



**PGA**

Georgia Section

# **2019 RULES OF GOLF**

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## **FACT SHEETS**

A short-cut to the main Rules changes effective January 1, 2019

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# 2019 Rules of Golf Fact Sheets – What is new in 2019?

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## 2019 Rules of Golf - Important new terms within the Definitions: 1.

**ABNORMAL COURSE CONDITION:** Replaces Abnormal Ground Conditions and now includes Immovable Obstructions.

**ANIMAL HOLE:** Any hole dug in the ground by an animal, except for holes dug by animals that are also defined as loose impediments (such as worms or insects).

**ANIMAL:** Any living member of the animal kingdom (other than humans).

**BOUNDARY OBJECT:** Artificial objects defining or showing out of bounds, such as walls, fences, stakes and railings, from which free relief is not allowed.

**CLUB-LENGTH:** The length of the longest club the player has during the round, other than a putter. Club-lengths are used in defining the player's teeing area on each hole and in determining the size of the player's relief area when taking relief under a Rule. There is now no benefit in using a shorter club.

**CONDITIONS AFFECTING THE STROKE:** The lie of the player's ball at rest, the area of intended stance, the area of intended swing, the line of play and the relief area where the player will drop or place a ball.

**GENERAL AREA:** Replaces Through the Green.

**HOLED:** Holed now includes the special case of a ball resting against the flagstick in the hole (see Rule 13.2c). The ball is treated as holed if **ANY** part of the ball is below the surface of the putting green.

**IMPROVE:** To alter one or more of the conditions affecting the stroke or other physical conditions affecting play so that a player gains a potential advantage for a stroke.

**INTEGRAL OBJECT:** An artificial object defined by the Committee as part of the challenge of playing the course from which free relief is not allowed.

**IN PLAY:** Replaces Ball in Play.

**LINE OF SIGHT:** Replaces Intervention in the TIO Local Rule.

**NATURAL FORCES:** The effects of nature such as wind, water or when something happens for no apparent reason because of the effects of gravity.

**OUTSIDE INFLUENCE:** Replaces Outside Agency.

**NEAREST POINT OF COMPLETE RELIEF:** Replaces Nearest Point of Relief.

**POINT OF MAXIMUM AVAILABLE RELIEF:** The reference point for taking free relief from an abnormal course condition in a bunker or on the putting green when there is no nearest point of complete relief.

**PENALTY AREA:** Replaces Water Hazard; any part of the course the Committee defines as a penalty area.

**RELIEF AREA:** The area where a player must drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule.

**ROUND:** Replaces Stipulated Round.

**TEMPORARY WATER:** Replaces Casual Water. Any temporary accumulation of water on the surface of the ground. It is not enough for the ground to be merely wet, muddy or soft or for the 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, for relief to be taken.

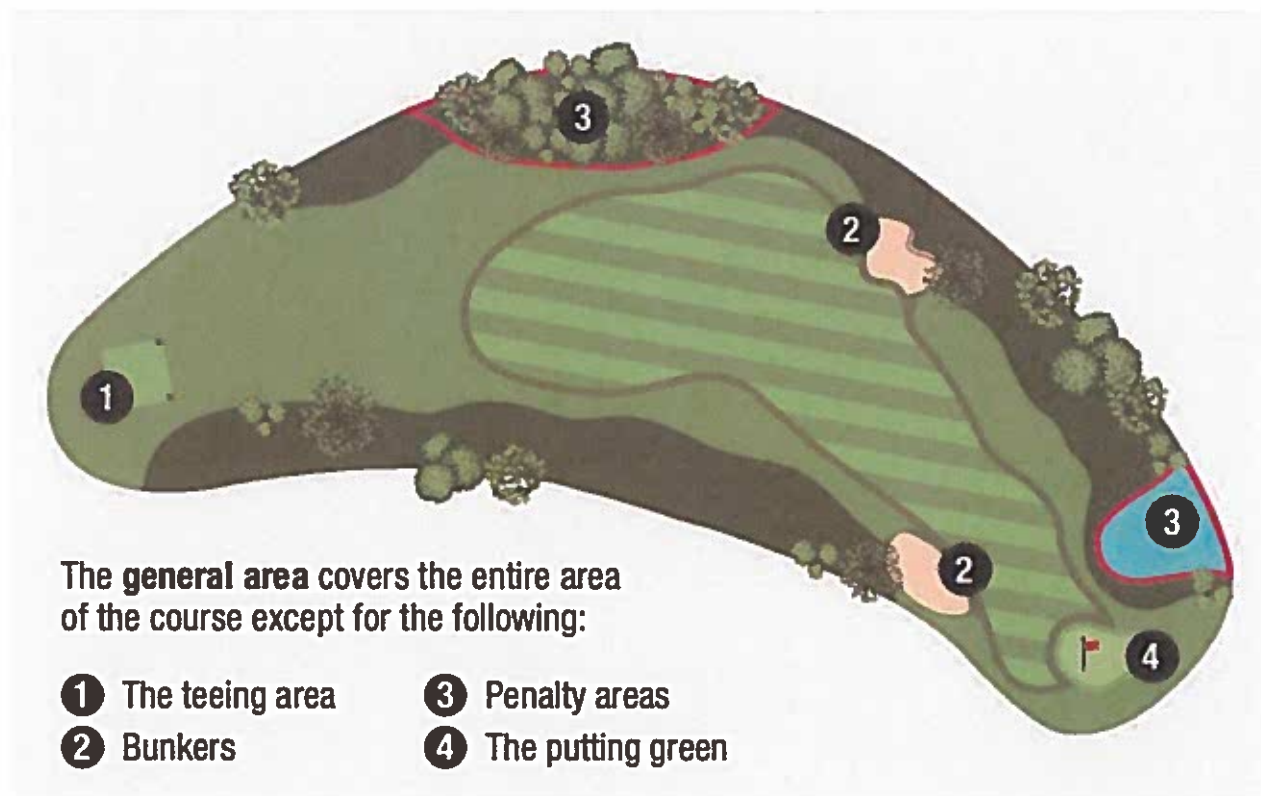
**TEEING AREA:** Replaces Teeing Ground.

**WRONG GREEN:** Any green on the course other than the putting green for the hole the player is playing. Wrong greens are part of the General Area and complete relief **MUST** be taken for all types of interference.

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## THE 5 AREAS OF THE GOLF COURSE:

- **GENERAL AREA** – previously known as “Through the Green”.  
The General Area covers the entire course, except the following four specific areas.
- **TEEING AREA** - area where the player must start play of a hole.
- **PENALTY AREA** – previously known as “Water Hazards”.  
Includes all areas marked by the Committee as a penalty area (with or without water).
- **BUNKER** - A specially prepared area of sand.
- **PUTTING GREEN** - the putting green of the hole the player is playing.



# 2019 Rules of Golf - Fact Sheet

2.

## Rule 2.2 - Areas of the Course

### New in 2019:

- There are **FIVE** defined areas of the course.
  - **GENERAL AREA** - covers the entire course, except the other four specific areas. The General Area in the previous Rules of Golf was known as "Through the Green".  
  
The other four specific areas are:
    - **TEEING AREA** - area where the player must start play of a hole.
    - **PENALTY AREA** - area marked by the Committee as a penalty area with or without water. Penalty Areas in the previous Rules of Golf were known as "Water Hazards and Lateral Water Hazards".
    - **BUNKER** - A specially prepared area of sand, which is often a hollow from which turf or soil was removed.  
  
The following are **NOT** part of a bunker:  
A lip, wall or face at the edge of a prepared area consisting of soil, grass, stacked turf or artificial materials; and soil or any growing attached natural object inside the edge of a prepared area (such as grass, bushes or trees).
  - **PUTTING GREEN** - the putting green of the hole the player is playing.

# 2019 Rules of Golf - Fact Sheet

3.

## Rule 14.3 - Dropping a Ball in the Relief Area

### New in 2019:

- **DROPPING:**

The ball **must** now be dropped from knee height.

Knee height means the height of the player's knee as if he were in a standing position. The ball must be dropped straight down so it falls to the ground without the player throwing, spinning or rolling it and it must not touch any part of the player's body or equipment before it strikes the ground. If it rolls against the player's foot or equipment accidentally after striking the ground, the ball is in play.

- **RE-DROPPING:**

Once dropped the ball **must** land in and come to rest in the relief area.

If it rolls outside the relief area it must be dropped again, then if it rolls out a second time, the ball must be placed where it struck the ground on the second drop just as we do today. If it will not stay at rest on that spot, it must be placed on that spot a second time and if it still will not stay there, it must be placed on the nearest spot where it will stay at rest, no nearer the hole. This spot must be in the same area of the course as the original spot, except if the original spot was on the putting green the nearest spot to place a ball may be in the General Area.

- **RELIEF AREA:**

The Relief Area is the area where a player **must** drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule.

The Relief Area is a defined area that is equal to the length of the longest club carried by a player, other than a putter. No matter what club is used to measure, the ball **must** come to rest within the longest club. For instance, using a sand wedge will **NOT** provide a smaller relief area.

Except when a player is using the two club-length "Lateral Relief" option from a red penalty area or from an unplayable ball, the one club-length Relief Area will be uniform for all other procedures. This change makes the relief area consistent. For example, no matter if a player is dropping a ball from an immovable obstruction, from an embedded ball, from a wrong putting green, when going back on the line relief under penalty, or when using the stroke and distance option under penalty, the one club-length relief area will apply.

If a ball is deliberately stopped before it leaves the relief area and it is clear the ball was not coming to rest in the relief area, there is no penalty.

However if the ball is deliberately stopped or deflected without the likelihood it is leaving the relief area the penalty is 2 strokes, the drop does not count and the ball must be re-dropped.

