

THE 18 MOST MISUNDERSTOOD RULES OF GOLF

1. *Red Lateral Hazard*

- Option 1 – Play it from the hazard, your club may not touch the ground during any practice swing nor can you remove any obstructions with your club or by hand.
- Option 2 – Replay the shot from the original position incurring a stroke and distance penalty.
- Option 3 – Draw a line from the hole to where the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard and drop anywhere behind that point keeping the point between you and the hole, incurring a 1 shot penalty.
- Option 4 - Go to the point where the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard and drop within 2 club lengths, no nearer the hole, on either side of the hazard, incurring a 1 shot penalty.

2. *Yellow Water Hazard*

- Option 1 – Play it from the hazard, your club may not touch the ground during any practice swing nor can you remove any obstructions with your club or hand.
- Option 2 – Replay the shot from the original position incurring a stroke and distance penalty.
- Option 3 – Draw a line from the hole to where the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard and drop anywhere behind that point keeping the point between you and the hole, incurring a 1 shot penalty.

3. *Lost Ball or Out-of-Bounds*

After looking for a maximum of 5 minutes, you must go back to where the shot was originally played from and replay the ball, incurring a stroke and distance penalty.

4. *Unplayable Lie*

- Option 1 – Take 2 club lengths relief from where the ball lies, no closer to the hole, incur a 1 stroke penalty.
- Option 2 – Replay the shot from the original position, incurring a stroke and distance penalty.
- Option 3 – Take the ball back as far as you want, keeping the point where the ball lies between you and the hole, incurring a 1 shot penalty.

5. *Improving Your Swing Path*

You cannot bend, break or hack anything growing or fixed if it improves your lie, your stance or your area of intended swing. The penalty for doing so is loss of hole in match play, or a 2 shot penalty in stroke play.

6. *Unplayable Lie in a Bunker*

- Option 1 – Take a drop of no more than 2 club lengths, no closer to the hole but still in the bunker, incurring a 1 shot penalty.
- Option 2 – Replay the shot from the original position, incurring a stroke and distance penalty.
- Option 3 – Go back as far as you like the the bunker and drop the ball, keeping that spot where your ball laid between you and the hole, incurring a 1 shot penalty.

7. ***Removing Objects in a Bunker***

You may not move or remove any loose impediments in the bunker unless they are foreign to the area. Example: you may remove a candy wrapper but not a pine cone or tree branch.

8. ***Number of Allowed Clubs***

You are only allowed to carry 14 clubs in your bag. The penalty for carrying more than 14 clubs is:

Match Play – Loss of Hole – maximum of 2 holes.

Stroke Play – 2 strokes per hole up to a maximum of 2 holes, or 4 total strokes.

9. ***Casual Water***

Find your nearest point of relief no closer to the hole where neither you or your ball lie in water that can be seen without pressing your feet up and down. You may then drop your ball within 1 club length from that point, no nearer to the hole at no penalty.

10. ***Grounding Your Club in a Hazard***

Practice swings may be taken inside a hazard as long as you don't touch the ground, sand or water with your club. The top of the grass may be touched during a practice swing. The penalty for grounding your club is loss of the hole in Match Play or a 2 shot penalty in Stroke Play.

11. ***Accidentally Moving Your Ball***

There is a 1 stroke penalty for accidentally moving your ball and it must be replaced in its original position before hitting. There is another 1 stroke penalty assessed for hitting the ball from the wrong place if it is not replaced. There is no penalty for accidentally moving the ball when on the tee.

12. ***Removing Loose Impediments***

If, in moving loose impediments you accidentally move your ball, you must return the ball to its original position and penalize yourself 1 stroke. You may not remove or disturb any impediments when your ball is in a hazard area.

13. ***Asking for Advice***

It is against the rules of golf to ask an opponent what club they have hit. The penalty for this breach is loss of hole in Match Play or a 2 shot penalty in Stroke Play.

14. ***Ball on a Cart Path***

You are entitled to free relief.

Step 1 – Determine the “nearest point of relief.” This is the point where the ball would lay affording the player both swing and stance relief from the cart path.

Step 2 – You are entitled to 1 club length from the point where the ball would lie once full relief is taken.

Step 3 – After dropping, the ball may roll up to 2 club lengths no closer to the hole.

15. ***Changing Club Characteristics***

Clubs may not be altered in any way once play has begun. If a club is altered during the normal course of play, such as bending it after hitting a tree while attempting to hit the ball, the club may be taken to the shop for immediate repair and a replacement club may be used until the original club is repaired.

If the club is modified outside the normal course of play, such as breaking or bending it in a fit of anger, it must be taken out of play for the remainder of the match. Should it be used again, the penalty is disqualification, whether Match or Stroke Play.

16. ***How to Drop the Ball***

After determining the nearest point of relief, you may stand outside the drop area, no closer to the hole, and extend your hand to the side dropping the ball from shoulder height. The ball may roll up to 2 club lengths no closer to the hole. If the ball rolls farther than that, you must re-drop. If after dropping it 2 times the ball continues to roll past 2 club lengths, you must place the ball where it first touched the ground on your final drop.

17. ***Repairing the Line of Your Putt***

You may repair any ball marks in your line and remove any pebbles or foreign objects in your line, provided you do it with your hand or club. You may not fix spike marks or fan the ground with a towel or cap to remove sand or foreign objects. The penalty for doing so is loss of hole in Match Play or a 2 shot penalty in Stroke Play.

18. ***Hitting the Wrong Ball***

The penalty for hitting the wrong ball in Match Play is loss of hole. If both players hit the wrong ball, only the first player to do so would be penalized as that would be the end of the hole.

The penalty for hitting the wrong ball in Stroke Play for either player is 2 strokes and the original ball must be replayed from its original position.