

The Rules of Golf



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In This Presentation

Intro & Resources

Parts of the Course (Rule 2)

Forms of Play (Rule 3)

Ball Handling (Rule 14)



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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

How the Rules Are Structured



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- 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**

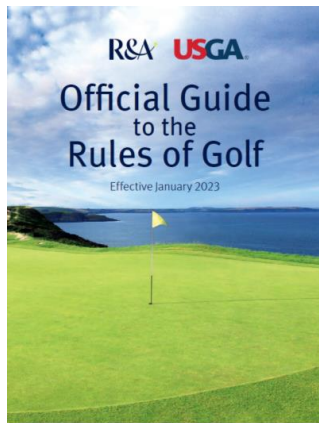
- Playing at a prompt pace
- Looking out for the safety of others
- Not distracting the play of another player

- **Take Good Care of the Course**

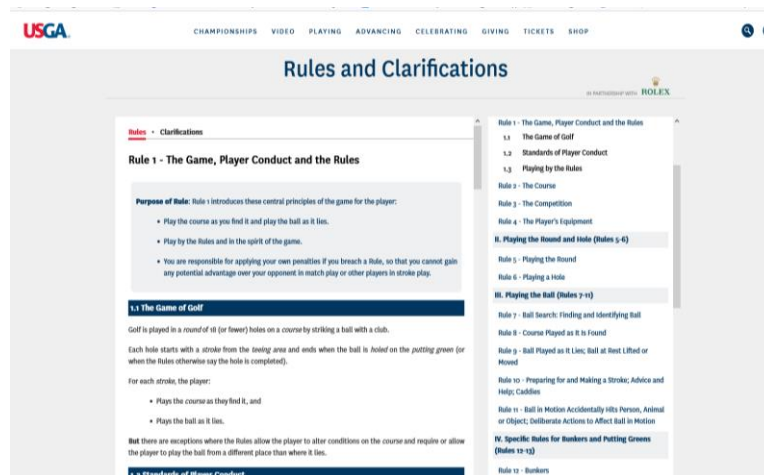
- Replacing divots, smoothing bunkers, repairing ball-marks
- Not causing unnecessary damage to the course



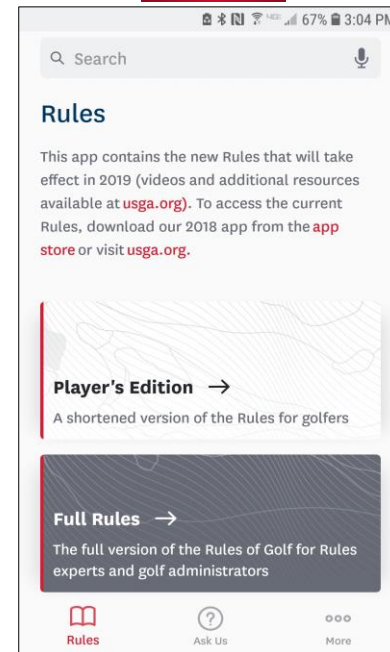
Resources



2023 Rules of Golf Books



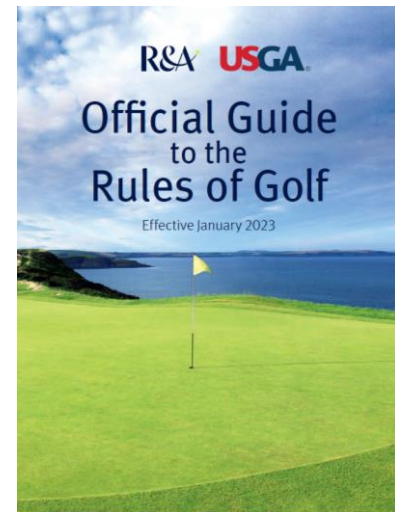
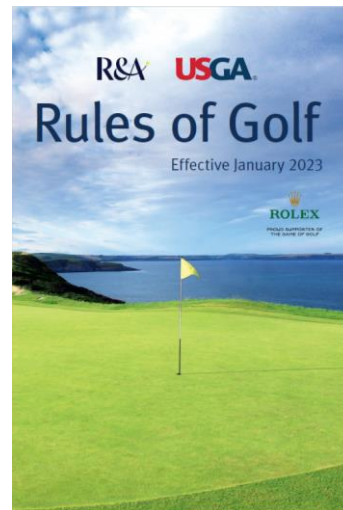
2023 Rules of Golf on
USGA.org



