

Rules of Golf

All rules of golf may be found at [Rules and Clarifications](#) . Click link at left (Rules and Clarifications) to open the USGA Rules of Golf.

The following rules have been further defined as noted below as questions come up with our members. Contact Happy Buonanno (buonanno82@cox.net or happybuonanno@gmail.com if you have any questions or need further guidance on a golf rule.

Rule 1 – The Game, Player Conduct and the Rules

Rule 2 – The Course

Rule 3 - The Competition

Rule 4 – The Player's Equipment

Rule 5 – Playing the Round

Rule 6 – Playing the Hole

Question: Where can you place the ball when you tee up in the teeing area?

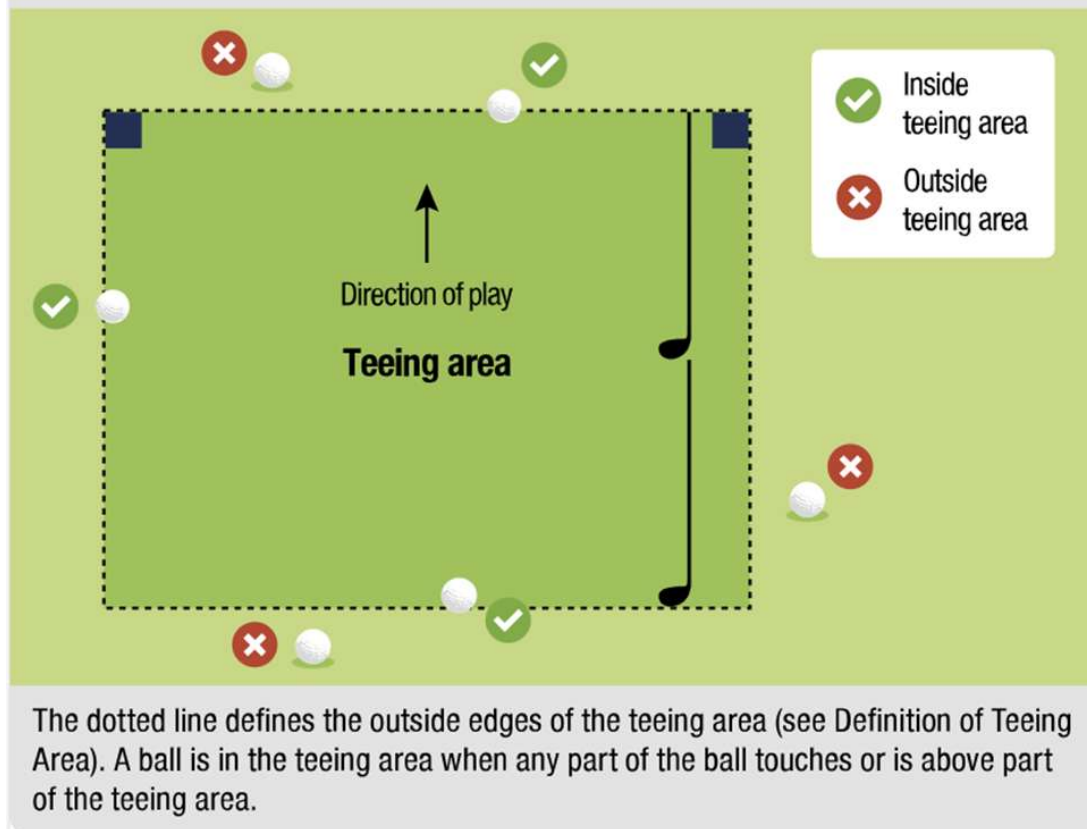
Answer: Rule 6.2b addresses this question. Please see the information and diagram below for information.

NOTE: Your ball does NOT have to be behind the tee markers. You may tee up at the very front of the markers as noted in the information and diagram below. Also, you may tee up within two club lengths in back of the tee markers. This is also noted in the diagram below. In the diagram the blue boxes are the tee markers.

b. Teeing Area Rules

Your ball is in the teeing area when any part of the ball touches or is above any part of the teeing area. You may stand outside the teeing area in making the stroke at a ball in the teeing area. You may play the ball from a tee placed on the ground or from the ground itself.

