

A SUMMARY OF THE
RULES OF GOLF



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**GOLF IS A GAME...
SO TEE UP AND HAVE FUN!**

BUT REMEMBER...

EVERY GAME HAS ITS RULES

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ETIQUETTE

Courtesy on the Course

1. If someone else is playing from the tee, do not tee your ball until he has played.
2. Always stand still when another player is playing. Do not talk.
3. Be ready to play when it is your turn.
4. When you are playing slowly or looking for a lost ball, ask the group behind you to play through, so you do not slow everyone down.
5. Write down scores on the way to the next hole, not on the green you are leaving.
6. Never take more than one practice swing, if any.



Safety First

Both in Practice and Play, always make sure that:

- ✓ No one is near you when you swing the club.
- ✓ No one is ahead of you where your shot might hit them.

Taking Care of the Course

1. Always wear golf or tennis shoes. Do not slide or drag your feet or run on the green.
2. Always rake a bunker after you have played from it.
3. Repair divots and repair depressions made when your ball hits the green.



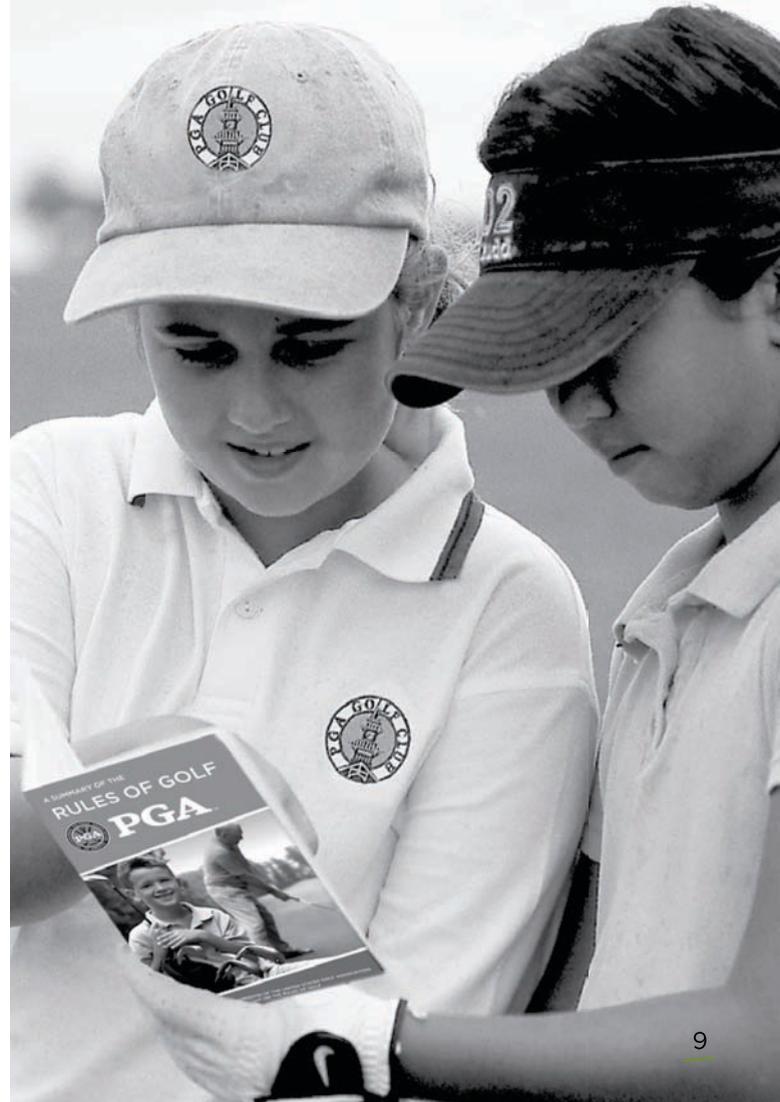
4. Never place your golf bag on the green. Put the flagstick carefully back into the hole after putting.



A SUMMARY OF THE RULES OF GOLF

Rule 1: The Game

- A. Golf is playing a ball from the teeing ground into the hole by a stroke or strokes.
- B. You must always play by the Rules.
You are not allowed to change them.



Rule 2: Match Play

- A. In match play, each hole is a separate contest. If you win the first hole, you are “one up”; if you lose it, your opponent is “one up”; if you tie it, you are “all square.”
- B. You have won the match when, for example, you are three up and there are only two holes left to play.
- C. Anyone you are playing against is your “opponent.”

