

GOLF COACHING GUIDE

Golf Competition Rules, Protocol and Etiquette A Summary of the Rules of Golf

Golf is a game. But remember, EVERY GAME HAS ITS RULES. The official Golf as governed by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews (R&A) and the United States Golf Association. To enjoy a fair match and protect the integrity of competition, it is important know and understand the basic rules of the game.

A Summary of the Rules of Golf

Rule 1-The Game

Rule 2-Match Play

Rule 3-Stroke Play

Rules 4&5-Clubs and the Ball.

Rule 6-Things a Player Should Know

Rule 7-Practice

Rule 8-Advice on How to Play

Rule 9-Advising Opponent on Strokes Taken

Rule 10-When to Play a Shot

Rule 11-Teeing Ground

Rule 12-Finding Ball in Hazard/Identifying Ball

Rule 13-Playing the Ball as It Lies and the Course as You find it

Rule 14-Striking the Ball

Rule 15-Playing a Wrong Ball

Rule 16-The Putting Green

Rule 17-The Flagstick

Rule 18-Moving the Ball

Rule 19-Ball in Motion, Deflected or Stopped

Rule 20-Lifting and Dropping the Ball

Rule 21-Cleaning the Ball

Rule 22-Ball Interfering with or Assisting Play

Rule 23-Loose Impediments

Rule 24-Obstructions

Rule 25-Casual Water; Ground under Repair; Animal Holes

Rule 26-Water Hazards

Rule 27-Ball Lost or Out of Bounds

Rule 28-Ball Unplayable

Courtesy on the Course

1. If someone else is playing from the tee, do not tee your ball until he/she has played
2. Always stand still and to the side of rather than behind another player when he or she is playing. Do not talk.
3. Be ready to play when it is your turn.
4. When you are playing slowly or looking for a lost ball, ask the group behind you to play through, so you do not slow everyone down.
5. Write down scores on the way to the next hole, not on the green you are leaving.
6. Never take more than one practice swing, if any.

Safety First.

Both in Practice and Play, always make sure that: No one is near you when you swing the club. No one is ahead of you where your shot might hit them,

Taking Care of the Course

1. Always wear golf or tennis shoes. Do not slide or drag your feet or the on the green.
2. Always rake a bunker after you have played from it.
3. Replace divots and repair depressions made when your ball hits the green. These are called "ball marks."
4. Never place your golf bag on the green. Put the flagstick carefully back into the hole after putting,

Rule 1 -The Game

- a. The holes of the course must be played in order (1 through 9, 10 through 18).
- b. You must always play by the Rules. You are not allowed to change them.

Rule 2 -Match Play

- a. In match play, each hole is a separate contest. If you win the first hole, you are one UP ; if you lose it, you are one down"; if you tie it, you are "all square."
- b. You have won the match when, for example, you are three up and there are only two holes left to play.
- c. Anyone you are playing against is your "opponent."

Rule 3 -Stroke Play

- a. In stroke play, the stipulated competitor with the lowest total score for the round is the winner.
- b. You must play the ball into the hole before starting the next hole. No "gimmies!"
- c. Anyone you are playing with is a fellow competitor.

Rules 4 and 5 -Clubs and the Ball

- a. You may carry no more than fourteen clubs.
- b. You may not change balls during the play of a hole. However, if you damage or cut your ball, you may do so after first asking your opponent or a fellow competitor.

Rule 6 -Things a Player Should Do

You should:

- a. Read the notices given to you by the tournament officials.
- b. Always use your proper handicap.
- c. Know your tee time or starting time.
- d. Make sure you play your own ball (put a mark on the ball with a pencil in case someone else is using an identical ball).
- e. In stroke play, make sure your score for each hole is right before you turn in your card.
- f. Keep playing unless there is lightning, you are ill or an official tells you to stop.

Rule 7 -Practice

You may not hit a practice shot during play of a hole, or from any hazard.
Note: Always read the local rules about practice.

Rule 8 -Advice on How to Play

- a. You may not ask anyone except your caddie or partner for advice on how to play, However, you may ask about Rules or the position of hazards or the flagstick.
- b. You may not give advice to your opponent or a fellow-competitor. Rule 9- Advising Opponent on Strokes Taken. In match play, you must tell your opponent the number of strokes you have taken if you are asked.

