The 2019 Rules of Golf: Major Changes

Effective January 1, 2019
Overview

- Definitions - Golf’s “Words of Art”
- Spirit of the Game & Etiquette
- Promoting Faster Pace of Play
- Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties
  - On the Putting Green
  - In Bunkers
  - Accidental Acts & Occurrences
- Determining Who or What Moved a Ball at Rest
- Penalty Areas
- Simplified Dropping and Re-Dropping Procedures
- Unplayable Ball in Bunker – New Relief Option
Modified or Renamed Definitions

Abnormal Course Condition: Abnormal Ground Condition + Immovable Obstruction
Penalty Area: Water Hazards + other areas to be treated as such
General Area: Through the Green
Integral Object: Integral Part of the Course
Outside Influence: Outside Agency
Round: Stipulated Round
Teeing Area: Teeing Ground
Temporary Water: Casual Water
Wrong Green: Wrong Putting Green
Areas of the Course

• The *general area*, (the entire course except for the four other defined areas)

• The four other defined areas of the course:
  ▪ The *teeing area* the player must play from in starting the hole he or she is playing,
  ▪ All *bunkers*,
  ▪ All *penalty areas*, and
  ▪ The *putting green* of the hole the player is playing.
Some New Definitions

- Ball-Marker
- Boundary Object
- Conditions Affecting the Stroke
- Drop
- Embedded
- Improve
- Lie

Mark
Natural Forces
No Play Zone
Reference Point
Relief Area

Review all the Definitions, they are key to applying rules.
Selected Definitions

• **Drop**
  - To hold the ball and let go of it so that it falls through the air, with the intent for the ball to be in play.

• **Place**
  - To place a ball by setting it down and letting it go, with the intent for it to be in play.

• **Penalty Area**
  - An area from which relief with a one-stroke penalty is allowed if the player’s ball comes to rest there.
  - A penalty area is:
    • Any body of water on the course (whether or not marked by the Committee), including a sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, surface drainage ditch, or other open watercourse (even if not containing water), and
    • Any other part of the course the Committee defines as a penalty area.
Clarification of Important Terms

• **Deliberate**
  • An action intentionally taken or intentionally not taken by the player; the player had a choice, e.g., a player lifts a ball thinking it is a stray ball, and it is his or her ball. The lifting was deliberate. The ball was not accidentally lifted.
  • Also, a person authorized to attend the flagstick fails to remove the flagstick from the hole, as he or she believed the attended flagstick did not need to be removed when attended, and the ball strikes the flagstick in the hole. A deliberate action…

• **Accidental**
  • An unintentional act by the player; the player did not choose to perform the (specific) act, the act was not planned or considered, e.g., a player, while marking the location of ball on the putting green, accidentally causes the ball to move.
Spirit of the Game / Etiquette

• Playing by the Rules

“All players are expected to play in the spirit of the game by:

• Acting with integrity….
• Showing consideration to others….
• Taking good care of the course….”

(Rule 1.2a - Standards of Player Conduct; Conduct Expected of All Players)
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Spirit of the Game / Etiquette

- Playing by the Rules
  - Player Integrity

You will be able to mark and lift a ball to identify it, check for damage or see if it is embedded without first announcing your intention to another player.
Reasonable Judgment in Estimating and Measuring

• Accepting Player’s “Reasonable Judgment” in Determining a Location When Applying the Rules.

• Many Rules require a player to determine a spot, point, line, area or other location under the Rules, such as:

  • » Estimating where a ball last crossed the edge of a penalty area,
  • » Estimating or measuring when dropping or placing a ball in taking relief, or
  • » Replacing a ball on its original spot (whether the spot is known or estimated).
Accepting Player’s “Reasonable Judgment”

• Such determinations about location need to be made promptly and with care but often cannot be precise.

• So long as the player does what can be reasonably expected under the circumstances to make an accurate determination, the player’s reasonable judgment will be accepted even if, after the *stroke* is made, the determination is shown to be wrong by video evidence or other information.

• If a player becomes aware of a wrong determination before the *stroke* is made, it must be corrected (see Rule 14.5).
Spirit of the Game / Etiquette

- Playing by the Rules
- Standards of Conduct
  - Committee set codes of conduct allowed

“The Committee may set its own standards of player conduct in a Code of Conduct adopted as a Local Rule.”

(Rule 1.2b - Standards of Player Conduct; Code of Conduct)
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Promoting Faster Pace of Play

• Rule 5.6b – Prompt Pace of Play
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• Ready Golf Encouraged
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Promoting Faster Pace of Play

• Rule 5.6b – Prompt Pace of Play
• Ready Golf Encouraged
• Search time reduced to 3 minutes
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Promoting Faster Pace of Play

• Rule 5.6b – Prompt Pace of Play
• Ready Golf Encouraged
• Search time reduced to 3 minutes
• Caddies
  - May not assist player with alignment
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Promoting Faster Pace of Play

• Rule 5.6b – Prompt Pace of Play
• Ready Golf Encouraged
• Search time reduced to 3 minutes
• Caddies
  - May not assist player with alignment
  - May always mark, lift and clean ball on the Putting Green
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Promoting Faster Pace of Play