2023 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



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Questions



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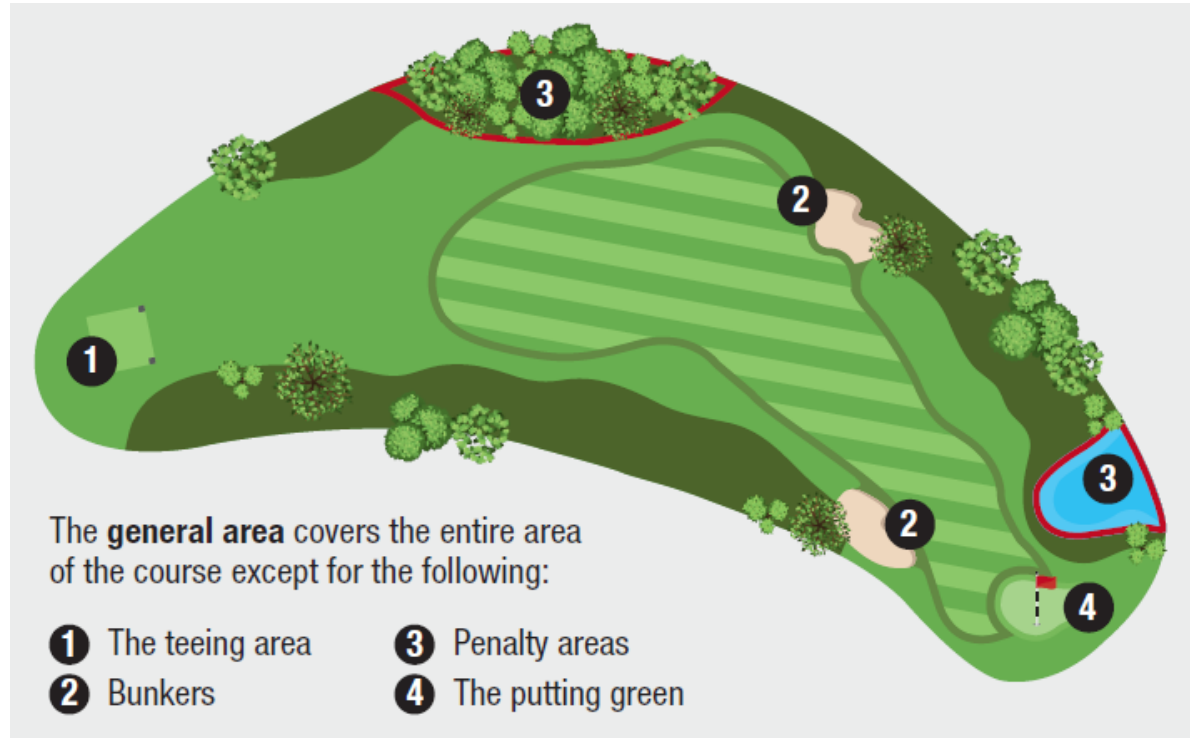
Parts of the Course