- **SUBSTITUTING A BALL:**

A player may always substitute a ball when taking relief. The original ball may be used, but it is not necessary. Examples of when substitution of the original ball is allowed include: When taking relief from temporary water, an immovable obstruction, ground under repair, a penalty area, an embedded ball, or when using the TIO or Preferred Lies Local Rule. **Note:** The player must still comply with the One Ball Rule, if in effect.

- **DROP ZONE:**

If using a Drop Zone, once dropped the ball **must** land and come to rest within the Drop Zone.

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

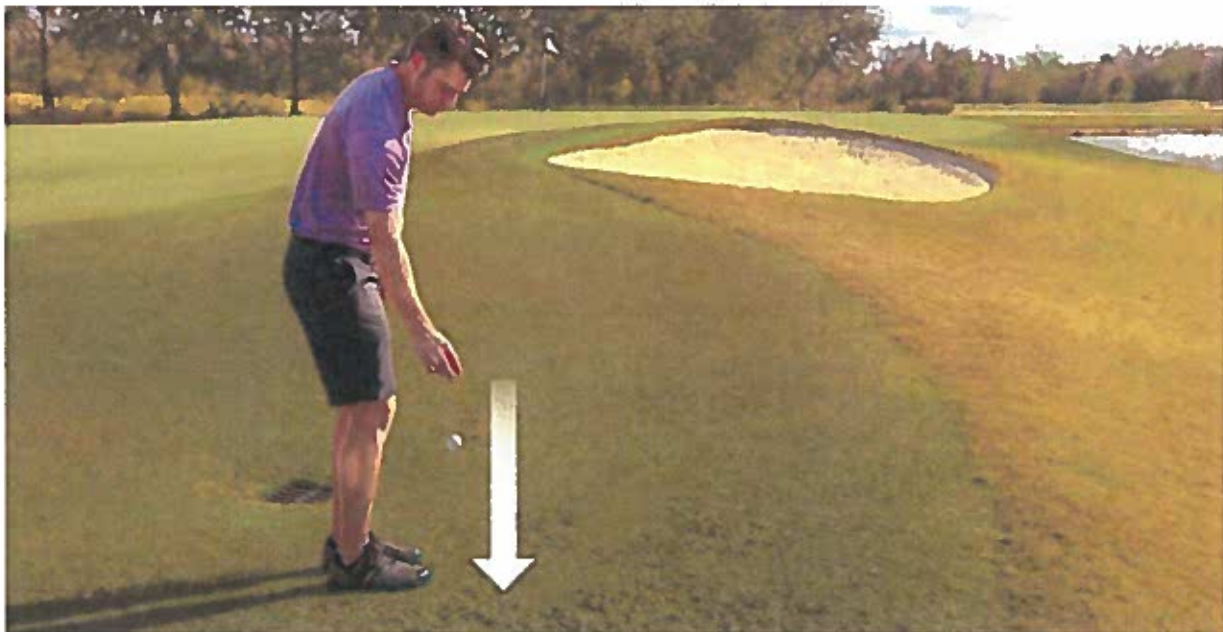
## DROPPING A BALL:

- The ball must now be dropped from knee height.
- Knee height means the height of the player's knee as if he were in a standing position.
- If it rolls against the player's foot or equipment accidentally after striking the ground, the ball is in play.

## RE-DROPPING A BALL:

- Once dropped, the ball **must** land in and come to rest in the relief area.
- If the ball rolls outside the relief area it must be dropped again, then if it rolls out a second time, the ball must be placed where it struck the ground on the second drop just as we do today.
- If it will not stay at rest on that spot, it must be placed on that spot a second time and if it still will not stay there, it must be placed on the nearest spot where it will stay at rest, no nearer the hole.
- If a Drop Zone is being used, the ball when dropped must land and come to rest in the Drop Zone.

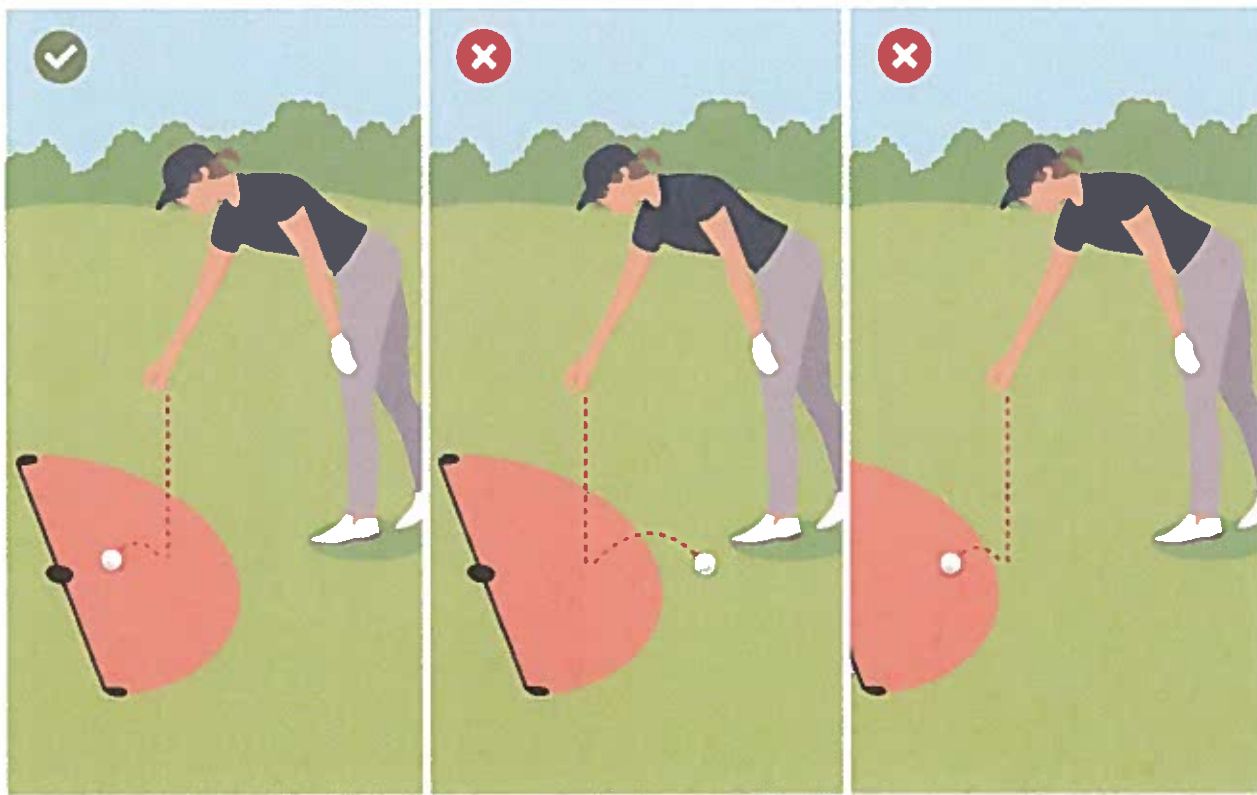
You will drop your ball from knee height into the relief area.



# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## DROPPING IN THE RELIEF AREA:

- The Relief Area is the area where a player **must** drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule.
- The Relief Area is a defined area that is equal to the length of the longest club carried by a player, other than a putter.
- No matter what club is used to measure, the ball **must** come to rest within the longest club, other than a putter. Using a putter or sand wedge will **not** provide a smaller relief area.
- The one club-length Relief Area will be uniform for all procedures, except when a player is using the two club-length “Lateral Relief” option from a red penalty area or from an unplayable ball.
- This change makes the relief area consistent. No matter if a player is dropping a ball from an immovable obstruction, from an embedded ball, from a wrong putting green, when going back on the line relief under penalty, or when using the stroke and distance option under penalty, the one club-length relief area will apply.
- When taking free relief or penalty relief, a substituted ball or the original ball **must** be dropped in the relief area.





# 2019 Rules of Golf - Fact Sheet

4.

## Definition of Club-Length Used for Measuring

### New in 2019:

- A **Club-Length** is now a defined term in the Definitions and it means the length of the longest club in the player's bag, other than a putter.  
For example, if a 44-inch driver is the longest club selected for the round, other than a putter, a club-length is 44 inches for that player for that round.  
Hence the relief area for that player is either 44" or 88" depending on the relief situation.
- Club-lengths will still be used for all measuring purposes within the Rules.
  - Two club-lengths will be used when measuring the teeing ground; or when measuring the two club-length Lateral Relief option under penalty from a red penalty area or unplayable ball.
  - One club-length will be used in all other relief procedures.
- The relief area may be measured with a short club, but the ball will be in play if it rolls and comes to rest inside the area defined by the length of the longest club other than a putter (usually a driver). The best practice is to always measure with the longest club (other than a putter). There is no benefit to using a short club to measure.

## Rule 14.1 - Lifting a Ball

### What is new in 2019?

- When a player has good reason to mark the position of a ball and lift it, such as to identify it, check for damage, or to see if it lies in a condition where relief is allowed (such as to see whether it is embedded), the player is **NO** longer required to announce to another player the intent to do so, or to give that person an opportunity to observe the process.
- A caddie may mark the position of the player's ball and lift it on the Putting Green **ONLY**, without authorization of the player. The player is still responsible for any related breach of the Rules.
- As in the previous Rules of Golf, when a ball is lifted to take relief under a Rule, the player is **NOT** required to mark the spot before lifting the ball.  
The player must only mark the spot of the ball when the ball must be replaced on its original spot.

## Rule 13 - Putting Green & The Flagstick

### New in 2019:

- **REPAIRING DAMAGE ON PUTTING GREEN:**

Damage to a putting green may be repaired. Damage is described in the Rule and it means any damage caused by a person or outside influence and includes ball marks, shoe damage (such as spike marks) and scrapes or indentations caused by equipment or the flagstick. It does not include natural surface imperfection or disease, aeration holes or natural wear to the hole. Any repair must be done promptly.

