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# The Rules of Golf



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# In This Presentation

Intro & Resources

Forms of Play (Rule 3)

Parts of the Course (Rule 2)

Play the Course as You Find It (Rule 8)



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# Introduction into the Game of Golf

## (Rule 1)

# What is Golf?



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Golf is played

- in a *round* of 18 (or fewer) holes
- on a *course*
- by striking a ball with a club.





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# The “Why” Behind the Rules

## The Two Great Principles

- Play the course as you find it
- Play the ball as it lies



**Bad lie in the fairway**



**Good lie in the rough**



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# How the Rules Are Structured

- Golf is a complicated game – so many things can happen



# Spirit of the Game



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All players are expected to play in the spirit of the game by:

- **Acting with Integrity**

- By following the rules
- Applying all penalties
- Being honest in all aspects of play

- **Showing Consideration to Others**

- Playing at a prompt pace
- Looking out for the safety of others
- Not distracting the play of another player

- **Take Good Care of the Course**

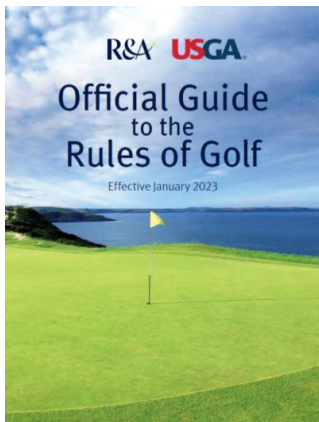
- Replacing divots, smoothing bunkers, repairing ball-marks
- Not causing unnecessary damage to the course



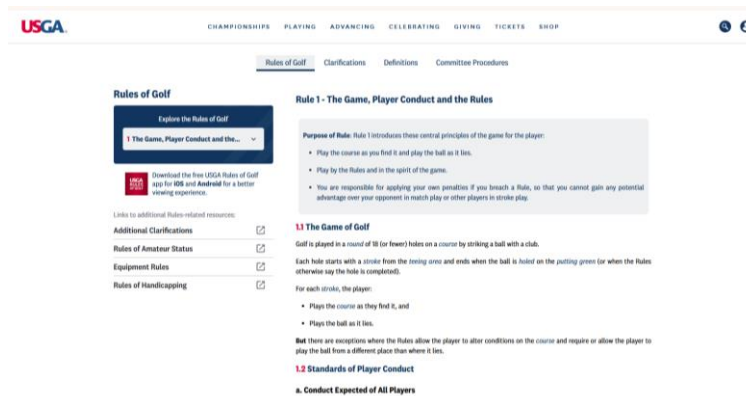
# Resources



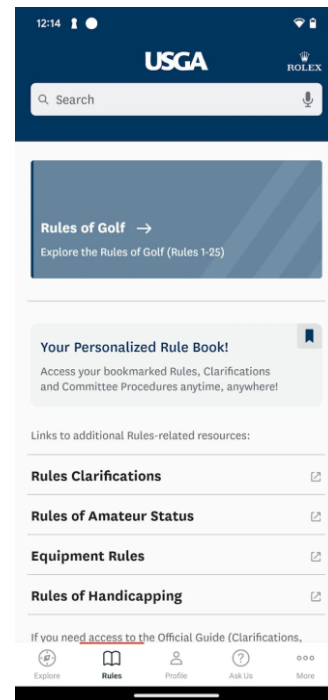
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Rules of Golf Books



Rules of Golf on  
USGA.org



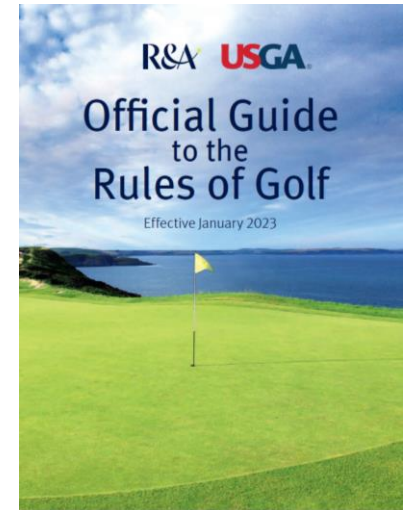
Rules of Golf app





# Using the Rules Book

- Identify the form of play
- Who, What, Where, When, Why
- Start with the Definitions
- Then Go Into the Rules
- If Unclear, Check for Clarifications
- Ask for Help



