

SECTION I ETIQUETTE

Courtesy on the Course

Safety

Prior to playing a stroke or making a practice swing, the player should ensure that no one is standing close by or in a position to be hit by the club, the ball or any stones, pebbles, twigs or the like which may be moved by the stroke or swing.

Consideration for Other Players

The player who has the honor should be allowed to play before his opponent or fellow-competitor tees his ball.

No one should move, talk or stand close to or directly behind the ball or the hole when a player is addressing the ball or making a stroke.

No player should play until the players in front are out of range.

Pace of Play

In the interest of all, players should play without delay.

If a player believes his ball may be lost outside a water hazard or out of bounds, to save time, he should play a provisional ball.

Players searching for a ball should signal the players behind them to pass as soon as it becomes apparent that the ball will not easily be found. They should not search for five minutes before doing so.

They should not continue play until the players following them have passed and are out of range.

When the play of a hole has been completed, players should immediately leave the putting green.

If a match fails to keep its place on the course and loses more than one clear hole on the players in front, it should invite the match following to pass.

Priority on the Course

In the absence of special rules, two-ball matches should have precedence over and be entitled to pass any three- or four-ball match, which should invite them through.

A single player has no standing and should give way to a match of any kind.

Any match playing a whole round is entitled to pass a match playing a shorter round.

Care of the Course

Holes in Bunkers Before leaving a *bunker*, a player should carefully fill up and smooth over all holes and footprints made by him.

Repair Divots, Ball-Marks and Damage by Spikes

A player should ensure that any divot hole made by him and any damage to the *putting green* made by a ball is carefully repaired. On completion of the hole by all players in the group, damage to the *putting green* caused by golf shoe spikes should be repaired.

Damage to Greens - Flagsticks, Bags, etc.

Players should ensure that, when putting down bags or the *flagstick*, no damage is done to the *putting green* and that neither they nor their *caddies* damage the *hole* by standing close to it, in handling the *flagstick* or in removing the ball from the *hole*. The *flagstick* should be properly replaced in the *hole* before the players leave the *putting green*. Players should not damage the *putting green* by leaning on their putters, particularly when removing the ball from the hole.

Golf Carts

Local notices regulating the movement of golf carts should be strictly observed.

Damage Through Practice Swings

In taking practice swings, players should avoid causing damage to the course, particularly the tees, by removing divots.

SECTION II DEFINITIONS

Abnormal Ground Conditions

An "abnormal ground condition" is any casual water, ground under repair or hole, cast or runway on the course made by a burrowing animal, a reptile or a bird.

Addressing the Ball

A player has "addressed the ball" when he has taken his stance and has also grounded his club, except that in a hazard a player has addressed the ball when he has taken his stance.

Advice

"Advice" is any counsel or suggestion which could influence a player in determining his play, the choice of a club or the method of making a stroke.

Information on the Rules or on matters of public information, such as the position of hazards or the flagstick on the putting green, is not advice.

Ball Deemed to Move

See "Move or Moved."

Ball Holed

See "Holed."

Ball Lost

See "Lost Ball."

Ball in Play

A ball is "in play" as soon as the player has made a stroke on the teeing ground. It remains in play until holed out, except when it is lost, out of bounds or lifted, or another ball has been substituted whether or not such substitution is permitted; a ball so substituted becomes the ball in play.

Bunker

A "bunker" is a hazard consisting of a prepared area of ground, often a hollow, from which turf or soil has been removed and replaced with sand or the like. Grass-covered ground bordering or within a bunker is not part of the bunker. The margin of a bunker extends vertically downward, but not upward. A ball is in a bunker when it lies in or any part of it touches the bunker.

Burrowing Animals

A "burrowing animal" is an animal that makes a hole for habitation or shelter, such as a rabbit, mole, ground hog, gopher or salamander.

Note: A hole made by a non-burrowing animal, such as a dog, is not an abnormal ground condition unless marked or declared as ground under repair.