The line of play on the putting green may be touched, including when pointing out a line for putting, but the line must not be improved beyond what is now permitted when repairing damage, i.e.: the player may **NOT** create a pathway or channel to the hole.
- **WHEN BALL OR BALL-MARKER MOVES ON PUTTING GREEN:**

There are **TWO** specific Rules for a ball or ball-marker that moves on the putting green:

  1. **No Penalty for Accidentally Causing Ball to Move.** There is **NO** penalty if the player accidentally causes the ball or ball-marker to move on the putting green. The player must replace the ball or ball marker on its original spot. This is applied within the Rule itself, not by Local Rule.
  2. **When to Replace Ball Moved by Natural Forces.** If natural forces cause a player's ball on the putting green to move, where the player plays his next stroke from next depends on whether the ball had already been lifted and replaced on its original spot:
    - Ball that was Lifted and Replaced: The ball must be replaced on its original spot.
    - Ball not yet Lifted and Replaced: The ball must be played from its new spot.
- **WRONG GREEN:**

Wrong Green is the new defined term for Wrong Putting Green. Wrong greens are part of the General Area.

Interference by a wrong green now includes lie of ball, stance and area of intended swing. i.e.: If the player is standing on a wrong putting green to play a ball which lies off the green, he **MUST** take relief. Relief from a wrong putting green is nearest point of complete relief plus the one club-length relief area in the **same area** of the course as where the ball originally came to rest.

i.e.: Stance on wrong green with the ball in a bunker, the relief area will be in the bunker.
- **FLAGSTICK:**

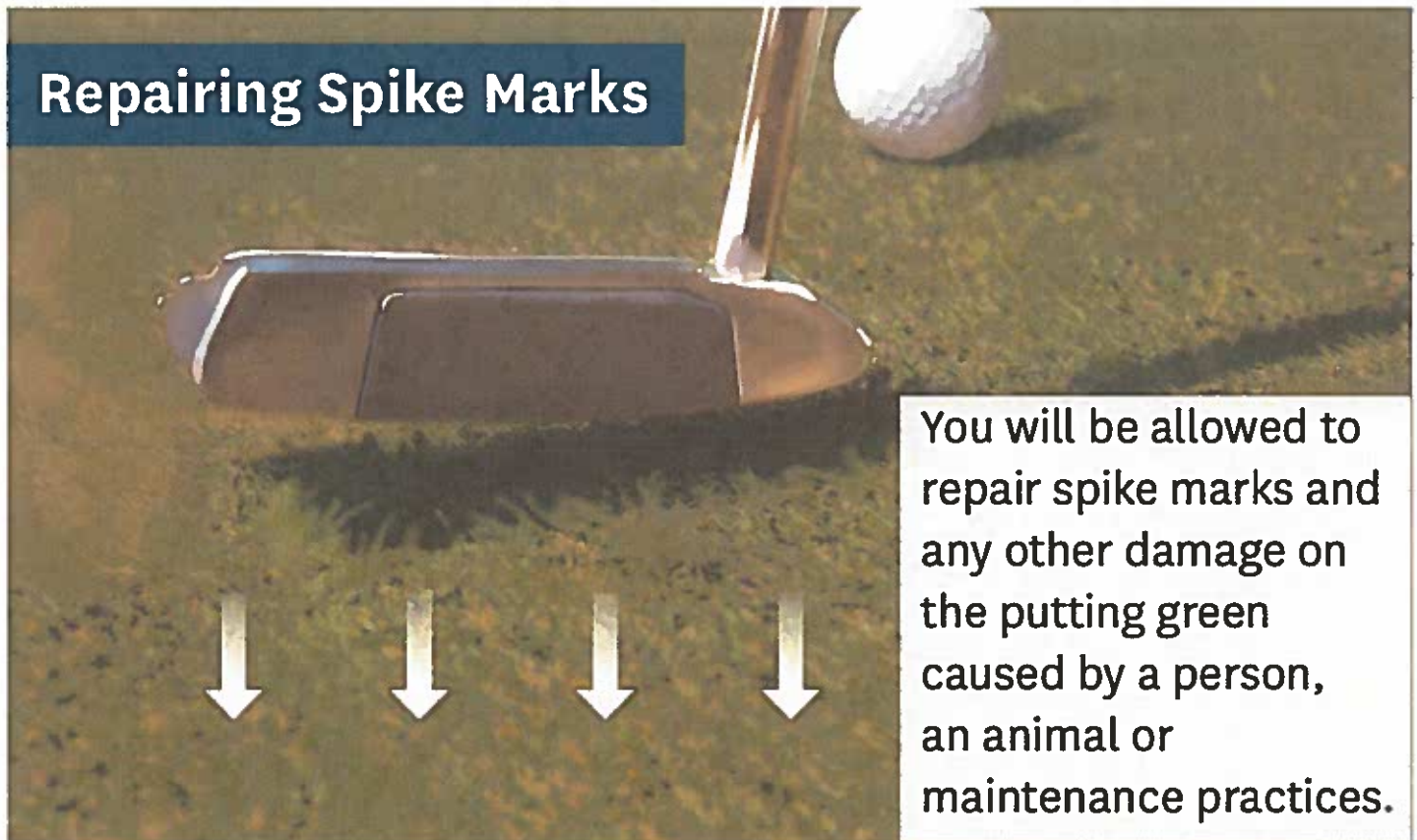
The player can now putt leaving the flagstick in the hole, but the player must decide this before making the stroke. There is **NO** penalty if the ball strikes the flagstick after a stroke made on the putting green, but if he elected to putt with the flagstick in the hole, it must not be moved after the stroke to affect where a ball in motion may come to rest.

If a ball rests against a flagstick in the hole and part of the ball is below the level of the lip, the ball will be considered holed, even if the entire ball is not below the surface. There is no longer a requirement to move the flagstick to see if the ball falls into the hole. The ball may be simply picked up.

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## REPAIRING DAMAGE ON THE PUTTING GREEN:

- Damage to a putting green may be repaired.
- Damage is described in the Rule and it means any damage caused by a person or outside influence and includes ball marks, shoe damage (such as spike marks) and scrapes or indentations caused by equipment or the flagstick. Any repair must be done promptly.
- It does not include natural surface imperfection or disease, aeration holes or natural wear to the hole.
- The line of play on the putting green may now be touched, including when pointing out a line for putting, but the line must not be improved beyond what is now permitted when repairing damage, i.e.: the player may **NOT** create a pathway or channel to the hole.



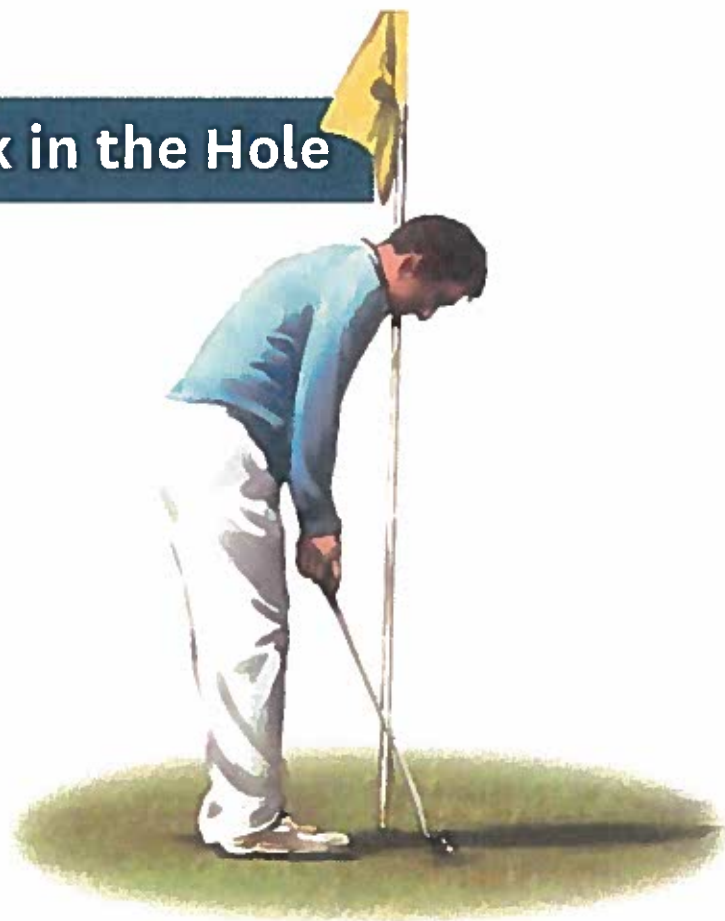
# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## FLAGSTICK:

- The player can now putt leaving the flagstick in the hole, but the player must decide this **before** making the stroke.
- There is **NO** penalty if the ball strikes the flagstick after a stroke made on the putting green, but if he elected to putt with the flagstick in the hole, it must not be moved after the stroke to affect where a ball in motion may come to rest.
- If a ball rests against a flagstick in the hole and part of the ball is below the level of the lip, the ball will be considered holed, even if the entire ball is not below the surface. There is no longer a requirement to move the flagstick to see if the ball falls into the hole. The ball may be simply picked up.

## Leaving Flagstick in the Hole

If you make a stroke from on the green and your ball hits the flagstick in the hole, there will be no penalty.



## Rule 12 - Bunkers

### New in 2019:

- **MOVING LOOSE IMPEDIMENTS:**

Loose impediments in a bunker may now be removed or touched provided the ball does not move. If the ball moves as a result, the penalty is one stroke penalty and the ball must be replaced. Hence, a Local Rule for Stones in Bunkers will no longer exist as the Rules will allow their removal.

- **TOUCHING THE SAND:**

The Rules now allow the player to generally touch the sand in a bunker with a hand or a club, **but** there are limitations. For example:

-You **cannot** touch the sand in a bunker when making a practice swing or in the backswing for the stroke.

