

## 2019 Golf Rules amendments

You cannot have failed to know that from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019 the Rules of Golf are changing across the world. Historically the USA has had slightly different rules than the rest of the world – who largely used the R & A rules, that we use in the UK. The changes not only harmonise rules across the world but also seek to simplify the rules and speed up play.

On Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> January 2019 at 4.30pm our Secretary/Manager, Keith Fisher, will hold a meeting in the club house to explain the new rules. Copies of the new Rule Book are also available on the table in the rear corridor, for all members to take a personal copy.

All players must be aware of these changes. No excuses. The 20 key changes are:-

1. When dropping a ball – do so from knee height (not shoulder height).
2. Measure the area to drop in with the longest club in your bag (except a putter).
3. Drop in, and play from, the relief area.
4. When dropping back-on-the-line, your ball cannot be played from nearer the hole than your chosen reference point.
5. Searching for a ball is now limited to 3 minutes, instead of 5 minutes.
6. If you accidentally move your ball when searching for it, replace it without penalty.
7. No penalty for a “double-hit” – it only counts as one stroke.
8. No penalty if your ball hits you or your equipment accidentally after a stroke.
9. No penalty if your ball strikes the flagstick when you have chosen to leave it in the hole.
10. Spike marks and other shoe damage on the putting green may be repaired.
11. A ball accidentally moved on the putting green – no penalty and replace the ball.
12. If a ball marked, lifted and replaced on the green is moved by wind to another position – replace the ball on the original spot.
13. Penalty Areas replace water hazards. You can move loose impediments, ground your club and take practice swings without penalty, just as you can on the fairway or in the rough.
14. You cannot take relief from a penalty area unless you are 95% certain your ball is in the penalty area.
15. In bunkers you can remove loose impediments.

16. In bunkers you cannot touch the sand with your club in the area right in front of, or right behind, your ball during your backswing or in taking practice swings.
17. Free relief is allowed if your ball is embedded on the fairway or in the rough. Embedded means part of your ball is below the level of the ground.
18. With an unplayable ball in a bunker you now have an extra option to drop outside the bunker for 2 penalty strokes.
19. You cannot have your caddie or your playing partner standing behind you once you begin taking your stance.
20. Pace of play – it is recommended that you take no more than 40 seconds to make a stroke (and usually you should be able to play more quickly than that) and Ready Golf in stroke play is encouraged.