

Golf under Singles Stroke Play, without Handicaps

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## INTRODUCTION

### Singles Stroke Play without Handicaps

Singles Play - Singles stroke play golf is one form of officially regulated golf competition. Another official form of golf competition is singles match play. Singles means golfing without partners.

Partner Play - Official forms of match play and stroke play using teams of partners are threesomes match play, foursomes match play, three-ball match play, best-ball match play, four-ball match play, and four-ball stroke play.

Minor Competitions - The other official forms of golf competition are bogey competitions, par competitions, and Stableford competitions.

Handicap - The official forms of golf competition can be played using a handicap system.

Official Rules of Golf - This article only discusses singles stroke play golf using no handicap system. For more information about the other official forms of competition, see the Official Rules of Golf.

All Actions Count - Singles stroke play golf without handicaps is the only form of golf competition which counts each stroke taken by a player on each hole. Singles stroke play golf without handicaps allows a player to measure his or her skills directly against the course itself, unaffected by the play of others. As such, performance on different courses can be directly compared.

#### Competition

The rules of golf apply to golf competitions. Golfers not involved in competitions have no referee or Committee, nor the other arrangements listed in the official rules of golf.

Noncompetitive - This article suggests a set of rules for players not involved in competitions, for golfers who want to follow the rules of golf at all times. The suggested rules are based on the official rules of golf for singles stroke play with no handicaps. The determination of the applicable rule (and penalty, if any) is left solely to the judgment of the player himself or herself. This article attempts to make it easy to know and apply the rules and penalties.

Courtesy - It is suggested that a new golf courtesy be extended. A player in a group can declare that he or she chooses to play noncompetitively and to follow the official rules of golf for singles stroke play with no handicap. Such a player does not use any handicapping system and does not participate in any betting. As a courtesy, other members of the group acknowledge that the player is playing solely for the love of, and out of respect for, the game of golf.

Purposes - Noncompetitive golf might appeal to golfers whose main goal is to improve their game. It might also appeal to persons who dislike competition or who dislike the social aspects of golf.

#### Golf as a Sport

Knowing All Rules - Golf is a sport that requires a player in competition to know all the rules. Each player bears responsibility to know and proceed under the rules. Golf requires players to penalize themselves. It uses referees only to make decisions about disputes. Other sports rely on referees to enforce the rules and penalize players.

Stamina - Golf is a sport characterized by stamina and balance, rather than strength or speed. Golf requires stamina because one round of golf averages three hours of continual individual effort, far longer than any other major sport. Golf offers no time-outs or and has no halves, quarters, or periods. Weather conditions affect golf play more than the play of other sports, and no relief is provided in the rules.

Balance - Golf requires balance because the golf swing is seemingly an unnatural swing. A golf swing is made at a low-lying object. The swing requires a pronounced bending over, a full turn of the body, and different coordinated motions of the arms, shoulders, hips, and head. The swing is characterized by touch, coordination, and timing rather than strength or speed. Unlike other sports, the ball is standing still.

However, the ball may lie on angled ground or in different types of ground. A player may have to stand on uneven, rough, or mushy ground. Furthermore, the ball is smaller than in other sports and the club is long and small.

All Mistakes Count - Unlike other sports, stroke play golf without partners or handicaps makes each action taken by a player count. No action can be canceled by a later action. Mistakes cannot be negated and cannot fortuitously lead to a gain. Golf typically has a higher level of frustration and stress than other sports.

Varied Conditions - The field of play in golf is larger than, and varies more than, in other sports. A golf course has more distractions than occur in other sports. What can happen is more varied and surprising. The unexpected occurs more often.

No Offense or Defense - Alone among sports, golf has no offense or defense. A player does not have outmaneuver, fool, or overpower an opponent. A player never tries to interfere with another player's play. There are no personal fouls. Also, a referee does not have to take sides but only interpret the rules. Peculiarly, golf is the only competition where it is likely you cannot see your opponent!

#### CONCEPTS AS ILLUSTRATED BY WALKING A GOLF COURSE

##### Definitions Used in Golf

This section uses the metaphor of walking a golf course to introduce the definitions used in golf. Each defined term is assigned to a main category of golfing knowledge. To find the meaning of a definition, look in the Definitions section, where each word or phrase is presented in alphabetical order.

Definitions and Rules - The definitions listed are part of the rules of golf. Whenever a defined word is used, it always carries the precise meaning given in the Definitions section.

Noncompetitive - Some of the definitions listed do not apply to noncompetitive golf but are included for completeness. Such definitions are marked by (C).

Walking - Walking the golf course is the preferred method of golfing. A player may carry the clubs, use a hand cart, or use a caddie. Motorized golf carts are allowed.

##### The Course and the Holes

A golf course consists of 9 or 18 golf holes. A golf hole can have the following defined parts, typically in this order from beginning to end:

- \* Course
- \* Teeing ground
- \* Tee-markers
- \* Out-of-bounds

- \* Through the green
- \* Hazard
- \* Water hazard
- \* Lateral water hazard
- \* Bunker
- \* Putting green
- \* Flagstick
- \* Hole

#### Situations

On each defined part of the golf course specifically defined conditions and situations can occur, each affecting the play of the ball in a different manner:

- \* Abnormal ground conditions
- \* Artificial object
- \* Casual water
- \* Ground under repair
- \* Loose impediments
- \* Obstruction
- \* Outside agency

#### Equipment

Golf equipment is regulated by the rules of golf. Use only approved equipment. On the course, a player may be allowed or disallowed these defined items of equipment:

- \* Club with a grip, head/clubhead, shaft, and clubface
- \* Grip
- \* Head/Clubhead
- \* Shaft
- \* Clubface
- \* Putter
- \* Ball
- \* Cart
- \* Ball-marker
- \* Tee
- \* Artificial device

#### Persons Involved

The following defined persons may be involved in a golf round:

- \* Caddie
- \* Committee (C)
- \* Competitor (C)
- \* Fellow-Competitor (C)
- \* Forecaddie (C)
- \* Group
- \* Marker (C)
- \* Observer (C)
- \* Player

\* Referee (C)

## The Ball

Golf balls are regulated by the rules of golf. Use only approved golf balls. A ball on the golf course is in one of the defined states:

- \* Ball in play
- \* Cleaned
- \* Covered
- \* Dropped
- \* Embedded
- \* Holed or ball holed
- \* Identified
- \* Lie
- \* Lifted
- \* Line of play
- \* Line of putt
- \* Lost ball or ball lost
- \* Marked
- \* Moved or move
- \* Nearest Point of Relief
- \* Placed
- \* Provisional ball
- \* Rub of the green
- \* Second ball
- \* Unseen
- \* Wrong ball

## The Swing

A golf swing has the following defined parts:

- \* Addressing the ball
- \* Backswing
- \* Divot
- \* Grounding club
- \* Interference
- \* Penalty stroke
- \* Stance or taking a stance
- \* Stroke
- \* Swing

## Other Concepts

To understand the rules of golf, the following definitions are also needed:

- \* Advice
- \* Equity
- \* Foreign material
- \* Honor
- \* Round
- \* Rule

- \* Side (C)
- \* Stipulated round (C)
- \* Testing
- \* Wrong information
- \* Wrong place
- \* Wrong putting green
- \* Wrong score

## RULES

### Rules of Noncompetitive Golf

The official rules of golf have three sections and three appendices.

Section I - Etiquette, including Courtesy on the Course, Priority on the Course, and Care of the Course.

Section II - Definitions.

Section III - The Rules of Play, including The Game (rules 1-3); Clubs and the Ball (rules 4-5); Player's Responsibilities (rules 6-9); Order of Play (rules 10); Teeing Ground (rules 11); Playing the Ball (rules 12-15); The Putting Green (rules 16-17); Ball Moved, Deflected, or Stopped (rules 18-19); Relief Situations and Procedure (rules 20-28); Other Forms of Play (rules 29-32); and Administration (rules 33-34).

Appendix I - Local Rules; Conditions of the Competition.

Appendix II - Design of Clubs.

Appendix III - The Ball.

There are also rules of amateur status.

Numbering - The rules suggested for noncompetitive golf have the same numbering as the official rules of competitive golf. Rules which do not apply to noncompetitive golf are so marked.

Action - The wording of the rules has been amended to express all rules in terms of actions. An action is a response to a specific situation stated in the rules.

Required or Prohibited Actions - Some actions are optional, some are required, and some are prohibited. In this article, optional actions feature the word "optional" or "optionally". Prohibited actions use the word "not" or "no". All other actions are required.

Penalties - A rule can have a penalty associated with it. A penalty is assessed for performing a specific action prohibited by the rule or for failing to perform a required action. For each penalty, the amount of the penalty and the action which causes the penalty are stated specifically, separately from the rule. The penalty can be one stroke, two strokes, or disqualification of the round.

## Section III - Rules 1 through 34

### Rule 1 - The Game of Golf in General

#### 1-1. General

Stroke one golf ball one or more times from the teeing ground into the hole, in accordance with the Rules of Golf. Play the specified series of holes in correct sequence. Play the same ball for all strokes. Do not maintain contact with the ball for more than an instant when stroking; do not push the ball. Do not concede a stroke or accept a conceded stroke.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 1-2. Influence on the Ball

Do not act so as to influence the position or movement of a ball, unless allowed by another Rule. Do not step on the line of putt. Do not use equipment to protect yourself or the ball from wind or rain. Do not roll or place the ball in a better lie. Do not alter any plants near the ball. Remove a movable obstruction using Rule 24-1.

\* Two Strokes - Acting to change the position or movement of any ball in play, unless allowed by another Rule.

#### 1-3. Agreement to Waive Rules

Agree to follow the Rules of Golf. Do not agree to waive any Rule or penalty. Take penalties when required. Hole out every hole. Do not take mulligans. Show courtesy. Play in turn; only play out of turn using Rule 10-2c.

\* Disqualification - Agreeing to waive any Rule or penalty.

#### 1-4. Points Not Covered by the Rules

For a situation not covered by the Rules, decide by equity. If a stroke might damage an animal or plant or their habitats, drop the ball nearby. If taking a stroke is dangerous to the player, drop the ball elsewhere. If a ball goes from or to an undefined part of the course, drop the ball on the course fairly.

\* No Specific Penalty

### Rule 2 - Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

### Rule 3 - Stroke Play

#### 3-1. Winner

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 3-2. Failure to Hole Out

Hole out each hole.

\* Disqualification - Failing to stroke the ball into the hole at a hole before playing from the next teeing ground or leaving the last putting green.

### 3-3a. Doubt as to Procedure - Procedure

If not sure how the Rules apply to a situation, on the score card, announce that a second ball will be played under Rule 3-3a, give the reason, state which ball you want to count on the score card, play a second ball (in your proper turn), and play both balls into the hole. Before signing the score card, note on the card the facts about the use of a second ball, if the scores for the two balls differed.

\* Disqualification - Not recording the use of a second ball on the score card when the scores for the first and second balls differ.

