

The Rules of Golf (short version)

Courtesy of www.LearnAboutGolf.com

<p>Rule 1 -- The Game</p> <p>The holes on the course must be played in order (1 through 9, 10 through 18 or 1 through 18).</p> <p>You must always play by the Rules. You are not allowed to change them.</p> <p>Rule 2 -- Match Play</p> <p>In match play, each hole is a separate contest. If you win the first hole, you are "one-up"; if you lose it, you are "one-down"; if you tie it, you are "all-square."</p> <p>You have won the match when, for example, you are three-up and there are only two holes left to play.</p> <p>Anyone you are playing against is your "opponent."</p> <p>Rule 3 -- Stroke Play</p> <p>In stroke play, the competitor with the lowest total score for the round (9 or 18 holes) is the winner.</p> <p>You must play the ball into the hole before starting the next hole.</p> <p>Anyone you are playing with is a fellow-competitor.</p> <p>Rules 4 & 5 -- Clubs and the Ball</p> <p>You may carry no more than fourteen clubs.</p> <p>Normally, you may not change balls during the play of a hole. However, if you damage or cut your ball, you may change the ball after first asking your opponent or fellow competitor.</p> <p>Rule 6 -- Things a Player Should Do</p> <p>Read the notices given to you by the tournament officials.</p> <p>Always use your proper handicap.</p> <p>Know your tee-time or starting time.</p> <p>Make sure you play your own ball (put a mark on the ball in case someone else is using an identical ball).</p> <p>In stroke play, make sure your score for each hole is correct before you turn in your card.</p> <p>Keep playing unless there is lightning, you are ill or an official tells you to stop.</p>	<p>Rule 7 -- Practice</p> <p>You may not hit a practice shot while playing a hole, or from any hazard.</p> <p>Note: Always read the local rules about practice.</p> <p>Rule 8 -- Advice on How to Play</p> <p>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.</p> <p>You may not give advice to your opponent or fellow-competitor</p> <p>Rule 9 -- Advising Opponent on Strokes Taken</p> <p>In match play, you must tell your opponent the number of strokes you have taken if you are asked.</p> <p>Rule 10 -- When to Play a Shot</p> <p>The player who has the lowest score on a hole has the right to play his/her ball first on the next hole. This is called the "honor."</p> <p>While playing a hole, the player whose ball is farthest from the hole plays first.</p> <p>In match play, if you play out of turn, your opponent may make you replay your shot. This is not so in stroke play.</p> <p>Rule 11 -- Teeing Ground</p> <p>Tee your ball between the tee-markers or a little behind them. You may tee your ball as far as two club lengths behind the markers.</p> <p>If your ball accidentally falls off the tee, you may replace it without penalty.</p> <p>Rule 12 -- Finding Ball in Hazard -- Identifying Ball</p> <p>A hazard is any bunker (area of sand) or water hazard (lake, pond, creek, etc).</p> <p>In a bunker or water hazard, if sand or leaves cover your ball, you may remove enough of the sand or leaves to be able to see a part of the ball.</p> <p>You may lift your ball to identify it anywhere except in a hazard. You must tell your opponent or fellow competitor before you lift your ball to identify it.</p>
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Rule 13 -- Playing the Ball as it Lies on the Course

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

You may not improve your lie by pressing down behind the ball. The club may be grounded only lightly behind the ball.

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.

In a hazard, you may not touch the sand, ground or water with the club before or during your back swing.

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

You must strike the ball fairly with the head of the club. You may not push, scrape or rake the ball.

You must not hit your ball while it is moving.

Rule 15 -- Playing a Wrong Ball

In match play, if you play a ball that is not yours, you lose the hole. If you play the wrong ball in a hazard, there is no penalty and you must then play the right ball.

In stroke play, if you play a ball that is not yours, you must take a two-stroke penalty. If you play the wrong ball in a 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

If any part of your ball is touching the green, it is on the green.