• Rule 5.6b – Prompt Pace of Play
• Ready Golf Encouraged
• Search time reduced to 3 minutes
• Caddies
  - May not assist player with alignment
  - May always mark, lift and clean ball on PG
• Putting allowed with Flagstick in the Hole
• Optional Local Rule for Stroke and Distance
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Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

- On the Putting Green
- In Bunkers
- Accidental Acts and Occurrences
Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

• On the Putting Green
  - Repair of Damage
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Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

- On the Putting Green
  - Repair of Damage
  - Touching Line of Play
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Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

• On the Putting Green
  - Repair of Damage
  - Touching Line of Play
  - Accidental movement of ball
    (No Penalty)
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Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

• On the Putting Green
  - Repair of Damage
  - Touching Line of Play
  - Accidental movement of ball (No Penalty)
  - After marking & lifting, ball is always replaced if it moves
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Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

- On the Putting Green
  - Repair of Damage
  - Touching Line of Play
  - Accidental movement of ball, No Penalty
  - After marking & lifting, ball is always replaced if it moves
  - Okay for a putt to strike an unattended flagstick in the hole
Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

- In Bunkers
  - Okay to move Loose Impediments
Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

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In Bunkers
- Okay to move Loose Impediments
- Touching Sand, except near ball
- Ground Club, except near ball
- Testing still penalized
Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

- Accidental Acts and Occurrences, **No Penalty**
  - Deflection of a Ball in Motion

**2019 Rule**

If a ball in motion is accidentally deflected by you or your equipment, there will be no penalty and the ball will be played from where it comes to rest.
Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

- Accidental Acts and Occurrences, **No Penalty**
  - Deflection of a Ball in Motion
  - Movement of a Ball on the Putting Green
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Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

• Accidental Acts and Occurrences, **No Penalty**
  - Deflection of a Ball in Motion
  - Movement of a Ball on the Putting Green
  - Movement of a Ball During Search
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Relaxed Requirements and Reduced Penalties

• Accidental Acts and Occurrences, **No Penalty**
  - Deflection of a Ball in Motion
  - Movement of a Ball on the Putting Green
  - Movement of a Ball During Search
  - Double Hits
Determining Who or What Moved a Ball at Rest

- **Virtual Certainty** required to conclude you caused your ball to move
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Penalty Areas

• What are they?
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Penalty Areas

• What are they?
• Any Penalty Area can be marked Red

2019 Rule

Any penalty area (water hazard) can be marked as red, which means that lateral relief will be available to you.
Penalty Areas

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• What are they?

• Any Penalty Area can be marked Red

• Play from Penalty Areas
  - Okay to move loose impediments
  - Okay to make practice swings
  - Okay to ground your club
  - Okay to touch water
Penalty Areas

• What are they?
• Any Penalty Area can be marked Red

• Play from Penalty Areas
  - Okay to move loose impediments
  - Okay to make practice swings
  - Okay to ground your club
  - Okay to touch water

• Relief Options (Red–3, Yellow–2)
  - Stroke and Distance (Red or Yellow)
  - Back-on-the-Line (Red or Yellow)
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Penalty Areas

• What are they?
• Any Penalty Area can be marked Red
• Play from Penalty Areas
  - Okay to move loose impediments
  - Okay to make practice swings
  - Okay to ground your club
  - Okay to touch water
• Relief Options (Red–3, Yellow–2)
  - Stroke and Distance (Red or Yellow)
  - Back-on-the-Line (Red or Yellow)
  - Lateral Relief (Red only)
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Penalty Areas

• What are they?
• Any Penalty Area can be Marked Red
• Play from Penalty Areas
  - Okay to move loose impediments
  - Okay to make practice swings
  - Okay to ground your club
  - Okay to touch water
• Relief Options (Red–3, Yellow–2)
  - Stroke and Distance (Red or Yellow)
  - Back-on-the-Line (Red or Yellow)
  - Lateral Relief (Red only)
• Option for equal distance opposite margin relief, available by Local Rule only

2019 Rule
You no longer have the option of taking relief on the opposite side of the point where your ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area.
Simplified Dropping and Re-Dropping Procedures

- Drop from Knee Height
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Simplified Dropping and Re-Dropping Procedures

• Drop from Knee Height
• Club-Lengths and Relief Areas
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Simplified Dropping and Re-Dropping Procedures

• Drop from Knee Height
• Club-Lengths and Relief Areas
• When to Re-Drop
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Simplified Dropping and Re-Dropping Procedures

• Drop from Knee Height
• Club-Lengths and Relief Areas
• When to Re-Drop
• All drops permit substitution
  – free relief
  – penalty relief
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Unplayable Ball – New Bunker Relief Option

• Back-on-the-Line Outside Bunker
• Two Penalty Strokes
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Advice & Help, Equipment, Stroke & Distance

• Distance Measuring Devices permitted unless prohibited by a Local Rule

2019 Rule
You will be permitted to use a distance-measuring device, unless a Local Rule has been adopted prohibiting its use.
Review and Questions

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