### 3-3b. Doubt as to Procedure - Determination of the Score for a Hole

If a second ball is played, but no announcement or note on the score card about Rule 3-3a or the ball selected to count is made, and the Rules allow the first situation, record only the score of the first ball.

If a second ball is played, and an announcement or note on the score card about Rule 3-3a and the ball selected to count is made, and the Rules allow the second situation, record the score of the second ball.

If a second ball is played, an announcement or note on the score card is or is not made, and the Rules do not allow the first or second situation, take the penalty for the first situation.

The second ball (Rule 3-3) is not a provisional ball (Rule 27-2).

\* No Specific Penalty

### 3-4. Refusal to Comply with a Rule

Comply with all Rules affecting the rights of another player. Perform all requests made by other players.

\* Disqualification - Failing to comply with a Rule affecting the rights of another player.

### 3-5. General Penalty

Take a two-stroke penalty on the score of the current hole for the breach of a Rule, except when a specific penalty is indicated. The other penalties are one stroke or disqualification.

\* No Specific Penalty

## Rule 4 - Clubs

### 4-1a. Form and Make of Clubs - General

Use only clubs conforming to this rule and the specifications and interpretations in Appendix II of the Rules of Golf.

\* Disqualification - Using a nonconforming club.

### 4-1b. Form and Make of Clubs - Wear and Alteration

A club which conforms when new conforms after normal use. A club which is altered must still conform and should be approved.

\* Disqualification - Using a nonconforming club.

#### 4-2a. Playing Characteristics and Foreign Material - Playing Characteristics Changed

Do not purposely change or adjust the playing characteristics of a club during a round.

\* Disqualification - Purposely changing the playing characteristics of a club.

#### 4-2b. Playing Characteristics and Foreign Material - Foreign Material

Do not apply anything to the clubface to influence the ball's movement. Saliva, chalk, and oils are examples of foreign materials.

\* Disqualification - Applying anything to the clubface to influence the ball's movement.

#### 4-3a. Damaged Clubs: Repair and Replacement - Damage in Normal Course of Play

For a club damaged in the normal course of play but fit for play, use the damaged club or repair the club without delay. For a club damaged in the normal course of play and unfit for play, replace the damaged club with any club without delay and without borrowing a club in use by a player on the course.

\* Two strokes, with a maximum of four strokes per round - Using a borrowed club or delaying play.

#### 4-3b. Damaged Clubs: Repair and Replacement - Damage Other Than in Normal Course of Play

In case of a damaged club which has become nonconforming or changed in playing characteristics outside of normal play during a round, do not use, repair, or replace the damaged club.

\* Disqualification - Using a club damaged outside of normal play during a round.

#### 4-3c. Damaged Clubs: Repair and Replacement - Damage Prior to Round

In case of a club damaged before a round which is still conforming, use or repair the damaged club without delay and without changing the playing characteristics.

\* Disqualification - Using a club damaged before play which has become nonconforming or changed in playing characteristics.

#### 4-4a. Maximum of Fourteen Clubs - Selection and Addition of Clubs

Start a round with fourteen clubs or less. Use only those clubs, or without delay, add any number of clubs so that the total is fourteen or less. Do not borrow a club selected for play by any person on the course.

\* Two Strokes, with a maximum of four strokes per round - Using or carrying more than 14 golf clubs.

#### 4-4b. Maximum of Fourteen Clubs - Partners Sharing Clubs

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 4-4c. Maximum of Fourteen Clubs - Excess Clubs

Declare an extra club or a nonconforming club out of play immediately upon discovery and do not use the club during the remainder of the round.

\* Disqualification - Failing to declare an extra club or a nonconforming club out of play upon discovery, or using a club declared out of play.

### Rule 5 - The Ball

#### 5-1. General

Use a golf ball conforming to Appendix III of the Rules of Golf, in maximum weight, minimum size, spherical symmetry, initial velocity, and overall distance, and approved by the USGA. The maximum weight is 1.62 ounces because heavier balls go farther. The minimum size is 1.68 inches diameter because smaller balls go farther. The spherical symmetry ensures no changes in flight pattern after leaving the club. The initial velocity measures the elasticity because more elastic balls go farther. The overall distance is about 255 yards in the air for a mechanical hit.

\* Disqualification - Using a nonconforming golf ball.

#### 5-2. Foreign Material

Do not apply anything to the ball to influence the ball's playing characteristics.

\* Disqualification - Applying anything to the ball to influence the ball's playing characteristics.

#### 5-3. Ball Unfit for Play

If you believe a ball is unfit for play, announce and note on the score card that the ball may be unfit, mark the ball, lift the ball, do not clean the ball, and examine the ball. A ball unfit for play is cut, cracked, or unspherical. A ball with mud or grass on its surface, scratches or scrapes, or damaged paint is still fit. If the ball is fit, replace the ball. If the ball is unfit, substitute another ball and place the ball. (If another person wants to dispute a fitness claim, do so before the substitute ball is played.) If a ball breaks into pieces when stroked, cancel the stroke and play a substitute ball from the same position on the course (using Rule 20-5).

\* One Stroke - Failing to announce and note on the score card that a ball may be unfit, failing to mark the ball, cleaning the ball, or failing to examine the ball.

\* Two Strokes - Playing a substitute ball for a fit ball (no other penalty for Rule 5-3 is then applied).

### Rule 6 - The Player

#### 6-1. Rules

Know the Rules of Golf.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 6-2. Handicap

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 6-3. Time of Starting and Groups

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 6-4. Caddie

Have only one caddie. If your caddie breaks a Rule of Golf, take the penalty. Caddies can search for balls, place clubs in a hazard, repair ball marks, repair old hole plugs, remove loose impediments, mark the ball's position, clean the ball, and remove movable obstructions.

\* Disqualification - Having more than one caddie.

#### 6-5. Ball

Play the correct ball. Mark your ball for identification purposes.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 6-6a. Scoring - Recording Scores

After each hole, check the score and mark the score card. After the round, check the scores and sign the score card.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 6-6b. Scoring - Signing the Score Card

After the round, check the scores and make final decisions. Sign the card and retain it.

\* Disqualification - Failing to sign a score card immediately after completing a round.

#### 6-6c. Scoring - Alteration

Do not alter a score card after signing it.

\* Disqualification - Altering a score card after signing it.

#### 6-6d. Scoring - Wrong Score for a Hole

If a score on a signed score card is higher than the actual score, use the score on the score card. Add the scores before signing the card. Do not use any handicap system.

\* Disqualification - Signing a score card with a score lower than the correct score for a hole.

#### 6-7. Undue Delay; Slow Play

Play without undue delay, both during a hole and between holes.

\* Two Strokes - Playing a hole with undue delay (penalty applies to current hole) or delaying between holes (penalty applies to the next hole).

#### 6-8a. Discontinuance and Resumption of Play - When Permitted

Do not discontinue play unless there is danger from lightning or there is illness or a similar, personal reason. Bad weather is not a sufficient reason. Leaving the course is not itself discontinuing play. Note on the score card a discontinuance of play.

\* Disqualification - Discontinuing play when there is no lightning or when there is no sufficient personal reason.

#### 6-8b. Discontinuance and Resumption of Play - Procedure

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 6-8c. Discontinuance and Resumption of Play - Lifting the Ball

If discontinuing play for a good reason, do not touch the ball. However, if there is a good reason, mark the ball's position, lift the ball, and note the reason on the score card.

\* One Stroke - Lifting the ball without good reason, failing to mark the ball position, or failing to note the reason on the score card.

#### 6-8d. Discontinuance and Resumption of Play - Procedure to Resume

Resume play at the point where it was discontinued. If the ball was lifted, replace the ball on the marked position. If the ball entitled to be lifted was not lifted, mark the ball's position, lift the ball, and clean the ball. If the ball or ball-marker has moved, replace the ball or ball-marker on the original position.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to play the original ball from the original position or to replace the ball on the marked position (Rule 6-8c is then not applied).

### Rule 7 - Practice

#### 7-1a. Before or Between Rounds - Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 7-1b. Before or Between Rounds - Stroke Play

On the day of a round, do not practice on the course or test the surface of any putting green before a round, except for putting and chipping practice on or near the first teeing ground.

\* Disqualification - Practicing on the course or testing the surface of any putting green before a round, except for putting and chipping practice on or near the first teeing ground.

#### 7-2. During Round

Between holes, practice putting and chipping only on or near the last putting green, any practice putting green, or the next teeing ground. Do not take a practice stroke from a hazard. Do not delay play. Do not take any other practice stroke during the play of a hole or between holes. Take a practice swing at any time or place, provided another Rule is not violated, since a practice swing is not a practice stroke.

\* Two Strokes, with the penalty applying to the next hole if between holes - Playing a practice stroke during the play of a hole, or playing a practice stroke from a hazard, or away from the next teeing ground, last putting green, or any practice putting green between holes.

## Rule 8 - Advice; Indicating Line of Play

### 8-1. Advice

Never give advice to another player during a round. Only ask advice from your caddie. Public knowledge, such as the distance from a permanent object to the green, is not advice.

\* Two Strokes - Giving advice to another player during a round, or asking for advice from another person.

### 8-2a. Indicating Line of Play - Other than on Putting Green

Off the putting green, before a stroke, ask anyone to indicate the line of play. If a mark has been used to indicate the line of play, remove the mark before the stroke. During a stroke, do not have any person or mark positioned on or near the line of play or the extension of the line beyond the hole. However, this Rule does not apply to attending or holding up the flagstick, covered in Rule 17-1.

\* Two Strokes - Off the putting green, having a person or mark positioned on or near the line of play or the extension of the line beyond the hole, during a stroke.

### 8-2b. Indicating Line of Play - On the Putting Green

On the putting green, before a stroke, ask only your caddie to indicate the line of putt. Do not use any mark positioned on the line of putt or on the extension of the line beyond the hole before or during a stroke.

\* Two Strokes - On the putting green, touching the putting green to indicate a line of putt, or having a mark positioned on the line of putt or on the extension of the line beyond the hole.

## Rule 9 - Information as to Strokes Taken

### 9-1. General

Include the penalty strokes in the number of strokes for a hole.

\*No Specific Penalty

### 9-2. Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

### 9-3. Stroke Play

After receiving a penalty, note it on the scorecard as soon as possible.  
\*No Specific Penalty

## Rule 10 - Order of Play

### 10-1. Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

### 10-2a. Stroke Play - Teeing Ground

At the first teeing ground, determine the sequence of players in a group by draw, lot, or agreement. At subsequent tees, determine the sequence of players by the scores, from lowest to highest, at the previous hole. For equal scores at the previous hole, play in the same sequence as at the previous teeing ground.

\* Disqualification - Agreeing to play out of turn to gain an advantage.

### 10-2b. Stroke Play - Other than on Teeing Ground

Not on the teeing ground, play the ball farthest from the hole (before any relief was taken) first. If balls are equidistant from the hole, determine the first ball by lot or agreement. If a ball is interfering with or assisting play, use Rule 22.

\* Disqualification - Agreeing to play out of turn to gain an advantage.

### 10-2c. Stroke Play - Playing out of Turn

Do not agree to play out of turn. If a ball is played out of turn, play the ball as it lies.