DIAGRAM 6.2b: WHEN BALL IS IN TEEING AREA



Rule 7 – Ball Search: Finding and Identifying Ball

Question: My golf buddy and I were playing the same make of ball, but we had different marks on each one. We hit the same area and when we went to search for our balls, we could not identify either one because the marks were on the ground side of the balls. Can we lift our balls to identify them?

Answer: Rule 7 – Ball Search: Finding and Identifying Ball

7.3 Lifting Ball to Identify It

If a ball might be a player's ball but cannot be identified as it lies:

- The player may lift the ball to identify it (including by rotating it), but:

- The spot of the ball must first be *marked*, and the ball must not be cleaned more than needed to identify it (except on the *putting green*) (see Rule 14.1).

If the lifted ball is the player's ball or another player's ball, it must be *replaced* on its original spot (see Rule 14.2).

If the player lifts their ball under this Rule when not reasonably necessary to identify it (except on the *putting green* where the player may lift under Rule 13.1b), fails to *mark* the spot of the ball before lifting it or cleans it when not allowed, the player gets one penalty stroke.

Rule 8 – Course Played as It Is Found

Interference from Boundary Objects – See link below

https://www.usga.org/RulesFAQ/rules_answer.asp?FAQidx=186&Rule=0&Topic=1

Rule 9 – Ball Played as It Lies; Ball at Rest Lifted or Moved

Rule 10 – Preparing for and Making a Stroke; Advice and Help; Caddies

Rule 11 – Ball in Motion Accidentally Hits Person, Animal or Object; Deliberate Actions to Affect Ball in Motion

Rule 12 - Bunkers

Rule 13 – Putting Greens

Rule 13.1c(2) allows repair of almost any damage on the green:

“Damage on the putting green” is defined to include all types of damage (such as ball-marks, shoe damage, indentations from a club or flagstick, animal damage, etc.), except aeration holes, natural surface imperfections or natural wear of the hole.

Reasons for Change:

Because putting greens are specially prepared for playing the ball along the ground, the Rules allow the player to do things on the green that are not allowed anywhere else:

The player may mark, lift and clean a ball on the green at any time, remove sand and loose soil on the green and repair old hole plugs and ball-marks on the green.

Given this philosophy of allowing players to try to have a smooth surface for rolling the ball, there is no conceptual reason for prohibiting repair of other types of damage (whether made by players, animals, maintenance staff, etc.).

This Rule change eliminates the frequent question among players and referees about whether a particular area of damage on the green is a ball-mark that may be repaired or is a shoe mark or other damage that must not be repaired.

The concern has been noted that allowing repair of all damage on the putting green could slow down play if players try to repair too many areas; but we believe this is unlikely to be true for most players and that the Rule against unreasonable delay (as well as a Committee's pace of play policy) can be used to address situations where a player seeks to make excessive repairs.

Based on the above a player may not tap/pat down the green unless it is actual damaged as listed in this rule. See video for more information:

https://youtu.be/plLFpwr7Jas?si=gHqjni5lwwjvl_-3

Rule 14 – Procedures for Ball; Marking, Lifting, and Cleaning; Replacing on Spot; Dropping in Relief Area; Playing from Wrong Place

Question: 1. How do I mark my ball on the green? 2. Do I have to use an actual round ball-marker?

1. Answer: Rule 14.1

a. Spot of Ball to Be Lifted and Replaced Must Be Marked

Before lifting your ball under a Rule requiring it to be *replaced* on its original spot, you must *mark* the spot, which means to:

- Place a *ball-marker* right behind or right next to your ball, or
- Hold a club on the ground right behind or right next to your ball.

If you lift your ball without *marking* its spot, *mark* its spot in a wrong way or make a *stroke* with a *ball-marker* left in place, you get one penalty stroke.

2. Answer

Ball-markers: It may come as a surprise, but any artificial object may be used to mark your ball.