CHAMPIONSHIP	428	524	209	380	355	573	152	374	409	3708
REGULAR	416	482	185	359	342	549	137	334	367	
PAR	4	5	3	4	4	5	3	4	4	
HANDICAP	15	5	9	3	11	13	17			

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NET
+/-								
Jim		+1	+2	+1	+1			
Mike		8	6	3	5	3		
LADIES		7	4	4	5	3		
PAR		323	386	145	293	27		
HANDICAP		4	5	3	4			
		13	5	17				

Excerpt from Match Play Scorecard

Rule 3: Stroke Play

- A. In stroke play, the competitor with the lowest total score for the stipulated rounds is the winner.
- B. You must play the ball into the hole before starting the next hole. No “gimmies!”
- C. Anyone you are playing with is a fellow competitor.

BLUE	428	524	209	380	355	573	152	374	409	3708
WHITE	416	482	185	359	342	549	137	334	367	3171
PAR	4	5	3	4	4	5	3	4	4	36
HANDICAP	15	5	9	3	11	13	17	7	1	

HOLE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	OUT	10	11
+/-												
Jim		4	6	7	5	44						
Mike		6	4	5	6	39						
LADIES		71	474	112	252	288	2544					
PAR		4	5	3	4	4	36					
HANDICAP		13	5	17								

Excerpt from Stroke Play Scorecard

Rule 4 & 5: Clubs and the Ball

- A. You may carry no more than fourteen clubs.
- B. Normally, you may not change balls during the play of a hole. However, if you damage or cut your ball, you may do so after first telling your opponent or a fellow competitor.



Rule 6: Things a Player Should Do

You should:

- A. Read the notices given to you by the tournament officials.
- B. Always use your proper handicap.
- C. Know your tee time or starting time.
- D. Make sure you play your own ball (put a mark on the ball with a pencil in case someone else is using an identical ball.)
- E. In stroke play, make sure your score for each hole is correct before you turn in your card.
- F. Keep playing unless there is lightning, you are ill or an official tells you to stop.



Rule 7: Practice

- A. You may not hit a practice shot during play of a hole, or from any hazard.

Note: Always read the local rules about practice.

Rule 8: Advice on How to Play

- A. During a round, you may not ask anyone except your caddie or partner for advice on how to play. However, you may ask about Rules or the position of hazards or the flagstick.
- B. You may not give advice to your opponent or a fellow-competitor or anyone else in the competition.

Rule 9: Advising Opponent on Strokes Taken

- A. In match play, you must tell your opponent the number of strokes you have taken if you are asked.

Rule 10: When to Play a Shot

- A. The player who has the lowest score on a hole has the right to play first on the next hole. This is called the “honor.”
- B. During play of a hole, the player whose ball is farthest from the hole plays first.
- C. If you play out of turn, in match play your opponent may make you replay, but this is not so in stroke play.



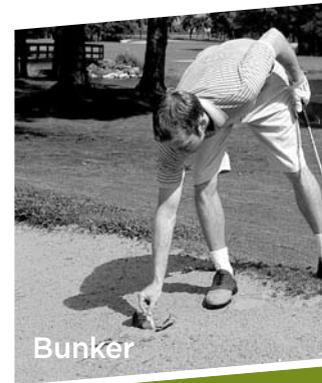
Rule 11: Teeing Ground

- A. Tee your ball between the tee-markers or a little behind them. You may go behind them as much as two club-lengths.
- B. If your ball accidentally falls off the tee before you make a stroke, you may replace it without penalty.



Rule 12: Finding Ball in Hazard-Identifying Ball

- A. You may lift your ball to identify it anywhere. You must tell your opponent or fellow-competitor before you lift your ball to identify it.
- B. A hazard is any bunker (area of sand) or water hazard (lake, pond, creek, etc.)
- C. In a bunker or water hazard, if your ball is covered by sand or leaves, you may remove enough of the sand or leaves to be able to see a part of the ball.



Rule 13: Playing the Ball as it Lies and the Course as You Find It

A. You must play the ball as it lies. You may not move it to a better spot.



You may remove loose impediments anywhere except in a hazard.

You may remove artificial objects.

- B. You may not improve your lie by pressing down behind the ball. The club may be grounded only lightly behind the ball.
- C. You may not improve the area of your intended swing or line of play by bending or breaking anything growing, such as tree limbs or weeds.
- D. In a hazard, you may not touch the sand, ground or water with the club before or during your backswing.
- E. In a hazard, you may not remove loose impediments (natural things such as leaves or twigs) but you may remove obstructions (artificial objects such as bottles or rakes).