\* Disqualification - Agreeing to play out of turn to gain an advantage.

### 10-3. Provisional Ball or Second Ball from Teeing Ground

Play a provisional ball, or a second ball, from the teeing ground after all other players have played their first stroke. If a provisional ball or a second ball is played from the teeing ground out of turn, play the ball as it lies.

\* Disqualification - Agreeing to play out of turn to gain an advantage.

### 10-4. Ball Moved in Measuring

If a ball is moved while measuring distance from the hole, replace the ball.

\* No Specific Penalty

## Rule 11- Teeing Ground

### 11-1. Teeing

Place the ball on the ground, ground raised by the player, or on a tee, sand, or other substance used to raise the ball off the ground inside the teeing ground. Take a stance inside or outside the teeing ground.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 11-2. Tee-Markers

Do not move a tee-marker before the first stroke. After the first stroke, the tee-markers can be moved, as movable obstructions. If there are no tee-markers, or there is only one tee-marker, use the grass markings around the missing tee-marker(s) to define the teeing ground.

\* Two Strokes - Moving a tee-marker to remove interference with a stance, swing, or line of play before the first stroke.

#### 11-3. Ball Falling Off Tee

Before the first stroke, replace a ball that falls off a tee or is knocked off a tee while addressing it. If a stroke is made at the ball, play the ball as it lies.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 11-4a. Playing from Outside Teeing Ground - Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 11-4b. Playing from Outside Teeing Ground - Stroke Play

Play the ball from inside the teeing ground. Announce the intention to replay a ball started from outside the teeing ground before leaving the last green or playing from the next teeing ground, and replay the hole. Do not count strokes played with a ball started from outside the teeing ground. During a round, use the same teeing ground, forward, middle, or back, for all holes.

\* Two Strokes, and replay the first stroke from the teeing ground - Playing the first stroke from outside the teeing ground.

\* Disqualification - After playing a first ball from outside a teeing ground, leaving the last green without announcing an intention to return to the teeing ground or not replaying the last hole, or not replaying the last hole before playing from the next teeing ground.

#### 11-5. Playing from Wrong Teeing Ground

Do not play a ball from the wrong teeing ground. Announce the intention to replay a ball started from outside the teeing ground before leaving the last green or playing from the next teeing ground, and replay the hole. Do not count strokes played with a ball started from outside the teeing ground.

\* Two Strokes, and replay the first stroke from the correct teeing ground - Playing a first ball from a wrong teeing ground.

\* Disqualification - After playing a first ball from a wrong teeing ground, leaving the last green without announcing an intention to return to the correct teeing ground or not replaying the last hole, or not replaying the last hole before playing from the next teeing ground.

### Rule 12 - Searching for and Identifying Ball

#### 12-1. Searching for Ball; Seeing Ball

When searching for a ball, do not improve the lie, swing area, or line of play. Touch or bend plants only enough to find and identify the ball. Play a stroke even when you cannot see the ball.

\* Two Strokes - When searching for a ball, improving the lie, swing area, or line of play.

In a hazard, remove loose impediments or sand by raking or probing only enough to see the ball. If an excess amount of loose impediments or sand leaves the ball uncovered, recover the ball until only a part of the ball is visible. If the ball is moved during removal of loose impediments or sand, replace the ball and recover it until only a part of the ball is visible.

\* Two Strokes - In a hazard, removing an excess amount of loose impediments or sand and leaving the ball uncovered, or not replacing or recovering a moved ball.

Outside a hazard, remove loose impediments under Rule 23.

\* No Specific Penalty

If a ball in casual water, ground under repair, or a hole, cast, or runway of an animal is moved during a search, replace the moved ball, or proceed under Rule 25-1b.

\* Two Strokes - In casual water, ground under repair, or a hole, cast, or runway of an animal, not replacing a moved ball.

If a ball is in water in a water hazard, probe for it. If a ball in water in a water hazard is moved, replace the moved ball, or proceed under Rule 26-1.

\* Two Strokes - In a water hazard, not replacing a moved ball.

#### 12-2. Identifying Ball

Outside a hazard, to identify a ball, announce the intention to check the identity and so mark the score card, mark the ball, lift the ball, clean the ball only enough to identify it, and allow others to observe the ball.

\* One Stroke, and replace the ball - Outside a hazard, during identification of a ball, not announcing the intention to check identity and so marking the score card, not marking the ball, cleaning the ball more than necessary for identification, or failing to allow another to observe the ball.

In a hazard, do not lift the ball for identification.

\* One Stroke, and replace the ball - In a hazard, lifting the ball for identification.

#### Rule 13 - Ball Played As It Lies

##### 13-1. General

Play a ball as it lies, unless an exception is allowed by another Rule. If anything changes the lie of the ball after it came to rest, such as the result of another player's actions, you can restore the original lie.

\* Two Strokes - Not playing a ball as it lies, unless an exception is allowed by another Rule.

### 13-2. Improving Lie, Area of Intended Swing or Line of Play

Do not improve the position or lie of the ball, area of intended swing, area of intended stance, line of play, extension of line of play beyond the hole, or drop or placement area, before the stance or stroke. Do not move, bend, or break anything growing or fixed, or remove or press down dew, frost, water, sand, loose soil, replaced divots, other cut turf placed in position, or any irregularities of surface, before taking a fair stance or making a stroke (including the backward movement). For example, do not touch anything with a practice swing. Do not unnecessarily disturb or stand on growing things when taking a stance. Do not brush aside growing things after taking a stance. Do not remove boundary stakes. You can create or eliminate irregularities of surface on the teeing ground (as allowed by Rule 11-1), remove sand and loose soil on the putting green (as allowed in Rule 16-1a), or repair damage to the putting green (as allowed in Rule 16-1c). Do not remove sand and loose soil on the apron of the putting green. Ground a club only lightly; do not press it into the ground.

\* Two Strokes - Improving the position or lie of the ball, area of intended swing, line of play, extension of line of play beyond the hole, or drop or placement area, before the stance or stroke, by moving, bending or breaking anything growing or fixed, or removing or pressing down dew, frost, water, sand, loose soil, replaced divots, other cut turf placed in position, or any irregularities of surface, unless fairly taking a stance, making a stroke (including the backward movement), creating or eliminating irregularities of surface on the teeing ground (as allowed by Rule 11-1), removing sand and loose soil on the putting green (as allowed in Rule 16-1a), or repairing damage to the putting green (as allowed in Rule 16-1c), or pressing the club into the ground, at address.

### 13-3. Building Stance

Do not build a stance. You can place the feet firmly to take a stance.

\* Two Strokes - Altering the ground or surrounding area to improve the stance.

### 13-4. Ball in Hazard

After a stroke, you can smooth sand or soil in a hazard without improving the lie of the ball or assisting the subsequent play of the hole. Your caddie can do so at any time.

\* Two Strokes - Improving the lie of the ball in a hazard.

In a hazard, before a stroke, do not test the condition of the hazard or any similar hazard.

\* Two Strokes - Testing the condition of the hazard or any similar hazard.

In a hazard, before a stroke, do not touch the ground or water. If the lie of the ball is not improved and the condition of the hazard is not

tested, you can touch the ground or water to prevent falling, remove an obstruction, measure, retrieve a ball, or lift a ball. You can touch any obstruction, construction that is an integral part of the course, or growing thing. If the lie of the ball is not improved and the condition of the hazard is not tested, you can place your clubs in a hazard.

\* Two Strokes - Touching the ground or water in a hazard (unless preventing falling, removing an obstruction, measuring, or lifting a ball).

In a hazard, before a stroke, do not touch or move a loose impediment touching the hazard, except accidentally. You can remove movable obstructions.

\* Two Strokes - Touching or moving a loose impediment touching the hazard, unless the lie of the ball is not improved.

## Rule 14 - Striking the Ball

### 14-1. Ball to Be Fairly Struck At

During a stroke, strike the ball with the clubhead. Do not push, scrape, or spoon the ball.

\* Two Strokes - During a stroke, pushing, scraping, or spooning the ball, or not trying to strike the ball with the clubhead.

### 14-2. Assistance

During a stroke, do not accept physical assistance or protection from rain, snow, sun, or other elements. Do not allow any player or caddie to stand near the line of putt or line of play.

\* Two Strokes - During a stroke, accepting physical assistance or protection from the elements, or allowing any player or caddie to stand near the line of putt or line of play.

### 14-3. Artificial Devices and Unusual Equipment

During a stipulated round, do not use artificial devices or unusual equipment to assist a stroke or play, to measure distance or conditions affecting the play, or to assist in gripping the club. To assist in gripping the club, you can use plain gloves; resin, powder, and drying or moisturizing agents applied to the grip, gloves, or hands; or a towel or handkerchief around the grip. Consult the USGA about any item for use during a stipulated round violates this Rule. You can wear eyeglasses, contact lenses, drop things to determine wind direction, keep the hands warm, and use a booklet of distances to the green from fixed objects on the course. You cannot use a range-finder, a plumb line, an artificially warmed ball, ball finders, or instructional tapes or books.

\* Disqualification - During a stipulated round, using artificial devices or unusual equipment to assist a stroke or play, to measure distance or conditions affecting the play, or to assist in gripping the club (except for plain gloves; resin, powder, and drying or moisturizing agents applied to the grip, gloves, or hands; or a towel or handkerchief around the grip).

### 14-4. Striking the Ball More Than Once

Do not hit the ball more than once during a stroke.

\* One Stroke (also record the actual stroke, making two strokes total) - Striking the ball with the club more than once during a stroke.

#### 14-5. Playing Moving Ball

Do not play the ball while it is moving, unless the ball is falling off the tee (as in Rule 11-3), the ball is struck more than once (as in Rule 14-4), the ball is moving in water in a water hazard (as in Rule 14-6), or the ball begins to move only after the backswing or stroke has begun. If a ball at rest is moved, use Rule 18-2a. If a ball is moved after address, use Rule 18-2b. If a ball at rest is moved because a loose impediment is touched, use Rule 18-2c.

\* Two Strokes - Playing the ball while it is moving, unless the ball is falling off the tee (as in Rule 11-3), the ball is struck more than once (as in Rule 14-4), the ball is moving in water in a water hazard (as in Rule 14-6), or the ball begins to move only after the backswing or stroke has begun.

#### 14-6. Ball Moving in Water

In a water hazard, for a moving ball, you can make a stroke, but do not delay play to allow the wind or water to improve the ball position. You can lift a ball moving in water in a water hazard, using Rule 26.

\* Two Strokes - In a water hazard, for a moving ball, allowing the wind or water to improve the ball position by delaying play.

### Rule 15 - Wrong Ball; Substituted Ball

#### 15-1. General

Hole the same ball as the ball played from the teeing ground, unless permitted to substitute a ball by another Rule. If a ball substitution was not permitted by the Rules, correct the play as in Rule 20-6. Do not use a special ball for putting.

\* Two Strokes - Holing out with a ball not played from the teeing ground, unless permitted to substitute a ball by another Rule.

