



MATCH PLAY RULES

RULE 1. THE GAME

1-3 AGREEMENT TO WAIVE RULES

Players must not agree to exclude the operation of any rule or to waive any penalty incurred.

PENALTY -- disqualification.

RULE 2. MATCH PLAY

2-4 CONCESSION OF NEXT STROKE, HOLE OR MATCH

When the opponent's ball is at rest, the player may concede the opponent to have holed out with her next stroke and the ball may be removed by either side with a club or otherwise.

A player may concede a hole or a match at any time prior to the conclusion of the hole or the match.

Concession of a stroke, hole or match may not be declined or withdrawn.

2-4/3 PLAYER LIFTS BALL IN MISTAKEN BELIEF THAT NEXT STROKE CONCEDED

Q. In a match between "A" and "B," "B" made a statement which "A" interpreted to mean that her ("A's") next stroke was conceded. Accordingly, "A" lifted her ball. "B" then said that she had not conceded "A's" next stroke. What is the ruling?

A. If "B's" statement could reasonably have led "A" to think her next stroke had been conceded, in equity "A" should replace her ball as near as possible to where it lay, without penalty.

Otherwise, "A" would incur a penalty stroke for lifting her ball without marking its position and she must replace her ball as near as possible to where it lay.

2-4/4 WHETHER PICKING UP OPPONENT'S BALL IS CONCESSION OF NEXT STROKE

Q. In match play, "A" holes a putt and, thinking she has won the match, picks up "B's" ball. "B" then advises "A" that she ("B") had a putt to win the hole. Did "A" concede "B's" next stroke when she picked up "B's" ball?

A. No. "A" incurred a penalty stroke under **Rule 18-3b**; "B" must replace her ball and now has two putts to win the hole.

CLAIMS

In match play, if a doubt or dispute arises between the players, a player may make a claim. If no duly-authorized representative of the Committee is available within a reasonable time, the players must continue the match without delay. A player making a claim must notify her opponent (i) that she is making a claim, (ii) of the facts of the situation and (iii) that she wants a ruling. Any claim, if it is to be considered by the Committee, must be made before any player in the match plays from the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole of the match, before all players leave the putting green.

RULE 4. CLUBS

MAXIMUM OF 14 CLUBS

a. Selection and addition of clubs

- The player must start a *stipulated round* with not more than 14 clubs. She is limited to the clubs thus selected for that round except that, if she started with fewer than 14 clubs, she may add any number provided her total number does not exceed 14.
- The addition of a club or clubs must not unduly delay play (*Rule 6-7*) and must not be made by borrowing any club selected for play by any other person playing on the course.

b. Partners May Share Clubs

Partners may share clubs, provided that the total number of clubs carried by the partners so sharing does not exceed 14.

PENALTY FOR BREACH OF RULE 4-4a OR b, REGARDLESS OF NUMBER OF EXCESS CLUBS CARRIED:

At the conclusion of the hole at which the breach is discovered, the state of the match is adjusted by deducting one hole for each hole at which a breach occurred. Maximum deduction per round: two holes.

RETRIEVING ANOTHER PLAYER'S CLUB

Q. A player carrying 14 clubs found another player's club on the course. She picked up the lost club, put it in her bag but did not use it, and handed it in at the pro shop when the round was completed. Was the player in breach of *Rule 4-4a* for carrying 15 clubs?

A. No.

RULE 6. THE PLAYER

6-2a/2 HANDICAP STROKE GIVEN AT INCORRECT HOLE IN ERROR

- Q. In a match between "A" and "B," under the Handicap Stroke Table, "A" was to receive a handicap stroke at the 9th hole. However, both "A" and "B" mistakenly believed that "A" should receive a handicap stroke at the 7th hole, and the match was played on this basis. Subsequently, the Committee became aware of the error. What should the Committee do?
- A. The Committee should take no action. Since the players did not agree to deviate from the Handicap Stroke Table and did so by mistake, there was no breach of *Rule 1-3*. The match should stand as played.

RULE 7. PRACTICE

7-1 BEFORE OR BETWEEN ROUNDS

On any day of a match play competition, a player may practice on the competition course before a round.

