

Golf's New Rules: 2019 Major Changes

1. Ball Moved During Search - No penalty for accidentally moving your ball during search.
2. No Penalty for Moving Ball on the Putting Green - No penalty for accidentally moving your ball or ball-marker on the putting green.
3. Standard for Deciding Why a Ball Moved - New standard to determine if you caused your ball to move.
4. Replacing Ball When Original Spot is Not Known - When the original location of your ball is not known, replace it on its estimated spot.
5. Ball in Motion Accidentally Deflected - No penalty if your ball in motion is accidentally deflected by you, your equipment, or your caddie.
6. Measuring the Size of the Relief Area Where a Ball Must Be Dropped and Played - Your relief area for dropping a ball will be a fixed size of either one or two club-lengths using the longest club in your bag, other than your putter.
7. New Procedure for Dropping a Ball - Your ball must be let go from knee height and fall through the air without touching any part of your body or equipment.
8. Where a Dropped Ball Must Come to Rest - Your ball must come to rest in the relief area where it was dropped, or else it must be redropped.
9. Fixed Distances to be Used for Measuring - A fixed distance of the longest club in your bag, other than your putter, will be used for measuring.
10. Time For Search Before Ball is Lost - Your ball is lost if not found in three (3) minutes.
11. Relief For an Embedded Ball - Relief allowed without penalty for an embedded ball anywhere (except in sand) in the "general area" (a new term for "through the green").
12. Procedure for Taking Lateral Relief - In taking lateral relief, you will drop within two club-lengths of where your ball entered the penalty area. The size of a club-length will always be measured using the longest club in your bag, other than your putter.
13. Procedure for Taking Back-on-the-Line Relief - One of your options for relief from either a red or yellow penalty area will be called back-on-the-line relief.
14. When to Replace a Ball That Moves on the Putting Green - After your ball has been lifted and replaced, you would always replace your ball on its original spot, even if it was blown by the wind or moved for no clear reason.
15. Repairing Damage on the Putting Green - Repair of almost any damage allowed on the putting green (including spike marks and animal damage).
16. Touching Line of Play on a Putting Green - No penalty for touching your line of play on the putting green so long as doing so does not improve the conditions for your stroke.
17. Ball Played From Green Hits Unattended Flagstick in Hole - No penalty if your ball played from the putting green (or anywhere else) hits the unattended flagstick in the hole.
18. Touching Loose Impediments or Ground in a Penalty Area - No penalty for moving loose impediments, touching the ground, or grounding your club in a penalty area.
19. Moving or Touching Loose Impediments or Touching Sand in a Bunker - Relaxed Rules relating to loose impediments and touching the ground in a bunker.

20. Unplayable Ball in Bunker - Relief allowed outside a bunker for an unplayable ball for two penalty strokes.
21. Caddie Standing Behind a Player to Help Line the Player Up - A caddie is not allowed to stand on a line behind you while you are taking your stance and until your stroke is made.
22. Ball Accidentally Struck More Than Once During a Stroke - If your club accidentally strikes your ball more than once during a stroke, there will be no penalty and your ball will be played as it lies.
23. Encouraging Prompt Pace of Play - It is recommended that you play “ready golf” and make each stroke in no more than 40 seconds.
24. Maximum Score Form of Stroke Play - A new “Maximum Score” form of stroke play is recognized, where your score for a hole is capped at a max score. Net Double Bogey Max.
25. Expected Standards of Player Conduct - The proposed new Rules speak to the high standards of conduct expected from players.
26. Elimination of the Requirement to Announce the Player's Intent to Lift a Ball - When you have good reason to mark and lift your ball, you are no longer required to first announce your intention.

New Local Rule

Local Rule: Alternative to Stroke and Distance

A new Local Rule will provide an alternative to stroke-and-distance relief for a ball that is lost outside a penalty area or out of bounds. Penalty of two strokes. Not used during the Club Championship.

GOLF'S NEW RULES: STROKE AND DISTANCE

A new Local Rule will provide an alternative to stroke-and-distance relief for a ball that is lost outside a penalty area or out of bounds. This new Local Rule will be available beginning January 1, 2019.

BALL OUT OF BOUNDS

LOST BALL

If the Local Rule is in effect, you can still take stroke-and-distance relief, but you will now have the following additional option that comes with a penalty of two strokes:

A DETERMINE SPOT where your ball went out of bounds (left diagram) or is likely to be lost (right diagram).

B FIND NEAREST FAIRWAY EDGE no closer to the hole.

C DROP YOUR BALL IN SHADED AREA as defined on one side by a line from the hole through point A and on the other side by a line from the hole through point B, and not nearer the hole. The relief area is extended on both sides by two club-lengths.

This Local Rule is not intended for higher levels of play, such as professional or elite amateur level competitions.