#### 15-2. Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 15-3. Stroke Play

Outside a hazard, stroke only the correct ball. If a wrong ball is stroked (even if missed), before teeing off at the next hole or leaving the last green, play the correct ball. Strokes played with a wrong ball do not count. Replace any ball of a player that was played as a wrong ball by another player.

\* Two Strokes - Outside a hazard, stroking a wrong ball one or more times.

\* Disqualification - Failing to play the correct ball before teeing off at the next hole or leaving the last green without announcing and marking on the score card the intention to correct the wrong ball.

## Rule 16 - The Putting Green

### 16-1a. General - Touching Line of Putt

On the putting green, do not touch the line of putt, except to move loose impediments, sand, and loose soil by picking them up or brushing them aside with the hand or a club without pressing anything down, to place the club in front of the ball without pressing anything down while addressing the ball, to measure (as in Rule 10-4), to lift the ball (as in Rule 16-1b), to press down a ball marker, to repair old hole plugs or ball marks on the putting green (as in Rule 16-1c), or to remove movable obstructions (as in Rule 24-1). Do not repair spike marks or scuff marks. Do not touch casual water on the line of putt. Do not step on the line of putt, except accidentally. Do not move loose impediments with a hat or towel.

\* Two Strokes - On the putting green, touching the line of putt, except to move loose impediments, sand, and loose soil by picking them up or brushing them aside with the hand or a club without pressing anything down, to place the club in front of the ball without pressing anything down while addressing the ball, to measure (as in Rule 10-4), to lift the ball (as in Rule 16-1b), to press down a ball marker, to repair old hole plugs or ball marks on the putting green (as in Rule 16-1c), or to remove movable obstructions (as in Rule 24-1).

### 16-1b. General - Lifting Ball

On the putting green, you can mark the ball, lift the ball, clean the ball, and then replace the ball on the spot from which it was lifted.

\* Two Strokes - On the putting green, failing to mark a ball before lifting, or failing to replace a lifted ball on the spot from which it was lifted.

### 16-1c. General - Repairing Hole Plugs, Ball Marks, and Other Damage

On the putting green, do not repair damage to the green which would assist subsequent play. You can repair old hole plugs and damage to the putting green from the impacts of balls whether the ball lies on or off the putting green; if the ball is moved during repair, replace the ball.

\* Two Strokes - On the putting green, repairing damage to the green that assists subsequent play, except for repairing old hole plugs and ball marks.

### 16-1d. General - Testing Surface

During the play of a hole, do not test the surface of the putting green, such as by rolling a ball or roughening or scraping the surface.

\* Two Strokes - During the play of a hole, testing the surface of the putting green, such as by rolling a ball or roughening or scraping the surface.

#### 16-1e. General - Standing Astride or on Line of Putt

On the putting green, stroke only from a stance with both feet on one side of the line of putt or its extension behind the ball.

\* Two Strokes - On the putting green, stroking while taking a stance with a foot on or over the line of putt or its extension behind the ball.

#### 16-1f. General - Playing Stroke While Another Ball is in Motion

On the putting green, do not stroke when another ball is in motion after a stroke from the putting green, unless it is your turn to play.

\* Two Strokes - On the putting green, stroking when another ball is in motion after a stroke from the putting green, unless it is the player's turn to play.

#### 16-2. Ball Overhanging Hole

When a ball overhangs the lip of a hole, walk to the hole without delay and wait ten seconds. If the ball has fallen into the hole, you have holed out. If the ball has not fallen into the hole, stroke the ball to hole out.

\* One Stroke - When a ball overhangs the lip of a hole, taking too long to reach the hole if the ball then falls in, or if the ball falls in more than ten seconds after waiting at the hole.

#### Rule 17 - The Flagstick

##### 17-1. Flagstick Attended, Removed or Held Up

Before and during a stroke, you can have the flagstick attended, removed, or held straight above the hole, but another person can only do so on authority of the player or with the player's knowledge without any objection. The person attending, removing, or holding up the flagstick, or standing near the hole during a stroke, is attending the flagstick until the ball rests.

\* Two Strokes - Attending the flagstick for the player by holding it not over the hole or at an angle.

##### 17-2a. Unauthorized Attendance - Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

##### 17-2b. Unauthorized Attendance - Stroke Play

During a stroke or while the ball is moving, do not attend, hold up, or remove the flagstick without the player's knowledge, over the player's objection, or without the player's authority. Off the putting green, if the ball then strikes the flagstick, attending person, or the equipment, play the ball as it lies. From the putting green, if the ball then strikes the flagstick, attending person, or the equipment, cancel the stroke and replace the ball.

\* Two Strokes, on the person attending the flagstick - During a stroke, attending, holding up, or removing the flagstick without the player's

knowledge, over the player's objection, or without the player's authority.

#### 17-3. Ball Striking Flagstick or Attendant

From off the putting green, do not strike the flagstick, when attended, removed, or held up with the player's authority or knowledge with no objection, and do not strike the person attending or anything carried by that person. You can strike an unattended flagstick.

\* Two Strokes, and play the ball as it lies - From off the putting green, striking the flagstick, when attended, removed, or held up with the player's authority or knowledge and lack of objection, or striking the person attending or anything carried by the person.

From the putting green, do not strike an unattended flagstick in the hole. Do not strike an attended flagstick; if struck, use Rule 17-2b.

\* Two Strokes, and play the ball as it lies - From the putting green, striking an unattended flagstick.

#### 17-4. Ball Resting Against Flagstick

If a ball rests against the flagstick in the hole, move or remove the flagstick (or authorize another person to do so), in order to move the ball. If the ball falls in the hole, you have holed out. If the ball moves but does not fall in, place the ball on the lip of the cup.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### Rule 18 - Ball At Rest Moved

If the ball to be replaced is not immediately recoverable, substitute another ball. If the spot on which to replace a ball is not known, use Rule 20-3c.

#### 18-1. By Outside Agency

If a ball at rest is moved by an outside agency, replace the ball.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to replace a ball moved by an outside agency.

#### 18-2a. By Player, Caddie or Equipment - General

For a ball in play, before a completed stroke, do not lift, move, touch (except with a club while addressing the ball), or cause a ball to move by an action of yourself, your caddie, or both your equipment, unless permitted by another Rule. If the ball moves, replace it. If the ball moves after the swing has begun and the swing is not discontinued, play the ball as it lies. You can accidentally cause a ball to move without penalty when measuring distance from the hole (as in Rule 10-4), searching for a ball in a hazard, casual water, or ground under repair (as in Rule 12-1), repairing an old hole plug or ball mark (as in Rule 16-1c), removing loose impediments from the putting green (as in Rule 18-2c), lifting a ball (as in Rule 20-1), placing or replacing a ball under a rule (as in Rule 20-3a), or removing a movable obstruction (as in Rule 24-1).

\* One Stroke, and replace the ball - For a ball in play, before a completed stroke, lifting, moving, touching (except with a club when addressing), or causing a ball to move, by a player, his or her caddie, or their equipment, unless permitted by another Rule.

\* Two Strokes, and do not count the one stroke penalty - Failing to replace a ball after lifting, moving, touching (except with a club when addressing), or causing a ball to move, by an action of yourself, your caddie, or both your equipment.

#### 18-2b. By Player, Caddie or Equipment - Ball Moving after Address

For a ball in play, before a completed stroke, do not move the ball after address by an action of yourself, your caddie, or both your equipment. If the ball moves, replace it. If the ball moves after the swing has begun and the swing is not discontinued, play the ball as it lies. If a ball might move due to wind or is on an unstable spot, do not ground your club, so that you have not addressed the ball.

\* One Stroke, and replace the ball - For a ball in play, before a completed stroke, moving the ball after it has been addressed by an action of yourself, your caddie, or both your equipment.

\* Two Strokes, and do not count the one stroke penalty - Failing to replace a ball moved after address.

#### 18-2c. By Player, Caddie or Equipment - Ball Moving after Loose Impediment Touched

Through the green, before addressing a ball, before a completed stroke, do not move a ball by touching a loose impediment within one club-length of the ball. If the ball moves, replace it. If the ball moves after the swing has begun and the swing is not discontinued, play the ball as it lies.

\* One Stroke, and replace the ball - Through the green, before addressing a ball, before a completed stroke, moving a ball after touching a loose impediment within one club-length of the ball.

\* Two Strokes, and do not count the one stroke penalty - Failing to replace a ball after touching a loose impediment within one club-length of the ball.

On the putting green, before addressing a ball, before a completed stroke, do not move a ball or ball-marker after touching any loose impediment. If the ball moves, replace it. If the ball moves not because of moving a loose impediment, proceed under Rule 18-2a or 20-1.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to replace a ball moved after touching any loose impediment.

#### 18-3. By Opponent, Caddie or Equipment in Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 18-4. By Fellow-Competitor, Caddie or Equipment in Stroke Play

Replace a ball moved by another player, his or her caddie, or their equipment.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to replace a ball moved by a player, his or her caddie, or their equipment.

#### 18-5. By Another Ball

Replace a resting ball in play moved by a stroked ball.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to replace a ball moved by a stroked ball.

#### Rule 19 - Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped

##### 19-1. By Outside Agency

From off the putting green, if a moving ball is accidentally deflected or stopped by an outside agency, play the ball as it lies. From off the putting green, if a moving ball comes to rest in or on a moving or an animate outside agency that is through the green or in a hazard, drop the ball where it came to rest. From off the putting green, if a moving ball comes to rest in or on a moving or an animate outside agency that is on the green, place the ball where it came to rest. From the putting green, if a moving ball is accidentally deflected or stopped by an outside agency or comes to rest in or on a moving or an animate outside agency, except a worm or insect, cancel the stroke and replace the ball. If a ball is not immediately recoverable, substitute another ball. If an outside agency purposely deflects or stops a ball, use Rule 1-4. If another player or his or her caddie purposely deflects or stops a ball, use Rule 1-2.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop or replace a moving ball stopped or deflected by an outside agency.

##### 19-2a. By Player, Partner, Caddie or Equipment - Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

##### 19-2b. By Player, Partner, Caddie or Equipment - Stroke Play

Sometimes a player, his or her caddie, or their equipment accidentally deflects or stops the player's moving ball. If a ball is so deflected or stopped, play the ball as it lies. Through the green or in a hazard, if the ball is in or on the player's or caddie's clothes or equipment, drop the ball where it came to rest. On the putting green, if the ball is in or on the player's or caddie's clothes or equipment, place the ball where it came to rest. If the ball is purposely deflected or stopped by the player, his or her caddie or their equipment, use Rule 1-2. If you accidentally deflect or stop a dropped ball, use Rule 20-2a.

\* Two Strokes - Accidentally deflecting or stopping your moving ball by player, his or her caddie, or their equipment.