Caddie

A "caddie" is one who carries or handles a player's clubs during play and otherwise assists him in accordance with the Rules. When one caddie is employed by more than one player, he is always deemed to be the caddie of the player whose ball is involved, and equipment carried by him is deemed to be that player's equipment, except when the caddie acts upon specific directions of another player, in which case he is considered to be that other player's caddie.

Casual Water

"Casual water" is any temporary accumulation of water on the course which is visible before or after the player takes his stance and is not in a water hazard. Snow and natural ice, other than frost, are either casual water or loose impediments, at the option of the player. Manufactured ice is an obstruction. Dew and frost are not casual water. A ball is in casual water when it lies in or any part of it touches the casual water.

Committee

The "Committee" is the committee in charge of the competition or, if the matter does not arise in a competition, the committee in charge of the course.

Competitor

A "competitor" is a player in a stroke competition. A "fellow-competitor" is any person with whom the competitor plays. Neither is partner of the other.

In stroke play foursome and four-ball competitions, where the context so admits, the word "competitor" or "fellow-competitor" includes his partner.

Course

The "course" is the whole area within which play is permitted (see Rule 33-2).

Equipment

"Equipment" is anything used, worn or carried by or for the player except any ball he has played at the hole being played and any small object, such as a coin or a tee, when used to mark the position of a ball or the extent of an area in which a ball is to be dropped. Equipment includes a golf cart, whether or not motorized. If such a cart is shared by two or more players, the cart and everything in it are deemed to be the equipment of the player whose ball is involved except that, when the cart is being moved by one of the players sharing it, the cart and everything in it are deemed to be that player's equipment.

Note: A ball played at the hole being played is equipment when it has been lifted and not put back into play.

Fellow-Competitor

See "Competitor."

Flagstick

The "flagstick" is a movable straight indicator, with or without bunting or other material attached, centered in the hole to show its position. It shall be circular in cross-section.

Forecaddie

A "forecaddie" is one who is employed by the Committee to indicate to players the position of balls during play. He is an outside agency.

Ground Under Repair

"Ground under repair" is any part of the course so marked by order of the Committee or so declared by its authorized representative. It includes material piled for removal and a hole made by a greenkeeper, even if not so marked.

All ground and any grass, bush, tree or other growing thing within the ground under repair is part of the ground under repair. The margin of ground under repair extends vertically downward, but not upward. Stakes and lines defining ground under *repair* are in such ground. Such stakes are *obstructions*. A ball is in *ground under repair* when it lies in or any part of it touches the *ground under repair*.

Note 1: Grass cuttings and other material left on the *course* which have been abandoned and are not intended to be removed are not *ground under repair* unless so marked.

Note 2: The *Committee* may make a Local Rule prohibiting play from *ground under repair* or an environmentally-sensitive area which has been defined as *ground under repair*.

Hazards

A "hazard" is any *bunker* or *water hazard*.

Hole The "hole" shall be 4 1/4 inches (108 mm) in diameter and at least 4 inches (100 mm) deep. If a lining is used, it shall be sunk at least 1 inch (25 mm) below the *putting green* surface unless the nature of the soil makes it impracticable to do so; its outer diameter shall not exceed 4 1/4 inches (108 mm).

Holed

A ball is "holed" when it is at rest within the circumference of the *hole* and all of it is below the level of the lip of the *hole*.

Honor

The player who is to play first from the *teeing ground* is said to have the "honor."

Lateral Water Hazard

A "lateral water hazard" is a *water hazard* or that part of a *water hazard* so situated that it is not possible or is deemed by the *Committee* to be impracticable to drop a ball behind the *water hazard* in accordance with Rule 26-1b.

That part of a *water hazard* to be played as a *lateral water hazard* should be distinctively marked. A ball is in a *lateral water hazard* when it lies in or any part of it touches the *lateral water hazard*.

Note 1: *Lateral water hazards* should be defined by red stakes or lines.

Note 2: The *Committee* may make a Local Rule prohibiting play from an environmentally-sensitive area which has been defined as a lateral water hazard.

Note 3: The *Committee* may define a lateral water hazard as a water hazard.

