

Rules of Golf 2019

Major Changes



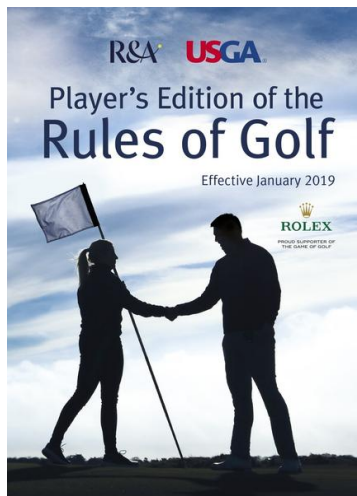


The Intent of the New Rules

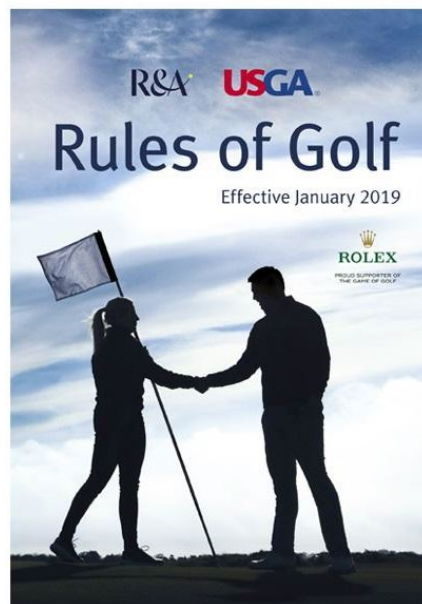
- Focus on the Spirit of the Game & Etiquette
- Promoting Faster Pace of Play
- Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties
 1. On the Putting Green
 2. In Bunkers
 3. Accidental Acts and Occurrences



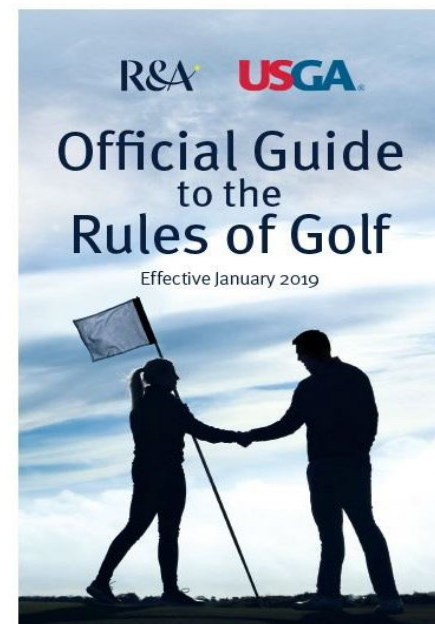
Rule Books



Effective for
in-round
rulings



Full Rule Book,
including more
detailed Sub-Rules



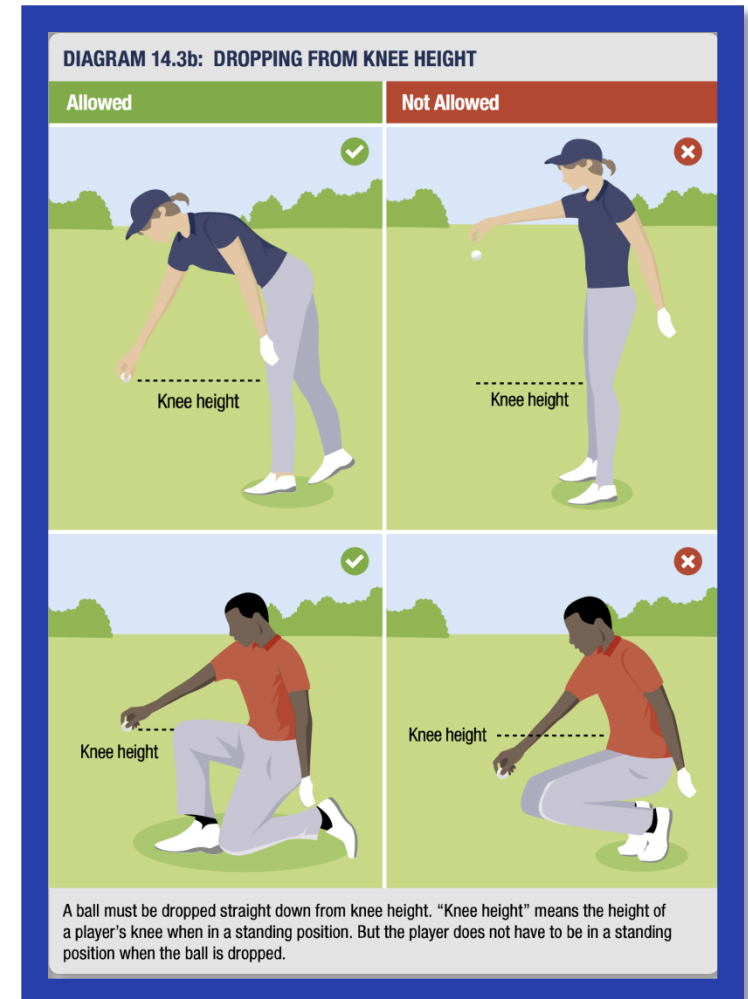
Full Rule Book,
Sub-Rules and
Interpretations of
the rules