##### 19-3. By Opponent, Caddie or Equipment in Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

##### 19-4. By Fellow-Competitor, Caddie or Equipment in Stroke Play

From off the putting green, if a moving ball is accidentally deflected or stopped by another player, his or her caddie, or their equipment, play the ball as it lies. From off the putting green, if a moving ball comes to rest in or on another player, his or her caddie, or their equipment that is through the green or in a hazard, drop the ball where it came to rest. From off the putting green, if a moving ball comes to rest in or on another player, his or her caddie, or their equipment that is on the green, place the ball where it came to rest. From the putting green, if a moving ball is accidentally deflected or stopped by another player, his or her caddie, or their equipment or comes to rest in or on another player, his or her caddie, or their equipment, cancel the stroke and replace the ball. If a ball is not immediately recoverable, substitute another ball. If another player, his or her caddie, or their equipment purposely deflects or stops a ball, use Rule 1-2.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop or replace a moving ball stopped or deflected by another player, his or her caddie, or their equipment.

#### 19-5a. By Another Ball - At Rest

From the putting green, sometimes a ball in play and at rest on the putting green is accidentally hit with a stroked ball. If a resting ball is so hit, replace the resting ball. For the moving ball which was deflected or stopped by a ball in play and at rest, play the ball as it lies.

\* Two Strokes - Accidentally hitting a ball in play and at rest on the putting green with a ball stroked from the putting green.

#### 19-5b. By Another Ball - In Motion

If a ball moving after a stroke is accidentally deflected or stopped by a ball in play and moving, play the ball as it lies. After a stroke from the putting green, do not play while that ball is in motion (see Rule 16-1g). From the putting green, if a ball in motion after a stroke is stopped or deflected by another ball in motion that is an outside agency, use Rule 19-1b.

\* No Specific Penalty

### Rule 20 - Lifting, Dropping and Placing; Playing from Wrong Place

#### 20-1. Lifting and Marking

If a Rule allows a ball to be lifted, announce and mark on the score card an intention to lift a ball, mark the ball if the ball is to be replaced, and lift the ball. Place a ball-marker immediately behind the ball, or one or more clubhead-lengths to one side if the marker interferes with the play, stance, or stroke of another player. You or a person authorized by you can lift the ball. If a ball or ball-marker is accidentally moved when lifting or marking, replace the ball or ball-marker. If a ball or ball-marker is moved not when lifting or marking, use Rule 18-2a. If a penalty is given for breaching Rule 5-3 or 12-2, apply no penalties under this Rule.

\* One Stroke, and replace the ball - Failing to mark a ball's position if it is to be replaced.

\* Two Strokes, ignore the one-stroke penalty, and replace the ball - Failing to announce and mark on the score card an intention to lift a ball, or failing to replace the ball.

#### 20-2a. Dropping and Redropping - By Whom and How

Drop a ball by standing erect, holding the ball at shoulder height and arm's length, and dropping the ball (in front or to the side). If the dropped ball touches the player, his or her caddie, or their equipment, before or after striking the course, redrop the ball. Redrop the ball an unlimited number of times, if necessary.

\* One Stroke - Failing to correct an incorrect drop of a ball, or dropping by a person other than the player.

#### 20-2b. Dropping and Redropping - Where to Drop

When dropping a ball near a specific or estimated spot, drop the ball not nearer the hole.

\* Two Strokes, and redrop the ball - Dropping the ball nearer the hole.

#### 20-2c. Dropping and Redropping - When to Re-Drop

Redrop a dropped ball that rolls into a hazard, out of a hazard, onto a putting green, out of bounds, back into ground marked as abnormal ground conditions (Rule 24-2), back into an immovable obstruction (Rule 25-1), back into a pitch-mark (Rule 25-2), more than two club-lengths away from where it first hit the course, nearer the hole (unless permitted by a Rule) than its original or estimated position (under Rule 20-2b), nearer the hole than the nearest point of relief or maximum available relief, or nearer the hole than the point where it last crossed the margin of the area or hazard (Rule 25-1c, Rule 26-1b, or Rule 26-1c). If the redropped ball rolls into any of the above positions, place the ball near where it first struck the course when redropped. If a ball is not immediately recoverable, substitute another ball.

\* Two Strokes, and redrop the ball - Dropping the ball nearer the hole, or dropping into an incorrect area of the course.

#### 20-3a. Placing and Replacing - By Whom and Where

If placing a ball under the Rules, place it yourself (no caddie or other person). If replacing a ball under the Rules, you or the person who lifted or moved the ball can replace it. If a ball or ball-marker is accidentally moved when placing or replacing, replace the ball or ball-marker. If a ball or ball-marker moves for another cause, use Rule 18-2a or Rule 20-1.

\* Two Strokes, and place or replace the ball - Allowing someone else to place a ball, or failing to place a ball correctly, or failing to replace a moved or lifted ball on the same spot, or allowing someone other than the player or the person who lifted or moved it to replace a ball.

#### 20-3b. Placing and Replacing - Lie of Ball to be Placed or Replaced Altered

Outside of a hazard, if the lie of the ball to be placed or replaced is altered, place or replace the ball not more than one club-length away from the original lie, not in a hazard, and not nearer the hole, in a lie most similar to the original lie.

\* Two Strokes - Outside of a hazard, if the lie of the ball to be placed or replaced is altered, placing or replacing the ball more than one club-length away, in a hazard, nearer the hole, or in a lie not similar to the original lie.

In a water hazard, if the lie of the ball to be replaced is altered, place or replace the ball not more than one club-length away from the original lie, in the water hazard, and not nearer the hole.

\* Two Strokes - In a water hazard, if the lie of the ball to be replaced is altered, replacing the ball more than one club-length away, outside the water hazard, or nearer the hole.

In a bunker, if the lie of the ball to be replaced is altered, recreate the original lie and place the ball in the recreated lie.

\* Two Strokes - In a bunker, if the lie of the ball to be replaced is altered, failing to recreate the lie or to replace the ball in the recreated lie.

#### 20-3c. Placing and Replacing - Spot Not Determinable

Through the green, if the spot where the ball is to be placed or replaced cannot be determined, drop the ball near the spot but not in a hazard or on a putting green.

\* Two Strokes - Through the green, if the spot where the ball is to be placed or replaced cannot be determined, dropping the ball not near the spot, not in a hazard, or not on a putting green.

In a hazard, if the spot where the ball is to be placed or replaced cannot be determined, drop the ball in the hazard near the spot.

\* Two Strokes - In a hazard, if the spot where the ball is to be placed or replaced cannot be determined, dropping the ball not in the hazard or not near the spot.

On the putting green, if the spot where the ball is to be placed or replaced cannot be determined, place the ball on the putting green near the spot.

\* Two Strokes - On the putting green, if the spot where the ball is to be placed or replaced cannot be determined, placing the ball not on the putting green or not near the spot.

#### 20-3d. Placing and Replacing - Ball Fails to Come to Rest on Spot

If a placed ball fails to come to rest on the spot, replace it. Outside a hazard, if it again fails to rest, place it on a nearby spot where it can rest, not nearer the hole and not in a hazard. In a hazard, if it again fails to rest, place it on a nearby spot where it can rest, not nearer the hole and in the hazard. If a placed ball comes to rest on the spot where it was placed, and later moves, play it as it lies, unless another Rule applies.

\* Two Strokes - If a placed ball fails to come to rest on the spot, outside a hazard replacing it not on a nearby spot or nearer the hole, or in a hazard replacing it not on a nearby spot, nearer the hole, or not in a hazard.

#### 20-4. When Ball Dropped or Placed Is in Play

When a ball is lifted, it is no longer in play. When a lifted ball is dropped or placed, it is again in play. When a substituted ball is dropped or placed, it is in play.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 20-5. Playing Next Stroke from Where Previous Stroke Played

Sometimes, you are required to play, or can elect to play, the next stroke from where a previous stroke was played. From the teeing ground, play the ball from anywhere inside the teeing ground (you can use a tee). Through the green, drop the ball. From a hazard, drop the ball. From the putting green, place the ball.

\* Two Strokes - When required to play, or electing to play, the next stroke from where a previous stroke was played, playing a ball outside the teeing ground when required to play from the teeing ground, not dropping the ball through the green, not dropping the ball in a hazard, or not placing the ball on the putting green.

#### 20-6. Lifting Ball Incorrectly Substituted, Dropped or Placed

Before making a stroke, lift an unplayed ball that was incorrectly substituted, dropped, or placed, such as in a wrong place or not in accordance with a Rule, and correctly substitute, drop, or place the ball.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 20-7a. Playing from Wrong Place - Match Play.

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 20-7b. Playing from Wrong Place - Stroke Play.

If a ball in play has been dropped or placed in a wrong place as defined by a Rule, or moved and not replaced when required by a Rule requiring replacement, and has then been stroked, play out the hole and take the penalty for the Rule, provided the advantage gained is not serious.

\* Play out the hole and apply the penalty for that Rule, if the advantage gained is not serious - Playing a stroke with a ball in play dropped or placed in a wrong place or moved and not replaced when required.

If a ball in play has been dropped or placed in a wrong place and has then been stroked, so that the advantage gained is serious, and if a stroke has not been played from the next teeing ground or the last putting green of the round has not been left, announce and mark on the score card the intention to play the hole with a second ball dropped or placed under a Rule and correctly play the second ball. Report the facts on the score card. Determine which ball shall count before signing the

score card. All strokes with the ball ruled out of play, and any penalty strokes on that ball, do not count.

\* Two Strokes, and use the score of the second ball - Playing a stroke with a ball in play dropped or placed in a wrong place, when the advantage gained is serious, but correcting the situation with a second ball correctly played.

\* Disqualification - Playing a stroke with a ball in play dropped or placed in a wrong place, when the advantage gained is serious, without correcting the situation with a second ball, or failing to report the facts of the use of a second ball.

If a ball is played from outside the teeing ground, use Rule 11-4. If a ball is played from a wrong teeing ground, use Rule 11-5.

#### Rule 21 - Cleaning Ball

On the putting green, you can clean a lifted ball. Off the putting green, you can clean a lifted ball, except to determine if it is unfit for play (Rule 5-3), to identify it but only to the extent needed for identification (Rule 12-2), or to lift it when it is interfering with or assisting play (Rule 22). For failing to replace a ball required to be replaced, use Rule 20-3a, not this Rule. Do not apply this Rule if a penalty is given under Rule 5-3, 12-2, or 22. If something is sticking to the ball, you cannot clean it. A live insect on a ball is a loose impediment, and can be removed without touching or moving the ball.

\* One Stroke, and replace a lifted ball - Cleaning a ball that is not lifted, or, off the putting green, cleaning a ball fit for play, identified, and not interfering with or assisting play.

#### Rule 22 - Ball Interfering with or Assisting Play

If all balls are at rest, you can lift a ball if it might assist another player. You can have another ball lifted if it might interfere with play or assist another player. If required to lift a ball by another player, you can play first or lift the ball. Replace a lifted ball.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to lift a ball as required by another player, or failing to replace a lifted ball.

#### Rule 23 - Loose Impediments

##### 23-1. Relief

Outside a hazard, with all balls at rest, remove any loose impediment. In a hazard, when both the ball and the loose impediment lie in or touch the same hazard, do not remove any loose impediment. When a ball is in motion, do not remove a loose impediment which might influence ball movement. If a ball moves when moving a loose impediment, use Rule 18-2c.