-You **cannot** deliberately touch the sand in the bunker with your hand, club, rake or other object to test the condition of the sand to learn information for the stroke.

-You **cannot** touch the sand in a bunker with a club in the area right in front of or right behind the ball except when searching, or removing a loose impediment or movable obstruction.

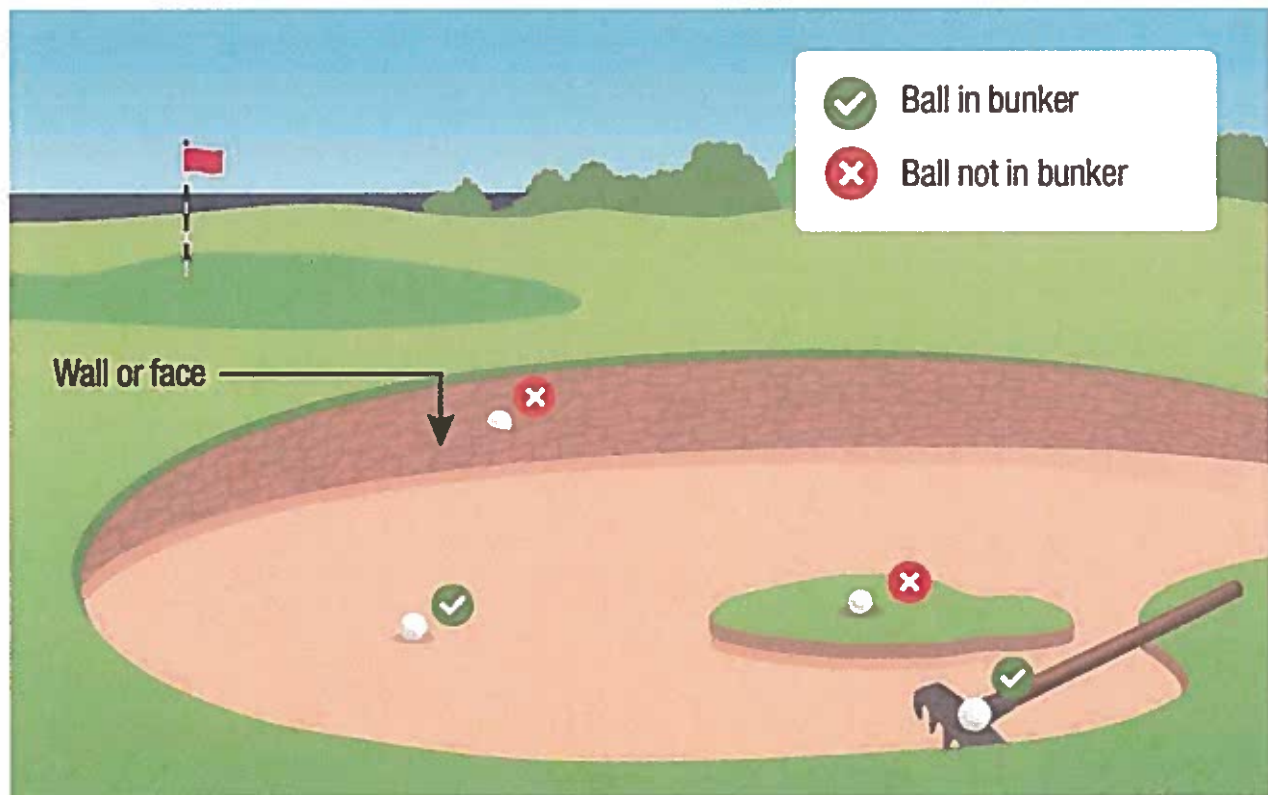
There is no longer a penalty for striking the sand in anger or frustration or for leaning on a club nowhere near the ball while waiting to play.

A soil lip or face of a bunker is no longer part of the bunker. This is now part of the General Area or what was known as through the green; therefore no penalty is incurred for touching it during your backswing for a stroke from a bunker.

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## BUNKERS:

- Loose impediments in a bunker may now be removed or touched, provided the ball does not move. If the ball moves as a result, the penalty is one stroke penalty and the ball must be replaced. Hence, a Local Rule for Stones in Bunkers will no longer exist as the Rules will allow their removal.
- The Rules now allow the player to generally touch the sand in a bunker with a hand or a club, but there are limitations. For example:
  - You **cannot** touch the sand in a bunker when making a practice swing or in the backswing for the stroke.
  - You **cannot** deliberately touch the sand in the bunker with your hand, club, rake or other object to test the condition of the sand to learn information for the stroke.
  - You **cannot** touch the sand in a bunker with a club in the area right in front of or right behind the ball except when searching or removing a loose impediment or movable obstruction.
- There is no longer a penalty for striking the sand in anger or frustration, or for leaning on a club in the sand away from the ball while waiting to play.



# 2019 Rules of Golf - Fact Sheet

7.

## Rule 17- Penalty Areas

### New in 2019:

- **Penalty Area** is the new name for Water Hazard. Penalty Areas will still be marked either Yellow or Red.
  
- **GROUNDING THE CLUB & MOVING LOOSE IMPEDIMENTS:**  
Whatever a player is allowed to do in the General Area, he can now also do in a Penalty Area. For example, he can now ground the club lightly behind the ball, move a loose impediment, take a practice swing and touch the ground or water in the penalty area.  
**NOTE:** As was the case previously, the player **cannot** take relief from Abnormal Ground Conditions including Immovable Obstructions or an Embedded Ball within a penalty area.
  
- **RELIEF OPTIONS CHANGES:**  
The three most common relief options used for Penalty Areas have changed slightly:
  1. The opposite margin **“Lateral Relief”** option will no longer automatically apply to a red penalty area. It can only be used on specific red penalty areas as determined by the Rules Committee. The Notice to Competitors sheet each week will specifically list those red penalty areas where opposite margin relief is an option for penalty of one stroke.
  2. When using the **“Back on the Line Relief”** option (or keeping the point where the ball last crossed the margin between you and the hole), the player can now drop in a one club-length relief area rather than exactly on the line itself as was done previously. The player can go back on the line as far as he wants, define a spot on the line and drop a ball within one club-length of that spot no nearer the hole. The ball when dropped cannot go forward of the spot as defined. (The player should indicate the spot by using an object such as a coin or tee). All other relief options from a red penalty area or yellow penalty area remain the same.  
  
\*Using the above two options, a ball may be dropped in the relief area in any area of the course, except the same penalty area. If more than one area of the course is located within the relief area, the ball must come to rest in the relief area in the same area of the course that the ball first touched when dropped.
  3. When using the **“Stroke and Distance Relief”** option, the player must now estimate where the previous stroke was played and drop a ball within one club-length of that spot no nearer the hole.  
  
\*Using the stroke and distance option a ball must be dropped in the relief area in the same area of the course where the previous stroke was played.
  
- **USING DROP ZONES:**  
A ball when dropped must land and come to rest in the relief area. Hence, if a player is using a Drop Zone as an option for a Penalty Area, the ball once dropped, must land and come to rest within the Drop Zone.



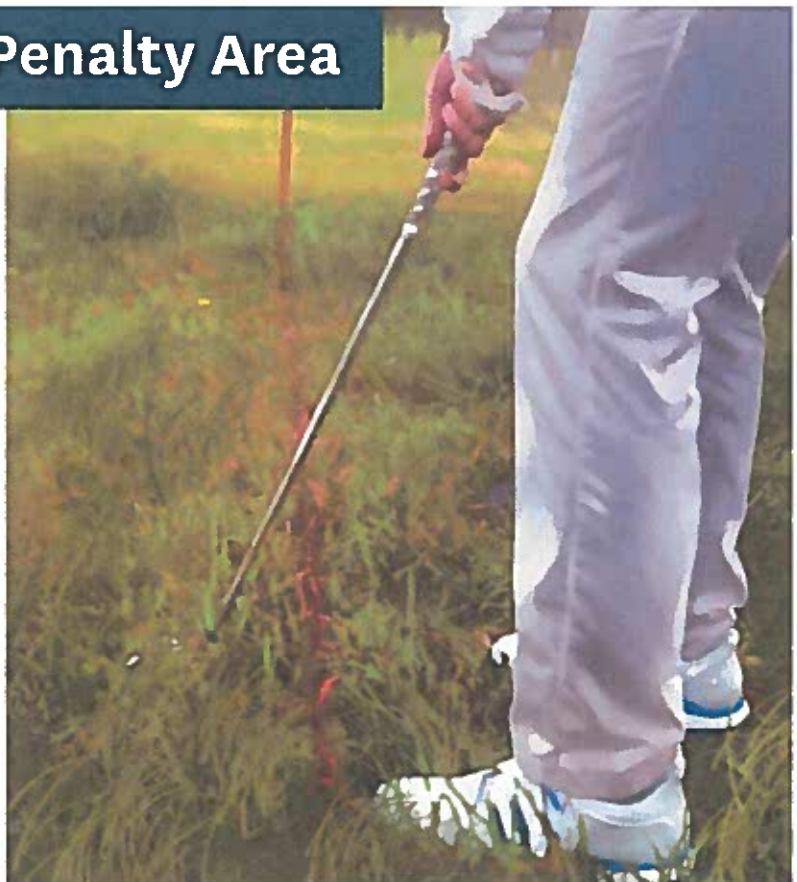
# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## PENALTY AREAS:

- Penalty Area is the new name for Water Hazard.
- Penalty Areas will still be marked either Yellow or Red.
- In a Penalty Area the player can now ground the club lightly behind the ball, move a loose impediment, take a practice swing and touch the ground or the water.
- **NOTE:** As was the case previously, the player **cannot** take relief from Abnormal Ground Conditions including Immovable Obstructions or an Embedded Ball within a penalty area.