(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





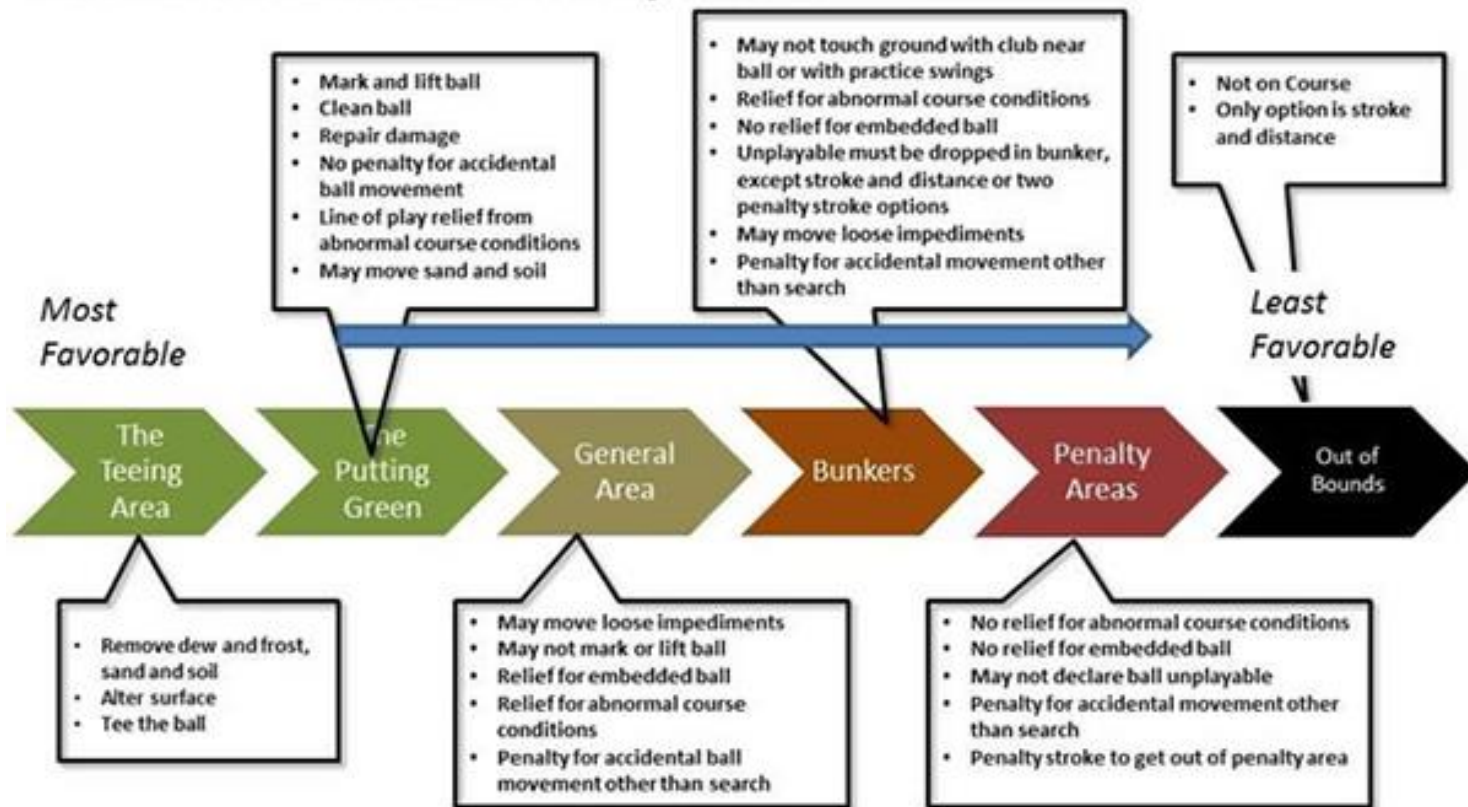
How are they Defined?

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





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Forms of Play

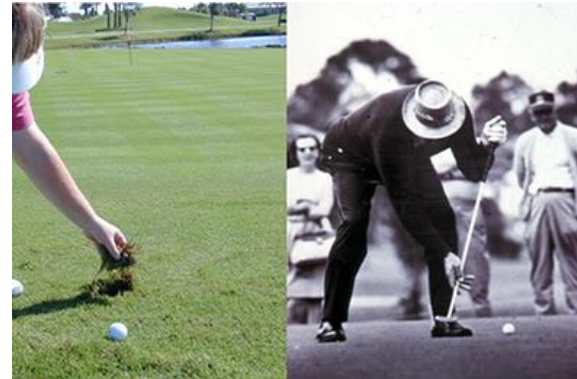
(Rule 3)



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



Questions



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Ball Handling

(Rule 14)



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How to Mark a Ball

Before lifting a ball under a Rule requiring the ball to be replaced on its original spot, the player must *mark* the spot.