Rule 14: Striking the Ball

- A. You must fairly strike the ball with the head of the club. You may not push, scrape or rake the ball.
- B. You must not hit your ball while it is moving.

Rule 15: Playing a Wrong Ball

- A. In match play, if you play a ball that is not yours, you lose the hole unless the wrong ball is played in a water hazard; if you play a wrong ball in a hazard, you must then play the right ball.
- B. In stroke play, if you play a ball that is not yours, you must take a two-stroke penalty unless the wrong ball was played in a water hazard. You must then play out the hole with your own ball. If you do not do so, you are disqualified.

Rule 16: The Putting Green

- A. If any part of your ball is touching the green, it is on the green.
- B. When your ball is on the green, you may brush away leaves, other loose impediments and movable obstructions on your line of putt.
- C. You should repair ball marks or old hole plugs but you may not repair marks made by spikes or shoes, if they are on your line of putt.
- D. You may not test the surface of the green by rolling a ball or scraping the surface.
- E. Always mark your ball by putting a small coin or other marker behind it when you want to pick it up to clean or get it out of another player's way.



Spike Marks

Hole Plug

Ball Depression



Rule 17: The Flagstick

If your ball is off the green, there is no penalty if you play and your ball strikes the flagstick, provided no one is holding the flagstick.



If your ball is on the green, do not putt with the flagstick in the hole. Either take the flagstick out or ask another player to hold it and take it out when you play your ball. If you putt and your ball hits the flagstick when it is in the hole, in match play you lose the hole. In stroke play, you must add two penalty strokes to your score for the hole.

Attending flagstick must be removed when ball is on the green.

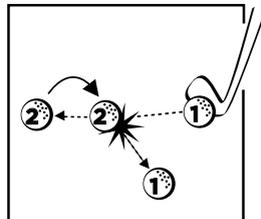
Rule 18: Ball at Rest Moved

- A. If you or your partner or either of your caddies move either of your balls on purpose, accidentally, or cause it to move add a penalty stroke to your score, replace and play it.
- B. If your ball is moved by someone or something other than you, your partner or either of your caddies, (an outside agency) there is no penalty, but you must replace it. If the ball is moved by wind or water, you must play it as it lies.
- C. Once you address the ball, if the ball moves, add a penalty stroke and replace the ball.

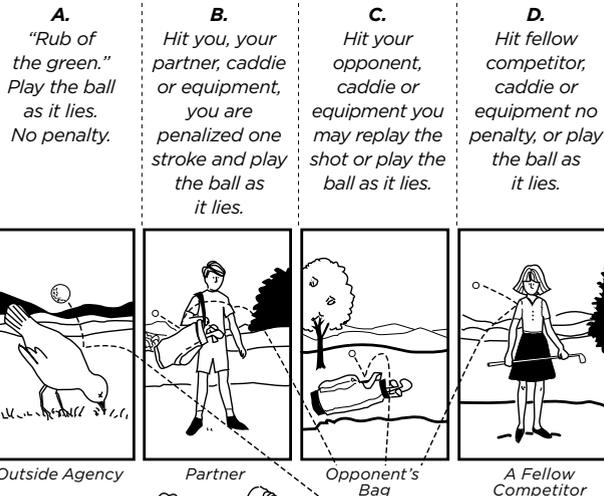
Rule 19: Ball in Motion, Deflected or Stopped

- A. If your ball hits an outside agency, (bird, rake, etc...), it is called a “rub of the green.” There is no penalty and the ball is played as it lies.
- B. If your ball hits you, your partner, your caddie, or your equipment you are penalized one stroke and you must play your ball as it lies.
- C. If your ball hits your opponent, his caddie or his equipment, there is no penalty; you may play the ball as it lies or replay the shot.
- D. If your ball hits a fellow-competitor, caddie or equipment in stroke play, there is no penalty and the ball is played as it lies. These are the same as outside agencies in stroke play.
- E. If your ball hits another ball and moves it, you must play your ball as it lies. The owner of the other ball must replace it. If your ball is on the green when you play and the ball which your ball

- E.**
 1 - Played as it lies.
 2 - Ball is replaced to original position.



hits is also on the green, you are penalized two strokes in stroke play. Otherwise, there is no penalty.