Rule 10 -When to Play a Shot

- a. The player who has the lowest score on a hole has the right to play first on the next hole. This is called the honor."
- b. During play of a hole, the player whose ball is farthest from the hole plays first,
- c. If you play out of turn ,in match play your opponent may make you replay, but this is not so in stroke play.

Rule 11 -Teeing Ground

- a. Tee your ball between the tee-markers or a little behind them. You may go behind them as much as two club-lengths.
- b. If your ball accidentally falls off the tee, you may replace it without penalty.

Rule 12 -Finding Ball in Hazard Identify Ball

- a. A hazard is any bunker (area of sand) or water hazard (lake, pond,

creek, etc.).

b. In a bunker or water hazard, if your ball is covered by sand or leaves, you may remove enough of the sand or leaves to be able to see a part of the ball.

c. You may lift your ball to identify it anywhere except in a hazard. You must tell your opponent or fellow competitor before you lift your ball to identify it.

Rule 13 -Playing the Ball as It Lies and the Course as You Find It

a. You must play the ball as it lies, You may not move it to a better spot,

b. You may not improve your lie by pressing down behind the ball. The club may be grounded only lightly behind the ball.

c. You may not improve the area of your intended swing or line of play by bending or breaking anything growing, such as tree limbs or weeds.

d. In a hazard, you may not touch the sand, ground or water with the club before or during your backswing.

e. In a hazard, you may not remove loose impediments (natural things, such as leaves or twigs) but you may remove obstructions (artificial objects, such as bottles or rakes,)

Rule 14 -Striking the Ball

a. You must fairly strike the ball with the head of the club. You may not push, scrape or rake the ball,

b. You must not hit your ball while it is moving.

Rule 15 -Playing a wrong Ball

a. In match play, if you play a ball that is not yours you lose the hole unless the wrong ball is played in a hazard; if you play a wrong ball in a hazard, you must then play the right ball.

b. In stroke play, if you play a ball that is not yours, you must take a two-stroke penalty unless the wrong ball was played in a hazard. You must then play out the hole with your own ball; If you do not do so, you are disqualified.

Rule 16 -The Putting Green

a. If any part of your ball is touching the green, it is on the green.

b. When your ball is on the green, you may brush away leaves and other loose impediments on your line of putt with your hand or a club, Do not fan them with a cap or towel.

c. You should repair ball marks or old hole plugs but you may not repair marks made by spikes or shoes, if they are on your line of putt.

- d. You may not test the surface of the green by rolling a ball or scraping the surface.
- e. Always mark your ball by putting a small coin or other marker behind it when you want to pick it up to clean or get it out of another player's way.

Rule 17 -The Flagstick

If your ball is off the green, there is no penalty if you play and your ball strikes the flagstick, provided no one is holding the flagstick.

If your ball is on the green, do not putt with the flagstick in the hole. Either take the flagstick out or ask another player to hold it and take it out when you play your ball. If you putt and your ball hits the flagstick when it is in the hole, in match play you lose the hole. In stroke play, you must add two penalty strokes to your score for the hole.

Rule 18 -Moving the Ball

- a. If you or your partner move either of your balls on purpose or accidentally, add a penalty stroke to your score, replace and play it.
- b. If your ball is moved by someone or something other than you or your partner (an outside agency) there is no penalty, but you must replace it. If the ball is moved by wind or water, you must play it as it lies.
- c. Once you address the ball, if the ball moves, add a penalty stroke and replace the ball.
- d. If you move a loose impediment within one club-length of the ball and the ball moves, add a penalty stroke, replace it and play it. On the putting green, there is no penalty.

Rule 19 -Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped

- a. If your ball hits an outside agency (bird, rake, etc.) it is called a rub of the green.
There is no penalty and the ball is played as it lies.
- b. If your ball hits you, your partner, your caddy, or your equipment, in match play you lose the hole. In stroke play, you are penalized two strokes and you must play your ball as it lies.
- c. If your ball hits your opponent, his/her caddy, or his/her equipment, there is no penalty; you may play the ball as it lies or replay the shot.
- d. If your ball hits a fellow competitor, caddy or equipment in stroke, there is no penalty and the ball is played as it lies. These are the same as outside agencies in stroke play.
- e. If your ball hits another ball and moves it, you must play your ball as it lies, The owner of the other ball must replace it. If your ball is on

the green when you play and the ball which your ball hits is also on the green, you are penalized two strokes in stroke play. Otherwise, there is no penalty.