Simplified Dropping and Re-Dropping Procedures

Dropping in the Right Way

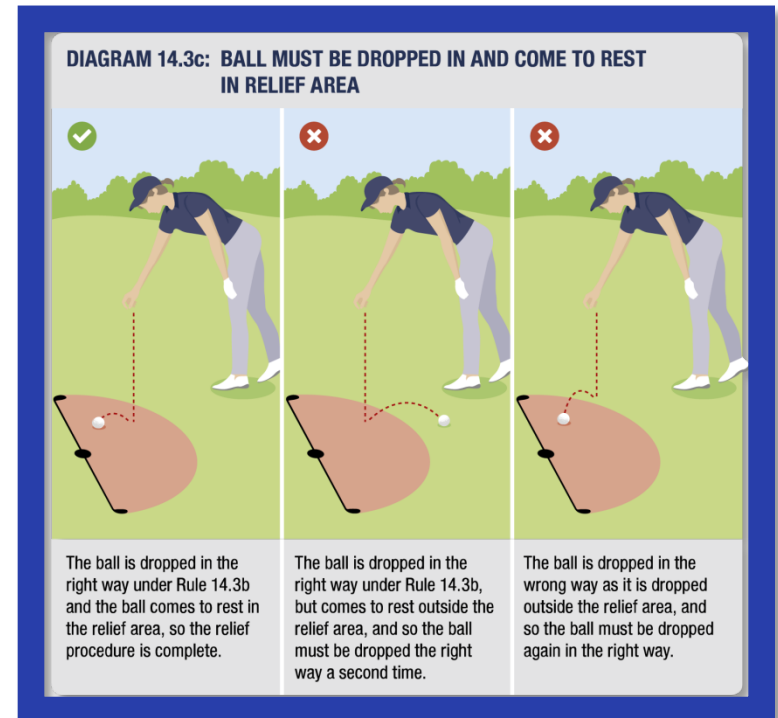
- Player only
- **Knee height**
- Straight down
- No throw, spin or roll



Simplified Dropping and Re-Dropping Procedures

Dropping in the Right Way

- The Ball must hit in and stay in the relief area.
- Relief area is always one club-length. EXCEPT lateral Relief (within two club-lengths)



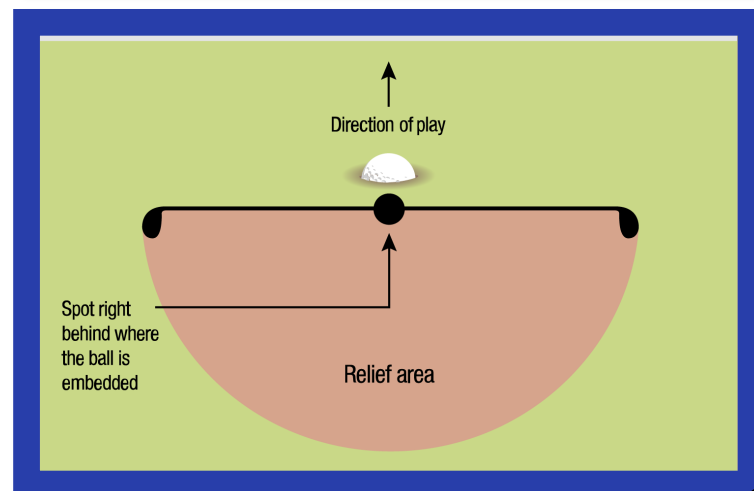
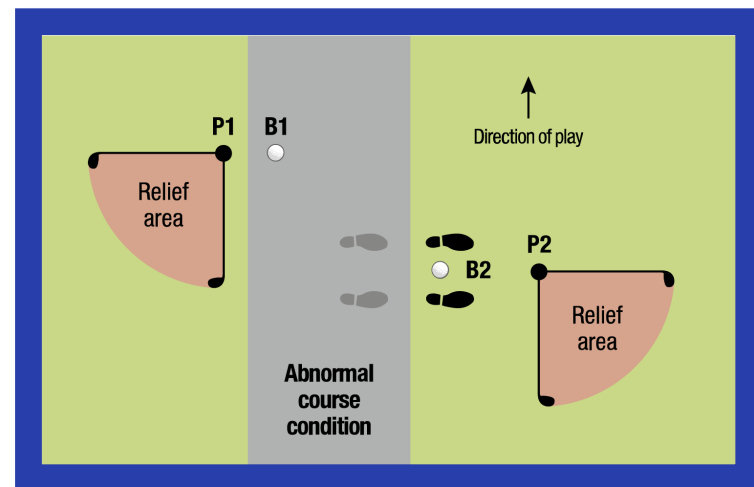
*The Relief Area is measured/estimated from the reference point and established with club-length(s). (**Club-length:** Any of the Player's clubs except the putter)*



