 options above available.
 - * Or, proceed directly outside the penalty area with 2 penalty strokes (1 for out of bounds and 1 for leaving the penalty area) using either of the last 2 options above.

Scoring

- * Definition: Marker, Scorecard
- * The player is responsible for signing or initialing their scorecard and ensuring that the marker has also signed or initialed the scorecard. 3.3b(2)
- * There is no penalty to the player for the marker failing to sign the scorecard if the reason is beyond the player's control. 3.3b(2) Exception
- * In stroke play, the Committee is responsible for making sure the player's handicap is correct, the total score, and the application of handicap strokes. (2023) 3.3b(4), 3.3b(4)
- * Multiple markers do not need to certify the hole scores on the scorecard if one marker sees the player play all of the holes. (2023) 3.3b(1)
- * The scorecard must have an accurate score on every hole. 3.3b(3)
- * In stroke play, if a player records a score on a hole lower than actual taken the player is disqualified. 3.3b(3)
- * In stroke play, if a player records a score on a hole higher than actual taken the higher score counts. 3.3b(3)
- * If a player fails to include any penalty strokes which they did not know about, those strokes are added to the players score. 3.3b(3) Exception
- * The player cannot make changes to the scorecard once it has been signed by the marker or turned in without the approval of the Committee or marker. 3.3b(2)
- * In a Four-Ball competition, the score of only one player of the players is required, but the score must be attributed to the correct player. Clarification 23.2b/1
- * In a Four-Ball competition, the Committee may use either of the players score when the scores are the same, otherwise the lower score is used (even if it is determined to include penalty strokes unknown to the player). Clarification 23.2b/2

Searching/Identifying

- * A player has 3 minutes to find their ball. Additional time is allowed to reach and identify the ball. Lost, 18.2a(1)
- * An additional minute is the amount of time a player has to identify their ball after the 3 minute search time has elapsed. (2023) Clarification 18.2a(1)/3
- * Time spent playing a wrong ball does not count as part of the player's 3 minute search time. 18.2a(1)/1
- * Time spent searching for a player's ball while play is suspended is counted as part of the player's 3 minute search time. Clarification 18.2a(1)/1
- * Time spent playing a provisional ball does count as part of the player's 3 minute search time. Lost/1
- * There is no penalty on anyone for accidentally moving a ball while trying to find or identify a ball. This includes removing loose impediments and movable obstructions. 7.4
- * A ball moved while searching must be replaced. If the exact spot is not known it must be estimated and placed. 7.4
- * If loose impediments are moved while searching for a ball, the loose impediments do not need to be replaced. 7.1a
- * The conditions affecting the stroke may be improved while fairly searching for a ball. 7.1a
- * When a ball is buried in sand, a small portion of the ball may be left visible for the player to see. 7.1b
- * A ball may be cleaned only to the extent necessary to identify it. 7.3
- * The ball must be marked before it is lifted to be identified. 7.3

Second Ball

- * A player may play a second ball in stroke play when the player is unsure of their options. 20.1c(3)
- * A second ball cannot be played in match play. 20.1b(4)
- * The declaration of playing a second ball must be made before making a stroke with the original or substituted ball. 20.1c(3), Clarification 20.1c(3)/2
- * The player should announce which ball they want to count for their score. If the player does not make an announcement, the first ball played is ruled to count if allowed by the rules. 20.1c(3)
- * Which ball will be counted in the player's score depends upon whether one or both balls were played according to the Rules 20.1c(4)
- * The player must report that two balls were played to the Committee. 20.1c(3)

Status of Ball

- * A ball may be:
 - * Ball In Play. In Play
 - * Provisional Ball. Provisional Ball
 - * Second Ball. Rule 14.7b(1)
 - * Substituted Ball. Substituted Ball
 - * Wrong Ball. Wrong Ball
- * Ball In Play In Play
 - * A ball is In Play when a stroke has been made at it from inside the teeing area or from outside the teeing area in match play when the opponent does not cancel the stroke.
 - * A ball that has been marked and not yet lifted or a ball that has been replaced with the ball-marker still in place is In Play.
 - * A ball is In Play even when it is replaced, placed, or dropped in a wrong way or wrong place.
 - * A ball is not In Play when it has been lifted, is lost or out of bounds, or has been holed.
 - * A ball that is not In Play is a Wrong Ball.
- * Provisional Ball Provisional Ball
 - * A ball that the player plays in case the original ball is lost or out of bounds.
 - * A provisional ball becomes the player's ball In Play when the original ball is lost or the provisional ball is played from a location nearer to the hole than the estimated location of the original ball. 18.3c(2)
 - * The provisional ball must be abandoned when the original ball is known to be in a penalty area. 18.3c(3)
- * Second Ball Rule 14.7b(1)
 - * A ball played when the player believes they may have played from a wrong place. 14.7b(1)
 - * A ball played when a player is uncertain of a Rule. 20.1c(3)
 - * The player should announce which ball is to count. If the player does not announce which ball is to count, the first ball played will count if allowed by the Rules. Clarification 20.1c(3)
- * Substituted Ball Substitute
 - * A ball has been substituted when it replaces the player's ball In Play.
 - * A substituted ball is In Play even when it is not allowed to replace the original ball.
 - * The penalty for playing an incorrectly substituted ball is 1 penalty stroke. (2023) 6.3b(3)