USGA Definitions:

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*.

When a Rule refers to a *ball-marker* being moved, this means a *ball-marker* in place on the *course* to *mark* the spot of a ball that has been lifted and not yet *replaced*.

For examples of ball-makers see the video link below.

[Rules Change for 2023: What is a Ball Marker](#)

Rule15 - Relief from Loose Impediments and Movable Obstructions (including Ball or Ball-Marker Helping or Interfering with Play)

Can you remove stakes or chains on the golf course without penalty?

Question: If my ball lands in a penalty area (i.e. either staked or painted red or yellow), can I remove any stakes or chains that may be in my swing, stance, or ball flight if I choose to hit my ball where it lies in the penalty area?

Answer: Yes. From within a penalty area, you are allowed to remove any removable objects. This would include any stakes or chains – if they are removable. If they are not removable you must play the ball as it lies or take a penalty and follow the drop rules available to you.

Rule 16 - Relief from Abnormal Course Conditions (Including Immovable Obstructions), Dangerous Animal Condition, Embedded Ball

Cart Path Ball:

- The good news is you don't have to play a shot in which your stance or swing is interfered with by an artificial cart path. The rules permit you to drop within one club-length of the nearest point of relief that allows you to stand and swing freely without interference from the path. The nearest point and drop zone can't be closer to the hole, and it's recommended that the spot be determined by using the club, stance, direction and swing you would have used if the obstruction had not been there. Sounds simple, but keep in mind the drop zone could be in a different place depending on whether you intend to swing left-handed or right-handed. Here is a video that provides three different circumstances.
- One more thing to keep in mind. Our courses do not allow us relief when we hit in the rocks. If the closest point of relief is in the rocks, then the person will need to decide to either hit from the cart path, hit from the rocks, or take a penalty and go back along their ball flight to drop the ball and hit from there.
- See video link below:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ejixOGLGIXY>

Rule 17 – Penalty Areas

Rule 17 is a specific Rule for penalty areas, which are bodies of water or other areas defined by the Committee where a ball is often lost or unable to be played. For one penalty stroke, players may use specific relief options to play a ball from outside the penalty area.

- Penalty areas are one of the five defined areas of the course and can be marked as either red or yellow. When your ball lies in a penalty area, you can play it as it lies or take relief outside the penalty area for one penalty stroke. For either red or yellow penalty areas, you can play from where your last stroke was made (stroke and distance) or take back-on-the-line relief by going back as far as you'd like on the line between the hole and where your ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area. In a red penalty area, you have one additional relief option, which is to take lateral relief within two club-lengths of where your ball last crossed into the penalty area.
- When playing a shot from a penalty area, you can remove any detached natural or artificial object (known as loose impediments and movable obstructions), ground your club behind the ball, or take practice swings that touch the ground. However, there are a few restrictions. You can't deem your ball unplayable or take relief from abnormal course conditions (such as a bridge or sprinkler control box) when your ball lies in a penalty area. If you need relief, you can play under the penalty area relief options discussed above.
- See video link below:

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/topics/penalty-areas.html>

Rule 18 - Stroke and Distance Relief; Ball Lost or Out of Bounds; Provisional Ball

Out of Bounds/Lost Ball/Provisional =

The video link below (1) does not discuss what option is in effect if there is a local rule, which we have. There is more information on the local rule in the second video link below (2). For out of bounds or lost ball there are two options: Rule 18 or the local rule:

Rule 18 - Hit from original place where the player hit the ball for a one stroke penalty (stroke and distance) OR LOCAL RULE - drop within 2 club distance, in fairway, from where ball went out of bounds or was lost, at a 2-stroke penalty (see (2) video for this one)

Out of bounds or lost ball video link:

(1)=

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/topics/out-of-bounds-lost-ball-provisional.html>

Stroke and Distance: New Local Rule E-5

(2) =

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rules-modernization/major-changes/golfs-new-rules-stroke-and-distance.html>

[Stroke and Distance: New Local Rule](#)

Rule 19 – Unplayable Ball

See video below (Also see Local Rules for Highland Falls, Hole #16):

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/topics/unplayable-ball.html>

Rule 20 - Resolving Rules Issues During Round; Rulings by Referee and Committee

Rule 21- Other Forms of Individual Stroke Play and Match Play

Rule 22 - Foursomes (Also Known as Alternate Shot)

Rule 23 - Four-Ball

Rule 24 - Team Competitions

Rule 25 - Modifications for Players with Disabilities

Committee Procedures

Question – Who makes up the “Committee” as addressed in the United States Golf Association (USGA) Rules?