Simplified Dropping and Re-Dropping Procedures

Reference Point Examples

- Nearest point of complete relief
- Point original ball last crossed edge of penalty area
- Spot where previous stroke made
- Point immediately behind where ball embedded



The Course

Notable Changes

- Areas of the course go from 4 to 5
- Term “hazard” eliminated
- “Through the green” is now the general area
- Concept of a “no play zone” replaces the previously limited use of environmentally sensitive area and GUR mandatory relief



Areas of the Course

Rule 2

General Area

(Previously Through the Green)

- 1) Teeing Area
- 2) Bunkers
- 3) Penalty Area

(Red and Yellow)

- 4) The Putting Green



If part of the ball is in both the *general area* and one of the four specific *areas* of the course, it is treated as lying in that specific area of the *course*.

If part of the ball is in two specific areas of the course, it is treated as lying in the specific area that comes first in this order: **penalty area, bunker, putting green.**

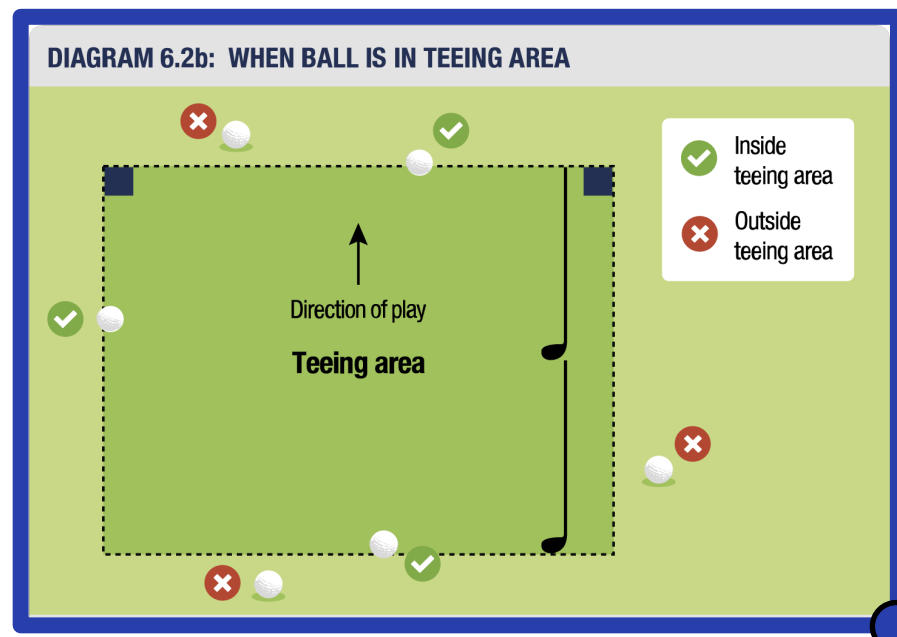
Areas of the Course

Teeing Area

- The teeing area (not “teeing ground”) is two club-lengths in depth as measured by the player’s longest club that is not a putter (definition of club-length)

Club-Length: *The length of the longest club of the 14 (or fewer) clubs the player has during the round other than a putter.*

- Any time a ball is in the teeing area, there is no penalty for accidentally or deliberately moving the ball when it is in play, including moving it somewhere



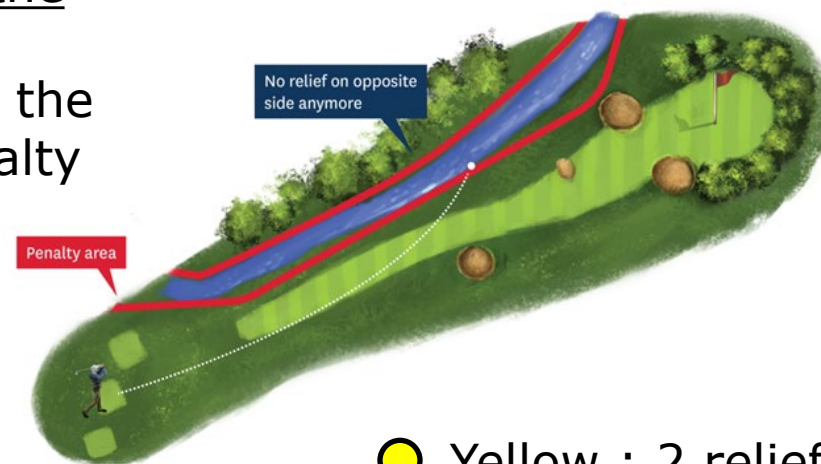
Areas of the Course

Penalty Areas

An area from which relief with a one-stroke penalty is allowed if the player's ball comes to rest there.

A penalty area is:

- Any body of water on the course (whether or not marked by the Committee) and
- Any other part of the course the Committee defines as a penalty area.