Line of Play The "line of play" is the direction which the player wishes his ball to take after a stroke, plus a reasonable distance on either side of the intended direction. The line of play extends vertically upward from the ground, but does not extend beyond the hole.

Line of Putt

The "line of putt" is the line which the player wishes his ball to take after a stroke on the putting green. Except with respect to Rule 16-1e, the line of putt includes a reasonable distance on either side of the intended line. The line of putt does not extend beyond the hole.

Loose Impediments

"Loose impediments" are natural objects such as stones, leaves, twigs, branches and the like, dung, worms and insects and casts or heaps made by them, provided they are not fixed or growing, are not solidly embedded and do not adhere to the ball.

Sand and loose soil are loose impediments on the putting green, but not elsewhere.

Snow and natural ice, other than frost, are either casual water or loose impediments, at the option of the player. Manufactured ice is an obstruction.

Dew and frost are not loose impediments.

Lost Ball

A ball is "lost" if.

- a. It is not found or identified as his by the player within five minutes after the player's side or his or their caddies have begun to search for it; or
- b. The player has put another ball into play under the Rules, even though he may not have searched for the original ball; or
- c. The player has played any *stroke* with a *provisional ball* from the place where the original ball is likely to be or from a point nearer the *hole* than that place, whereupon the *provisional ball* becomes the *ball in play*.

Time spent in playing a *wrong ball* is not counted in the five-minute period allowed for search.

Marker

A "marker" is one who is appointed by the *Committee* to record a *competitor's* score in stroke play. He may be a *fellow-competitor*. He is not a *referee*.

Matches

See "*Sides and Matches*."

Move or Moved

A ball is deemed to have "*moved*" if it leaves its position and comes to rest in any other place.

Nearest Point of Relief

The "*nearest point of relief*" is the reference point for taking relief without penalty from interference by an immovable *obstruction* (Rule 24-2), an *abnormal ground condition* (Rule 25-1) or a *wrong putting green* (Rule 2 5-3).

It is the point on the *course* nearest to where the ball lies, which is not nearer the *hole* and at which, if the ball were so positioned, no interference (as defined) would exist.

Note: The player should determine his *nearest point of relief* by using the club with which he expects to play his next *stroke* to simulate the *address* position and swing for such *stroke*.

Observer

An "*observer*" is one who is appointed by the *Committee* to assist a *referee* to decide questions of fact and to report to him any breach of a *Rule*. An *observer* should not attend the *flagstick*, stand at or mark the position of the *hole*, or lift the ball or mark its position.

Obstructions

An "*obstruction*" is anything artificial, including the artificial surfaces and sides of roads and paths and manufactured ice, except:

- a. Objects defining out *of* bounds, such as walls, fences, stakes and railings;
- b. Any part of an immovable artificial object which is out of bounds; and
- c. Any construction declared by the *Committee* to be an integral part of the *course*.

An obstruction is a movable obstruction if it may be moved without unreasonable effort, without unduly delaying play and without causing damage. Otherwise it is an immovable obstruction.

Note: The *Committee* may make a Local Rule declaring a movable obstruction to be an immovable obstruction.

Out of Bounds

"*Out of bounds*" is beyond the boundaries of the *course* or any part of the *course* so marked by the *Committee*.

When out of bounds is defined by reference to stakes or a fence or as being beyond stakes or a fence, the out *of* bounds line is determined by the nearest inside points of the stakes or fence posts at ground level excluding angled supports.

Objects defining out *of* bounds such as walls, fences, stakes and railings, are not obstructions and are deemed to be fixed.

When out *of* bounds is defined by a line on the ground, the line itself is out o bounds.

The out *of* bounds line extends vertically upward and downward.

A ball is out *of* bounds when all of it lies out *of* bounds.

A player may stand out *of* bounds to play a ball lying within bounds.

Outside Agency

An "outside agency" is any agency not part of the match or, in stroke play, not part of the competitor's side, and includes a referee, a marker, an observer and a forecaddie. Neither wind nor water is an outside agency.

Partner

A "*partner*" is a player associated with another player on the same *side*.