# Questions



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# Forms of Play

## (Rule 3)



# Types of Penalties

Three different types of penalties:

- **One-Stroke Penalty**
  - Minor infractions where potential advantage is minimal
- **General Penalty**
  - Potential for player to gain significant advance, but not enough to nullify a player's score
- **Disqualification**
  - Breaches significant that the player's score should not be allowed to count





# Match Play vs. Stroke Play

## Match Play

- Playing against an opponent
- 18 one-hole contests
- Scoring: by holes (up or down)
- General Penalty – Loss of hole
- Right to know match score
- Concessions permitted
- Overlook opponent's breach
- Resolve doubts or request a ruling before the next hole starts

## Stroke Play

- Playing against the entire field
- 1 eighteen-hole contest
- Scoring: total strokes made
- General Penalty – Two penalty strokes
- No guarantee of standing
- Must hole out
- The Rules protect the field
- Resolve doubts before returning scorecard



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# How Players Compete

- **Individual Play**

- One person plays against other individuals.
- Singles match or individual stroke play



- **Partner Play**

- A side of two or more partners competing against another side
- Foursomes (Alternate Shot) or Four-Ball



- **Team Competition**

- A group of players playing as individuals or as partners competing against other teams
- College or High School Events, Team Matches





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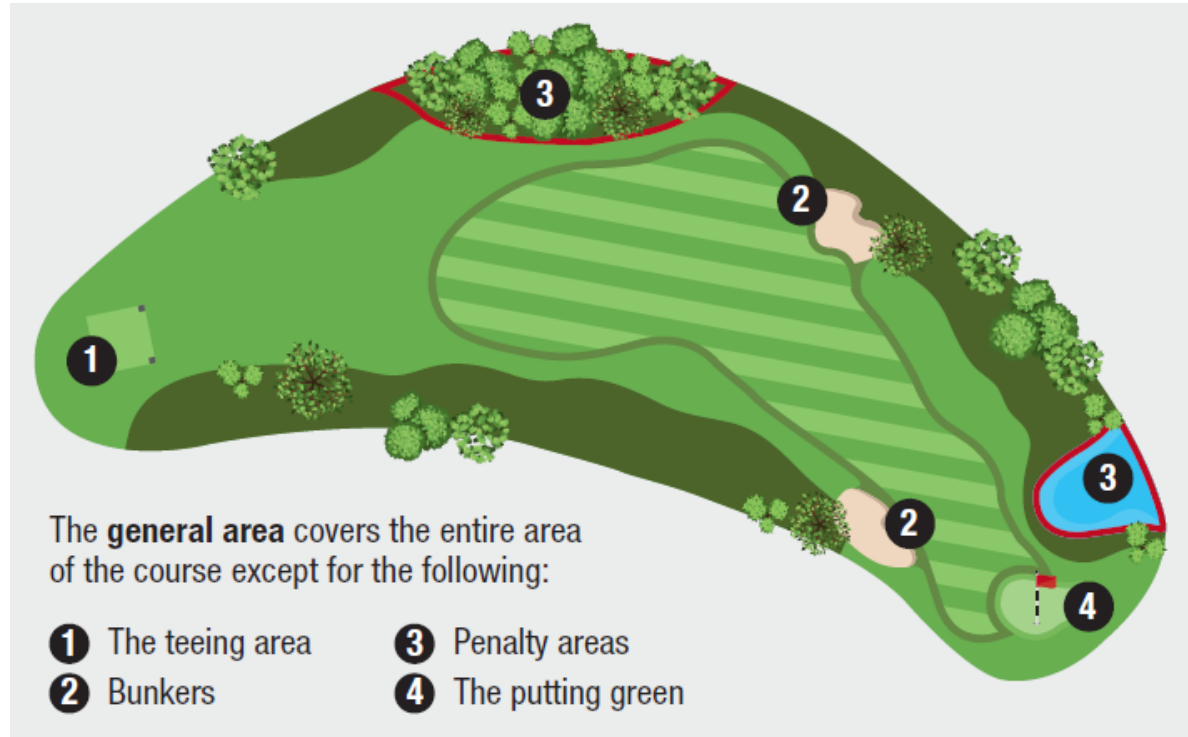
# Parts of the Course

## (Rule 2)

# The Five Areas of the Course

The course is divided into **five defined areas**. Each area of the course has its own unique privileges and restrictions.