● Yellow : 2 relief options

● Red : 3 relief options



Areas of the Course

Changes to the Penalty Areas (Formally known as hazards)

- You may play the ball as it lies without penalty, under the same rules that apply to a ball in the general area.
 1. You can Move Loose Impediments
 2. You can Ground Your Club and Make Practice Swings
 3. You may also Touch Any Water

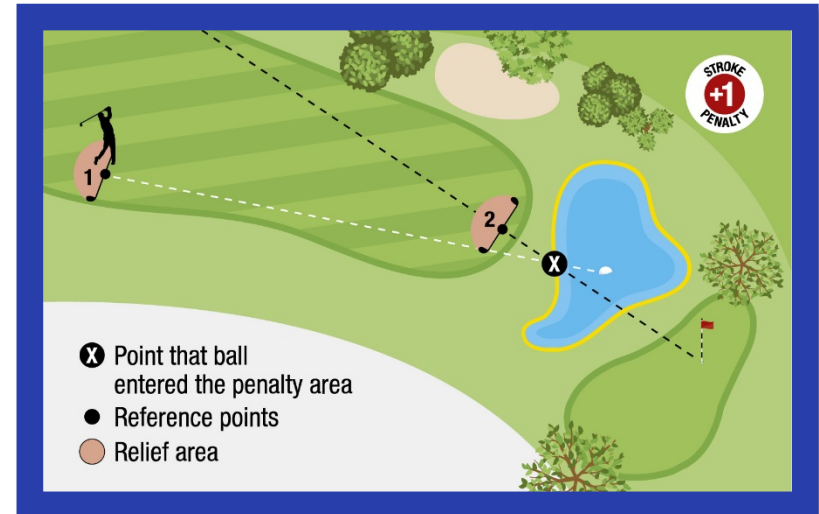


Areas of the Course

Penalty Area Relief Options

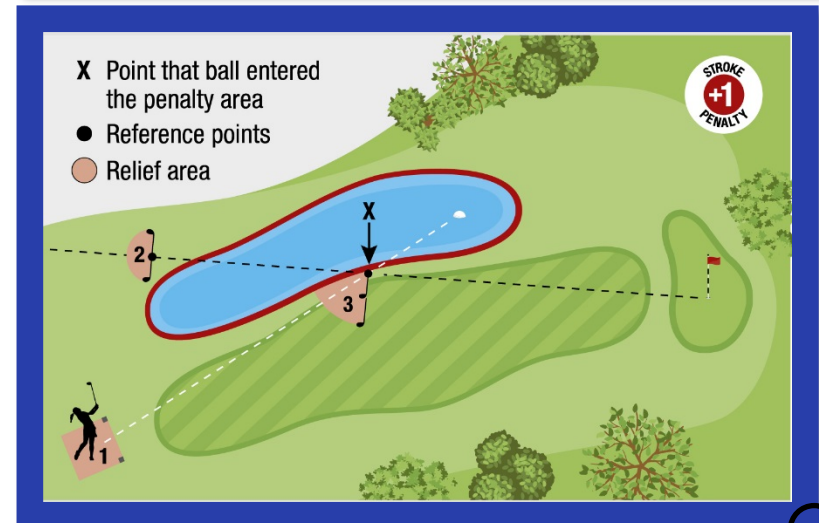
● Yellow Relief Options

1. Stroke and Distance
2. Back on the Line



● Red Relief Options

1. Stroke and Distance
2. Back on the Line
3. Lateral Relief (Two Club Lengths form the Reference Point)



Areas of the Course

Bunkers

A specially prepared area of sand, which is often a hollow from which turf or soil was removed. These are **not** part of a bunker:

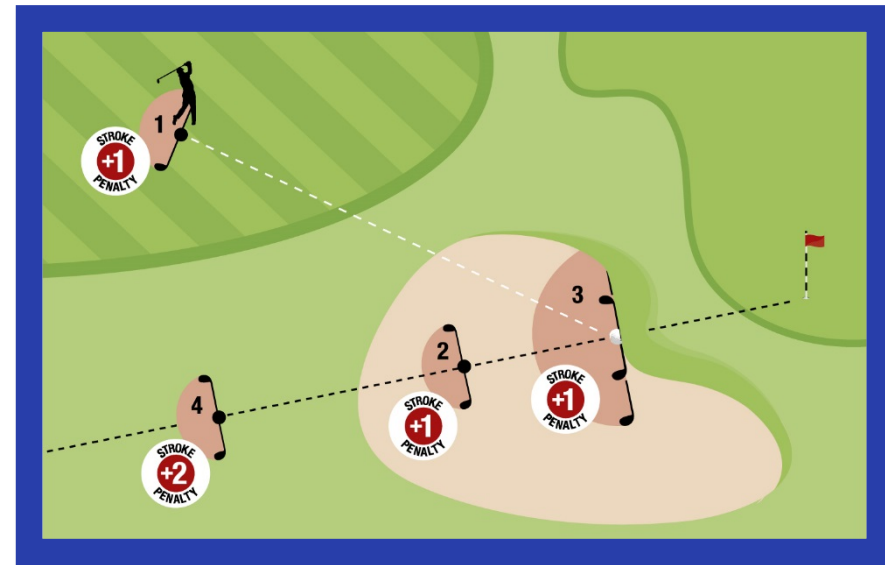
- A **lip, wall** or **face** at the edge of a prepared area and consisting of soil, grass, stacked turf or artificial materials
- **Soil** or **any growing or attached natural object** inside the edge of a prepared area (such as grass, bushes or trees),
- Sand that has spilled over or is outside the edge of a prepared area
- All other areas of sand on the course that are not inside the edge of a prepared area (such as deserts and other natural sand areas or areas sometimes referred to as waste areas).