\* Two Strokes - Removing a loose impediment which might influence ball movement when a ball is in motion, or removing a loose impediment when both the ball and the loose impediment lie in or touch the same hazard.

#### Rule 24 - Obstructions

##### 24-1. Movable Obstruction

Remove a movable obstruction if the ball is not in or on it. If the ball then moves, replace it. (If the ball moves for another reason, apply Rule 18-2a.) Lift the ball and remove the movable obstruction if the ball is in or on it. Through the green or in a hazard, drop the ball near the spot where the ball lay in or on the obstruction, not nearer the hole. On the putting green, place the ball near the spot where the ball lay in or on the obstruction, not nearer the hole. You can clean the lifted ball. When a ball is moving, do not remove an obstruction which might influence the movement of the ball, except to move the flagstick or a player's equipment. Substitute another ball if the ball in or on the obstruction is not immediately recoverable.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop or place the ball on or in a movable obstruction near the spot or nearer the hole, or moving an obstruction which might influence the movement of a moving ball (except the flagstick or a player's equipment).

#### 24-2a. Immovable Obstruction - Interference

Off the putting green, interference occurs if a ball lies close to, in, or on an immovable obstruction, so that the obstruction interferes with a necessary stance or swing area. On the putting green, interference occurs if a ball lies close to, in, or on an immovable obstruction, so that the obstruction interferes with the stance, swing area, or line of putt. An immovable obstruction on the line of play is not interference. No interference occurs if the direction of play is lateral or backward. No interference occurs if anything other than an immovable obstruction also affects the necessary stance or swing area.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 24-2b. Immovable Obstruction - Relief

For interference through the green, find the point on the course nearest to the ball which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not on the green or in a hazard. Then lift and drop the ball within one club-length of that point on a part of the course which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not on the green or in a hazard. You can clean the lifted ball. Substitute another ball if the ball is not immediately recoverable. If a ball is in a water hazard or lateral water hazard, play the ball as it lies or use Rule 26-1.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop or place from interference through the green within one club-length of that point on a part of the course which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not on the green or in a hazard.

For interference in a bunker, find the point in the bunker nearest to the ball which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not on the green. Then lift and drop the ball within one club-length of that point on a part of the course which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not on the green. You can clean the lifted ball. Substitute another ball if the ball is not immediately recoverable.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop or place from interference in a bunker within one club-length of that point on a part of the course which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not on the green.

For interference on the green, lift the ball and place it at the nearest spot which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not in a hazard. You can clean the lifted ball. Substitute another ball if the ball is not immediately recoverable.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop or place from interference on the green not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not in a hazard.

#### 24-2b. Immovable Obstruction - Ball Lost

Except in a water hazard or lateral water hazard, if the evidence supports that the ball is lost in an immovable obstruction, the ball is deemed to lie at the place where the ball last entered the obstruction. Substitute another ball, use the point at which the ball last entered the obstruction, and follow rule 24-2b. If the ball is lost in an obstruction in a hazard, use Rule 26-1.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop the ball deemed lost in an immovable obstruction at the place where the ball last entered the obstruction.

#### Rule 25 - Abnormal Ground Conditions, Embedded Ball, and Wrong Putting Greens

##### 25-1a. Abnormal Ground Condition - Interference

Through the green or in a bunker, interference occurs if a ball lies in or touches, or if the stance or swing area is affected by, casual water, ground under repair, or a hole, cast, or runway made by an animal.

In a water hazard or lateral water hazard, interference occurs if a ball lies in or touches, or if the stance or swing area is affected by, ground under repair. If a ball lies in or touches, or if the stance or swing area is affected by, a hole, cast, or runway made by an animal, play the ball as it lies or use Rule 26-1.

On the putting green, interference occurs if a ball lies in or touches, or if the stance, swing area, or line of putt is affected by, casual water, ground under repair, or a hole, cast, or runway made by an animal.

No interference occurs if the direction of play is lateral or backward. No interference occurs if anything other than casual water, ground under repair, or a hole, cast, or runway made by an animal also affects the necessary stance or swing area. Substitute another ball if the ball is not immediately recoverable. For interference on the course, play the ball as it lies or take relief as in Rule 25-1b.

\* No Specific Penalty

##### 25-1b. Abnormal Ground Condition - Relief

For interference through the green, play the ball as it lies or find the point on the course nearest to the ball which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not on the green or in a hazard. Then lift and drop the ball within one club-length of that point on a part of the course which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, not on the green or in a hazard, and not in the abnormal ground condition.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop or place from interference through the green within one club-length of that point on a part of the course which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, not on the green or in a hazard, and not in the abnormal ground condition.

For interference in a hazard, play the ball as it lies or find the point in the hazard nearest to the ball which is not nearer the hole and not in interference. Then lift and drop the ball not in the abnormal ground condition, or take a one-stroke penalty and lift and drop the ball outside the hazard along the line from the hole to the original position of the ball at any distance behind that position.

\* One Stroke - Inside a hazard, for relief from interference, deciding to lift and drop a ball outside the hazard along the line from the hole to the where the ball crossed the margin at any distance behind that position, if the evidence supports that the ball is lost in casual water or ground under repair.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop or place from interference in a hazard at a point in the hazard nearest to the ball which is not nearer the hole and not in interference.

For interference on the putting green, play the ball as it lies or lift the ball and replace it at the nearest spot which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, not in a hazard, and not in the abnormal ground condition. You may clean the ball.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop or place from interference on the putting green at the nearest spot which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, not in a hazard, and not in the abnormal ground condition.

#### 25-1c. Abnormal Ground Condition - Ball Lost

Outside a hazard, if the evidence supports that the ball is lost in casual water, ground under repair, or a hole, cast, or runway made by an animal, substitute another ball, use a point on the course nearest where the ball crossed the margin which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, and not on the putting green or in a hazard. Then drop a ball within one club-length of that point on a part of the course which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, not on the putting green or in a hazard, and not in the abnormal ground condition. If the ball is lost for another reason, use Rule 27.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop the ball within one club-length of that point on a part of the course which is not nearer the hole, not in interference, not on the putting green or in a hazard, and not in the abnormal ground condition.

Inside a bunker, if the evidence supports that the ball is lost in casual water, ground under repair, or a hole, cast, or runway made by an animal, substitute another ball, find the point in the hazard nearest to the where the ball crossed the margin which is not nearer the hole and not in interference. Then lift and drop a ball not in the abnormal ground condition, or take a one-stroke penalty and lift and drop the ball outside the hazard along the line from the hole to the where the ball crossed the margin at any distance behind that position. If the ball is lost for another reason, use Rule 27.

\* One Stroke - Inside a hazard, deciding to lift and drop a ball outside the hazard along the line from the hole to the where the ball crossed the margin at any distance behind that position, if the evidence supports that the ball is lost in casual water or ground under repair.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to drop the ball at the point in the hazard nearest to the where the ball crossed the margin which is not nearer the hole and not in interference.

Inside a water hazard or lateral water hazard, if the evidence supports that the ball is lost in casual water or ground under repair, use rule 26-1.

#### 25-2. Embedded Ball

Through the green, if a ball is embedded in its own pitch-mark in the ground in an area of grass cut to fairway height, lift, clean, and drop a ball near the pitch-mark but not nearer the hole, so that it hits a spot through the green. Do not lift a ball embedded in the rough.

\* Two Strokes - Through the green, dropping an embedded ball nearer the hole or not on a spot through the green, or dropping a ball embedded in rough.

#### 25-3a. Wrong Putting Green - Interference

A ball on a wrong putting green is interference.

\*No Specific Penalty

#### 25-3b. Wrong Putting Green - Relief

For a ball on a wrong putting green, lift the ball, clean it, and find the nearest spot which is not nearer the hole and not in a hazard or on a putting green. Then drop the ball (typically on the apron of the green) within one club-length on a part of the course which is not nearer the hole and not in a hazard or on a putting green. Do not play a ball from a wrong putting green.

\* Two Strokes - Stroking a ball from a wrong putting green, or placing a ball on a wrong putting green.

### Rule 26 - Water Hazards (including Lateral Water Hazards)

#### 26-1. Ball in Water Hazard

If a ball is in a water hazard (whether in water or not), play the ball as it lies, or take a one-stroke penalty and play a ball from near the spot from where the original ball was played (using Rule 20-5), or drop a cleaned ball behind the water hazard along the line of the hole and where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance.

\* One Stroke - From a water hazard, deciding to play a ball from near the spot from where the original ball was played, or to drop a cleaned ball behind the water hazard along the line of the hole and where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance.

\* Two Strokes - Not playing from where the original stroke was played or dropping incorrectly.

If a ball is in a lateral water hazard (whether in water or not), play the ball as it lies, or take a one-stroke penalty. Then play a ball from near the spot from where the original ball was played (using Rule 20-5), or drop a cleaned ball behind the water hazard along the line of the hole and where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance, or drop a cleaned ball outside the water hazard, not nearer the hole, within two club-lengths of where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance, or where the opposite margin of the water hazard is equidistant from the hole.

\* One Stroke - From a lateral water hazard, deciding to play a ball from near the spot from where the original ball was played, or to drop a cleaned ball behind the water hazard along the line of the hole and where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance, or to drop a cleaned ball outside the water hazard, not nearer the hole, within two club-lengths of where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance, or where the opposite margin of the water hazard is equidistant from the hole.

\* Two Strokes - Not playing from where the original stroke was played or dropping incorrectly.

If the evidence indicates the ball is lost in a water hazard (whether in water or not), take a one-stroke penalty and play a ball from near the spot from where the original ball was played (using Rule 20-5), or drop a cleaned ball behind the water hazard along the line of the hole and where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance. If the ball is lost outside a water hazard, use Rule 27.

\* One Stroke - From a water hazard, deciding to play a ball from near the spot from where the original lost ball was played, or to drop a cleaned ball behind the water hazard along the line of the hole and where the lost ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance.

\* Two Strokes - Not playing from where the original stroke was played or dropping incorrectly.

If the evidence indicates the ball is lost in a lateral water hazard (whether in water or not), take a one-stroke penalty. Then play a ball from near the spot from where the original ball was played (using Rule 20-5), or drop a cleaned ball behind the water hazard along the line of the hole and where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance, or drop a cleaned ball outside the water hazard, not nearer the hole, within two club-lengths of where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance, or where the opposite margin of the water hazard is equidistant from the hole. If the ball is lost outside a water hazard, use Rule 27.

\* One Stroke - From a lateral water hazard, deciding to play a ball from near the spot from where the original ball was played, or to drop a cleaned ball behind the water hazard along the line of the hole and where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance, or to drop a cleaned ball outside the water hazard, not nearer the hole, within two club-lengths of where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard at any distance, or where the opposite margin of the water hazard is equidistant from the hole.

\* Two Strokes - Not playing from where the original stroke was played or dropping incorrectly.