Rule 20: Lifting and Dropping the Ball

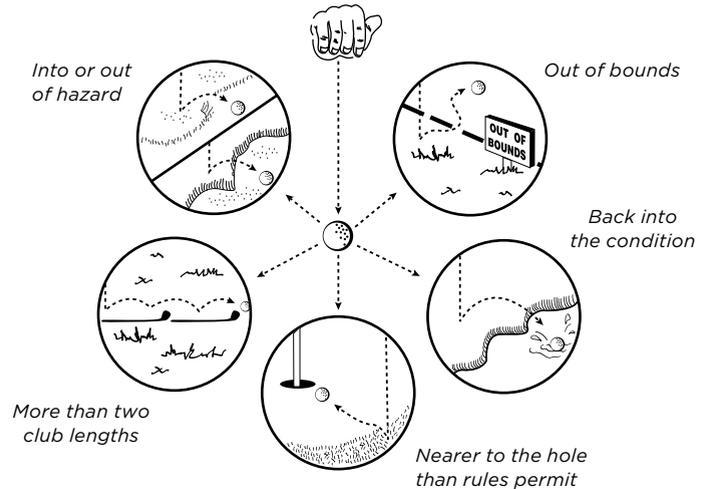
- A. If you are going to lift your ball under a Rule and the Rule requires that the ball be replaced, you must put a ball-marker behind the ball before you lift it.
- B. When you drop a ball, stand erect, hold your arm out straight at shoulder height and drop it.
- C. If a dropped ball hits the ground and rolls into a hazard, out of a hazard, more than two club-lengths, nearer the hole than the rules permit or, if you are dropping away from an immovable obstruction or ground under repair, etc., back into the obstruction or ground under repair, you must re-drop.



lengths, nearer the hole than the rules permit or, if you are dropping away from an immovable obstruction or ground under repair, etc., back into the obstruction or ground under repair, you must re-drop.

If the same thing happens when you re-drop, you must place

the ball where it struck the ground when it was re-dropped.



Rule 21: Cleaning the Ball

You may usually clean your ball when you are allowed to lift it. Except on the green, you may not clean the ball when you lift it for identification, because it interferes with another player, or to determine if it is unfit.



Rule 22: Ball Interfering with or Assisting Play

- A. If another ball interferes with your play or is in your line of putt, you may ask the owner of the ball to lift it.
- B. If your ball is in a position where it might assist another player, you may lift your ball.

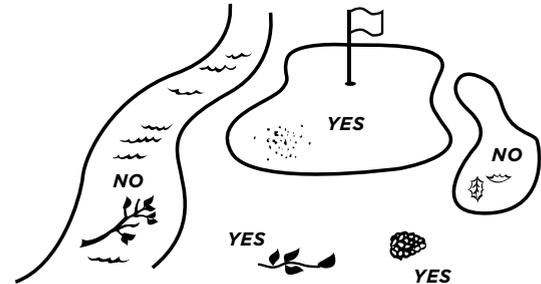


Rule 23: Loose Impediments

Loose impediments are natural objects that are not growing or fixed — such as leaves, twigs, branches, worms and insects. You may remove a loose

impediment except when your ball and the loose impediment lie in the same bunker or water hazard.

(Exception: See Rule 12)

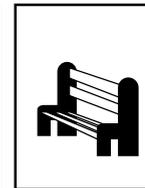


Rule 24: Obstructions

- A. Obstructions are artificial or man-made objects. Bottles, tin cans, rakes, etc..., are movable obstructions. Sprinkler heads, shelter houses, cart paths, etc., are immovable obstructions.
- B. Movable obstructions anywhere on the course may be removed. If the ball moves, it must be replaced without penalty.



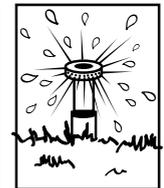
Movable



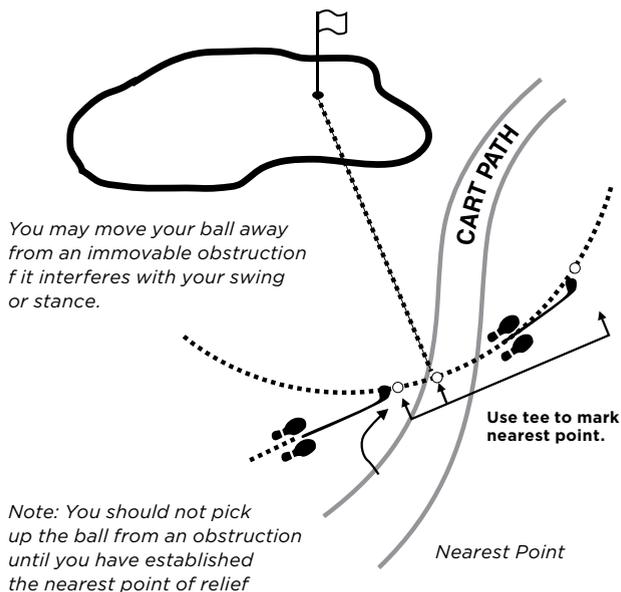
*May or may not
be movable*



*Immovable
(Drop Ball)*



- C. You may drop your ball away from an immovable obstruction if it interferes with your swing or stance. Find the nearest point not nearer the hole where you can play without interference with your swing or stance. Drop the ball within one club-length of that point.