Areas of the Course

Changes in the Bunker

- **Move Loose Impediments**
- Unplayable Options
 1. Stroke and Distance
 2. Back on the Line
(Must remain in bunker)
 3. Lateral Relief
(Two Club Lengths form the Reference Point)
 4. Extra Back on the Line
Outside of the Bunker



Areas of the Course

Putting Green

The area on the hole the player is playing that:

- Is specially prepared for putting, or
- The Committee has defined as the putting green (such as when a temporary green is used).

The putting greens for all other holes (which the player is **not** playing at the time) are wrong greens and part of the general area.

Wrong Greens

- Free Relief is Mandatory
- Includes: Lie of Ball, Stance, Area of Intended Swing



Putting Green Changes

Ball Moved on the Putting Green

Accidental Movement By Player

- Always move it back (No Penalty)

Moved by Natural Forces
(*Wind, Water, and Gravity*)

- Ball Lifted and Replaced
 - Ball owns the spot and **MUST** be replaced
- Ball not Lifted
 - Ball played from where it comes to rest



Putting Green Changes

Flagstick

Player may leave the flagstick in the hole when playing from anywhere, and gets no penalty if his or her ball in motion strikes it.

- If a player's ball comes to rest against the flagstick left in the hole and any part of the ball is in the hole below the surface of the putting green, the ball is treated as holed even if the entire ball is not below the surface.



Putting Green Changes

Touching the Line of Play

The player or caddie may touch the putting green with a hand, foot or anything he or she is holding, but must not improve the conditions affecting the stroke.



Putting Green Changes

Repairing Damage on Putting Green

Almost all damage on the putting green may be repaired

- A player may take reasonable action to restore the putting green to original condition:
 1. By using his or her hand, foot or other part of the body or a normal ball-mark repair tool, tee, club or similar item of normal equipment
 2. Must not unreasonably delay play





Areas of the Course

No Play Zone

A part of the course where the Committee has prohibited play. A no play zone must be defined as part of either an abnormal course condition or a penalty area.

A player must take relief when:

- His or her ball is in a no play zone, or
- A no play zone interferes with his or her area **of intended stance** or **area of intended swing** in playing a ball outside the no play zone (see Rules 16.1f and 17.1e).



Ball Search: Finding and Identifying Ball

Searching for Ball

A ball is lost only if it is not found **within the three-minute search time**

- A player may go back and play a provisional ball **after** going forward to search
- No penalty for improving conditions during search so long as it happened while “fairly searching”
- No penalty if ball is moved during search. Ball must be replaced
- No longer necessary to announce or involve others when lifting a ball for identification



Ball at Rest Lifted or Moved

A ball is “treated as” moved only if it is **known or virtually certain** that it did move (95% certainty)

- Movement must be visible to the “naked eye”
- If the ball might have moved but this is not known or virtually certain, it is treated as not having moved and must be played as it lies





Rule 4 – The Players Equipment

Notable Changes

- **Non-Conforming Club** - No penalty for carrying a non-conforming club, penalty only for making a stroke
- **Damage to a Club** - A player may repair any damage to a club that occurs during a round –“normal course of play” limitation on repair has been eliminated.
- **Club Purposely Changed** - If an adjustable feature on a club has been purposely changed, it may be restored without penalty before it is used
- **Damaged Ball** – Only “cut” or “cracked” damage substitution allowed, “out of shape” has been eliminated for replacing a damaged ball
- **Distance-Measuring Devices** - The Rules now permit distance-measuring devices, a Local Rule may be used to prohibit their use



Temporary Water

Temporary Water

Any temporary accumulation of water on the surface of the ground (such as puddles from rain or irrigation or an overflow from a body of water) that:

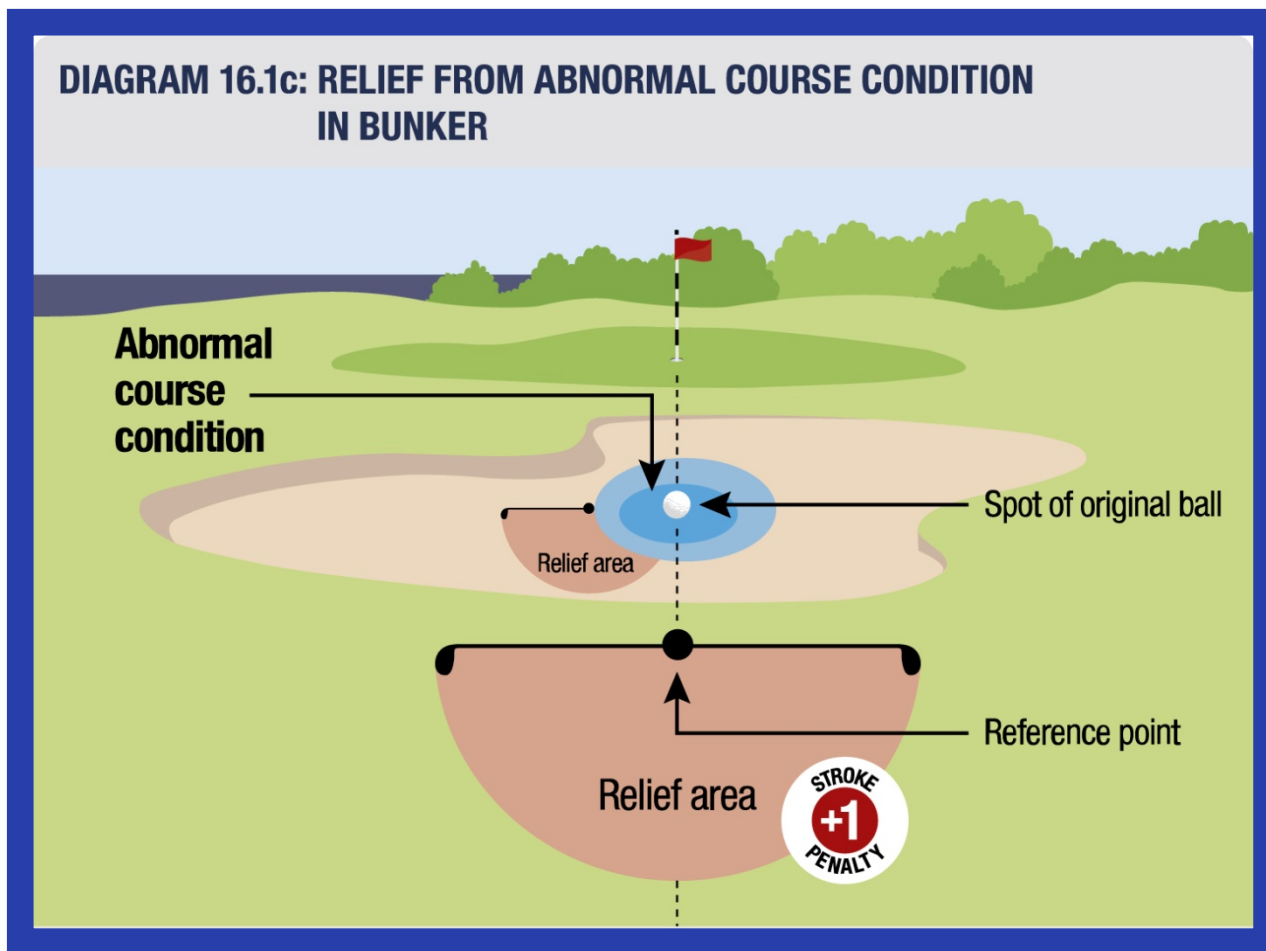
- Is not in a penalty area, and
- Can be seen before or after the player takes a stance
(without pressing down excessively with his or her feet)

It is not enough for water to be momentarily visible as the player steps on the ground; an accumulation of water must **remain present** either before or after the stance is taken



Temporary Water

Temporary Water in a Bunker



Temporary Water

Temporary Water on the Putting Green





PGA®

2019 Rule Changes

Accidental Acts and Occurrences

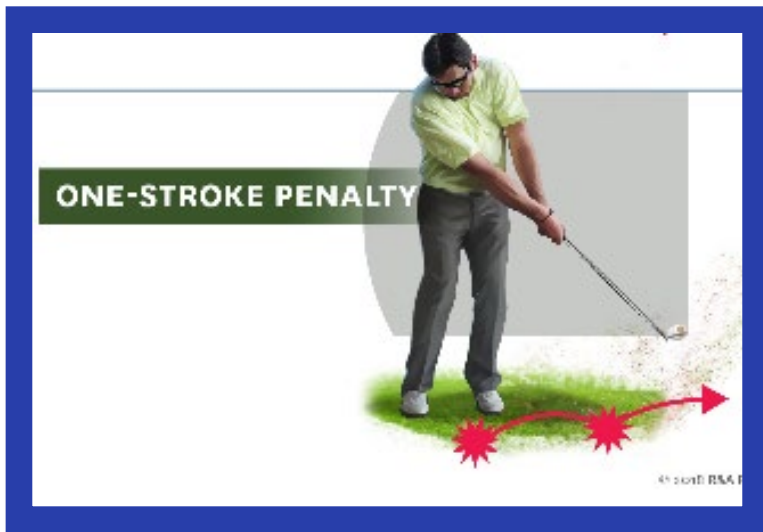
- Accidental Acts and Occurrences, No Penalty
 - Deflection of a Ball in Motion