RULE 8. ADVICE; INDICATING LINE OF PLAY

8-1/2 EXCHANGING DISTANCE INFORMATION

Information regarding the distance between two objects is public information and not advice. It is therefore permissible for players to exchange information relating to the distance between two objects. For example, a player may ask anyone, including his opponent, fellow-competitor or either of their caddies, the distance between his ball and the hole.

Except when the Local Rule allowing the use of distance-measuring devices has been adopted (see Note to Rule 14-3), information regarding distance must not have been obtained from an artificial device used during a stipulated round. A player who obtains distance information that he knew was measured by anyone with an artificial device during the player's round is disqualified under Rule 14-3. (Revised)

- Q. May a player ask or give advice to a member of her team, other than her partner, during a stipulated round?
- A. No.

9-2 INFORMATION AS TO STROKES TAKEN

An opponent is entitled to ascertain from the player, during the play of a hole, the number of strokes she has taken, and after play of a hole, the number of strokes taken on the hole just completed.

If, during the play of a hole, the player gives or is deemed to give wrong information as to the number of strokes taken, she shall incur no penalty if she corrects the mistake before her opponent has played her next stroke. If the player fails to correct the wrong information, she loses the hole.

RULE 10. ORDER OF PLAY

10-1 MATCH PLAY

c. Playing Out of Turn

If a player plays when her opponent should have played, the opponent may immediately require the player to cancel the stroke so played and, in correct order, play a ball without penalty as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was last played.

RULE 11. TEEING GROUND

11-4 PLAYING FROM OUTSIDE TEEING GROUND

If a player, when starting a hole, plays a ball from outside the teeing ground, the opponent may immediately require the player to cancel the stroke so played and play a ball from within the teeing ground, without penalty.

RULE 13. BALL PLAYED AS IT LIES

13-2/8 PLAYER'S LIE OR LINE OF PLAY AFFECTED BY PITCH-MARK (DIVOT) MADE BY PARTNER'S, OPPONENT'S OR FELLOW COMPETITOR'S BALL.

Q. If a player's lie or line of play through the green is affected by a pitch-mark made by her partner's, her opponent's or a fellow competitor's ball, is the player entitled to relief?

A. If the pitch-mark was there before the player's ball came to rest, she is not entitled to relief without penalty.

If the pitch-mark was created after the player's ball came to rest, in equity, she may repair the pitch-mark. A player is entitled to the lie which her stroke gave her.

RULE 14. STRIKING THE BALL

14-2 ASSISTANCE

In making a stroke, a player must not:

- a. Accept physical assistance or protection from the elements, or
- b. Allow her caddie, her partner or her partner's caddie to position herself/himself on or close to an extension of the line of play or the line of putt behind the ball.

14-3 ARTIFICIAL DEVICES AND UNUSUAL EQUIPMENT. See WSCGA Position Statement regarding GPS devices.

14-4 STRIKING THE BALL MORE THAN ONCE

If a player's club strikes the ball more than once in the course of a stroke, the player must count the stroke and add a penalty stroke, making two strokes in all.

RULE 15. WRONG BALL, SUBSTITUTED BALL

15-3 MATCH PLAY

If a player plays a stroke with a wrong ball, she is disqualified from the hole.

EXCEPTION: In Four Ball Match Play, if the player hits her partner's ball, the player loses the hole. The penalty does not apply to her partner even if it assisted her in subsequent play of the hole.

15/4 PLAYER LIFTS BALL, SETS IT ASIDE AND PLAYS IT FROM WHERE SET ASIDE

Q. A player marks the position of her ball on the putting green, lifts the ball and sets it aside. By mistake, she putts the ball from the spot at which she set it aside. What is the ruling?

A. In match play, the player lost the hole.

RULE 16. THE PUTTING GREEN

16-1/f MAKING THE STROKE WHILE ANOTHER BALL IN MOTION

The player must not make a *stroke* while another ball is in motion after a *stroke* from the *putting green*, except that, if a player does so, there is no penalty if it was her turn to play.

