



GOLF'S NEW RULES: MAJOR CHANGES

The USGA and the R&A have made some very exciting changes in the Rules of Golf effective January 1st, 2019. We are happy to try and help you better understand these new and exciting rules!

New Definitions:

- **Penalty Area** - an area from which relief with a 1 shot penalty is allowed (formerly 'Water Hazard'). Still defined as either yellow or red.
- **Relief Area** - the area in which the ball must be dropped (and come to rest) when taking relief under a rule.
- **Reference Point** - the point from which the size of the Relief Area is measured.
- **General Area** - anywhere on the course except Teeing areas, Penalty areas, Bunkers and Greens (formerly 'Through the Green')
- **Temporary Water** - formerly 'Casual Water'

Dropping procedure

- When taking relief (from an abnormal course condition or penalty area, for example), golfers will now drop from knee height. This will ensure consistency and simplicity in the dropping process while also preserving the randomness of the drop.

Measuring in taking relief

- The golfer's relief area will be measured by using the longest club in his/her bag (other than a putter) to measure one club-length or two club-lengths, depending on the situation
- Providing a consistent process for golfers to establish his/her relief area.

Removing the penalty for a double hit

- The penalty stroke for accidentally striking the ball more than once in the course of a stroke has been removed.
- Golfers will simply count the one stroke they made to strike the ball.

Balls Lost or Out of Bounds: Alternative to Stroke and Distance

- A new Local Rule will now be available in January 2019, permitting committees to allow golfers the option to drop the ball in the vicinity of where the ball is lost or out of bounds (including the nearest fairway area), under a two-stroke penalty. It addresses concerns raised at the club level about the negative impact on pace of play when a player is required to go back under stroke and distance.
- The Local Rule is not intended for higher levels of play, such as professional or elite level competitions.

Elimination or reduction of "ball moved" penalties

- There will be no penalty for accidentally moving a ball on the putting green or in searching for a ball
- A player is not responsible for causing a ball to move unless it is "virtually certain" that he or she did so.

Relaxed putting green rules

- There will be no penalty if a ball played from the putting green hits an unattended flagstick in the hole; players may putt without having the flagstick attended or removed.
- Players may repair spike marks and other damage made by shoes, animal damage and other damage on the putting green
- There is no penalty for merely touching the line of putt.

Relaxed rules for "penalty areas" (currently called "water hazards")

- Red and yellow-marked penalty areas may cover areas of desert, jungle, lava rock, etc., in addition to areas of water
- Expanded use of red penalty areas where lateral relief is allowed
- There will be no penalty for moving loose impediments or touching the ground or water in a penalty area.

Relaxed bunker rules

- There will be no penalty for moving loose impediments in a bunker or for generally touching the sand with a hand or club. A limited set of restrictions (such as not grounding the club right next to the ball) is kept to preserve the challenge of playing from the sand
- However, an extra relief option is added for an unplayable ball in a bunker, allowing the ball to be played from outside the bunker with a two-stroke penalty.

Pace-of-play support

- Reduced time for searching for a lost ball (from five minutes to three)
- Encouragement of "ready golf" in stroke play
- Recommending that players take no more than 40 seconds to play a stroke

Relief

- Relief for an **embedded ball** is available anywhere in the General Area. The Relief Area is 1 club length from a point directly behind the ball.
- No "**opposite side relief**" from red Penalty Areas (unless there is a local rule in place)

Damaged Golf Club

- A player may keep using and/or repair any **club damaged** during the round, no matter what the damage and even if the player damaged it in anger.
- A player is not allowed to **replace a damaged club**, except when it is damaged by an outside influence or by someone other than the player or caddie.

Some other changes

- A player's "**reasonable judgment**" when estimating or measuring a spot, point, line, area or distance **will be upheld**, even if video evidence later shows it to be wrong
- **Elimination of announcement** procedures when lifting a ball to identify it or to see if it is damaged.
- The **honour** on the tee is determined by the player with the lowest gross score on the previous hole.
- No need to announce the intention to **lift a ball** to identify it or to determine if it is in an abnormal condition (ball must be marked first).
- A ball may be **marked** by holding a club behind or to the side of it.
- **Natural objects** may be moved to see if they are loose or unattached. If they are found to be attached they must be replaced as close as possible to their original position.
- A new form of Stroke Play called '**Maximum Score**' where the maximum score for a hole is set at a specific number (e.g. 8), or twice the par of the hole, or nett double bogey. For example, if the maximum score for a hole is set at 8 and you lose your ball and decide not to complete the hole, your score is entered as 8. Similarly, once you have played 7 (or less) shots you can pick up your ball and record 8 on the scorecard. For **CONGU Qualifying Competitions** the maximum score must be set at a minimum of 5 over par (equivalent to the 'stableford adjustment' of net double bogey for a player receiving 3 shots on the hole).

The information above are the main changes to the Rules of Golf effective January 1st, 2019 that are expected to have the most impact on the game and to be of most interest to golfers.

For some great videos that explain these rules and for more extensive information on the new rules for 2019 please visit <http://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rules-modernization/major-changes/major-changes.html>

PICTURES TO HELP UNDERSTAND SOME CHANGES

GOLF'S NEW RULES: PACE OF PLAY IMPROVEMENTS
 Implementing changes that have a positive impact on pace of play is an important aspect of golf's new Rules, which will take effect on January 1, 2019.