Status of Ball

- * Wrong Ball Wrong Ball

- * A wrong ball is any ball other than the ball In Play, a Provisional Ball, or a Second Ball.
- * A wrong ball could be another player's ball, a stray ball, the player's own ball when lifted or out of bounds.

Stroke Play

- * Definition: Stroke Play
- * A round is 18 holes or fewer and must be played in the order set by the Committee. Round
- * A stroke play play-off is a new round, it is not a continuation of the current round. 5.1
- * In stroke play, the player is not responsible for adding the score and applying the handicap, it is the Committee's responsibility. 3.3b(4)
- * If a player records a score on a hole lower than actually taken the player is disqualified. 3.3b(3)
- * If a player records a score on a hole higher than actually taken the higher score counts. 3.3b(3)
- * In stroke play, a player may play a second ball when the player is unsure of their options. 20.1c(3)
- * If a player's ball in motion hits another ball at rest on the putting green and both balls were on the putting green before the stroke, the player gets a 2 stroke penalty and the ball is played as it lies. 11.1a Exception, 11.1b Exception 2
- * When a stroke play round is cancelled all strokes and penalties, including disqualifications, are also cancelled.
- * The general penalty in stroke play is 2 strokes. General Penalty

Teeing Areas

- * Definition: Teeing Area
- * The teeing area is 2 club-lengths in depth as measured by the player's longest club (not putter). Definition, Club-Length
- * The maximum length of a tee is 4 inches (101.6 mm). Tee
- * The tee markers being used on the hole being played must not be moved, all other tee markers are movable obstructions. 6.2b(4) and 6.2b(4)/1
- * A player may stand outside the teeing area to play their tee shot. 6.2b(1)
- * Using a non-conforming tee is the same penalty as an equipment penalty. 6.2b(2)
- * In stroke play, a ball must be played from within the teeing area to start a hole. 6.1b(2)
- * In match play, there is no penalty for teeing outside the teeing area, but the opponent may require the stroke to be replayed correctly. 6.4a(2)
- * There is no penalty for hitting a ball falling off a tee. 6.2b(5)
- * A ball coming to rest in the teeing area after a stroke can be substituted, moved and/or re-teed without penalty. 6.2b(5), 6.2b(6), 6.2b(6)/1
- * Ground inside the teeing area can be altered before any shot from the teeing area. 6.2b(3) and 8.1b(8)
- * Ground outside the teeing area cannot be altered before any shot from the teeing area when the changes improve the conditions affecting the stroke. 8.1a(1)

The Committee

- * The Committee is the person or group in charge of the competition or the course.
- * The Committee is responsible for adding the players' score and applying the players' handicap. 3.3b(4)
- * When a stroke play round is cancelled all strokes and penalties, including disqualifications, are also cancelled.

The Stroke

- * Definition: Stroke
- * A stroke is the forward movement of a club with the intent to strike a ball. Definition
- * A player must not push, scrape, or scoop the ball. 10.1a and 10.1a/1
- * A player must not anchor the club against their body or create an indirect anchor point. 10.1b, 10.1b/1
- * A player must not stand across the line of play to make a stroke unless it is to avoid another player's line of play. 10.1c
- * A player must not get physical assistance from anyone while making a stroke or protection from the elements, such as rain, wind, and sun. 10.2b(5)
- * A player may use any part of the clubhead to make a stroke. 10.1a, 10.1a/2
- * The club does not need to come into contact with the ball for the stroke to count. 10.1a/2
- * A player may only make a stroke at a moving ball if the ball is moving in water or falling off a tee. 10.1d
- * When a player's club breaks during the backswing, the swing is not a stroke, but the player could be penalized if the ball moves. Stroke/1
- * When a player's club breaks during a stroke (the downswing), the stroke counts unless the player stops or intentionally misses the ball. Stroke/1