## Relaxed Rules in Penalty Area

You will be allowed to ground your club and move loose impediments in a penalty area (an expanded concept of water hazards that does not include bunkers).

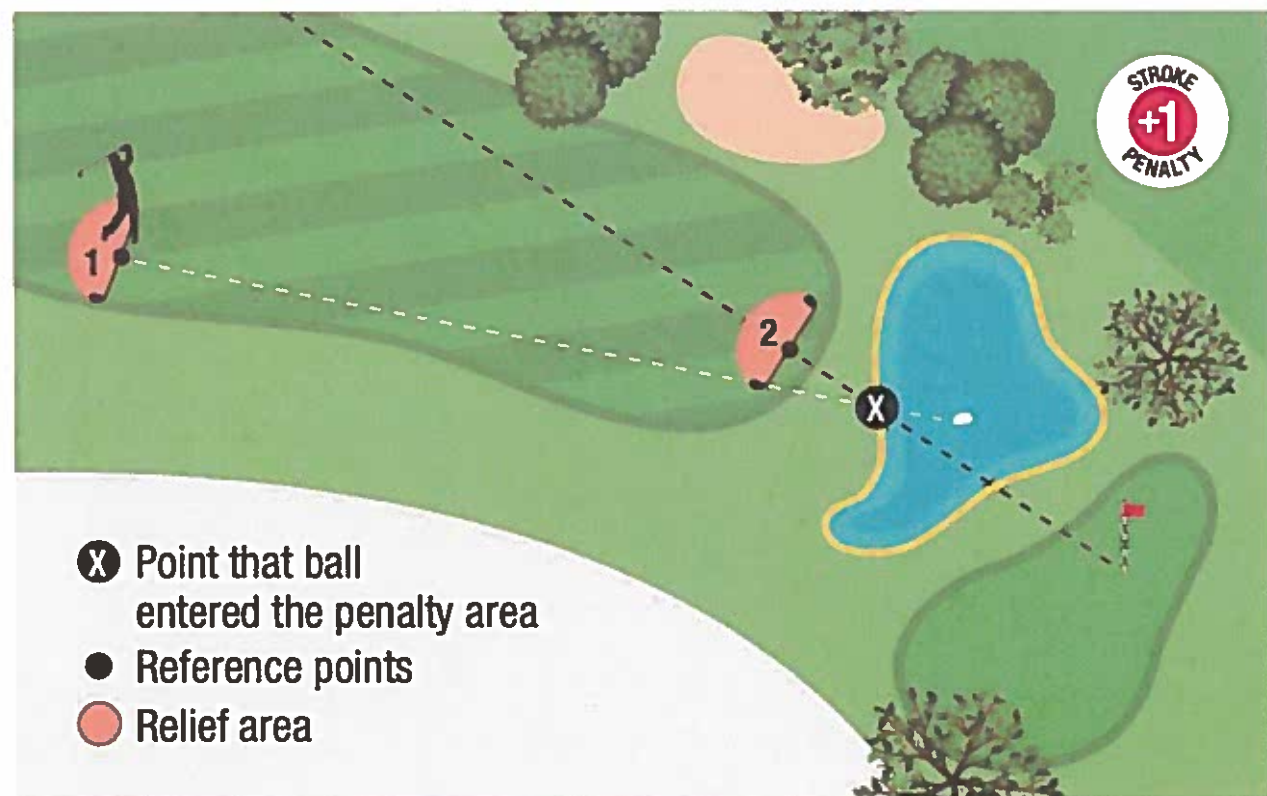
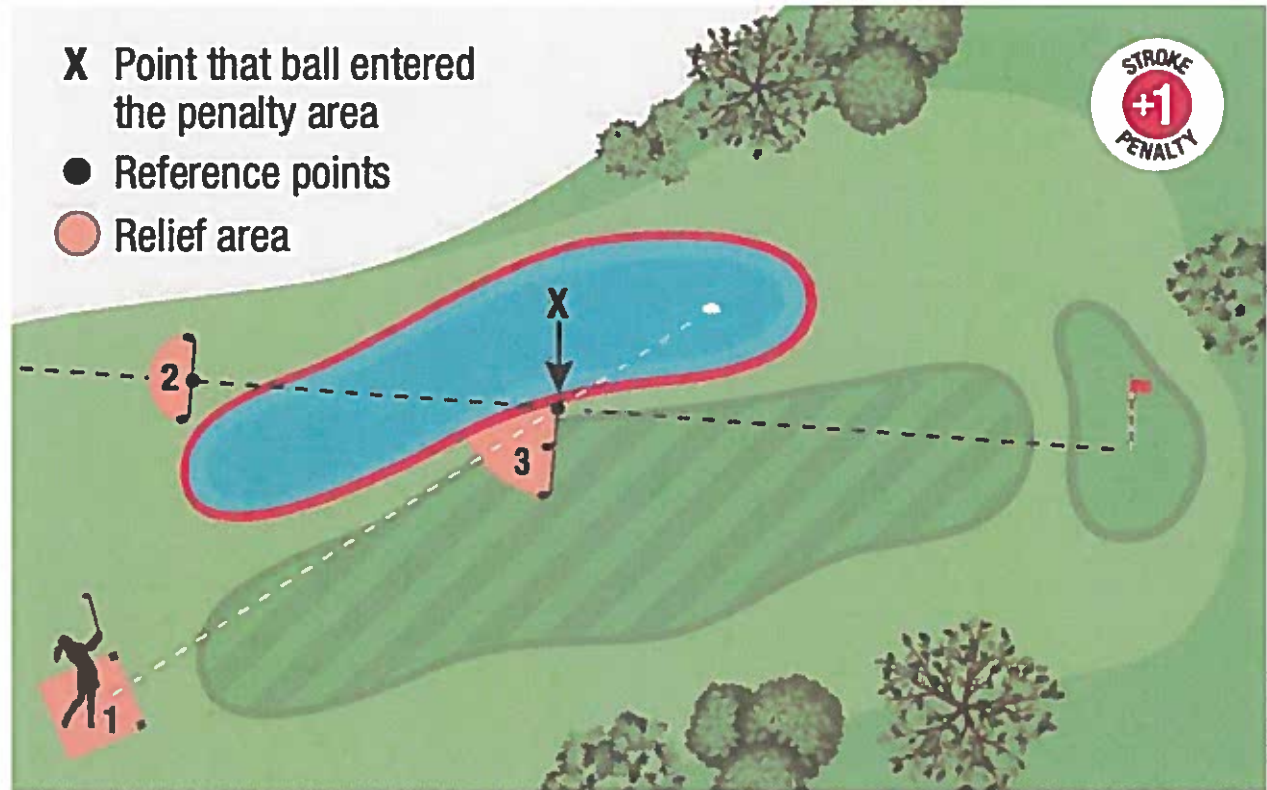




# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## DROPPING OPTIONS FROM PENALTY AREAS:

**Important Note:** Opposite Margin relief from a Red Penalty area is not available by the Rules, it must be on the Local Rules sheet each week for each specific Red Penalty Areas.



## Rule 19 - Unplayable Ball

### New in 2019:

- **RELIEF OPTION CHANGES:**

The three most common relief options used for an unplayable ball have changed slightly:

1. Using the 2 club-length “**Lateral Relief**” option, when a ball is declared unplayable it must stay in the 2 club-length relief area when dropped. It can no longer roll 2 club-lengths from where it strikes the ground. If it rolls out of the relief area, it must be dropped again. If it happens again, the player must place the ball on the spot where the 2<sup>nd</sup> drop hit the ground. **NOTE:** This may impact the relief option taken when the 2 club-length relief area just reaches the edge of a bush.

If this option is used for a ball unplayable in a bunker, the ball must be dropped in the bunker as in the previous Rules of Golf.

2. When using the “**Back on the Line Relief**” option (or keeping the place where the ball lies between you and the hole), the player can now drop in a one club-length relief area rather than exactly on the line itself as was done previously. The player can go back on the line as far as he wants, define a spot on the line and drop within one club-length of that spot no nearer the hole. (The player should indicate the spot by using an object such as a coin or tee). The ball when dropped cannot go forward of the spot as defined. If this option is used for a ball unplayable in a bunker, the ball must be dropped in the bunker as in the previous Rules of Golf; though see NOTE below.

\*Using the above two options, a ball may be dropped in the relief area in **any** area of the course. If more than one area of the course is located within the relief area, the ball must come to rest in the relief area in the same area of the course that the ball first touched when dropped.