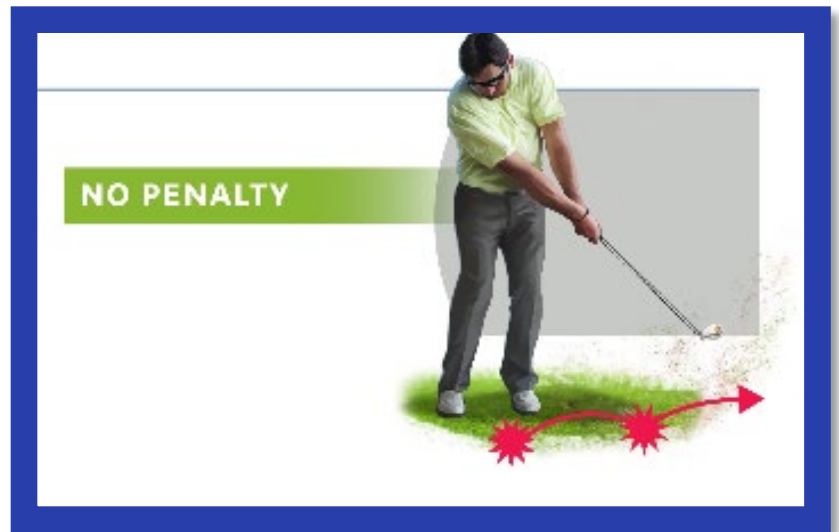
Accidental Acts and Occurrences

- Accidental Acts and Occurrences, No Penalty
 - Double Hits

2018 Rule



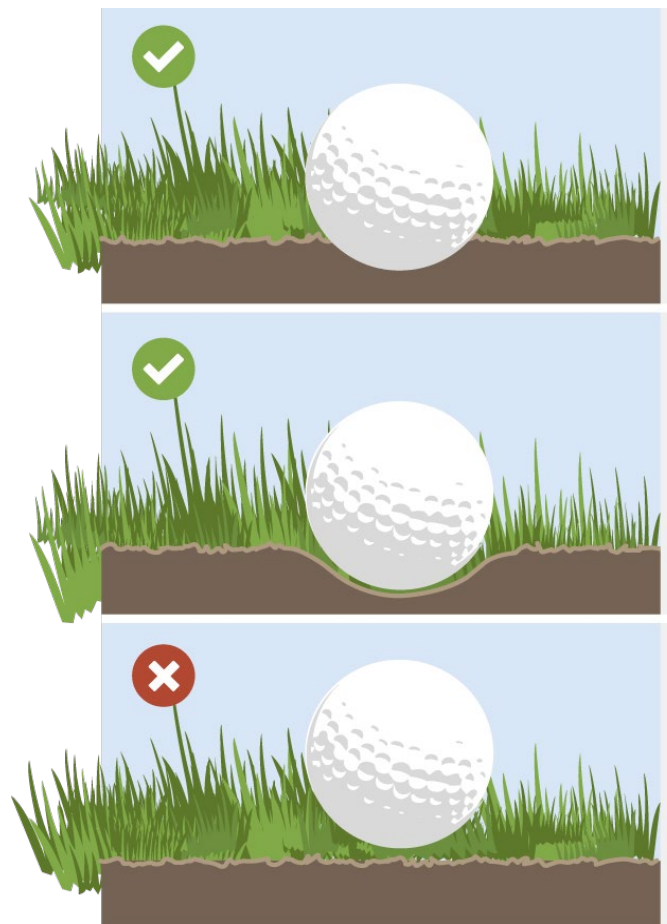
2019 Rule



Embedded Ball

Embedded ball rule now applies **anywhere in the general area**

- Except when the ball is embedded in sand in a part of the general area that is not cut to fairway height or less
- A local rule may be used to restrict relief to "fairway height or less areas"



Advice and Help

When preparing for a making a stroke:

- A player's caddie (or partner) must not be positioned behind the player when the player begins to take his or her stance
- No setting down object to help in taking stance
(such as a club set down on the ground to show line of play)



Rule 3 – The Competition

Notable Changes

- Timeline for Ruling
 - 1. Match Play** - Timeline to “request a ruling” on the last hole of a match extended until the “match is final”
 - 2. Stroke Play** - Timeline to correct a mistake on the last hole of a stroke-play round extended until the scorecard is returned
- The 2018 Local Rule (no penalty for a wrong score because of an unknown penalty) incorporated into the rules





Rule 5 – Playing the Round

Notable Changes

- Players may practice on the course after they have completed play for that day even between consecutive rounds of stroke play
- An individual may “stop play” on his or her own only because of lightning – stopping due to sudden illness or to get a ruling are now addressed under the unreasonable delay rule



