

# JANUARY 1<sup>ST</sup> 2019

## REVISED R&A GOLF RULES

You should all be aware that from 1<sup>st</sup> January the R&A and USPGA have totally rewritten the rules of golf. Whilst most rules are the same but presented in easier language, many with diagrams to ease understanding, there are a number of fundamental changes. Copies of the new rule books are held in the clubhouse and many members have asked for and received their own personal abridged version. To understand the rules and changes which apply to all golf played from 1<sup>st</sup> January it is essential that these books are read and understood. To help, a session is being arranged in the clubhouse in late February or early March with a Hampshire PGA rules expert who will show a video, explain the changes and hold a question and answer session with members. This will take around 1.5 hours starting at 18.30. Watch out for the date and further details to be published when finalised.

In the meantime, the key rule changes are (read the rule book for full details):

- **When taking a penalty drop you now drop the ball from knee height**
- **There will be no penalty for a double hit or if the ball strikes your person or your equipment**
- **You can remove loose impediments from bunkers and other hazards without penalty**
- **There is no penalty if you accidentally touch the sand in a bunker or brush it on your backswing but you still cannot place your club on the sand behind your ball to take your shot.**
- **Ready golf is encouraged**
- **You can leave the flag in the hole when putting on the green with no penalty if you strike it.**
- **Repairing spike marks on the green is now permitted.**
- **You have only three minutes to search for your 'lost' ball which starts when the first player starts looking, so always hit a provisional ball if in doubt.**
- **If you declare a ball 'unplayable' in a bunker you now have an option to drop the ball outside the bunker for two penalty shots.**

There is a new rule that if you hit your ball out of bounds you can go to the point where the ball went out and drop a ball at that point under a two-shot penalty. This is aimed to speed up play. Gosport and Stokes Bay Golf Club will **NOT** be implementing this rule at present for any **official** club competition or matches though it may be used in any casual golf played on the course.

Please read your rule book and come to the Hampshire PGA rules session at the club to understand these changes better.

Happy and faster golfing.