

New Rules changes from 1 January 2023

The R. & A. typically introduces major or minor changes to the rules of golf on a four-yearly basis. The 2019 review was a major revamp of the entire rulebook. The 2023 changes are far more minor, but there are still **40 rules** affected by changes to come into force on 1 January 2023. In addition there are **16 Model Local Rules** affected in some way. The list below attempts to identify some of the changes to the various rules. In addition there are some rewrites of some rules to clarify them as well as some minor word changes eg *he/she* becomes *they*. Note there are also changes(mostly additions) to various definitions.

1. The rules regarding the taking of back-on-the-line relief , have been simplified. At present, taking the drop in that situation, specified the drop was to be within one club-length of that line, and if it rolled forward of the reference point, a re-drop was to be taken. The change will require the drop to be on the line and come to rest within one club-length in any direction of where it first touched the line. No re-drop will be required, simply because it has gone forward (less than one club-length) from where it first hit the ground. This not only saves time, but is acknowledging that the choice of reference point on the line of relief , could have been anywhere forward of that up to the original position , prior to that relief option being taken. Rule 14.3b(3), Rule16.1c (2) page 141 Rule 17.1d page 151, Rule19.2b page 167and rule 19.3 page 169
2. With one exception, the present rules do not permit the replacement of lost or damaged clubs, during a round, if the player started the round with 14 clubs. That anomaly will be remedied. It always seemed unfair to be penalised for something beyond your control. Other than in cases of abuse (breaking a club in anger), a player may repair or replace any damaged club, with another club. Rule4.1a(2)
3. If a player makes a stroke at an incorrectly substituted ball, the present penalty is the general penalty. That will change to a one stroke penalty Rule4.2c (2)
4. Regardless of the area of the course, a player will not be permitted to set an object down to show the line of play or to help with taking a stance. At present, there is an exception where the ball is not on the green. Rule 10.2b(3) *Note old rule 10.2b (1) allowed setting down object to show line of play in general area, but not on green*
5. Currently, if a ball at rest, is moved by natural forces (wind, water, or otherwise by simple gravity), other than when being replaced on the green, the ball is to be played from where it moves to. From next year, if a ball at rest, is moved by natural forces after being dropped, placed or replaced, and *comes to rest in a different area of the course (or OB)*, the ball must be replaced and played from the original spot e.g. if dropped,

and it comes to rest, but then rolls from the general area into a bunker, penalty area or on to the green, through natural forces, you get to put it back where it was last at rest. Rule 9.3 Exception 2 page 81

6. Currently a player is responsible for his correct handicap being shown on the scorecard, in a stableford or net competition, failing which there may be a penalty. Next year, it will be the committee's responsibility, as an administrative matter. There will then be no time limit for correcting the player's net/stableford score and the result of the competition Rule 3.3b(4) page 36
7. Until the end of 2022, if a ball played from the putting green, hits any person, animal or movable obstruction (other than another ball at rest, or a ball marker), the stroke does not count and the ball must be replaced on its original spot. Otherwise, there is a penalty for playing from the wrong place. From 2023, if the player does not replace when required to do so, there will simply be the general penalty, not a wrong place one. However, if the ball played actually hits the player, the club used to make the stroke, or an insect, the ball will be played as it then lies. Rule 11.1b(2) page 95. This section is a little confusing so must be read carefully. The list contains the items when the stroke is NOT replayed.
8. Until the end of 2022, the reference point for embedded ball relief was not required to be in the general area (where the ball was embedded in the general area). From 1 January, the reference point for determining the relief area, must also be in the relief area, in that situation. Previously, relief might not have been available, at all, if no part of the relief area is in the general area. From 2023, the player needs to find the nearest point in the general area, but no closer to the hole. Rule 16.3b page 147
9. Previously, if a player started the round with a non-permissible external attachment (such as a sticker on the clubface), the player was not allowed to use the club at all, even if the attachment was removed before use. Penalty was DQ. Now, the player is permitted to use the club if the attachment is first removed. DQ is now only the penalty if the club is actually used with the attachment still attached. Rule 4.1a(3) page 39
10. Where it is known, or virtually certain, that a player's ball in motion, on the green, has been deliberately deflected or stopped by a person, the stroke does not count, and the ball (or a replacement) must be played from the original spot. Until this year, failure to replace, before replaying, invoked the wrong place penalty. Now, such a failure, simply incurs the general penalty, the stroke counts, and play continues. Rule 11.2c(2) page 97
11. If cleaning a ball that is not lifted, ie by flicking a leaf of it while it is still in situ, it now incurs a one stroke penalty. Previously it was unclear what penalty and under what rule and the wording changes clarify this. Rule 14.1c page 115