Answer - Let’s start with the definition of “Committee” as outlined in the USGA Official Guide to the Rules of Golf =

Committee – The person or group in charge of the competition or the course

From the USGA Official Guide to the Rules of Golf, Committee Procedures:

1. The Role of the Committee

The Rules of Golf define the Committee as the person or group in charge of a competition or the course. The Committee is essential to the proper playing of the game. Committees have the responsibility of running the course on a day-to-day basis or for a specific competition and it should always act in ways that support the Rules of Golf. This part of the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf provides guidance to Committees in fulfilling this role.

While many of the duties of a Committee are specific to running organized competitions, an important part of the Committee’s duties relates to its responsibility for the course during general or every day play.

For our Sun City Summerlin Women’s Golf Club (SCSWG) it is important to understand the definition of “committee” when reading the USGA golf rules. For SCSWGC purposes “committee” could mean our local Director of Golf or the folks in charge of maintenance on the course AND/OR those ladies on our Tournament and Rules Committees.

Keep in mind as you read the USGA Rules, when the rules address “the committee”, you will need to understand what would fall under the Director of Golf, the Course Management folks, or the SCSWGC Tournament and/or Rules Committees.

The following link can provide you with more information on Committee Responsibilities and Procedures:

rules.usga.org/rules/rules-and-clarifications/rules-and-clarifications.html

Model Local Rules and Other Forms of Play

Question - What are Local Rules? I keep seeing these mentioned and I do not understand why there are separate “Local Rules”.

Answer - There are Model Local Rules listed within the USGA Rules and there may be other Local Rules that have been established under the Southern Nevada Golf Association (SNGA) or by our individual courses within Sun City. An example of the latter would be the Local Rule that is in place for Hole #16 on Highland Falls. Another example of a Local Rule would be the adoption of the new USGA Local Rule allowing a stroke and distance option (E-5 – Alternative to Stroke and Distance for Lost Ball or Ball Out of Bounds) that was adopted by our club. The SCSWGC Local Golf Rules that have been adopted for our club may be found on the SCSWGC website. It is important to note that unless it is called for by our Sun City Summerlin (SCS) Director of Golf or our golf course maintenance group, that any other Local Rule must be adopted by the SCSWGC. It is not required that all local rules must be complied with unless they are mandated by the Director of Golf or golf course management staff OR adopted for the SCSWGC under the Tournament and/or Rules Committees.

Based on the information provided above you can see how our Tournament and Rules Committees must work together with our Director of Golf and Golf Maintenance folks when adopting local rules.

From the USGA Official Guide to the Rules of Golf, Committee Procedures, 8. Model Local Rules:

8. Model Local Rules

A Local Rule is a modification of a Rule or an additional Rule that the Committee adopts for general play or a particular competition. The Committee is responsible for deciding whether to adopt any Local Rules and for making sure they are consistent with the guidelines provided in Section 8(1).

Local Rules that are inconsistent with these guidelines are not authorized, and a round played with such a Local Rule in place is not considered to have been played by the Rules of Golf.

If a Committee adopts a Local Rule that is inconsistent with the stated purpose of the Model Local Rules, the handicapping authority should be consulted as to whether players may submit acceptable scores from that round for handicap purposes.

For more information on Local Rules click on the following:

rules.usga.org/rules/rules-and-clarifications/rules-and-clarifications.html

Click on Committee Procedures and then under the Explore the Committee Procedures, use the drop down and select, 8 Model Local Rules.