If the player

- lifts the ball without *marking* its spot,
- *marks* its spot in a wrong way, or
- makes a *stroke* with a *ball-marker* left in place,

The player gets **one penalty stroke**.





Definition of Mark

To show the spot where a ball is at rest by either:

- Placing a **ball-marker**
 - right behind,
 - right next to the ball, or
 - holding a **club** on the ground right behind or next to the ball.

This is done to show the spot where the ball must be *replaced* after it is lifted.





Definition of Ball-Marker

An **artificial object** when used to *mark* the spot of a ball to be lifted, such as

- a tee,
- a coin,
- an object made to be a *ball-marker*, or
- another small piece of *equipment*.





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Who May Lift Ball

The player's ball may be lifted only by:

- the player,
- a partner,
- anyone the player authorizes,

but such authorization

- must be given each time before the ball is lifted rather than given generally for the round.

Exception – The caddie may lift the player's ball without authorization when the player's ball is on the putting green.





Cleaning the Golf Ball

A ball lifted from the *putting green* may **always** be cleaned (see Rule 13.1b).

A ball lifted from anywhere else may always be cleaned **except** when it is lifted:

- To see if it is cut or cracked (see Rule 4.2c(1))
- To identify it (see Rule 7.3)
- Because it interferes with play (Rule 15.3b(2))
- To see if it lies in a condition where relief is allowed (see Rule 16.4)
- **One penalty stroke** if cleaned when not allowed





Dropping Ball Procedure

Ball Must Be Dropped in Right Way

The player must drop a ball in the right way, which means all three of these things...

- (1) Player Must Drop Ball.
- (2) Ball Must Be Dropped
 - Straight Down
 - from Knee Height
 - Without Touching Player or Equipment.
- (3) Ball Must Be Dropped in Relief Area (or on Line).





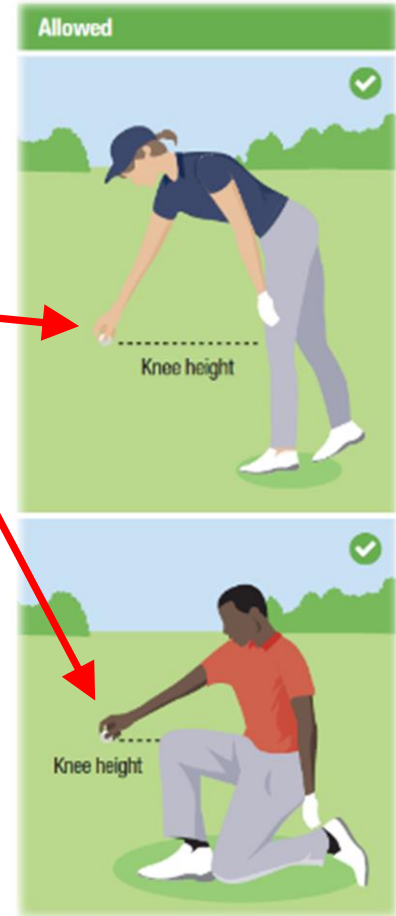
Dropping Ball Procedure



“Knee height” means:

- the height of the player’s knee
- when in a standing position.

The player may be either inside or outside the *relief area* when *dropping* the ball.





Dropping Ball Procedure

What to Do if Ball Dropped in Right Way Comes to Rest Outside Relief Area.

If that ball also comes to rest outside the *relief area*,
- the player must then complete taking relief:

The player must place a ball on the spot where the ball
- *dropped* the second time
- first touched the ground.





Dropping Ball Procedure

Original Ball or Another Ball May Be Used

The player may use **any ball** each time they *drop* or place a ball under a Rule.

This is true for both free relief rules and penalty relief rules.

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Coming Up Next Week

- Free Relief Procedures
 - Abnormal Course Conditions & Embedded Ball (Rule 16)
 - Loose Impediments and Movable Obstructions (Rule 15)
- Penalty Relief Procedures
 - Penalty Areas (Rule 17)
 - Unplayable Ball (Rule 19)
 - Stroke & Distance, Ball Lost/Out of Bounds, Provisional (Rule 18)