

INTRODUCTION

The new Rules of Golf 2019 take effect on 1st January 2019. The key changes include:

New Definitions:

- **Penalty Area** - an area from which relief with a 1 shot penalty is allowed (formerly 'Water Hazard'). Still defined as either yellow or red.
- **Relief Area** - the area in which the ball must be dropped (and come to rest) when taking relief under a rule.
- **General Area** - anywhere on the course except Teeing areas, Penalty areas, Bunkers and Greens (formerly 'Through the Green')
- **Temporary Water** - formerly 'Casual Water'

Pace-of-play support

- Encouragement of *Ready Golf* in Stroke Play.
- Players may agree to play out of turn in Match Play.

Elimination of 'Ball Moved' penalties

- No penalty for **accidentally moving** a ball on the **putting green or in searching** for a ball.

Relaxed Putting Green rules

- No penalty if a ball hits an **unattended flagstick** in the hole.
- Players may **repair damage** to the green, whether their ball is on the green or not. This includes old hole plugs, spike marks and damage made by shoes, animals and maintenance practices (but not aeration holes, unless there is a local rule in place).
- No penalty for **touching the line** of putt.
- A ball **resting against the flagstick** is deemed holed as long as part of the ball is below the surface of the ground.
- Interference by a **Wrong Green** now includes the player's stance.

Relaxed Bunker rules

- No penalty for **moving loose impediments** (stones, leaves, etc.) in a bunker or for generally **touching the sand** with hand or club (but not directly in front or behind the ball or in making a backswing or practice swing).
- An extra relief option for an **unplayable ball**, allowing the ball to be played from outside the bunker with a two stroke penalty.

Relaxed rules for Penalty Areas

- Expanded use of red penalty areas where lateral relief is allowed.
- No penalty for moving loose impediments, touching the ground or water or taking a practice swing in a Penalty Area.

Simplified way of Taking Relief

- New procedure for taking relief by dropping in a specific **Relief Area**.
- Ball dropped from knee height and must stay within the Relief Area.

Lost Ball & Provisional Ball

- A ball is **Lost** if not found within **3 minutes** of commencing search, although a reasonable amount of additional time is allowed to get to and identify a ball that has been spotted within the 3 minutes.
- A **Provisional Ball** may be played after the player has moved forward, at any time up to the end of the 3 minute search period.

Alternative to Stroke & Distance (Discretion of the Committee)

- A new **Local Rule** to allow golfers to drop the ball in the vicinity of where the ball is lost or out of bounds under a two-stroke penalty.
- This Local Rule is not available in **Qualifiers** and is not intended for higher levels of play, such as professional or elite level competitions.

Some other changes

- The **honour** on the tee is determined by the player with the lowest gross score on the previous hole.
- No need to announce the intention to **lift a ball** to identify it or determine if it is in an abnormal condition (ball must be marked first).
- A ball may be **marked** by holding a club behind or to the side of it.
- **Natural objects** may be moved to see if they are loose or unattached. If they are found to be attached they must be replaced as close as possible to their original position.
- No penalty for a **multiple hit** or if the **ball accidentally hits** the player.
- Relief for an **embedded ball** is available anywhere in the General Area and the Relief Area is 1 club length from a point directly behind the ball.
- No "**opposite side relief**" from red penalty areas.
- A player may keep using and/or repair any **club damaged** during the round, no matter what the damage and even if the player damaged it in anger.
- A player is not allowed to **replace a damaged club**, except when it is damaged by an outside influence or by someone other than the player or caddie.
- A new form of Stroke Play called '**Maximum Score**' where the maximum score for a hole is set at a specific number (e.g. 8), or twice the par of the hole, or nett double bogey. For example, if the maximum score for a hole is set at 8 and you lose your ball and decide not to complete the hole, your score is entered as 8. Similarly, once you have played 7 (or less) shots you can pick up your ball and record 8 on the scorecard. For **CONGU Qualifying Competitions** the maximum score must be set at a minimum of 5 over par (equivalent to net double bogey for a player receiving 3 shots on the hole).

Visit the New Rules of Golf videos in the member`s area for more detail on the main changes.

R&A RULES OF GOLF WEBSITE

Click to go to the [Official Rules of Golf website](#), which is made up of 6 parts, including:

- **The Rules of Golf (full version)** which is intended for those who administer the game and who need to answer the variety of questions that can arise in relation to golf competitions.
- **The Rules of Golf (Player`s Edition)** which is intended for you, the golfer. It contains the Rules situations that occur most commonly on the course and is an abridged version

of the full Rules. Although its text is edited, it gives the same answer that is in the full Rules of Golf and so it is a functioning Rule book.

- **Definitions** - over 70 defined terms that form the foundation around which the Rules are written.
- **Interpretations** - provided only for aspects of the Rules that are considered to require additional clarification (replaces the old 'Decisions' book).
- **Committee Procedures** - practical guidance for those involved in running day to day play at golf courses, including defining Penalty Areas and defining Local Rules.

R&A RULES MODERNISATION WEBSITE

The [Rules of Golf Modernisation website](#) contains detailed descriptions, documents and videos about the new rules, as well as a link to download a **2019 Rules app for iOS and Android**.