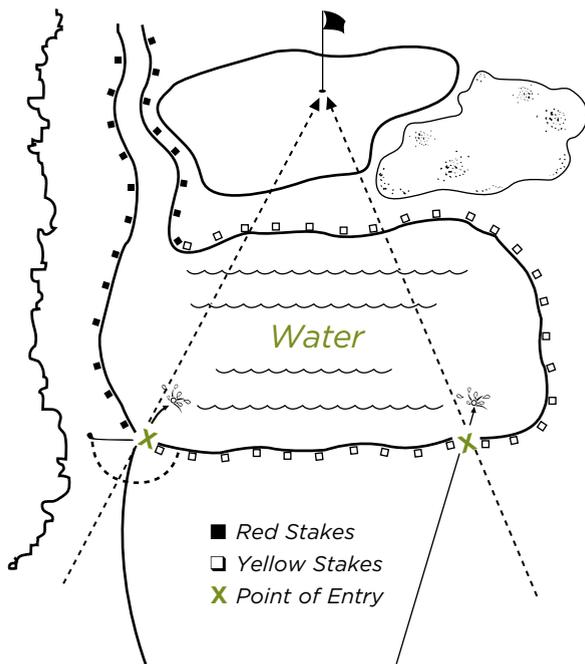


Rule 25: Casual Water, Ground Under Repair, Burrowing Animal Holes

- A. Casual water is any temporary puddle of water caused by rain or overwatering. Ground under repair is any damaged area which the Committee has marked as such.
- B. If your ball or your stance is in casual water, ground under repair or a burrowing animal hole, you may either play the ball as it lies or find the nearest place not nearer the hole which gives you relief and drop the ball within one club-length of that place.
- C. If your ball is in casual water, etc., and you cannot find it, determine where the ball entered the area and drop a ball within one club-length of that place without penalty.
- D. If your ball is on the wrong green, find the nearest place off the green which is not nearer the hole and drop the ball within one club-length of that place.

Rule 26: Water Hazards

A. Water hazard margins are identified by yellow stakes or lines. Lateral water hazard margins are identified by red stakes or lines.



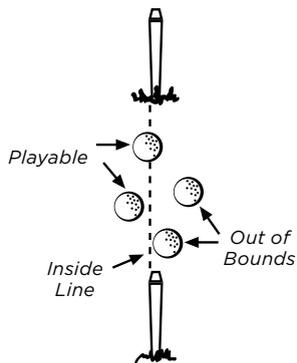
B. If your ball is in a water hazard or a lateral water hazard, you may play it as it lies. If you cannot find it or do not wish to play it, add a penalty stroke and drop and play another ball from where you last played or drop a ball behind the water hazard as far back as you wish. If you decide to drop behind the hazard, drop the ball so that there is a straight line between the hole, where your ball last crossed the hazard margin and where you drop the ball. If your ball is in a lateral water hazard, you may also drop a ball within two club-lengths of where the ball last crossed the hazard margin or equidistant on the opposite margin no nearer to the hole.

Rule 27: Ball Lost or Out of Bounds

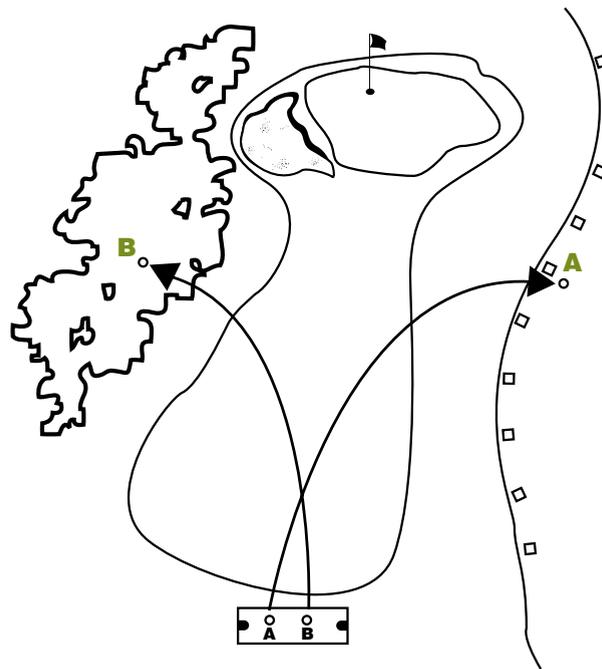
A. A ball is lost if it is not found within five minutes after you first begin to search, or if another ball has been put into play, or if a stroke has been played with a provisional ball at or beyond the spot which the original ball is known to be.