Unplayable Ball

- * Only the player and the player's partner can declare a ball unplayable. 19.1, 22.2, and 23.5a
- * A ball in a penalty area cannot be unplayable. The player must take penalty area relief. 19.1
- * There are three 1 penalty stroke relief options for an unplayable ball:
 - * Stroke and Distance. 19.2a
 - * Back-on-the-Line Relief. 19.2b
 - * 2 club-lengths Lateral Relief. 19.2c
- * Only for an unplayable ball in a bunker:
 - * Stroke and Distance relief is still an option. 19.2a
 - * 2 club-lengths lateral relief (1 penalty stroke) must be taken in the bunker. 19.3a
 - * Back-on-the-line relief (1 penalty stroke) must be taken in the bunker. 19.3a
 - * Back-on-the-line relief (2 penalty strokes) must be taken outside the bunker. 19.3b
- * When taking Stroke and Distance relief for a ball played from the Teeing Area, the ball may be teed anywhere in the teeing area. 14.6a
- * When taking Stroke and Distance relief for a ball played from the General Area or a bunker, the relief area includes 1 club-length from the location of the prior stroke. 14.6b
- * When taking back-on-the-Line relief, the relief area includes 1 club-length in any direction (including forward) from the location where the ball first touched the line. (2023) 19.2b

Wrong Ball

- * Definition: Wrong Ball
- * A wrong ball is any ball other than the player's ball in play, a provisional ball, or a second ball. Definition
- * A wrong ball includes: Wrong Ball
 - * Another player's ball.
 - * A stray ball.
- * A player's own ball becomes a wrong ball when:
 - * The ball is out of bounds.
 - * The ball is not found within 3 minutes.
 - * The ball has been lifted. In Play
 - * The ball has been substituted for another ball. In Play
 - * There is no intent for the ball to be in play. (e.g., The ball has been set aside after being marked.) In Play
- * Strokes played with a wrong ball do not count in the player's score. 6.3c(1)
- * Time spent playing a wrong ball does not count in the time the player is allowed to search for their original or provisional ball. Clarification 18.2a(1)/1
- * There is no penalty for making a stroke at a wrong ball moving in water. 6.3c(1) Exception
- * The first player to play a wrong ball in match play loses the hole. 6.3c(1)
- * When a player plays their partner's ball, only the player is penalized. 23.9a Exception
- * A stroke at a partial stray ball is still a stroke at a wrong ball. Wrong Ball/1
- * There is no penalty for playing a wrong ball after the completion of a hole. Clarification 6.5/1
- * A player is not permitted to play a second ball in match play. If the opponent makes a timely objection, the second ball played is a wrong ball. Clarification 20.1b(4)/1
- * When a player's ball is hit out of bounds, is thrown back onto the course and the player plays the ball, that ball is a wrong ball, but in this limited situation the player may not be penalized for playing a wrong ball. Clarification 9.6/4

Wrong Place

- * Definition: Wrong Place
- * Examples of playing from a wrong place include:
 - * A moved ball that is not replaced.
 - * A ball replaced or dropped in the wrong location.
 - * A ball played from a no play zone.
 - * A ball played from a wrong green.
- * Playing a ball from outside teeing area when starting a hole is not considered playing from a wrong place because the error must be corrected. Wrong Place
- * If playing from a wrong place does not give the player a significant advantage, the player is assessed the general penalty and must finish the hole with the ball played from the wrong place. 14.7a, 14.7b(1)
- * If playing from a wrong place does give the player a significant advantage, the stroke does not count, the player is assessed the general penalty, and the mistake must be corrected otherwise the player is disqualified. Serious Breach, 14.7b(1)
- * If a player fails to replay a stroke from a putting green when required (for example, when their ball played from a putting green hits another ball in motion), the penalty is the general penalty not a wrong place penalty. 11.1b, 11.2c, Wrong Place
- * The player must correct a serious breach before starting the following hole or in the case of the final hole before returning the scorecard. 14.7b(1)
- * Serious breach only applies in stroke play. It does not apply in match play because the player would lose the hole for playing from a wrong place. Serious Breach
- * When a player tries to correct the mistake of playing from a wrong place and plays 2 balls, the player must report the facts to the Committee. (2023) 14.7b(2)
- * A ball played from an incorrect place without the intent to put the ball into play is a wrong ball, not a ball played from a wrong place. In Play