



Important Changes to Rules of Golf for 2019

These changes are explained in more detail in the Rules Home page located within The USGA website at www.usga.org

- Drop the ball straight down from knee height (NOT shoulder height).
- Measure the area to drop in with the longest club in your bag (except putter). The longest club in your bag will be used in all instances to determine your relief area. The relief area is the area the player must drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule.
- Once dropped, the ball must land in and come to rest in the relief area.
- When dropping back-on-the-line, your ball cannot be played from nearer the hole than your chosen reference point.
- Time to search now 3 minutes (NOT 5 minutes).
- No penalty if you accidentally move your ball when searching for it, replace it without penalty. Do not drop.
- No penalty for a double hit – it only counts as one stroke.
- No penalty if your ball hits you or your equipment accidentally after a stroke.
- No penalty if your ball strikes the flagstick when you have chosen to leave it in the hole. Putting with the flagstick in the hole is now permitted.
- With an embedded ball you get free relief when your ball is embedded on the fairway or in the rough.
- Spike marks and other damage on the putting green can be repaired.
- Ball accidentally moved on the putting green – no penalty and replace.
- Ball moves on the putting green after being marked – replace it back on that marked spot every time – no penalty.
- Penalty areas replace water hazards. You can move loose impediments, ground your club and take practice swings in penalty areas – no penalty.
- In bunkers you can remove loose impediments. Touching the sand incidentally is permitted.
- In a bunker you still cannot touch the sand with your club behind or in front of your ball, when making a practice swing, or when making your backswing.
- Unplayable ball in bunker – as an additional option you may drop outside the bunker for 2 penalty strokes.
- You cannot have your caddie or your partner deliberately standing behind you once you begin taking your stance.
- Setting down your club to align your stance is not permitted.
- No matter how a club is damaged, even by abusing it, keep using the club for the rest of the round. No replacement of damaged clubs unless damage caused by outside influence or natural forces.
- Pace of Play – it is recommended that you take no longer than 40 seconds to make a stroke. The player should usually be able to play more quickly than that and is encouraged to do so.