- B. A ball is out of bounds when all of it lies beyond the inside line of objects such as white stakes, or a fence or wall that marks the playing area.
- C. If your ball is lost or out of bounds, you must add a penalty stroke to your score and play another ball from where you played your last shot.
- D. If you think your ball may be lost or out of bounds, you may play another ball (provisional ball) from the place where your first ball was played. You must tell your opponent or fellow-competitor that you are playing a provisional ball and play it before you look for your first ball.

If you cannot find your first ball or if it is out of bounds, you must count the strokes with the first and provisional ball, add a penalty stroke and play out the hole with the provisional ball. If you find your first ball in bounds, continue to play with it and pick up the provisional ball.



Go ahead and play a provisional



Ball is out of bounds when it is beyond white stakes, fences, or walls marking playing area.

SEE BALL A

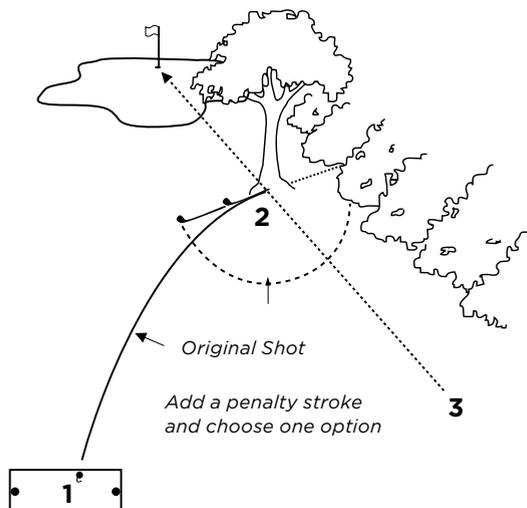
If your ball is lost or out of bounds, add one penalty stroke. Play another ball from where you played your last shot.

SEE BALL B

Rule 28: Ball Unplayable

A. If your ball is under a tree or in some other bad situation and you decide you cannot play it, add a penalty stroke and do one of the following:

1. Go back to where you played the last shot and play a ball from there; or
2. Measure two club-lengths from the unplayable lie, drop a ball and play from there; or
3. Keep the unplayable lie between where you drop the ball and the hole, go back as far as you wish on a straight line and drop and play the ball.



DEFINITIONS

Addressing the Ball A player has “addressed the ball” when he has taken his stance and has also grounded his club, except that in a hazard a player has addressed the ball when he has taken his stance.

Advice “Advice” is any counsel or suggestion which could influence a player in determining his play, the choice of a club or the method of making a stroke.

Information on the Rules or on matters of public information, such as the position of hazards, distance, or the flagstick on the putting green, is not advice.

Ball Deemed to Move See “Move or Moved”

Ball Holed See “Holed”

Ball Lost See “Lost Ball”

Ball in Play A ball is “in play” as soon as the player has made a stroke on the teeing ground. It remains in play until holed out, except when it is lost, out of bounds or lifted, or another ball has been substituted whether or not such substitution is permitted; a ball so substituted becomes the ball in play.

Bunker A “bunker” is a hazard consisting of a prepared area of ground, often a hollow, from which turf or soil has been removed and replaced with sand or the like. Grass-covered ground bordering or within a bunker is not part of the bunker. The margin of a bunker extends vertically downward, but not upwards.

Caddie A “caddie” is one who carries or handles a player’s clubs during play and otherwise assists him in accordance with the Rules.

When one caddie is employed by more than one player, he is always deemed to be the caddie of the player whose ball is involved, and equipment carried by him is deemed to be that player’s equipment, except when the caddie acts upon specific directions of another player, in which case he is considered to be that other player’s caddie.

Casual Water “Casual water” is any temporary accumulation of water on the course which is visible before or after the player takes his stance and is not a water hazard. Snow and ice are either casual water or loose impediments, at the option of the player, except that manufactured ice is an obstruction. Dew is not casual water.