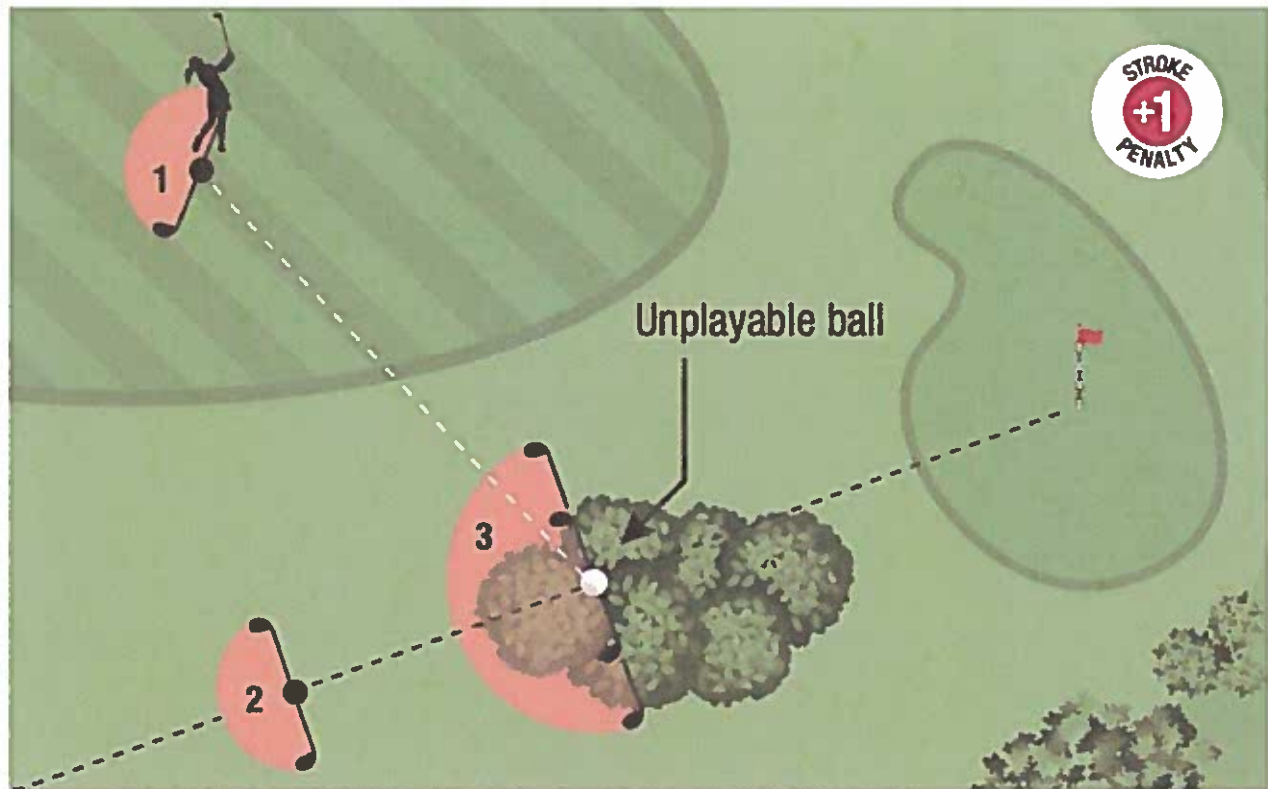
3. When using the “**Stroke and Distance Relief**” option, the player must now estimate where the previous stroke was played and drop a ball within one club-length of that spot no nearer the hole.

\*Using the stroke and distance option a ball must be dropped in the relief area in the **same area** of the course where the previous stroke was played.

- **NOTE:** There is a new option when declaring a ball unplayable in a bunker. For a total of two penalty strokes, using the Back on the Line Relief procedure, a ball may be dropped outside the bunker in the relief area as described in item 2 above.

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## DROPPING OPTIONS FROM AN UNPLAYABLE BALL:



- Using the 2 club-length “Lateral Relief” option (#3 above), when a ball is declared unplayable it must stay in the 2 club-length relief area when dropped. It can no longer roll 2 club-lengths from where it strikes the ground.
- When using the “Back on the Line Relief” option (#2 above), or keeping the place where the ball lies between you and the hole, the player can now drop in a one club-length relief area rather than exactly on the line itself as was done previously. The player can go back on the line as far as he wants, define a spot on the line and drop within one club-length of that spot no nearer the hole. (The player should indicate the spot by using an object such as a coin or tee). The ball when dropped cannot go forward of the spot.
- When using the “Stroke and Distance Relief” option (#1 above), the player must now estimate where the previous stroke was played and drop a ball within one club-length of that spot no nearer the hole.

## Rule 16.3 - Embedded Ball

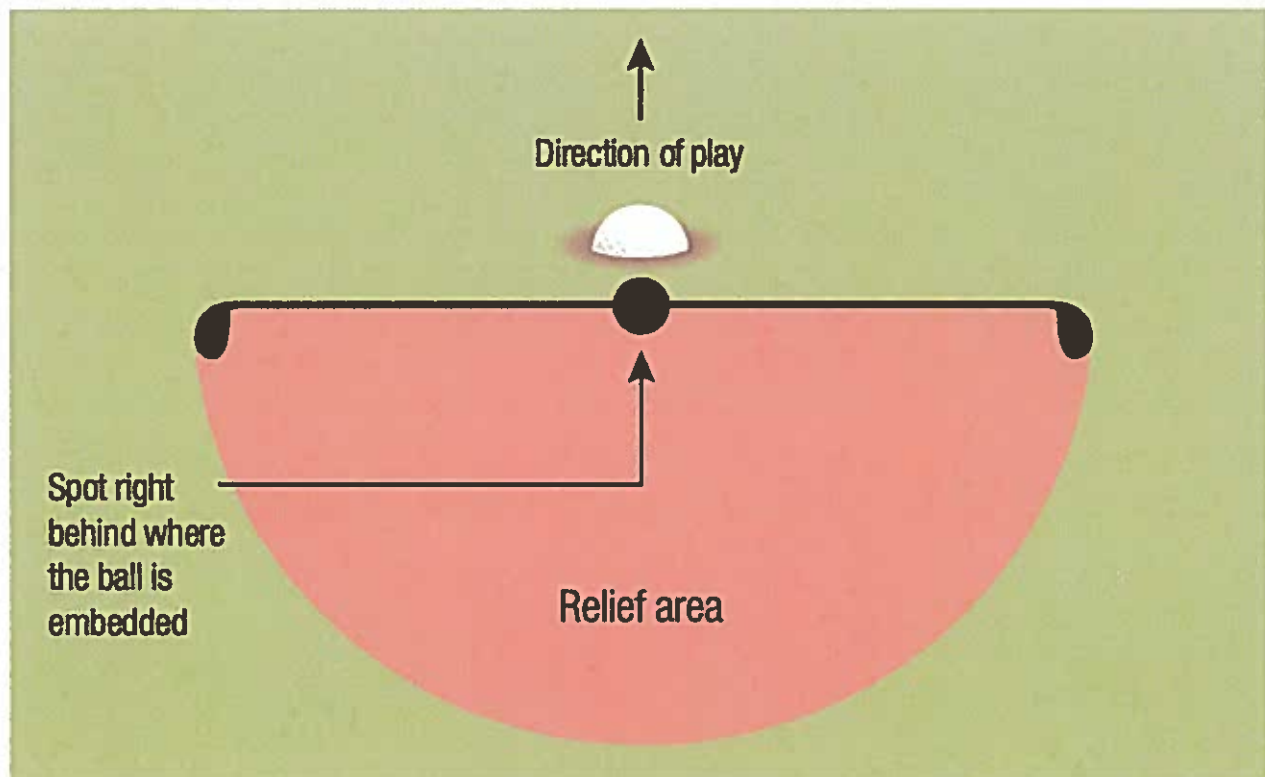
### New in 2019:

- As in the previous Rules of Golf, relief is still available for a ball embedded (other than in sand) in the General Area which is the new term for Through the Green. Relief in the General Area is now allowed by the Rule itself, not by Local Rule, so it will not be on the PGA TOUR Hard Card.
- **RELIEF PROCEDURE CHANGES:**
  1. If the ball is embedded the relief procedure has changed. The relief area starts at the spot immediately behind where the ball was embedded, and a ball must be dropped in the one club-length relief area, no nearer the hole than this spot, and in the General Area.
  2. There is **NO** longer a requirement to announce to your marker or fellow competitor your intention to mark and lift the ball to check if it is embedded, but it is still good practice to do so.
  3. A ball is **NOT** embedded if it is below the level of the ground as a result of anything other than the player's previous stroke, such as when the ball was dropped in taking relief under a Rule.
  4. A ball may be substituted and dropped when taking relief. The original ball may be used, but it is not necessary.

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## EMBEDDED BALL:

- The relief procedure has changed for an embedded ball.
- The relief area starts at the spot immediately behind where the ball was embedded, and a ball must be dropped in the one club-length relief area, no nearer the hole than this spot, and in the General Area.
- There is **NO** longer a requirement to announce to your marker or fellow competitor your intention to mark and lift the ball to check if it is embedded, but it is still good practice to do so.
- A ball is **NOT** embedded if it is below the level of the ground as a result of anything other than the player's previous stroke, such as when the ball was dropped in taking relief under a Rule.
- As with other relief procedures, a ball may be substituted and dropped when taking relief. The original ball may be used, but it is not necessary.



## Rule 18.2 - Lost Ball

### New in 2019:

- The time to search for a ball is reduced from 5 minutes to 3 minutes. The time of search still starts when the player or caddie begin to search. If the original ball is found, the provisional ball must be abandoned.
- Once the search time has begun, there is no penalty if the ball is accidentally moved during the search by the player or caddie. Simply replace the ball in its estimated position. (Rule 7.4)

## Rule 18.3 – Provisional Ball

### New in 2019:

- The player can now go back to where the ball was last played and play a provisional ball at any time before the original ball is found. The restriction on walking forward or going forward to search has been removed. However, he must still announce that the ball about to be played is a provisional ball. The player must use the word “provisional” or otherwise clearly indicate that he or she is playing the ball provisionally under Rule 18.3.
- If a search was underway for a ball, the 3-minute search time period will continue to run while the player goes back to play a provisional ball.
- The provisional ball will become the ball in play if it is played from a spot nearer the hole than where the original is likely to be. This is a minor change, but the player can now play the provisional from the spot where the original is likely to be but not from nearer the hole.



# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## LOST BALL and PLAYING A PROVISIONAL BALL:

- The time to search for a ball is reduced from 5 minutes to 3 minutes. The time of search still starts when the player or the caddie begin to search. If the original ball is found, the provisional ball must be abandoned.
- Once the search time has begun, there is no penalty if the ball is accidentally moved during the search by anyone including the player or caddie. Simply replace the ball in its estimated position.
- The player can now go back to where the ball was last played and play a provisional ball at any time before the original ball is found.
- The player must still announce that the ball about to be played is a provisional ball. The player must use the word “provisional” or otherwise clearly indicate that he or she is playing the ball provisionally.