Rule 20 -Lifting and Dropping the Ball

- a. If you are going to lift your ball under a Rule and the Rule requires that the ball be replaced, you must put a ball-marker behind the ball before you lift it.
- b. When you drop a ball, stand erect, hold the ball at shoulder height extend your arm out straight and drop it.
- c. If a dropped ball hits the ground and rolls into a hazard, out of a hazard, more than two club-lengths, nearer the hole or, if you are dropping away from an immovable obstruction or ground under repair, etc., back into the obstruction or ground under repair, you must re-drop. If the same thing happens when you re-drop, you must place the ball where it struck the ground when it was re-dropped.

Rule 21 -Cleaning the Ball

You may usually clean your ball when you are allowed to lift it, Except on the green, you may not clean the ball when you lift it for identification, because it interferes with another player, or to determine if it is unfit.

Rule 22 -Ball Interfering with or Assisting Play

- a. If another ball interferes with your swing or is in your line of putt, you may ask the owner of the ball to lift it.
- b. If your ball is near the hole and might serve as a backstop for another player, you might lift your ball.

Rule 23 -Loose Impediments

Loose impediments are natural objects that are not growing or fixed --such as leaves twigs, branches, worms and insects. You may remove a loose impediment except when your ball and the loose impediment lie in a bunker or water hazard.

Rule 24 -Obstructions

- a. Obstructions are artificial or man-made objects. Bottles, tin cans, rakes, etc., are movable obstructions. Sprinkler heads, shelter houses, golf car paths, etc., are immovable obstructions.
- b. Movable obstructions anywhere on the course may be moved. If the ball moves, it must be replaced without penalty.
- c. You may drop your ball away from an immovable obstruction if it

interferes with your swing or stance. Drop the ball within one club-length of that point.

Note: You should not pick up the ball from an obstruction until you have established the nearest point of relief.

Rule 25 -Casual Water; Ground Under Repair; Animal Holes

a. Casual water is any temporary puddle of water caused by rain or over watering. Ground under repair is any damaged area which the Committee has marked as such.

b. If your ball or your stance is in casual water, ground under repair or a burrowing animal hole, you may either play the ball as it lies or find the nearest place not nearer the hole which gives you relief and drop the ball within one club-length of that place.

c. If your ball is in casual water, etc., and you cannot find it, determine where the ball entered the area and drop a ball within one club-length of that place without penalty.

d. If your ball is on the wrong green, find the nearest place off the green which is not nearer the hole and drop the ball within one club-length of that place.

Rule 26 -Water Hazards

a. Water hazard margins are identified by yellow stakes or lines. Lateral water hazard margins are identified by red stakes or lines. Lateral water hazards are identified by red stakes or lines.

b. If your ball is in a water hazard or a lateral water hazard, you may play it as it lies. If you cannot find it or do not wish to play it where it lies, add a penalty stroke and:

1.

play another ball from where you last played or

2. drop a ball behind the water hazard as far back as you wish keeping a straight line between the hole and the point where your ball last crossed the hazard margin and where you want to drop.

If your ball is in a lateral water hazard, you may

3. also drop a ball within two club-lengths of where the ball last crossed the hazard margin.

Rule 27 -Ball Lost or Out of Bounds

a. A ball is lost if it is not found within five minutes after you first begin to search.

b. A ball is out of bounds when all of it lies beyond the inside line of

objects, such as white stakes, or a fence or wall that marks the playing area.

c. If your ball is lost or out of bounds, you must add a penalty stroke to your score and play another ball from where you played your last shot.

d. If you think your ball may be lost or out of bounds, you may play another ball (provisional ball) from the place where your first ball was played. You must tell your opponent or fellow competitor that you are playing a provisional ball and play it before you look for your first ball. If you cannot find your first ball or if it is out of bounds, you must count the strokes with the first and provisional balls, add a penalty and play out the hole with the provisional ball. If you find your first ball in bounds, continue play with it and pick up the provisional ball.

Rule 28 -Ball Unplayable

If your ball is under a tree or in some other bad situation and you decide you cannot play it, add a penalty stroke and do one of the following:

1. Go back to where you played the last shot and play a ball from there; or
2. Measure two club-lengths from the unplayable lie, drop a ball and play from there, or
3. Keep the unplayable lie between where you drop the ball and the hole, go back as far as you wish on a straight line and drop and play the ball.