Committee The “Committee” is the committee in charge of the competition or, if the matter does

not arise in a competition, the committee in charge of the course.

Competitor A “competitor” is a player in a stroke competition. A “fellow-competitor” is any person with whom the competitor plays. Neither is partner of the other.

In stroke play foursome and four-ball competitions, where the context so admits, the word “competitor” or “fellow-competitor” includes his partner.

Course The “course” is the whole area within which play is permitted. See Rule 33-2.

Equipment “Equipment” is anything used, worn or carried by or for the player except any ball he has played at the hole being played and any small object, such as a coin or a tee, when used to mark the position of a ball or the extent of an area in which a ball is to be dropped. Equipment includes a golf cart, whether or not motorized. If such a cart is shared by more than one player, its status under the Rules is the same as that of a caddie employed by more than one player. See “Caddie.”

Fellow-Competitor See “Competitor”

Flagstick The “flagstick” is a moveable straight indicator, with or without bunting or other material attached, centered in the hole to show its position. It shall be circular in cross-section.

Forecaddie A “forecaddie” is one who is employed by the Committee to indicate to players the position of balls during play. He is an outside agency.

Forms of Match Play Single: A match in which one player plays against another player.

Threesome: A match in which one player plays against two other players, and each *side* plays one ball.

Foursome: A match in which two players play against two other players, and each *side* plays one ball.

Three-Ball: Three players play a match against one another, each playing his own ball. Each player is playing two distinct matches.

Best-Ball: A match in which one player plays against the better ball of two other players or the best ball of three other players.

Four-Ball: A match in which two players play their better ball against the better ball of two other players.

Forms of Stroke Play Individual: A competition in which each *competitor* plays as an individual.

Foursome: A competition in which two *competitors* play as *partners* and play one ball.

Four-Ball: A competition in which two *competitors* play as *partners*, each playing his own ball. The lower score of the *partners* is the score for the hole. If one *partner* fails to complete the play of the hole, there is no penalty.

Ground Under Repair “Ground under repair” is any portion of the course so marked by order of the Committee or so declared by its authorized representative. It includes material piled for removal and a hole made by a greenkeeper, even if not so marked. Stakes and lines defining ground under repair are in such ground. The margin of ground under repair extends vertically downward but not upwards.

Note 1: Grass cuttings and other material left on the course which have been abandoned and are not intended to be removed are not ground under repair unless so marked.

Note 2: The Committee may make a local rule prohibiting play from ground under repair.

Hazards A “hazard” is any bunker or water hazard.

Hole The “hole” shall be 4 1/4 inches (108mm) in diameter and at least 4 inches (100 mm) deep. If a lining is used, it shall be sunk at least 1 inch (25mm) below the putting green surface unless the nature of the soil makes it impracticable to do so; its outer diameter shall not exceed 4 1/4 inches (108mm).

Holed A ball is “holed” when it is at rest within the circumference of the hole and all of it is below the level of the lip of the hole.

Honor The side entitled to play first from the teeing ground is said to have the “honor.”

Lateral Water Hazard A “lateral water hazard” is a water hazard or that part of a water hazard so situated that it is not possible or is deemed by the Committee to be impracticable to drop a ball behind the water hazard in accordance with Rule 26-1b.

That part of the water hazard to be played as lateral water hazard should be distinctively marked.

Note: Lateral water hazards should be defined by red stakes or lines.

Loose Impediments “Loose impediments” are natural objects such as stones, leaves, twigs, branches and the like, dung, worms and insects and casts or heaps made by them, provided they are not fixed or growing, are solidly embedded and do not adhere to the ball.

Sand and loose soil are loose impediments on the putting green, but not elsewhere. Snow and ice are either casual water or loose impediment, at the option of the player, except that manufactured ice is a movable obstruction.

Dew is not a loose impediment.

Lost Ball A ball is “lost” if:

- a. It is not found or identified as his by the player within five minutes after the player’s side or his or their caddies have begun to search for it; or

- b. The player has put another ball into play under the Rules, even though he may not have searched for the original ball; or
- c. The player has played any stroke with a provisional ball from the place where the original ball is likely to be or from a point nearer the hole than that place, where-upon the provisional ball becomes the ball in play.

Time spent in playing a wrong ball is not counted in the five-minute period allowed for search.

Marker A “marker” is one who is appointed by the Committee to record a competitor’s score in stroke play. He may be a fellow-competitor. He is not a referee.

Move or Moved A ball is deemed to have “moved” if it leaves its position and comes to rest in any other place.