12. If a player is required to re-create a lie in sand, (e.g. after another player's stroke nearby, has changed the lie) but fails to do so, before taking their next stroke, a wrong place penalty was incurred, previously. Now, the stroke counts, but the general penalty is applied, instead. Rule 14.2d (1) page 117
13. Previously, If a player tried to play from a right place to fix their mistake, they would be DQ'd if the matter was **NOT** reported to the committee before their card was returned. Now , there must only be a report to the committee if if the player has played **two balls**, to fix their mistake. Rule 14.7b (2) page 128
14. If player needs time to identify their ball, following a search, previously, it was a "reasonable time". That time was considered by each committee, in each instance. Now reasonable is defined as up to one minute after the ball is found. In other words, the combined time for the search and identification, could be a total of four minutes maximum Rule 18.2a page 160 and Clarification 18.2a(1)/3 which defines" reasonable time to do so".
15. Where there is a local rule regarding replay for a ball hitting a temporary elevated line or cable, previously, a failure to replay, incurred the wrong place penalty. Now, it is simply the general penalty, the stroke counts, and play continues. Clarification Model local rule E -11
16. Multiple Penalties has been rewritten to clarify. If the same rule has been broken several times or multiple rules have been broken, there are two intervening conditions , either of which will invoke the rule. (1)A completion of a stroke, or(2) the player is made aware or become aware of a breach of a rule. The player will get the higher penalty if none of these conditions exist between the breaking of the rule. If there is one of the intervening conditions between the breaches, and the player breaks the same rule or different rules, the player get multiple penalties. Rule 1.3c(4) page 24
17. If a player needs to play a provisional ball, and there is no one nearby to hear the statement, , there is no penalty but the player must inform the others when possible to do so Rule18.3b page 162
18. Ineligible Player. There is an additional section on the status of an ineligible player that applies even after the competition has closed. Rule 20.2f page 178
19. Penalties in Stableford have been changed to match those in stroke play. However there are listed some actions which result in zero points rather than DQ Rule 21.1c page 182
20. If the marker is moved on the green (e.g. stuck to sole of shoe), there is no penalty. The marker (or ball) is simply replaced on the spot (or a reasonable estimate of that spot). However, that new "on the green "

exemption does not apply to a marker sitting anywhere else on the course. It will be treated as if it were a movement of the ball Rule 9,2
21. Rule 25 is a new rule relating to players with disabilities.

Definitions that have some changes:

Animal hole: last sentence is an addition re animal footprints

Club length: has been rewritten with an addition of the last paragraph

Flagstick: Now includes any artificial or natural object attached to showing the position of the hole is part of the flagstick

Gound Under repair: stakes used to show this are obstructions

Known or virtually certain: last sentence is an addition stating that information gathered within the three minutes is used to determine this

Lost: this definition has been enlarged with extra explanations of lost

Nearest point of relief: insertion of “where there is no interference.....were not there”

Outside Influence: last sentence is an addition now includes “artificially propelled air and water...”

Penalty area: contains a section “if the committee has mistakenly excluded an area of water that is clearly part of the penalty areathat area is part of the penalty areas”

Referee: now has an extended definition of a referee and the duties

Relief area: now includes a section of taking back on line relief

Scorecard: Player enter score for each hole and marker and player certify the scores is included

Wrong Place: the last section lists two areas that are not considered playing from a wrong place has been added.