Local Rule – Ball Lost or Out of Bounds

Alternative to Stroke and Distance for Lost Ball or Ball out of Bounds

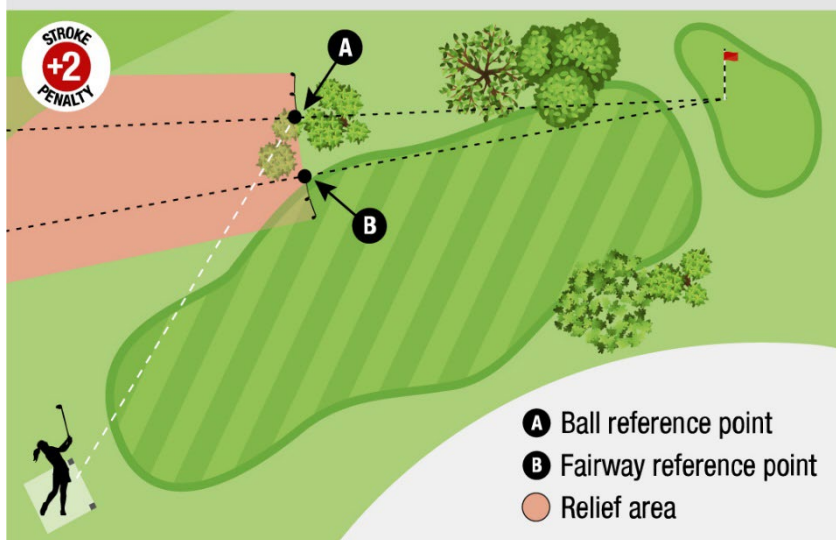
The purpose of this Local Rule is to allow a Committee to provide an extra relief option that allows a player to play on without returning to the location of the previous stroke.

- May introduce this Local Rule for all play on the course or only for one or two specific holes where it may be especially useful
- Allows the player to drop in a large area between the point where the ball is estimated to have come to rest or gone out of bounds and the edge of the fairway of the hole being played that is not nearer the hole.
- The player gets **two penalty strokes** when using this option



Ball Not Found Example

MLR E-5 DIAGRAM 1: BALL NOT FOUND



When a player's ball has not been found, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes:

Reference Points	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
<p>A. Ball Reference Point: The point where the original ball is estimated to have come to rest on the course (point A)</p> <p>B. Fairway Reference Point: The point of fairway of the hole being played (point B) that is nearest to the ball reference point, but is not nearer the hole than the ball reference point</p>	<p>Anywhere between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A line from the hole through the ball reference point (point A) (and within two club-lengths to the outside of that line), and A line from the hole through the fairway reference point (point B) (and within two club-lengths to the fairway side of that line) 	<p>The relief area:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must not be nearer the hole than the ball reference point, and Must be in the general area

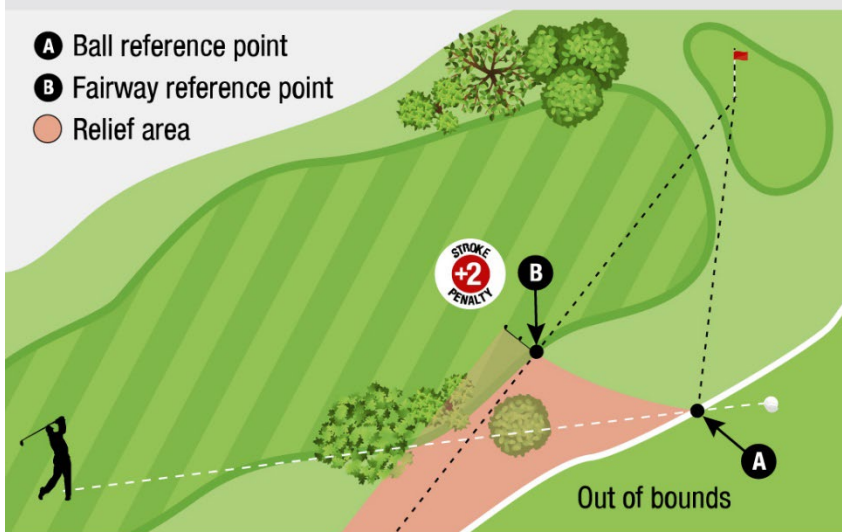
Player Notes:

As the relief area is likely to be very large, the ball could roll a considerable distance from the spot where it first strikes the ground and not need to be dropped again.



Ball Out of Bounds Example

MLR E-5 DIAGRAM 2: BALL OUT OF BOUNDS



When a player's ball is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes:

Reference Point	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
A. Ball Reference Point: The point where the original ball is estimated to have last crossed the edge of the course boundary to go out of bounds (point A)	Anywhere between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A line from the hole through the ball reference point (point A) (and within two club-lengths to the outside of that line but still on the course), and A line from the hole through the fairway reference point (point B) (and within two club-lengths to the fairway side of that line) 	The relief area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must not be nearer the hole than the ball reference point, and Must be in the general area
B. Fairway Reference Point: The point of fairway of the hole being played (point B) that is nearest to the ball reference point, but is not nearer the hole than the ball reference point		

Player Notes:

As the relief area is likely to be very large, the ball could roll a considerable distance from the spot where it first strikes the ground and not need to be dropped again.

Additional Resources



USGA Rules App
(Available on the App Store)



USGA 2019 Rules Quiz
(usga.org/RulesQuiz/rules_quizzes2019.html)



USGA/PGA Rules Workshop
(3 Day Class – Covering the Rules Cover to Cover)

