

Principal Changes Introduced in the 2023 Rules of Golf

Rule 1.3c(4) Applying Penalties to Multiple Breaches of the Rules The rule has been amended so that determining whether breaches are related or unrelated is no longer part of its application, meaning that there will be fewer instances where multiple penalties will be applied.

Rule 3.3b(4) Player Not Responsible for Showing Handicap on Scorecard or Adding Up Scores The Rule has been amended so that a player is no longer required to show their handicap on their scorecard. The Committee is responsible for calculating the player's handicap strokes for the competition and using that to calculate the player's net score.

Rule 4.1a(2) Use, Repair or Replacement of Club Damaged During Round The Rule has been amended to allow a player to replace a damaged club, provided the club has not been damaged through abuse.

Rule 6.3b(3) Substitution of Another Ball While Playing a Hole The penalty for playing an incorrectly substituted ball has been reduced from the general penalty to one penalty stroke.

Rule 9.3 Ball Moved by Natural Forces New Exception provides that a ball must be replaced if it moves to another area of the course after being dropped, placed or replaced. This also applies if the ball comes to rest out of bounds.

Rule 10.2b Other Help Rules 10.2b(1) and (2) have been amended to provide that neither the caddie nor any other person is allowed to set an object down to help the player with the line of play or other directional information (such as when the player cannot see the flagstick), and the player cannot avoid penalty by having the object removed before the stroke is made.

Rule 11.1b Ball in Motion Accidentally Hits Person or Outside Influence: Place from Where Ball Must Be Played Rule 11.1b(2) has been amended to provide that if a ball played from the putting green hits an insect, the player or the club used to make the stroke, the ball is played as it lies - the stroke is not replayed.

Rule 21.1c Penalties in Stableford The Rule is amended to provide that penalties in relation to clubs, time of starting and unreasonable delay will now be applied to the hole in the same way as regular stroke play. The same amendment is made to Rule 21.3c (Penalties in Par/Bogey).

General Changes

Backon-the-Line Relief Procedure

The back-on-the-line relief procedure is amended to provide that the player is required to drop on the line. The spot on the line where the ball first touches the ground when dropped creates a relief area that is one club-length in any direction from that point. This amendment is reflected in changes to Rules 14.3b(3), 16.1c(2), 17.1d(2), 19.2b and 19.3, and the definition of relief area.

How to Proceed When Stroke Must Be Replayed

Several Rules that used the phrase "stroke does not count" (such as Rule 11.1b) have been amended so that the failure to replay a stroke when required to do so, while still a breach of the relevant Rule, no longer carries the potential for disqualification.