#### 26-2a. Ball Played Within Water Hazard - Ball Comes to Rest in the Hazard

If a ball stroked from a water hazard comes to rest in the same water hazard, proceed by Rule 26-1 or take a one-stroke penalty and play from where the last stroke from outside the hazard was played (using Rule 20-5). If proceeding under Rule 26-1a, play the dropped or placed ball, or proceed under Rule 26-1b (and its one-stroke penalty), or proceed under Rule 26-1c if it applies (and its one-stroke penalty), or take a one-stroke penalty and play from where the last stroke from outside the hazard was played (using Rule 20-5).

\* One Stroke - Deciding to play from where the last stroke from outside the hazard was played.

\* Two Strokes - Not playing from where the original stroke was played or dropping incorrectly.

#### 26-2b. Ball Played Within Water Hazard - Ball Lost or Unplayable Outside Hazard or Out of Bounds

If a ball stroked from a water hazard is lost, declared unplayable, or out of bounds, take a one-stroke penalty (under Rule 27-1 or 28a). Then play from the hazard where the last stroke from inside the hazard was played (using Rule 20-5; dropping the ball is not required and a dropped ball need not be played). Alternatively, proceed under Rule 26-1b (and its one-stroke penalty) using the point where the original ball crossed the margin of the hazard, or proceed under Rule 26-1c if it applies (and its one-stroke penalty) using the point where the original ball crossed the margin of the hazard. Alternatively, take a one-stroke penalty and play from where the last stroke from outside the hazard was played (using Rule 20-5). If a ball played from a water hazard is declared unplayable outside the hazard, proceed under Rule 26-2b, Rule 28b, or Rule 28c.

\* One Stroke - Deciding to play from where the last stroke from outside the hazard was played.

\* Two Strokes - Not playing from where the original stroke was played or dropping incorrectly.

#### Rule 27 - Ball Lost or Out of Bounds; Provisional Ball

If a ball is lost in an immovable obstruction, use Rule 24-2. If a ball is lost in abnormal ground conditions, use Rule 25-1. If a ball is lost in a water hazard, use Rule 26.

#### 27-1. Ball Lost or Out of Bounds

If a ball is out of bounds or is lost outside a water hazard, immovable obstruction, or abnormal ground condition, take a one-stroke penalty and play a substitute ball from where the original ball was last played (using Rule 20-5). If a ball is lost in a water hazard, use Rule 26-1. If a ball is lost in an immovable obstruction, use Rule 24-2c. If a ball is lost in an abnormal ground condition, use Rule 25-1c. Do not search for more than five minutes, because after five minutes the ball is lost; playing a ball found after five minutes is playing a wrong ball. You cannot arbitrarily declare a ball lost. If you put a substitute ball into play, the original ball is deemed lost.

- \* One Stroke, and play a substitute ball from where the original ball was last played - Losing a ball outside a water hazard or out of bounds.
- \* Two Strokes - Failing to play a substitute ball from the original spot.

#### 27-2a. Provisional Ball - Procedure

If a ball might be out of bounds or be lost outside a water hazard, immovable obstruction, or abnormal ground condition, announce the intention and mark the score card to play a provisional ball and, before beginning the search or going forward, play a provisional ball from where the original ball was last played (using Rule 20-5). If no announcement is made and a substitute ball is played, take a one-stroke penalty and only play the substitute ball since it is now the ball in play (as required by Rule 27-1).

- \* One Stroke, and play only the substitute ball, as the ball in play (as required by Rule 27-1) - Failing to announce the intention to play a provisional ball and playing a substitute ball.

#### 27-2b. Provisional Ball - When Provisional Ball Becomes Ball in Play

Play a provisional ball until reaching the place where the original ball might be located. If the original ball is out of bounds or is lost outside a water hazard, immovable obstruction, or abnormal ground condition, take a one-stroke penalty and play the provisional ball as the ball in play (under Rule 27-1). Playing a stroke from where the original ball might be located or from nearer the hole makes the provisional ball the ball in play, and the original ball must be abandoned as if lost (under Rule 27-1). If the ball lies in a water hazard, abandon the provisional ball and play the ball as it lies or proceed using Rule 26. If the ball is lost in a water hazard, abandon the provisional ball and proceed using Rule 26-1. If a ball is lost in an immovable obstruction, abandon the provisional ball and use Rule 24-2c. If a ball is lost in an abnormal ground condition, abandon the provisional ball and use Rule 25-1c. If the ball is unplayable, abandon the provisional ball and proceed using Rule 28. If the ball is in bounds, play the ball as it lies.

- \* One Stroke, and play only the substitute ball as the ball in play (as required by Rule 27-1) - Playing the provisional ball from a place where the original ball might be located or from a place nearer the hole.

#### 27-2c. Provisional Ball - When Provisional Ball Is to be Abandoned

Play the provisional ball until reaching the place where the original ball might be located. If the original ball is found and not out of bounds, abandon the provisional ball and play the original ball as the ball in play. Do not play the provisional ball because it is now a wrong ball (under Rule 15).

- \* Two Strokes - Playing the provisional ball when the original ball should be played (under Rule 15), or failing to identify a found ball as the player's ball.

#### Rule 28 - Ball Unplayable

Outside a water hazard and outside a bunker, you may declare a ball unplayable and take a one-stroke penalty. Then play a cleaned ball from

where the original ball was last played, or drop a cleaned ball within two club-lengths of the spot of the unplayable ball but not nearer the hole, or drop a cleaned ball behind the spot of the unplayable ball on a line from the hole to the ball at any distance. If you drop into an unplayable lie, play the ball as it lies or declare the ball unplayable; you do not get a second chance to drop. In a water hazard, you may not declare a ball unplayable.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to play from the original spot, to drop within two club-lengths, or to drop on the line from the hole behind the spot of the unplayable ball.

Outside a water hazard and in a bunker, you may declare a ball unplayable and take a one-stroke penalty. Then play a cleaned ball from where the original ball was last played, or drop a cleaned ball in the same bunker within two club-lengths of the spot of the unplayable ball but not nearer the hole, or drop a cleaned ball in the same bunker behind the spot of the unplayable ball on a line from the hole to the ball at any distance. If you drop into an unplayable lie, play the ball as it lies or declare the ball unplayable; you do not get a second chance to drop. In a water hazard, you may not declare a ball unplayable.

\* Two Strokes - Failing to play from the original spot, to drop within two club-lengths, or to drop on the line from the hole behind the spot of the unplayable ball.

#### Rule 29. Threesomes and Foursomes

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### Rule 30. Three-Ball, Best-Ball, and Four-Ball Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### Rule 31. Four-Ball Stroke Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### Rule 32. Bogey, Par, and Stableford Competitions

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### Rule 33. The Committee

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### Rule 34. Disputes and Decisions

##### Rule 34-1a. Claims and Penalties - Match Play

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

##### Rule 34-1b. Claims and Penalties - Stroke Play

A claim is informing the player that a Rule was violated. A claim must be made before playing from the next tee or leaving the last green, or as soon as practicable after learning of a violation.

No penalty can be rescinded, modified, or imposed after the score card has been signed, except that the player is disqualified if the player violated Rule 1-3, returned a score card with a score on a hole lower than the actual score (unless the returned score was correct except for a penalty of which the player was unaware), or knew that a Rule requiring disqualification had been violated.

\* No Specific Penalty

#### 34-2. Referee's Decision

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### 34-3. Committee's Decision

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### Appendix I - Local Rules; Conditions of the Competition

Not applicable to noncompetitive golf.

#### Appendix II - Design of Clubs

Use only clubs conforming to the specifications and interpretations in Appendix II of the Rules of Golf. The USGA rules if a club is conforming. A club must be designed and manufactured to have conforming properties, within manufacturing tolerances.

The club must be one fixed unit, adjustable only for weight, with no external attachments, and consist of a shaft and a head in a traditional and customary form.

The shaft must be straight, and bend and twist equally in all directions. The shaft is attached to the head at the heel directly or through a single plain neck and/or socket.

The grip is the part of the shaft used to hold the club, and any material added to aid in holding. The grip must be straight, adhere to the end of the shaft, and not be molded to fit the hand.

The head or clubhead must have only one clubface, be longer from heel to toe than from front to back, and have a traditional plain shape.

The clubface must be hard and rigid, must be smooth (with dots or horizontal lines as allowed by Appendix II), and must have no concavity.

A putter is a club used to stroke the ball on the putting green. It cannot have a loft of more than 10 degrees.

A putter shaft can be attached to the head at any point.

A putter can have two clubfaces if both are opposite each other and have the same form.

#### Appendix III - The Ball

A golf ball must have a maximum weight, minimum size, spherical symmetry, initial velocity, and overall distance, and be approved by the USGA. The maximum weight is 1.62 ounces because heavier balls go farther. The minimum size is 1.68 inches diameter because smaller balls go farther. The spherical symmetry ensures no changes in flight pattern after leaving the club. The initial velocity measures the elasticity because more elastic balls go farther. The overall distance is about 255 yards in the air for a mechanical hit.

#### Section I - Courtesy

Golf courtesy is encapsulated in the following precepts:

A player should ensure that no one is likely to be hit by a club, ball, or anything moved by a stroke or swing.

The player in a group with the honor should be allowed to play first. No one should move, talk, or stand close to or directly behind a player making a stroke or addressing the ball. Do not play until the players in front are out of range.

Play without delay. When searching for a ball, allow players behind to pass through. Leave the putting green immediately when play has been completed. If a group loses more than one clear hole, invite the following group to pass.

A single player has no standing and should give way to all other groups. A group of two has precedence over three and four. A group playing a whole round can pass a group playing a shorter round.

Fill up and smooth holes and footprints left in a bunker.

Replace divots and press them down. Repair damage to the putting green by ball-marks. After a hole has been completed, repair damage to the putting green by spike marks.

Put down golf bags and flagsticks so as not to damage putting greens. Do not stand close to the hole. Do not damage the putting green with the flagstick. Do not damage the putting green when removing a ball from the hole. Replace the flagstick in the hole properly before leaving the putting green. Do not lean on a putter on the putting green, especially when removing a ball from the hole.

Use golf carts only in designated areas.

Do not take divots with practice swings, especially on teeing grounds.

#### Section II - Definitions

Abnormal Ground Conditions - casual water, ground under repair, hole, cast or runway made by an animal, or certain damage to the course.

Addressing The Ball - Outside a hazard, addressing the ball occurs when a player has taken a stance and grounded the club. In a hazard, addressing the ball occurs when a player has taken a stance.

Advice - any suggestion that could influence a player's play: such as the choice of club or method of stroking. The Rules of Golf, information about the Rules, and public information, such as the positions of hazards or the flagsticks, is not advice.

Artificial Device - unusual equipment that could assist a stroke or play, to measure distance or conditions affecting the play, or to assist in gripping the club, such as a range-finder, a plumb line, an artificially warmed ball, ball finders, or instructional tapes or books. Plain gloves; resin, powder, and drying or moisturizing agents applied to the grip, gloves, or hands; tape or gauze applied to the grip so as the grip is still conforming; or a towel or handkerchief around the grip; eyeglasses and contact lenses; things dropped to determine wind direction, hand warmers; and booklets of distances to the green from fixed objects on the course are not artificial devices.

