

Major Changes to the Rules of Golf effective from January 2019

1. **The Player accidentally moves their ball during search: New Rule: No Penalty** / Old Rule: One Stroke
2. **The Player accidentally moves their ball, or their ball marker, on the Putting Green: New Rule: No Penalty** / Old Rule: One Stroke
3. **Player accidentally strikes ball more than once. New Rule: No Penalty** / Old Rule 1 Stroke
4. **Ball Moved: New Rule: The Player will now be found to be the cause of the ball moving *only* when it is known or virtually certain (meaning at least 95%) to be the case** / Old Rule: the opposite
5. **Player's Ball in motion accidentally strikes the Player or their caddie. New Rule: No Penalty** / Old Rule 1 Stroke
6. **Player's Ball in motion from Putting Green strikes Flagstick: New Rule: No Penalty** (Exception: New Rule 11.2 Flagstick deliberately left behind Hole as back-stop = 2 strokes) / Old Rule: 2 Strokes.
7. **Taking Relief: New Rule: Ball must be dropped in a defined relief area** / Old Rule: Sometimes the drop would be in a defined area, sometimes on, or as near as possible, to a spot or line
8. **Where dropped ball must come to rest. New Rule: the ball must come to rest in the relief area where it was dropped, or else it must be re-dropped** / Old Rule must be re-dropped if it comes to rest in any of the nine specified areas defined in Rule 20-2c. (the relief area is the one or two club-lengths depending on the situation.
9. **Time allowed for search: New Rule = 3 minutes** / Old Rule = 5 minutes
10. **Embedded Ball Relief: New Rule: Player may take relief without penalty from an embedded ball anywhere, except in sand, in the "General Area"** (new term for Through the Green)
11. **Ball Moved: New Rule: The Ball must be replaced on its original spot, even if it is blown by the wind or moved for no clear reason (with exception on Putting Green** / Old Rule: Ball is only replaced if a player or outside agency caused it to move, otherwise it is played from its new location
12. **Putting Green: New Rule: A player may repair almost any damage (including spike marks and animal damage, but not including natural imperfections** / Old Rule: A player may only repair ball marks or old hole plugs on the Putting Green
13. **Touching Line of Play on the Green: New Rule: No Penalty so long as doing so does not improve the conditions for the player's stroke** / Old Rule (Line of Putt) General Penalty (Loss of Hole / 2 Strokes)
14. **Putting with unattended Flagstick left in the Hole: New Rule: No Penalty if a ball played from the Putting Green (or anywhere else) hits the unattended Flagstick in the Hole** / Old Rule: Loss of Hole or 2 Stroke Penalty if the ball is played from the Putting Green
15. **Penalty Areas (1): (old Water Hazards): Player moves Loose Impediments, touches the ground with a hand or club, or grounds the club in the Penalty Area when the ball is in the Penalty Area. New Rule: No Penalty** / Old Rule Loss of Hole or 2 Stroke Penalty (with exceptions)
16. **Penalty Areas (2): Opposite Side Relief Option: New Rule: Player no longer allowed to take relief from the opposite side of a red marked Penalty Area**
17. **Bunkers (1): Player moves or touches Loose Impediments in a Bunker when the ball is in the Bunker. New Rule: No Penalty** / Old Rule: Loss of Hole / 2 Strokes
18. **Bunkers (2): Player touches sand in a bunker with hand or club when the ball is in the bunker. New Rule: No Penalty except when a Player (a) touches the sand to test the conditions of the bunker (b) grounds the club in the area right behind or in front of the ball, in making a practice swing or in making the backswing for the stroke** / Old Rule: any touching of the sand results in the General Penalty (with exceptions)
19. **Bunkers (3): Unplayable Ball relief. New Rule: A Player may take relief outside the Bunker back on a line from the hole through where the ball was at rest in the Bunker for 2 penalty strokes** Old Rule: No Relief outside the Bunker other than Stroke & Distance
20. **Pace of Play: New Rule: Recommends that Players make each stroke in no more than 40 seconds and usually in less time** / Old Rule: No recommendations are given
21. **Distance Measuring Devices: New Rule: The use of DMDs is allowed, unless a Local Rule has been adopted prohibiting their use** / Old Rule: DMDs only if allowed by Local Rule

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