## Rule 10.1 - Making a Stroke

### New in 2019:

- The player is **NOT** allowed to make any stroke while standing on or across the line of play. Previously, this only applied to a stroke on the putting green; however, the exception still applies for avoiding another player's line of play.
- In making a stroke, if the player's club accidentally hits the ball more than once, there has been only one stroke and there is **NO** penalty.
- The same restrictions on anchoring the club apply as in the previous Rules of Golf.

## Rule 10.2b - Alignment

### New in 2019:

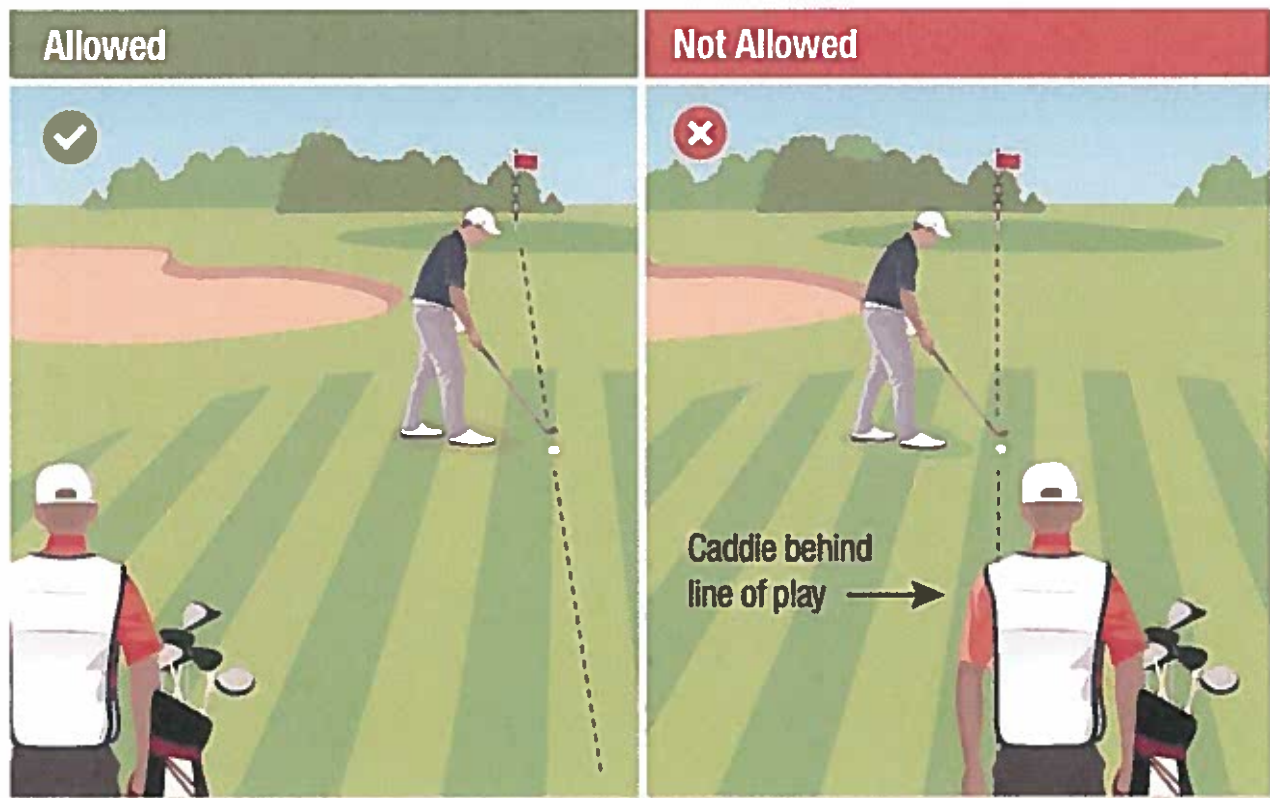
- No one can help the player with his alignment for the stroke. This is an essential skill which the player must do for himself.
- A caddie is no longer allowed to stand behind the player to help with alignment. At the moment the player begins to take his stance, the caddie must not deliberately stand directly behind the player. If he is there deliberately – for any reason – the player will be in breach of the Rule and cannot avoid the penalty by backing away and starting again. The penalty is two strokes.
- There is one exception which applies **only** on the putting green. The penalty can be avoided if the player backs away and starts again without the caddie directly behind him. This is designed to recognize that on a putting green, reading the line of putt by the caddie is often done from behind the ball and this may overlap with the player taking his stance. Provided the player backs away and starts again, there is no penalty.
- No Setting Down an Object to Help in Taking a Stance (10.2b.3). This Rule prevents the player from setting something down (such as a club) to help with alignment for a stroke. Once this is done the penalty is two strokes.  
The key point to this Rule is the player must always align his feet and body himself.



# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## ALIGNMENT:

- No one can help the player with his alignment for the stroke. This is an essential skill which the player must do for himself.
- A caddie is no longer allowed to stand behind the player to help with alignment. At the moment the player begins to take his stance, the caddie must not deliberately stand directly behind the player. The penalty is two strokes in stroke play.
- There is one exception which applies **only** on the Putting Green. The penalty can be avoided if the player backs away and starts again without the caddie directly behind him. Provided the player backs away and starts again on the Putting Green, there is no penalty.
- The player cannot set something down (such as a club) to help with alignment for a stroke. Once this is done the penalty is two strokes in stroke play.



## Rule 11.1 - Ball in Motion Issues

### New in 2019:

- There is now **NO** penalty if a ball in motion accidentally hits the player, caddie, his equipment, or the flagstick whether removed or attended. There is only a penalty if it is deliberate or if the player or caddie deliberately positions equipment to stop a ball in motion.
- There is now **NO** penalty for an accidental double hit. All accidental deflections are treated the same way; a double hit, a ball striking the player, a ball striking the opponent or an outside influence – **NO** penalty and the ball is played as it lies.
- On the putting green a ball which strikes a moving inanimate object (like a leaf) after a putt, is **NO** longer canceled and replayed. The ball will be played as it lies. However, it is still cancel and replay for a putt striking a person not attending the flagstick, or an animal.
- A ball on the putting green can be marked and lifted at any time including when another ball is in motion. If a ball is not marked and the player thinks another ball played from on the putting green may hit it, under the new Rule the ball can be marked and lifted with **NO** penalty to either player.
- If the ball accidentally hits an opponent in match-play, the option to replay the stroke has been removed and the ball will be played as it lies.

## Ball at Rest Moved Issues

### New in 2019:

#### Rule 7.4 - Ball Moved During Search

- During a search, there is **NO** penalty if a ball is moved by the player or his caddie. In all cases, the ball will be replaced, it will never be dropped. If the spot is not known, it will be estimated, and the ball will be replaced as it was, including being under or against any growing, attached natural object, or obstruction. For instance: If all that was known was that the ball was somewhere under the grass and was not visible before a player or anyone found it by kicking it, then the ball must be replaced under the grass. If the ball was covered by sand, it is the same as previous years. The original lie must be re-created, and the ball must be replaced in that lie. However, the player may leave a small part of the ball visible when doing so.

#### Rule 9.6 - Ball Moved by an Outside Influence

- If a ball has been moved by an Outside Influence, it must be replaced in all cases including when the spot is not known. It will never be dropped. If the spot is not known, it must be estimated and the original ball (if it is still readily available) must be replaced on this estimated spot, which as above, might be under grass or against other items.

#### Rule 13.1d - Accidental Movement of the Ball on the Putting Green

- There is still **NO** penalty for a ball or ball marker accidentally moved on the putting green, but this is now applied within the Rule itself, not by Local Rule as it has for the past two years.

## Rule 8.1c - Avoiding a Penalty by Restoring an Improved Condition

### New in 2019:

- If a player has improved the condition(s) affecting the stroke, he may avoid penalty if he restores the condition as nearly as possible to its original position so that the improvement is eliminated before the stroke is made.
- However, the restoring is limited to:
  - replacing a boundary object to its original position.
  - returning a tree branch, grass, immovable obstruction or TIO, to its original position.The player cannot avoid penalty if the improvement is not eliminated or is done by using anything other than the original object.
- Improvements that cannot be restored, resulting in a penalty, include:
  - replacing divots in a hole, removing or pressing down divots and eliminating holes.
  - removing or pressing down sand or loose soil.
  - removing dew, frost or water

## Rule 9.2b - Standard for Deciding Why A Ball Moved

### What is new in 2019?

- The new standard for deciding whether a ball has moved or not, has been raised to “known or virtually certain” which is a defined term and means at least 95% likely. This is a much higher standard than what was used previously (weight of the evidence/more likely than not) and should lead to fewer penalties when deciding how a ball moved.
  - For example, in a case where there is no doubt that the ball has moved in rough after a player had addressed it, but because of the time lag between the player’s actions and the movement of the ball there is significant doubt over what actually caused the ball to move, the likely result will be no penalty.