In a *threesome*, *foursome*, *best-ball* or *four-ball* match, where the context so admits, the word "player" includes his *partner* or *partners*.

Penalty Stroke

A "*penalty stroke*" is one added to the score of a player or *side* under certain *Rules*. In a *threesome* or *foursome*, *penalty strokes* do not affect the order of play.

Provisional Ball

A "*provisional ball*" is a ball played under Rule 27-2 for a ball which may be *lost* outside a *water hazard* or may be *out of bounds*.

Putting Green

The "*putting green*" is all ground of the hole being played which is specially prepared for putting or otherwise defined as such by the *Committee*. A ball is on the *putting green* when any part of it touches the *putting green*.

Referee

A "*referee*" is one who is appointed by the *Committee* to accompany players to decide questions of fact and apply the *Rules*. He shall act on any breach of a *Rule* which he observes or is reported to him. A *referee* should not attend the *flagstick*, stand at or mark the position of the *hole*, or lift the ball or mark its position.

Rub of the Green

A "*rub of the green*" occurs when a ball in motion is accidentally deflected or stopped by any *outside agency* (see Rule 19-1).

Rule or Rules

The term "Rule" includes:

- a. The Rules of Golf,
- b. Any Local Rules made by the *Committee* under Rule 33-8a and Appendix 1; and
- c. The specifications on clubs and the ball in Appendices II and III

Sides and Matches

Side: A player, or two or more players who are *partners*.

Single: A match in which one plays against another.

Threesome: A match in which one plays against two, and each *side* plays one ball.

Foursome: A match in which two play against two, and each *side* plays one ball.

Three-Ball: A match-play competition in which three play against one another, each playing his own ball. Each player is playing two distinct *matches*.

Best-Ball: A match in which one plays against the better ball of two or the best ball of three players.

Four-Ball: A match in which two play their better ball against the better ball of two other players.

Stance

Taking the "*stance*" consists in a player placing his feet in position for and preparatory to making a *stroke*.

Stipulated Round

The "*stipulated round*" consists of playing the holes of the *course* in their correct sequence unless otherwise authorized by the *Committee*. The number of holes in a *stipulated round* is 18 unless a smaller number is authorized by the *Committee*. As to extension of *stipulated round* in match play, see Rule 2-3.

Stroke

A "*stroke*" is the forward movement of the club made with the intention of fairly striking at and moving the ball, but if a player checks his downswing voluntarily before the clubhead reaches the ball he is deemed not to have made a *stroke*.

Teeing Ground

The "*teeing ground*" is the starting place for the hole to be played. It is rectangular area two club-lengths in depth, the front and the sides of which are defined by the outside limits of two tee-markers. A ball is outside the *teeing ground* when all of it lies outside the *teeing ground*.

Through the Green

"*Through the green*" is the whole area of the *course* except:

- a. The *teeing ground* and *putting green* of the hole being played; and
- b. All *hazards* on the *course*.

Water Hazard

A "*water hazard*" is any sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, surface drainage ditch or other open water course (whether or not containing water) and anything of a similar nature.

All ground or water within the margin of a *water hazard* is part of the *water hazard*. The margin of a *water hazard* extends vertically upward and downward. Stakes and lines defining the margins of *water hazards* are in the *hazards*. Such stakes are *obstructions*. A ball is in a *water hazard* when it lies in or any part of it touches the *water hazard*.

Note 1: *Water hazards* (other than *lateral water hazards*) should be defined by yellow stakes or lines.

Note 2: The *Committee* may make a Local Rule prohibiting play from an environmentally-sensitive area which has been defined as a *water hazard*.

Wrong Ball

A "*wrong ball*" is any ball other than the player's:

- a. *Ball in play*,
- b. *Provisional ball*, or
- c. Second ball played under Rule 3-3 or Rule 20-7b in stroke play.

Note: *Ball in play* includes a ball substituted for the *ball in play* whether or not such substitution is permitted.

Wrong Putting Green

A "*wrong putting green*" is any *putting green* other than that of the hole being played. Unless otherwise prescribed by the *Committee*, this term includes a practice *putting green* or pitching green on the *course*.