40 seconds



A recommendation in the Rules that you make each stroke in 40 seconds or less.



"Ready Golf"



Playing out of turn in stroke play to save time, also known as ready golf, is encouraged.



Max Score



A new stroke-play format allowing the Committee to set a maximum score for a hole.



Flagstick

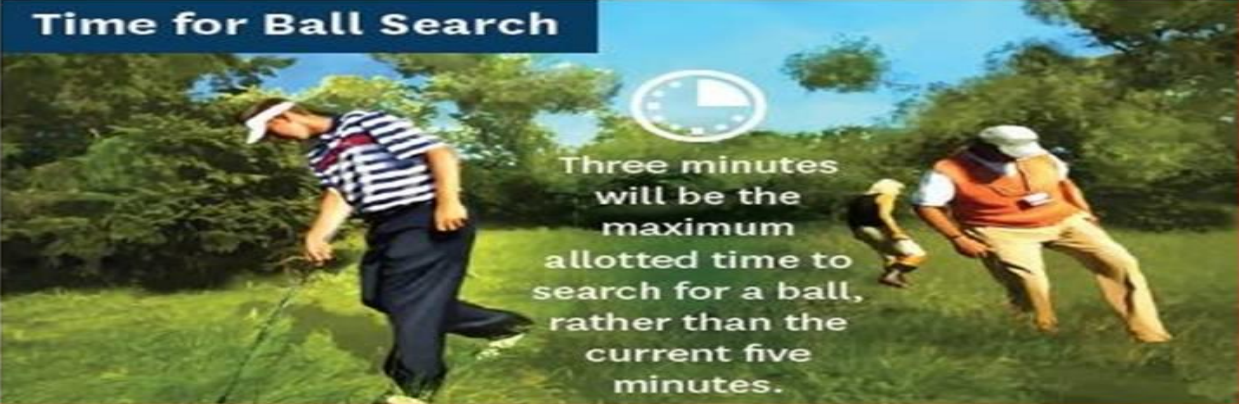



If your putt hits an unattended flagstick in the hole, there will be no penalty.




For more information on golf's new Rules, please visit usga.org or randa.org.
 The new Rules will go into effect on January 1, 2019.

Time for Ball Search





 Three minutes will be the maximum allotted time to search for a ball, rather than the current five minutes.

Repairing Spike Marks



It will be OK to repair spike marks and any other damage done by shoes, damage from a club and almost all other damage on the putting green.

RELIEF FOR EMBEDDED BALL



2019 Rule

You may take relief for an embedded ball anywhere in the "general area" (except in sand). "General area" is the new term for "through the green."










PICTURES TO HELP UNDERSTAND SOME CHANGES


GOLF'S NEW RULES: EVOLUTION OF KEY CHANGES

The continuous evolution of the Rules of Golf is one of the game's central traditions.

On March 1, 2017, The R&A and the USGA released a set of proposed changes to the Rules of Golf, which started a six-month period of public feedback on the proposals. We received and listened to more than 30,000 comments from golfers around the world, which helped inform further analysis, review and updates.


The new Rules were then finalized and are set to take effect on **January 1, 2019.** See how three topics evolved from the current Rule to last year's proposed modification to the final Rule scheduled to take effect in 2019.

	Current Rule	Proposed Rule (March 1, 2017)	New Rule (January 1, 2019)
Dropping a Ball	SHOULDER HEIGHT 	ANY HEIGHT 	KNEE HEIGHT 
Taking Relief	CLUB-LENGTHS 	FIXED DISTANCE 	CLUB-LENGTHS 
Double Hit	ONE-STROKE PENALTY 	ONE-STROKE PENALTY 	NO PENALTY 



Relaxed Rules in Penalty Area

You are allowed to ground your club and move loose impediments in a penalty area (an expanded concept of water hazards).



ELIMINATION OF OPPOSITE-SIDE RELIEF FOR RED PENALTY AREAS

2019 Rule


You no longer have the option of taking relief on the opposite side of the point where your ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area.




GOLF'S NEW RULES: STROKE AND DISTANCE

A new Local Rule will provide an alternative to stroke-and-distance relief for a ball that is lost outside a penalty area or out of bounds. This new Local Rule will be available beginning January 1, 2019.

BALL OUT OF BOUNDS



LOST BALL



If the Local Rule is in effect, you can still take stroke-and-distance relief, but you will now have the following additional option that comes with a penalty of two strokes:

- (A) DETERMINE SPOT** where your ball went out of bounds (left diagram) or is likely to be lost (right diagram).
- (B) FIND NEAREST FAIRWAY EDGE** no closer to the hole.
- (C) DROP YOUR BALL IN SHADED AREA** as defined on one side by a line from the hole through point A and on the other side by a line from the hole through point B, and not nearer the hole. The relief area is extended on both sides by two club-lengths.

This Local Rule is intended to be used only for lower levels of play where pace of play and other problems may be significant. It is not intended for higher levels of play, and particularly not for professional or elite amateur competitions.