



## NEW RULES OF GOLF FOR SPRING 2017

The USGA and the R&A have published a completely revised rule book which they intend to implement on January 1, 2019. The intent of the revisions is generally twofold, to simplify the rules and re-write them to make the new version easier to understand and implement.

Since the revision is so extensive and the LBGLL golfers are so young we have decided to give ourselves and our players and parents a head start by practicing some of the revisions immediately. We will practice 12 revised rules and 4 revised definitions. The USGLL national office has allowed the local affiliates to choose which, if any, of the new rules they adopt prior to January 1, 2019.

The revisions chosen are among those that are likely to be implemented by USGA with minimal refinement and those that will immediately simplify the game for our players. These simplifications will also speed the pace of play and add to the enjoyment

Our implementation will be in the form of fewer penalties. When a changed rule is involved explanation can be given. In an effort to avoid confusion for players who will continue to play under the existing rules in tournaments at other venues, we will not include the revisions in the on course rules questions. Here are two examples. If a player removes a loose impediment from a bunker while his ball lies in that bunker he will **not** incur a penalty but we will not test him on this rule. If during a search a player causes his ball to move, and he replaces it, he will **not** incur a penalty but we will not test him on this rule. We can begin to test on the revisions next year after the final rules have been published.

If you are interested in the full text of the proposal it's available on the USGA.ORG website. There you will find the full text Draft of the 24 Revised Rules of Golf (151 pages) and a draft of the "Players Edition" (116 pages) which includes references to the Full Rules and to a HANDBOOK which seems to be the new name of the Decisions on the Rules of Golf.

### SUMMARY OF CHANGES

Partners may not share clubs

GPS are allowed

Allow play out of turn in Match Play

No Penalty – Ball moved during search and replaced

No Penalty - Ball moved by wind not replaced unless previously lifted

No Penalty – Ball in motion strikes someone or something

Player may repair damage to the green

No Penalty – Ball or marker on green accidentally moved and replaced

Dropping – Any way you want, as long as the ball is **dropped**

Loose impediments may be removed anywhere. Penalty if ball moves

Ball search limited to 3 minutes

Add PENALTY option to unplayable lie in a BUNKER

## DEFINITIONS:

**Animal** – Any **member of the animal kingdom**. That is not a plant.

NEW

**Animal Hole** – **Any hole, and the material removed, made by an animal** unless that animal is itself a loose impediment, such as worms or insects.

REPLACES HOLE BY BURROWING ANIMAL

**Penalties** - There are three levels of penalty

\* 1 stroke penalty in either Match or Stroke play

NEW

\* **General Penalty** – Loss of Hole in Match play or 2 Stroke penalty in Stroke play.

TERM

\* Disqualification

**Stroke** – The forward movement of the club to strike the ball. **But** a stroke has not been made when the player decides, during the downswing, not to strike the ball and: either stops the clubhead before it reaches the ball or **if unable to stop, deliberately misses the ball.**

NEW ASPECT OF DEFINITION

## RULES:

4.1B (2). **Partners may not share clubs.** Players are limited to the clubs they chose and may not make a stroke with a club chosen by another player. **GENERAL PENALTY**

REVERSES 4-4b

4.3b (1) **Measuring devices are allowed** as long as they comply with the “distance only” requirement. Previously, the rules allowed the committee to make a local rule allowing measuring devices but the default was to disallow them. Under the new rule the committee is permitted to make a local rule to disallow measuring devices.

REVERSES 14-3

6.4a In match play, to speed the pace of play, a **player may invite his opponent to play out of turn.** When such an invitation is made the inviting player gives up his right under 6.4a (2) to cancel his opponent’s out-of-turn stroke and have it re-played.

EXPANDS 10-1c

7.4 During a search for the ball **the player** (or anyone else) **accidentally causes the ball to move. There is NO PENALTY and the ball must be replaced.** Under current rules the player is penalized if he or his caddy causes the ball to move but if ‘anyone else’ causes the movement the ball is replaced, NO PENALTY

REVISES 18-2

9.3 Under rule #9 BALL PLAYED AS IT LIES; BALL AT REST MOVED we learn that there are only 4 possible reasons a ball at rest can be caused to move. These are (1) **Natural forces, wind or water**, (2) the player, (3) the opponent in match play or (4) outside influence which includes other players in stroke play, spectators, animals etc.

If the cause of the ball's movement is **Natural Forces**, anywhere on the course, the **ball is played as it lies, not replaced**. **EXCEPTION: When the ball is on the putting green and has NOT been marked, lifted and replaced and is moved by Natural Forces it is played from its new location. If the ball on the putting green has already been marked, lifted and replaced when it is moved by Natural Forces IT IS ALWAYS REPLACED, NO PENALTY.** **CLARIFIES REVISED (2016) RULE 18**

In this context, the rules clarify that if it is not known or virtually certain that the movement was caused by the player, opponent or an outside influence **it will be assumed** that the cause was Natural Forces.

11.1 Ball in motion after a stroke **accidentally hits someone or something. There is no penalty to any player.** Exception: in stroke play if a ball putted from the putting green strikes another ball at rest on the putting green the player incurs a General Penalty and plays his ball as it lies.

**ELIMINATES 19-2 PENALTY FOR HITTING PLAYER and 19-3 CANCEL OPTION IF HIT OPPONENT**

11.2b A player gets the **General Penalty** if he or she **deliberately deflects or stops any ball in motion after a stroke**. This is true whether it's the player's own ball **or a ball played by an opponent or any other player in the competition.** **CLARIFICATION OF 1-2**

13.1b Player may repair damage on the putting green without penalty. **"Damage on the putting green" includes all damage except aeration holes, natural defects of the ground and natural wear of the hole.** Spike marks and the marks made by dragging the feet are now repairable. **REVISES 16-1c**

13.1c (1) **No Penalty for accidentally causing the ball to move on the putting green.** The key here is the movement of the ball was accidental regardless of whether it was caused by the player, opponent or another player in stroke play. The **ball is always replaced.** **REVISES 18**

14.3a HOW THE BALL MUST BE DROPPED. When dropping the ball the player must **hold the ball above the ground without touching any growing thing or other natural or artificial object and intentionally let it go so it falls through the air before coming to rest.** The guideline for holding the ball above the ground is at least **1 inch**. A ball dropped accidentally is not in play. **REVISES 20-2a**

15.1 LOOSE IMPEDIMENTS: A player may remove **loose impediments anywhere on or off the course. NO PENALTY** If the removal causes the ball at rest, anywhere except the putting green, to move the player incurs a 1 stroke penalty and the ball must be replaced. **ALLOWS REMOVAL IN A HAZARD 23-1 AND IN A BUNKER**

18.2 Ball lost outside a hazard or out of bounds. This rule requires the player to **take stroke and distance relief when the ball has not been found within three (3) minutes of the search for it.** The principle of the search and the relief have not changed only the time limit has been shortened. **REVISES 27-1c**

19.3 UNPLAYABLE BALL IN A BUNKER: If a ball at rest in a bunker is declared unplayable the player incurs a 1 stroke penalty under rule 19.3a. The ball must be dropped in the bunker.

Rule 19.3b then allows **relief with additional penalty. The player may use the back-on-a-line relief procedure and drop behind the bunker. An additional 1 stroke penalty is incurred.**

**ADDS A SECOND PENALTY OPTION TO RULE 28**