When your ball is on the green, you may brush away leaves and other loose impediments within your line of putt with your hand or a club. Do not fan them with a cap or towel.

You should repair ball marks or old hole plugs if they are within your line of putt, but you may not repair marks made by spikes or shoes.

You may not test the surface of the green by rolling a ball or scraping the surface.

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.

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. In match play, if you putt and your ball hits the flagstick when it is in the hole, you lose the hole. In stroke play, you must add two penalty strokes to your score for the hole.

Rule 18 -- Moving the Ball

If you or your partner move either of your balls on purpose or accidentally, add a penalty stroke to your score, replace and play it.

If someone or something moves your ball other than you or your partner, (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.

Once you address the ball, if the ball moves, add a penalty stroke and replace the ball.

If you move a loose impediment lying within one club-length of the ball and the ball moves, add a penalty stroke, replace it and play it. On the putting green, there is no penalty.

Rule 19 -- Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped

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.

"Rub of the green." Play the ball as it lies. No penalty.

Hits you, partner, caddie or equipment, you lose the hole. In stroke play, incur a two-stroke penalty.

Hits your opponent, caddie or equipment, you may replay the shot.

Hit fellow competitor, caddie or equipment, no penalty.

If your ball hits you, your partner, your caddie, or your equipment in match play you lose the hole. In stroke play, you are penalized two strokes and you must play your ball as it lies.

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.

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.

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 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

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.

When you drop a ball, stand erect, hold your arm out straight and drop it.

If a dropped ball hits the ground and rolls into a hazard, out of a hazard, comes to rest more than two club-lengths from where it first struck a part of the course, nearer the hole 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 clean your ball when you are allowed to lift it. On the green a ball may be cleaned when lifted except when it has been lifted to determine if it is unfit or for identification purposes because it interferes with play.

Rule 22 -- Ball Interfering with or Assisting Play

If another ball interferes with your swing or is in your line of putt, you may ask the owner of the ball to lift it.

If your ball is near the hole and might serve as a backstop for 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 a bunker or water hazard. (Exception see Rule 12)

Rule 24 -- Obstructions

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.

Movable obstructions anywhere on the course may be removed. If the ball moves when moving an obstruction, it must be replaced without penalty.

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. (You may move your ball away from an immovable obstruction if it interferes with your swing or stance.) Note: You should not pick up the ball from an obstruction until you have established the nearest point of relief.

Rule 25 -- Casual Water; Ground Under Repair; Animal Holes

Casual water is any temporary puddle of water caused by rain or over watering. Ground under repair is any damaged area, which the Committee has marked as such.

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.

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.

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

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

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 drop a ball within two club-lengths of where the ball last crossed the hazard margin, no nearer to the hole.

Rule 27 -- Ball Lost or Out of Bounds

A ball is lost if it is not found within five minutes after you first begin to search.

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.

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.

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 the 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 balls, add a penalty stroke and play out the hole with the provisional ball. If you find your first ball in bounds, continue play with it and pick up the provisional ball.

Rule 28 -- Ball Unplayable

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
2. Measure two club-lengths from the unplayable lie, drop a ball and play from there
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.

Source: USGA (www.usga.org). Please visit them for updates on the rules of golf.

Recommended Reading:

The Golf Beginner Guide - www.GolfBeginnerGuide.com

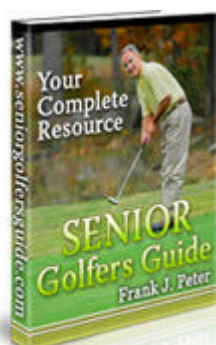


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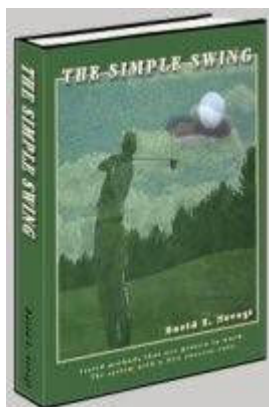
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