Artificial Object - anything not natural, such as the surfaces and sides of roads and paths, manufactured ice, stakes, walls, fences, railings, and temporary construction.

Backswing - the movement of the club backward from the ball.

Ball-marker - a coin or plastic disk used to mark the position of a ball to be lifted.

Ball In Play - the state of the ball immediately after the first stroke from the teeing ground until the ball is holed. If the ball is lost, out-of-bounds, or lifted, the ball is no longer in play. If another ball has been substituted, whether or not the substitution is permitted, the substituted ball becomes the ball in play.

Bunker - a hazard filled with sand or the like. Ground with grass that borders or is in a bunker is not part of the bunker. The margin of bunker extends downwards but not upwards, so that trees over a bunker are not in a hazard. A ball is in a bunker when any part of it touches the bunker.

Burrowing Animals - foxes, gophers, ground hogs, rabbits, moles, and salamanders, which make a hole for themselves. Not dogs or cats.

Caddie - the person who carries and/or handles a player's clubs during play and who assists a player as the Rules allow. If a caddie is employed by two players, the ball involved at each moment determines which player at that moment, unless the caddie is acting upon specific instructions from a player.

Casual Water - temporary accumulation of water, visible before or after a player takes a stance, that is not in a water hazard or lateral water hazard. Snow and natural ice are casual water (or loose impediments). Dew and frost are not casual water. Manufactured ice is not casual water.

Club - the equipment used to stroke the ball. Use only clubs approved by the USGA. The club must be one fixed unit, only adjustable for weight, with no external attachments. A club has a straight shaft, which can bend and twist equally in all directions, that is attached to a head at the heel directly or through a single plain neck and/or socket, in a traditional and customary form. The head must have only one clubface, be longer from heel to toe than from front to back, and have a traditional shape. The clubface must be hard and rigid, smooth (with dots or horizontal lines allowed), and have no concavity. The grip must be straight, adhere to the end of the shaft, and not be molded to fit the hand.

Committee - arranges the contest and course according to the Rules of Golf and makes decisions about any situation involving the Rules.

Competitor - a player in stroke competition.

Conditions - the course, stipulated round(s), starting time, groups, form of competition, fees, and method of settling ties, for a golf competition.

Course - the whole area within which play is permitted.

Decision - a formal ruling by the Committee based on the Rules of Golf after a claim or dispute.

Divot - a place on the course where the turf has been scraped bare and/or a depression made by a stroke. The piece of turf so scraped away should be replaced.

Equipment - anything used, worn, or carried by or for the player, including a mechanical or motorized golf cart, except for the ball in play and any small object (usually a coin or a tee) used to mark the position of a ball or the extent of a drop area. If any golf cart is being moved, the cart belongs to the player moving it. A lifted ball is equipment.

Equity - using fairness to settle disputes not covered by the Rules of Golf.

Fellow-competitor - a competitor playing in the same group as a competitor.

Flagstick - a movable, straight indicator, circular in cross-section, with or without a flag, centered in the hole to show position.

Forecaddie - appointed or employed by the Committee to indicate the positions of balls to the players during play. A forecaddie is an outside agency.

Golf Hole - a part of the golf course from tens of yards to over 700 yards long.

Grip - the part of the shaft used to hold the club, and any material added to aid in holding. The grip must be straight, adhere to the end of the shaft, and not be molded to fit the hand.

Ground Under Repair - any part of the course marked as ground under repair, material intended for removal or piled for removal, and plugged holes on a putting green. Stakes and lines marking ground under repair are in ground under repair. The margin of ground under repair extends downwards but not upwards. A ball in a bush or tree growing in ground under repair is in ground under repair. A ball is in ground under repair when any part of it lies in or touches ground under repair.

Grounding - touching the ground or any object touching the ground with the club after address. Only light grounding is allowed, with no pressing down.

Hazard - a bunker, water hazard, or lateral water hazard.

Hole - a 4 1/4 inch, or 108 mm, diameter hole in the ground at least 4 inches, or 100 mm deep. Any lining must have an outer diameter less than 4 1/4 inches, or 108 mm, and must be sunk 1 inch, or 25 mm, below the surface of the putting green (unless impracticable due to soil conditions).

Holed (Ball Holed) - a ball at rest within the circumference of the hole, all of it below the level of the lip of the hole.

Honor - the player entitled to play first from the teeing ground.

Interference - occurs if anything or person interferes with a necessary stance or swing area, or, on the putting green, the line of putt.

Lateral Water Hazard - a water hazard or part of a water hazard situated so that it is impracticable to drop a ball behind it. A lateral water hazard should be marked with red stakes and lines. A ball is in a lateral water hazard when any part of it lies in or touches the lateral water hazard.

Line Of Play - the intended direction of the ball for a stroke, plus a reasonable distance on either side. The line of play extends upwards, but not beyond the hole.

Line Of Putt - the intended direction of the ball for a stroke on the putting green, plus a reasonable distance on either side. The line of putt does not extend beyond the hole.

Loose Impediments - natural objects such as a stone, leaf, twig, branch, dung, worms, insects, casts, heaps, that is not fixed or growing, not solidly embedded, and not adhering to the ball. On the putting green only, sand and loose soil are loose impediments. Snow and natural ice are

loose impediments (or casual water). Dew and frost are not loose impediments. Manufactured ice is not a loose impediment. A live insect on a ball is a loose impediment. Thrown away food or garbage is a loose impediment. Plugs of ground made by aeration equipment are loose impediments.

Lost Ball (Ball Lost) - a ball not found or identified after five minutes of searching after reaching the probable location of the ball (time spent in playing a wrong ball does not count in search time), a ball abandoned by putting another ball into play under the Rules (even if no search has been made), or a ball abandoned by playing a stroke with a provisional ball from the probable location of the lost ball or from a point nearer the hole. Putting another ball into play or stroking the provisional ball under the described conditions makes the new ball the ball in play.

Marker - appointed by the Committee to record a player's score. A marker can be a fellow competitor. A marker cannot be a referee. A marker is an outside agency.

Matches - single, threesome, foursome, three-ball, best-ball, four-ball.

Moved (Move) (Ball Deemed To Move) - a ball that leaves its position and comes to rest at another position. A jiggled or oscillating ball has not moved.

Nearest Point of Relief - the closest point on the course, not nearer the hole, from where the ball lies in an abnormal ground condition, immovable obstruction, or wrong putting green, at which relief can be taken from all interference without penalty. The club to be used next is the club used in the determination of relief from interference.

Observer - appointed by the Committee to assist the referee to decide questions of fact and report any breach of a Rule. An observer should not attend a flagstick, stand at or mark the position of the hole, mark a ball's position, or lift a ball. An observer is an outside agency.

Obstruction - anything artificial, such as the surfaces and sides of roads and paths and manufactured ice. Stakes marking ground under repair are obstructions. Stakes defining water hazards are obstructions. Objects defining out of bounds, such as walls, fences, stakes and railings, are not obstructions. Parts of immovable artificial objects which are out of bounds are not obstructions. Construction declared to be an integral part of the course is not an obstruction.

Out-of-bounds - ground on which play is not permitted. Out-of-bounds is not part of the course. Out-of-bounds is marked with white stakes and lines. The out-of-bounds line is out-of-bounds and includes all parts of the actual line, stakes, fence posts, fence, or wall, at ground level, but not their angled supports extending onto the course. The out-of-bounds line extends vertically upwards and downwards. A ball is out-of-bounds only when all of it lies out-of-bounds. A player can stand out-of-bounds to hit a ball within bounds.

Outside Agency - any agency that is not the player or the caddie. A referee, marker, observer, and forecaddie are outside agencies. Wind and water are not outside agencies.

Partner - a player on the same side.

Penalty Stroke - a stroke added to the score of a player under a Rule. A penalty stroke counts the same as a regular stroke if there are no partners.

Provisional Ball - a ball played to save time when a ball might be lost outside a water hazard or might be out-of-bounds.

Putter - a club to be used on the putting green. It cannot have a loft of more than 10 degrees, its shaft can be attached to the head at any point, and it can have two clubfaces if both are opposite each other and have the same form.

Putting Green - ground specially prepared for putting, around the hole. A ball is on the putting green when any part of it touches the putting green.

Referee - appointed by the Committee to accompany the players, decide questions of fact, apply the Rules, and act on any breach of a Rule observed or reported. The referee should not attend a flagstick, stand at or mark the position of the hole, mark a ball's position, or lift a ball. A referee is an outside agency.

Rub Of The Green - when a ball in motion is accidentally deflected or stopped by an outside agency.

Rule - one of the Rules of golf, including a Local Rule.

Score - official number of strokes on each hole of a stipulated round.

Score Card - official document on which to record the score for each hole of a stipulated round.

Scorer - appointed by the Committee to record a player's score. A scorer can be a fellow competitor. A scorer cannot be a referee. A scorer is an outside agency.

Second Ball - a ball played when a player is in doubt about a Rule, right, or procedure, or when the player believes a serious breach of the Rule against playing from the wrong place has occurred.

Side - a player, or partners.

Stance (Taking A Stance) - positioning the feet for preparing to make a stroke.

Stipulated Round or Round - playing the holes of the course in the correct sequence or another sequence authorized by the Committee. The

number of holes is 18, unless a smaller number is authorized by the Committee.

Stroke - forward movement of the club intending to strike and move the ball. If the downswing is stopped before the clubhead reaches the ball, there is no stroke.

Swing - the movement of the club forward and backward during a stroke.

Tee - a small wooden or plastic peg to poke in the ground and put the ball on.

Tee-markers - rectangular blocks at the front of the teeing ground.

Teeing Ground - the starting area to begin one of the golf holes. The teeing ground is rectangular. The front line is defined by the fronts of the two tee-markers. The side lines are defined by the outsides of the two tee-markers. The depth is two club-lengths from the front of the tee-markers. A ball is outside the teeing ground when all of it lies outside the teeing ground.

Through The Green - all of the course except the teeing ground of the hole being played, all hazards, and the putting green of the hole being played. Through the green includes the grassy areas of the fairway and rough and the apron of the putting green. Out-of-bounds is not through the green.

Unplayable - declaration by player that a ball cannot be played as it lies and will be removed from play and put back in play under the penalty prescribed by the Rules.

Water Hazard - any sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, surface drainage ditch, any open water course, or the like, whether containing water or not. A water hazard, except for lateral water hazards, should be marked with yellow stakes and lines. All ground or water within the margin of a water hazard is in the water hazard. The margin of the water hazard extends upwards and downwards. Stakes and lines defining a water hazard are in the hazard. A stake defining a water hazard is an obstruction. A ball is in a water hazard when any part of it touches the water hazard.

Wrong Ball - a ball other than the player's ball in play, provisional ball, or second ball (as allowed in Rule 3-3 or Rule 20-7b). A substituted ball is the ball in play, whether or not the substitution was legal.

Wrong Information - an erroneous report about any condition of the competition or status of play, or a failure to report a penalty..

Wrong Place - an area or spot where a ball was not supposed to be dropped or placed.

Wrong Putting Green - not the putting green of the hole being played. Also, any practice putting or pitching green.

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