

## Summary Chart: The Major Changes in the Rules of Golf for 2019

Category	Sub-Category	Topic	Description of Change
Ball at rest	Ball moved	Player accidentally moves his or her ball during search	<b>New rule: No Penalty.</b> Old rule: 1-stroke penalty
	Ball moved	Player accidentally moves his or her ball or ball-marker on the putting green	<b>New rule: No Penalty.</b> <b>Old rule: 1-stroke penalty (with exceptions)</b>
Ball in motion	Accidental deflection	Player's ball in motion accidentally hits the player, his or her caddie, the person attending the flagstick or the attended or removed flagstick	<b>New Rule: No penalty.</b> Old rule: 1-stroke penalty (except it is a 2-stroke penalty when the accidental deflection relates to the flagstick or the attendant).
	Double hit	Player accidentally hits the ball more than once during a stroke	<b>New rule: No penalty.</b> Old rule: 1-stroke penalty.
Taking relief	Dropping procedure	Where a ball must be dropped	<b>New rule: Drop in a defined relief area, ball must come to rest in defined relief area.</b> Old rule: Sometimes the drop is in a specified area, sometimes it is on or as near as possible to a spot or a line.
	Dropping procedure	How to drop a ball	<b>New rule: The ball must be dropped straight down from knee height (the height of the player's knee when in a standing position).</b> Old rule: Stand erect, hold the ball at shoulder height and arm's length.
	Lost Ball	Time allowed for a ball search	<b>New rule: A ball is lost if not found in three minutes.</b> Old rule: A ball is lost if not found in five minutes.
	Substituting ball	Substituting ball when taking relief	<b>New rule: A player may always substitute a ball when taking relief.</b> Old rule: The player must use the original ball when taking free relief (with exceptions); a substituted ball is allowed only when taking penalty relief.
	Embedded Ball	Taking relief for a ball embedded in its own pitch-mark	<b>New rule: A player may take relief without penalty for an embedded ball anywhere in the "general area" (new term for "through the green"), unless a Local Rule has been adopted restricting relief only to areas cut to fairway height or less. The general area is the new term for "through the green".</b> Old rule: Relief is allowed only in areas cut to fairway height or less, unless a Local Rule has been adopted allowing relief anywhere (except in sand) through the green.
Areas of the Course	Putting green	Replacing a ball on the putting green when it moves from its spot after it already had been lifted and replaced	<b>New rule: The ball must always be replaced on its original spot, even if it was blown by the wind or moved for no clear reason.</b> Old rule: The ball is replaced only if a player or outside agency caused it to move; otherwise, the ball is played from its new location.

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Areas of the Course (continued)	Putting green	Repairing damage on the putting green	<b>New rule: A player may repair almost any damage (including spike marks and animal damage but not including natural imperfections) on the putting green.</b> Old rule: A player may only repair ball-marks or old hole plugs on the putting green.
	Putting green	Player touches the line of putt or touches the putting green in pointing out a target	<b>New rule: No penalty, so long as doing so does not improve the conditions for the player's stroke.</b> Old rule: Loss of hole/2-stroke penalty (with exceptions).
	Putting green	Putting with an unattended flagstick left in the hole	<b>New rule: No penalty if a ball played from the putting green (or anywhere else) hits the unattended flagstick in hole.</b> Old rule: Loss of hole/2-stroke penalty if the ball is played from the putting green and hits the unattended flagstick in hole.
	Penalty areas	Areas the Committee may mark as a penalty area (where relief with 1-stroke penalty is allowed)	<b>New rule: Red- and yellow-marked "penalty areas" may now cover areas of desert, jungle, lava rock, etc, in addition to areas of water.</b> Old rule: The Committee may only mark an area of water as a "water hazard".
	Penalty areas	Player moves loose impediments, touches the ground with hand or club or grounds the club in a penalty area when the ball is in the penalty area	<b>New rule: No penalty.</b> Old rule: Loss of hole/2-stroke penalty (with exceptions).
	Bunkers	Player moves or touches a loose impediment in a bunker when the ball is in the bunker	<b>New rule: No penalty.</b> Old rule: Loss of hole/2-stroke penalty (with exceptions).
	Bunkers	Player touches sand in a bunker with his or her hand or a club when the ball is in the bunker	<b>New rule: No penalty except when a player touches sand (1) with his or her hand or club to test the conditions of the bunker, (2) in making a practice swing, (3) with the club in the area right behind or in front of the ball or (4) in making the backswing for the stroke.</b> Old rule: Any touching of sand with hand or club results in loss of hole/2-stroke penalty (with exceptions).
Bunkers	Unplayable ball relief options	<b>New rule: A player may take relief outside the bunker back on the line from the hole through where ball was at rest for 2 penalty strokes.</b> Old rule: No relief outside the bunker (other than in playing from where the player's last stroke was made).	
Equipment	Damaged Clubs	Use of clubs damaged during round	<b>New rule: A player may keep using any damaged club, no matter the nature or cause of the damage, even if the player damaged it in anger. May not replace damaged club unless not responsible for damage.</b> Old rule: A player may use the damaged club or replace it only if it was damaged in the "normal course of play."
	Other equipment	Use of distance-measuring devices (DMDs)	<b>New rule: The use of DMDs is allowed, unless a Local Rule has been adopted prohibiting their use.</b> Old rule: Local rule can adopt DMDs