16-1a/3 REMOVING DEW OR FROST FROM LINE OF PUTT

Q. May a player brush dew or frost from her line of putt?

A. No. Rule 16-1a prohibits touching the line of putt except in removal of loose impediments, repair of ball marks, etc. Dew or frost is not a loose impediment.

PENALTY -- loss of hole.

16-1a/8 LOOSE IMPEDIMENTS REMOVED FROM LINE OF PUTT WITH CAP OR TOWEL

Q. A player removes loose impediments from her line of putt by brushing them aside with her cap or with a towel. Is this permissible?

A. Yes, provided she does not press anything down.

16-1c/1.5 BALL MARK PARTIALLY ON AND PARTIALLY OFF PUTTING GREEN IS ON LINE OF PLAY.

- Q. If a player's ball lies just off the putting green and there is a ball mark on her line of play, she is entitled to repair the ball mark if it is on the green but not if it is off the green. What is the ruling if a ball mark on the line of play is partially on and partially off the green?
- A. Since it is impractical to allow the repair of only that part of the ball mark, which is on the putting green, the player may repair the entire ball mark.

16-1d/5 RUBBING BALL ON PUTTING GREEN FOR CLEANING PURPOSES

- Q. May a player clean her ball by rubbing it on the putting green?
- A. Yes, provided the act is not for testing the surface of the putting green. It is recommended that a ball be cleaned in other ways to eliminate any question as to the player's intentions.

RULE 17. THE FLAGSTICK

17-3/3 BALL STRIKES FLAGSTICK LYING ON GREEN

- Q. A player putts too strongly and her ball strikes the flagstick which has been removed by someone in her match or group and placed on the putting green behind the hole. What is the ruling?
- A. The player incurs a penalty under *Rule 17-3a* -- loss of the hole in match play.

RULE 19. BALL IN MOTION DEFLECTED OR STOPPED

19-1 BY OUTSIDE AGENCY

If a ball in motion is accidentally deflected or stopped by any outside agency, it is a rub of the green, no penalty is incurred and the ball must be played as it lies except:

- a. If a ball in motion after a stroke other than on the putting green comes to rest in or on any moving or animate outside agency, the player must, through the green or in a hazard, drop the ball, or on the putting green place the ball as near as possible to the spot where the outside agency was when the ball came to rest in or on it, and
- b. If a ball in motion after a stroke on the putting green is deflected or stopped by, or comes to rest in or on any moving or animate outside agency except a worm or insect, the stroke is cancelled, the ball must be replaced and the stroke replayed.

19-2 BY PLAYER, PARTNER, CADDIE OR EQUIPMENT

If a player's ball is accidentally deflected or stopped by herself, her partner, or either of their caddies or equipment, she incurs a penalty of one stroke.

**RULE 20. LIFTING, DROPPING AND PLACING; PLAYING FROM
WRONG PLACE**

20-1/16 MARKING POSITION OF BALL WITH TOE OF CLUB

- Q. A player, prior to lifting her ball under a Rule, marked the position of the ball by placing the toe of a club at the side of, or behind, the ball. Is this permissible?
- A. Yes, but not recommended.

20-2 DROPPING AND RE-DROPPING

- a. **By Whom and How** -- a ball to be dropped under the **Rules** must be dropped by the player herself. She must stand erect, hold the ball at shoulder height and arm's length and drop it. If the ball touches the player, her partner or their equipment before or after it strikes a part of the course, the ball must be re-dropped, without penalty. There is no limit to the number of times a ball must be re-dropped in such circumstances.
- c. **When to Re-drop** -- a dropped ball must be re-dropped without penalty if it:
- (i) rolls into and comes to rest in a hazard;
 - (ii) rolls out of and comes to rest outside a hazard;
 - (iii) rolls onto and comes to rest on a putting green;
 - (iv) rolls and comes to rest out of bounds;
 - (v) rolls to and comes to rest in a position where there is interference by the condition from which relief was taken under **Rule 24-2** (immovable obstruction), **Rule 25-1** (abnormal ground conditions), **Rule 25-3** (wrong putting green) or a local rule (**Rule 33-8a**), or rolls back into the pitch-mark from which it was lifted under **Rule 25-2** (embedded ball);
 - (vi) rolls and comes to rest more than two club-lengths from where it first struck a part of the course;
 - (vii) rolls and comes to rest nearer the hole than:
 - (a) Its original position or estimated position (see **Rule 20-2b**) unless otherwise permitted by the **Rules**;
 - (b) The nearest point of relief or maximum available relief (**Rule 24-2, 25-1, or 25-3**); or
 - (c) The point where the original ball last crossed the margin of the water hazard or lateral water hazard (**Rule 26-1c**).