Observer An “observer” is one who is appointed by the Committee to assist a referee to decide questions of fact and to report to him any breach of a Rule. An observer should not attend the flagstick, stand at or mark the position of the hole, or lift the ball or mark its position.

Obstructions An “obstruction” is anything artificial, including the artificial surfaces and sides of roads and paths and manufactured ice, except:

- a. Objects defining out of bounds, such as walls, fences, stakes and railings;
- b. Any part of an immovable artificial object which is out of bounds; and
- c. Any construction declared by the Committee to be an integral part of the course.

Out of Bounds “Out of bounds” is ground on which play is prohibited. When out of bounds is defined by reference to stakes or a fence or as being beyond stakes or a fence, the out of bounds line determined by the nearest inside points of the stakes of fence posts at ground level excluding angled supports.

When out of bounds is defined by a line on the ground, the line itself is out of bounds.

The out of bounds line extends vertically upwards and downward.

A ball is out of bounds when all of it lies out of bounds.

A player may stand out of bounds to play a ball lying within bounds.

Outside Agency An “outside agency” is any agency not part of the match or, in stroke play, not part of a competitor’s side, and includes a referee, a marker, an observer or a forecaddie. Neither wind nor water is an outside agency.

Partner A “partner” is a player associated with another player on the same side.

In a threesome, foursome, best-ball or four-ball match, where the context so admits, the word “player” includes his partner or partners.

Penalty Stroke A “penalty stroke” is one added to the score of a player or side under certain Rules. In a threesome or foursome, penalty strokes do not affect the order of play.

Provisional Ball A “provisional ball” is played under Rule 27-2 for a ball which may be lost outside a water hazard or may be out of bounds.

Putting Green The “putting green” is all ground of the hole being played which is specially prepared for putting or otherwise defined as such by the Committee. A ball is on the putting green when any part of it touches the putting green.

Referee A “referee” is one who is appointed by the Committee to accompany players to decide questions of fact and apply the Rules of Golf. He shall act on any breach of a Rule which he observes or is reported to him.

A referee should not attend the flagstick, stand at or mark the position of the hole, or lift the ball or mark its position.

Rub of the Green A “rub of the green” occurs when a ball in motion is accidentally deflected or stopped by any outside agency

(See Rule 19-1)

Rule The term “Rule” includes Local Rules made by the Committee under Rule 33-8a.

Stance Taking the “stance” consists in a player placing his feet in position for and preparatory to making a stroke.

Stipulated Round The “stipulated round” consists of playing the holes of the course in their correct sequence unless otherwise authorized by the Committee. The number of holes in a stipulated round is 18 unless a smaller number is authorized by the Committee. As to extension of stipulated round in match play, See Rule 2-3.

Stroke A “stroke” is the forward movement of the club made with the intention of fairly striking at and moving the ball, but if a player checks his downswing voluntarily before it reaches the ball he is deemed not to have made a stroke.

Teeing Ground The “teeing ground” is the starting place for the hole to be played. It is a rectangular area two club-lengths in depth, the front and sides of which are defined by the outside limits of two

tee-markers. A ball is outside the teeing ground when all of it lies outside the teeing ground.

Through the Green “Through the green” is the whole area of the course except:

- a. The teeing ground and putting green of the hole being played; and
- b. All hazards on the course.

Water Hazard A “water hazard” is any sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, surface drainage ditch or other open water course (whether or not containing water) and anything of a similar nature. All ground or water within the margin of a water hazard is part of the water hazard. The margin of a water hazard extends vertically upwards and downwards. Stakes and line defining the margins of water hazards are in the hazards.

Note: Water hazards (other than lateral water hazards) should be defined by yellow stakes or lines.

Wrong Ball A “wrong ball” is any ball other than:

- a. The ball in play,
- b. A Provisional ball or
- c. In stroke play, a second ball played under Rule 3-3 or Rule 20-7b.

Note: Ball in play includes a ball substituted for the ball in play when the player is proceeding under an applicable Rule which does not permit substitution.

The Rules of Golf were written and interpreted by the United States Golf Association and The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland.

Golf is one of the very few sports in the world in which the rules are enforced by the participants. The honor and integrity of the game are of utmost concern to the USGA and The PGA of America. The two organizations have worked together for years in conducting rules workshops for people involved in rules administration at tournament and club-level competitions.

The PGA of America golf professional is a grass roots source of rules information throughout the United States. The USGA urges every golfer to know and play the Rules of Golf and to use the PGA Professional as a source of information on the rules.

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