## Rule 4.1 - Clubs

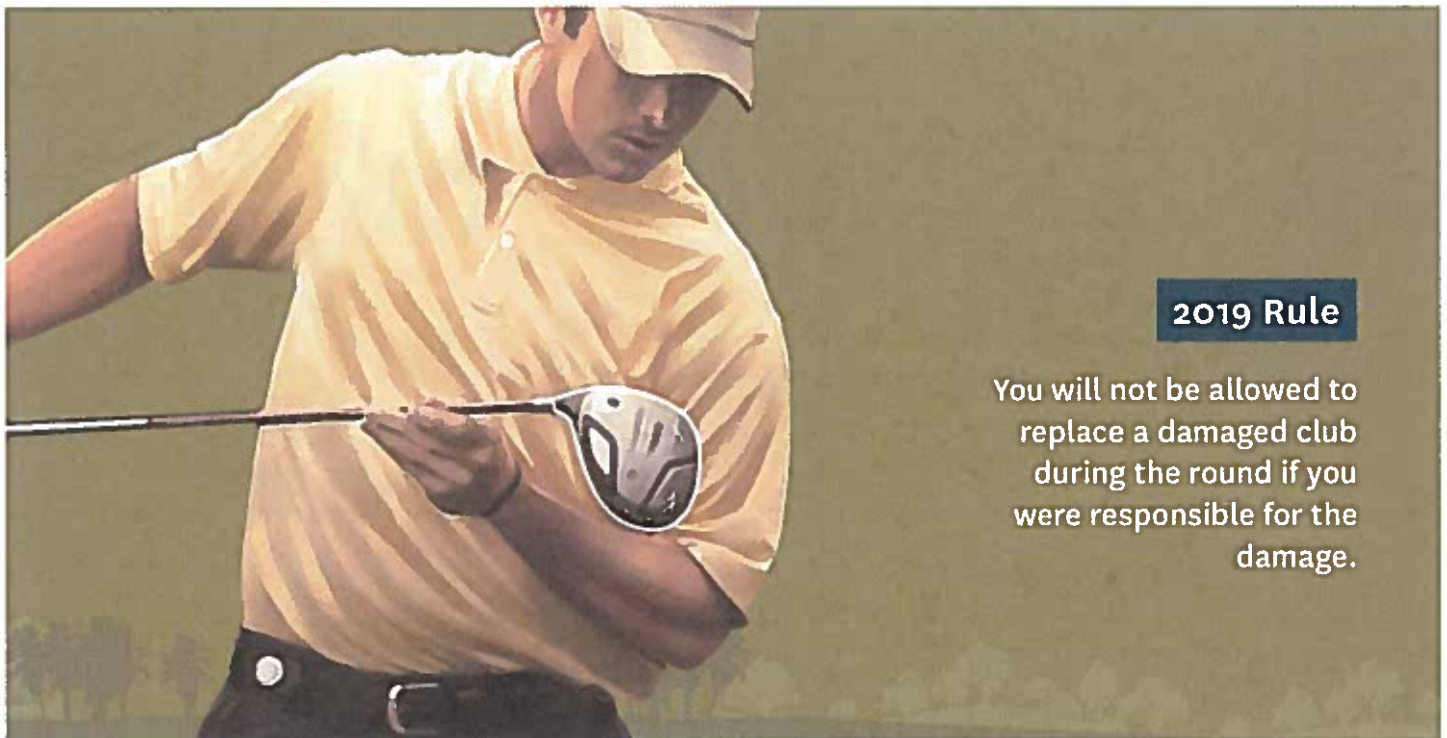
### New in 2019:

- No matter how a club is damaged, even by abusing it, the player can continue to use the club in its damaged state for the rest of the round, but he will **NOT** be allowed to change it. There will be **NO** replacement of a club unfit for play (such as a cracked driver face), unless the damage is caused by an outside influence or natural forces. No matter what the nature or cause of the damage, the damaged club is treated as conforming for the rest of that round only.
- The player will be allowed to have the damaged club repaired, but is limited to the original components of the club - the same grip, shaft and head. Damage that existed prior to the round must not be repaired.
- A club **MUST** still conform when starting a new round or when starting a play-off in stroke play.
- While performance characteristics must not be deliberately changed, if they are changed by using an adjustable feature and this is restored to the original setting before a stroke is made with that club, there is **NO** penalty.
- The same 14 club limit applies. If you find that you have more than 14 clubs before starting the round, there is **NO** penalty provided the player clearly declares the club or clubs out of play and take some other action such as turning them upside down in the bag and do not use them. Clubs carried in this way will not count towards the 14 club total, but the player will be disqualified if any of them are used.

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## CLUBS:

- No matter how a club is damaged, even by abusing it, the player can continue to use the club in its damaged state for the rest of the round, but he will **NOT** be allowed to replace it.
- There will be **NO** replacement of a club unfit for play (such as a cracked driver face), unless the damage is caused by an outside influence or natural forces. No matter what the nature or cause of the damage, the damaged club is treated as conforming for the rest of that round only.
- The player will be allowed to have the damaged club repaired but the repair is limited to the original components of the club - the same grip, shaft and head. Damage that existed prior to the round must not be repaired.
- A club **MUST** still conform when starting a new round or when starting a play-off in stroke play.



### 2019 Rule

You will not be allowed to replace a damaged club during the round if you were responsible for the damage.

## Rule 4.2 - The Ball

### New in 2019:

- A ball "**Cut or Cracked**" replaces what we knew in the previous Rules of Golf as a ball "Unfit for Play".
- A ball can only be changed if it can be clearly seen that the ball is cut or cracked, and this damage has happened during play of the hole being played. Balls often scuff or scratch, but this is **NOT** considered cut or cracked.
- There is **NO** longer a requirement in the Rule for the player to announce that he is lifting the ball to identify it or to see if it is cut or cracked, but it is still good practice to do so. The spot of the ball must still be marked before the ball is lifted; and as in previous years the ball must **NOT** be cleaned.
- The ball can **NO** longer be changed if it is out of shape.

# 2019 Rules of Golf - Fact Sheet

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## Rule 10.3 - Caddies

### New in 2019:

- A caddie will now be able to mark, lift and replace the players ball (if he lifted it) on the putting green **ONLY**, without needing authorization. The player is still responsible for any related breach of the Rules.
- A caddie will **NO** longer be able to align the player for any shot. There are strict Rules about where the caddie may deliberately stand when the player begins to take the stance and other than on the putting green, there is no way out of the penalty if the caddie is deliberately standing directly behind the player when he starts to take his stance.

See Rules of Golf Fact Sheet on Alignment or Rule 10.2b(4) for more information.

## Rule 4.3 - Use of Distance Measuring Devices

### New in 2019:

- In 2019 the Rules of Golf will allow the everyday use of Distance Measuring Devices (DMD's) without measuring elevation changes.
- However, the PGA TOUR will be adopting a Local Rule on our Hard Card which will prevent the use of Distance Measuring Devices during any tournament rounds. Penalty for first breach of this Local Rule during a tournament round is two strokes; second breach during the same round Disqualification.
- DMD's without elevation change, will still be permitted in PGA TOUR pre-tournament Pro-Ams, Open Qualifying rounds and stages of Q school, except the Q school finals.



# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## CADDIES:

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## DISTANCE MEASURING DEVICES:

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- DMD's without elevation change, will still be permitted in PGA TOUR pre-tournament Pro-Ams, Open Qualifying rounds and stages of Q school, except the Q school finals.

## TEMPORARY IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS:

- The TIO Local Rule was recrafted to enable a player to treat a TIO as an Immovable Obstruction when any physical interference exists, if the player so chooses. This should simplify the process for players when taking relief.
- When a player has **both** Physical Interference and Line of Sight Interference, he has a choice of procedure. However, once this option is made, the other option may not be used.

## PREFERRED LIES:

- The position of the ball may be marked before being lifted, but it is not required. Simply lift the ball and place a ball **once** within one club length of the original spot, but no nearer the hole. As with relief procedures, a ball may be substituted when a ball is lifted under this Local Rule.

## Local Rule E-3 - Preferred Lies

### New in 2019:

- In 2019 the Preferred Lies Local Rule on the PGA TOUR will again allow for a ball in an area cut to fairway height or less (i.e. closely mown area) in the General Area, to be lifted, cleaned and placed within the one club length relief area.
- However, two key changes are:
  1. The position of the ball may be marked before being lifted, but it is not required. Simply lift the ball and place a ball once within one club length of the original spot, but no nearer the hole.
  2. As with relief procedures, a ball may be substituted when a ball is lifted under this Local Rule.

## Local Rule F-23 - Temporary Immovable Obstructions (TIO's)

### New in 2019:

- The TIO Local Rule was recrafted to enable a player to treat a TIO as an Immovable Obstruction when any physical interference exists, if the player so chooses.
- **“Physical Interference”** remains the same as in the previous Rules of Golf. Physical Interference exists when the player’s ball touches or lies in or on a TIO, or the TIO interferes with the player’s area of intended stance or area of intended swing. When physical interference exists, the player may choose to treat the TIO as they would any other immovable obstruction (i.e.: cart path) and drop a ball in the one club-length relief area. For balls in-front-of a TIO this simplifies the relief procedure greatly.
- **“Line of Sight”** is the new term for Intervention. Line of Sight exists when a player’s ball is in, on, or under a TIO, or behind the TIO where the TIO is on a straight line between the ball and the hole, or the ball is within one club length of that line. When a player has Line of Sight Interference only the same relief procedure as today applies (one plus one), and the same exceptions as today apply.
- When a player has **both** Physical Interference and Line of Sight Interference, he has a choice of procedure. For example, when a ball is “in or on” a TIO, the player may now choose to take immovable obstruction relief, or one plus one Line of Sight relief. However, once this choice is made its final, and the other option may not be used.
- As with all other relief procedures, a ball may be substituted when proceeding under this Local Rule.

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

## ELIMINATION OF PENALTIES:

- There is now **NO** penalty if a ball in motion accidentally hits the player, caddie, his equipment, or the flagstick whether removed or attended.  
There is only a penalty if it is deliberate or if the player or caddie deliberately positions equipment to stop a ball in motion.
- There is now **NO** penalty for an accidental double hit.  
All accidental deflections are treated the same way; **NO** penalty and the ball is played as it lies.
- On the putting green a ball which strikes a moving inanimate object (like a leaf) after a putt, is **NO** longer cancelled and replayed. The ball will be played as it lies.



- During a search for a ball, there is **NO** penalty if a ball is moved by the player or his caddie.  
In all cases, the ball will be replaced, it will never be dropped.
- If a ball has been moved by an Outside Influence, it must be replaced in all cases including when the spot is not known. It will never be dropped.
- There is still **NO** penalty for a ball or ball marker accidentally moved on the putting green.