If the ball, when re-dropped, rolls into any position listed above, it must be placed as near as possible to the spot where it first struck a part of the course when re-dropped.

If a ball to be re-dropped or placed under this rule is not immediately recoverable, another ball may be substituted.

Note: If a ball, when dropped or re-dropped, comes to rest and subsequently moves, the ball must be played as it lies, unless the provisions of any other rule apply.

20-3 PLACING AND REPLACING

- a. **By whom and where** -- a ball to be placed under the **Rules** must be **placed** by the player or her partner. If a ball is to be **replaced**, the player, her partner or the person who lifted or moved it must place it on the spot from which it was lifted or moved. In any such case, the player is responsible for any breach of the **Rules**.

20-5 PLAYING NEXT STROKE FROM WHERE PREVIOUS STROKE PLAYED

When, under the **Rules**, a player elects or is required to play her next stroke from where a previous stroke was played, she must proceed as follows: if the stroke is to be played from the teeing ground, the ball to be played must be played from anywhere within the teeing ground and may be teed; if the stroke is to be played from **through the green** or a hazard, it must be dropped; if the stroke is to be played on the putting green, the ball must be placed.

PENALTY FOR BREACH OF RULE -- loss of the hole.

RULE 30 – THREE-BALL, BEST BALL AND FOUR-BALL MATCH PLAY

30-3 BEST BALL AND FOUR-BALL MATCH PLAY

a. Representation of a Side

A side may be represented by one **partner** for all or any part of a match; all partners need not be present. An absent **partner** may join a match between holes but not during the play of a hole.

b. Order of Play

Balls belonging to the same **side** may be played in the order the **side** considers best.

c. Wrong Ball

If a player incurs a loss of hole penalty under **Rule 15-3a** for making a stroke at a **wrong ball**, she is **disqualified for that hole**, but her partner incurs no penalty even if the **wrong ball** belongs to her. If the **wrong ball** belongs to another player, its owner must place a ball on the spot from which the **wrong ball** was first played.

d. Penalty to Side

A side is penalized for breach of any of the following by any partner:

- **Rule 4** – Clubs
- **Rule 6-4** – Caddie
- Any Local Rule or Condition of the Competition for which the penalty is an adjustment to the state of the match.

e. Disqualification of a Side

A **side** is disqualified if any partner incurs a disqualification under any of the following:

- **Rule 1-3** – Agreement to Waive Rules
- **Rule 4** – Clubs.
- **Rule 5-1 or 5-2** – The Ball.
- **Rule 6-2a** – Handicap (playing off higher handicap).
- **Rule 6-7** – Undue Delay; Slow Play (repeated offense)
- **Rule 11-1** – Teeing
- **Rule 14-3** – Artificial Devices, Unusual Equipment and Use of Unusual Equipment
- **Rule 33-7** – Disqualification Penalty Imposed by Committee

A **side** is disqualified for a breach of any of the following **by all partners**:

- **Rule 6-3** – Time of Starting and Groups.
- **Rule 6-8** – Discontinuance of Play.

f. Effect of Other Penalties

If a player's breach of a Rule assists her *partner's* play or adversely affects the opponent's play, ***the partner incurs the applicable penalty in addition to any penalty incurred by the player.***

In all other cases where a player incurs a penalty for breach of a Rule, the penalty does not apply to her *partner*. Where the penalty is stated to be loss of hole, ***the effect is to disqualify the player for that hole.***