- The teeing area
- Bunkers
- Penalty areas
- The putting green
- The general area







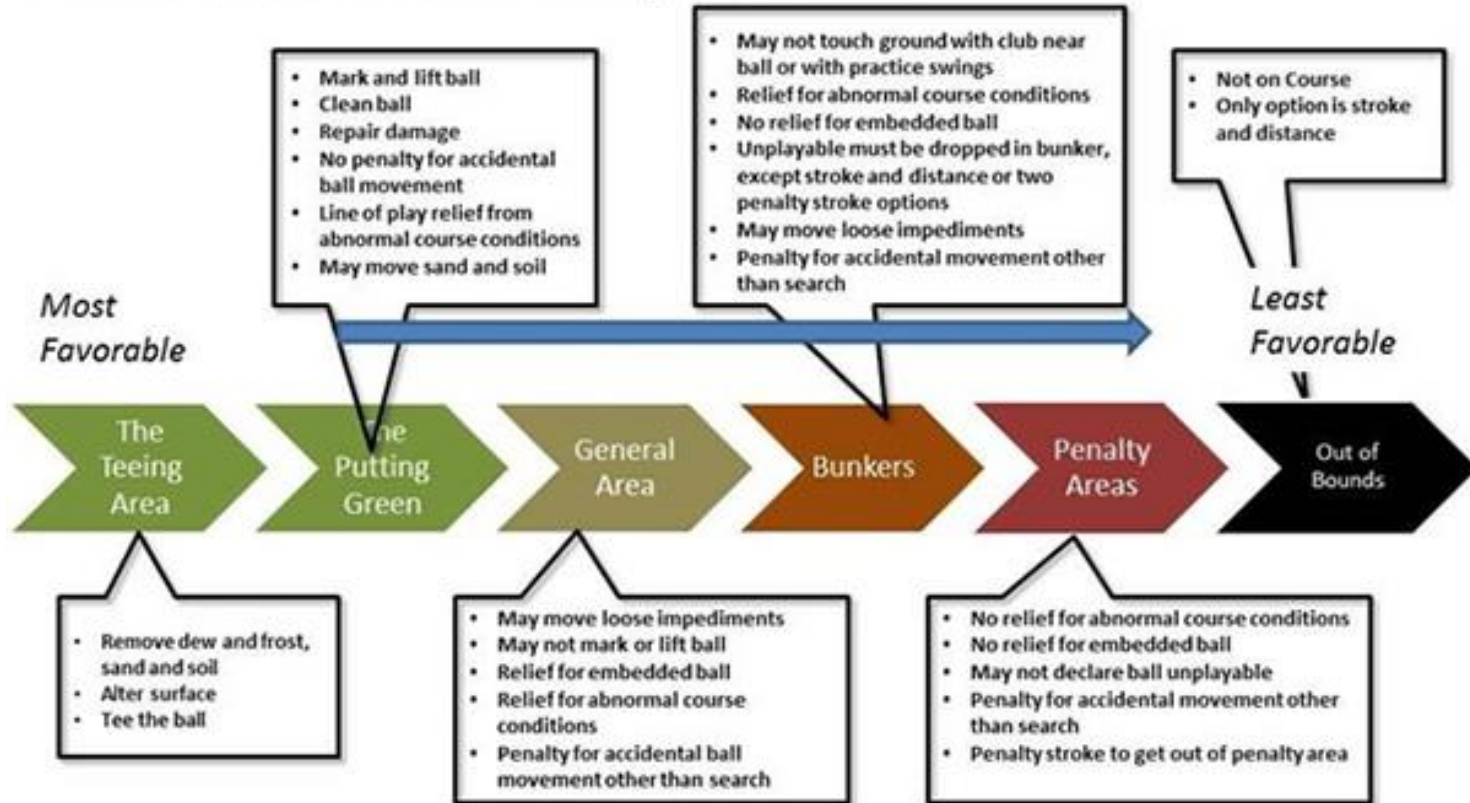
# How are they Defined?

Area of the Course	Imaginary Edge	Defined By...	A Ball is in Area When...
<b>The Teeing Area</b>	Up	Outside and front edge of tee markers – 2 club-length depth	Any part of ball touches it
<b>The Putting Green</b>	None	Surface specially prepared for putting	Any part of ball touches it
<b>Bunker</b>	None	Specially prepared areas of sand	Any part of ball touches sand (or where sand would be)
<b>Penalty Area</b>	Up & Down	Outside edge of stakes or lines, or physical feature	Any part of the ball touches it
<b>General Area</b>	None	Anywhere on course except four specific areas	No part of ball touches any other area and is not out of bounds
<b>Out of Bounds</b>	Up & Down	Course-side edge of stakes or lines (or otherwise defined by Committee)	When no part of the ball touches the course (all of it is out of bounds)



# How are they Treated Differently?

## Areas of the Course: How They Are Treated



# Questions



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# Course Played as It is Found

## (Rule 8)



# Conditions Affecting the Stroke (CATS)

1. The lie of the player's ball at rest,
2. The area of intended stance,
3. The area of intended swing,
4. The line of play, and
5. The relief area where the player will *drop or place a ball*

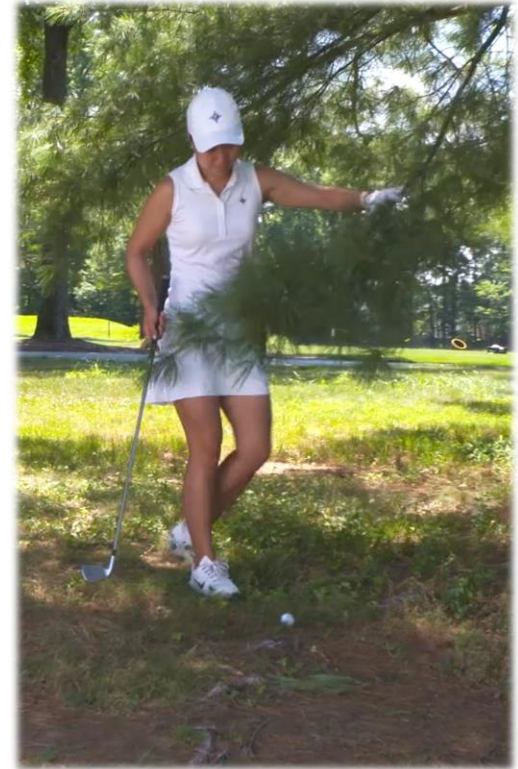


# Definition of Improve

To alter one or more of the *conditions affecting the stroke* or other physical conditions affecting play so that a player **gains a potential advantage** for a *stroke*.



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# Allowed Actions

- Fairly search for your ball.
- Remove movable objects.
- Mark, lift, and replace ball.
- Ground your club lightly.
- Firmly place your feet to take a stance.
- Fairly take a stance.





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# Allowed Actions

- Make a stroke (includes backswing)
- Make improvements in the teeing area.
- Smooth sand in bunker after playing from it.
- Make certain improvements on putting green.
- Move a natural object to see if it is loose.





# Prohibited Actions

## Fixable

- Moving, bending, or breaking any fixed natural or artificial object.
- Moving a movable object into place.



## Not Fixable

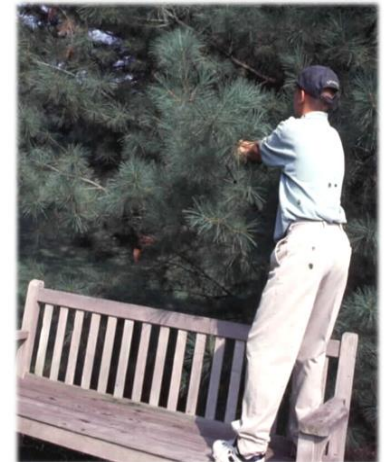
- Altering the surface of the ground.
- Removing or pressing down sand or loose soil.
- Removing dew, frost, or water.



# Prohibited Actions

## How you may fix...

- by restoring the **original object** back to its **original position** (e.g. boundary stake, tree branch) so that the created improvement is eliminated.
- removing the object that was moved into position.



# Questions



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# Coming Up Next Week

Finding and Identifying Ball (Rule 7)

Playing the Ball as it Lies (Rule 9)

Ball in Motion Deflected (Rule 11)

Ball Handling (Rule 14)



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# Additional Rules Resources

- **USGA Rules Section**
  - Helpful videos, additional resources, and free Rules 101 online course
  - [www.usga.org](http://www.usga.org)
- **The Roving Official Website**
  - Additional rules content and quiz questions
  - [www.therovingofficial.com](http://www.therovingofficial.com)