



Definitions

Abnormal Ground Conditions

An “abnormal ground condition” is any *casual water*, *ground under repair* or hole, cast or runway on the course made by a *burrowing animal*, a reptile or a bird.

Addressing the Ball

A player has “*addressed the ball*” if he/she has taken his/her *stance* and has also grounded his/her club, except that in a *hazard*, a player has *addressed the ball* when he/she has taken his/her *stance*.

Advice

“*Advice*” is any counsel or suggestion which could influence a player in determining his/her play, choice of a club or in the method of making a *stroke*.

Information on the Rules or on matters of public information, such as the position of *hazards* or the *flagstick* on the *putting green*, is not *advice*.

Ball Deemed to Move

See “*Move or Moved*.”

Ball Holed

See “*Holed*.”

Ball Lost

See “*Lost Ball*”

Ball in Play

A ball is “*in play*” as soon as the player has made a *stroke* on the *teeing ground*. It remains in play until *holed out*, except when it is *lost*, *out of bounds* or lifted, or another ball has been substituted under an applicable Rule, whether or not such Rule permits substitution a ball so substituted becomes the *ball in play*.

Bunker

A “*bunker*” is a *hazard* consisting of a prepared area of ground, often a hollow, from which turf or soil has been removed and replaced with sand or the like. Grass-covered ground bordering or within a *bunker* is not part of the *bunker*. The margin extends vertically downwards. A ball is in the *bunker* when it lies in or any part of it touches the *bunker*.

Caddie

A “*caddie*” is one who carries or handles a player’s clubs during play and otherwise assists him/her in accordance with the Rules.

When one *caddie* is employed by more than one player, he/she is always deemed to be the *caddie* of the player whose ball is involved, and *equipment* carried by him is deemed to be that player’s *equipment*, except when the *caddie* acts upon specific directions of another player, in which case he/she is considered to be that other player’s *caddie*.

Casual Water

“*Casual water*” is any temporary accumulation of water on the course which is visible before or after the player takes his/her *stance* and is not a *water hazard*. Snow and natural ice, other than frost, are either *casual water* or *loose impediments*, at the option of the player. Manufactured ice is an *obstruction*. Dew and frost are not casual water.



Committee

The "*Committee*" is the committee in charge of the competition or, if the matter does not arise in competition, the committee in charge of the *course*.

Competitor

A "*competitor*" is a player in a stroke competition. A "*fellow-competitor*" is any person with whom the competitor plays. Neither is *partner* of the other.

Course

The "*course*" is the whole area within which is permitted. See Rule 33-2.

Equipment

"*Equipment*" is anything used, worn or carried by or for the player except any ball he/she has played at the hole being played and any small object, such as a coin or a tee, when used to mark the position of a ball or the extent of an area in which a ball is to be dropped. *Equipment* includes a golf cart, whether or not motorized. If such a cart is shared by more than one player, its status under the Rules is the same as that of a caddie employed by more than one player.

Fellow Competitor

See "*Competitor*."

Flagstick

The "*flagstick*" is a moveable straight indicator, with or without bunting or other material attached, centered in the hole to show its position. It shall be circular in cross-section.

Forecaddie

A "*forecaddie*" is one who is employed by the *Committee* to indicate to players the position of balls during play. He/she is an outside agency.

Ground Under Repair

"*Ground under repair*" is any portion of the course so marked by the *Committee* or so declared by its authorized representative. It includes material piled for removal and a hole made by golf course maintenance even if not so marked. Stakes and lines defining *ground under repair* are in such ground such stakes are *obstructions*. The margin of *ground under repair* extends vertically downwards but not upwards. A ball is in *ground under repair* when it lies in or any part of it touches the *ground under repair*.

Note 1: Grass cuttings and other material left on the course which have been abandoned and are not intended to be removed are not *ground under repair* unless so marked.

Note 2: The *Committee* may make a *Local Rule* prohibiting play from *ground under repair* or an environmentally sensitive area which has been defined as *ground under repair*.

Hazards

A "*hazard*" is any bunker or water hazard.

Hole

The "*hole*" shall be 4 ¼ inches (108mm) in diameter and at least 4 inches (100mm) deep. If a lining is used, it shall be sunk at least 1 inch (25mm) below the *putting green* surface unless the nature of the soil makes it impractical to do so; its outer diameter shall not exceed 4 ¼ inches (108mm).

Holed

The ball is "*holed*" when it is at rest with the circumference of the hole and all of it is below the level of the lip of the hole.



Honor

The side entitled to play first from the teeing ground is said to have the “*honor*.”

Lateral Water Hazard

A “*lateral water hazard*” is a *water hazard* or that part of a *water hazard* so situated that it is not possible or is deemed by the *Committee* to be impractical to drop a ball behind the water hazard in accordance with Rule 26-1b.

That part of the *water hazard* to be played as *lateral water hazard* should be distinctly marked.

Note 1: *Lateral water hazards* should be defined by red stakes or lines.

Note 2: The *Committee* may make a *Local Rule* prohibiting play from an environmentally sensitive area which has been defined as a *lateral water hazard*.

Note 3: The *Committee* may define a *lateral water hazard* as a *water hazard*.

Line of Play

The “*line of play*” is the direction which the player wishes his ball to take after a *stroke*, plus a reasonable distance on either side of the intended direction. The *line of play* extends vertically upwards from the ground, but does not extend beyond the *hole*.

Loose Impediments Marker

“*Loose impediments*” are natural objects, such as stones, leaves, twigs, branches and the like, dung, worms and insects and casts or heaps made by them, provided they are not fixed or growing, are not solidly embedded and do not adhere to the ball.

Sand and loose soil are *loose impediments* on the *putting green*, but not elsewhere.

Snow and natural ice, other than frost, are either *casual water* or *loose impediments*, at the option of the player. Manufactured ice is an *obstruction*.

Dew is not a *loose impediment*.

Lost Ball

A ball is “*lost*” if:

- a. It is not found or identified as his/her by the player within five minutes after the player’s *side* or his or their *caddies* have begun to search for it; or
- b. The player has put another ball into play under the Rules, even though he/she may not have searched for the original ball; or
- c. The player has played any *stroke* with a *provisional ball* from the place where the original ball is likely to be or from a point nearer the *hole* than that place, whereupon the *provisional ball* becomes the *ball in play*.

Time spent in playing a *wrong ball* is not counted in the five-minute period allowed for search

Marker

A “*marker*” is one who is appointed by the *Committee* to record a competitor’s score in stroke play. He/she may be a *fellow competitor*. He/she is not a *referee*.

Matches

See “*Sides and Matches*.”

Move or Moved

A ball is deemed to have “*moved*” if it leaves its position and comes to rest in any other place.



Nearest Point of Relief

The “*nearest point of relief*” is the reference point for taking relief without penalty from interference by an immovable *obstruction* (Rule 24-2), an *abnormal ground condition* (Rule 25-1) or a *wrong putting green* (Rule 25-3).

It is the point on the course nearest to where the ball lies, which is not nearer the hole and at which, if the ball were so positioned, no interference (as defined) would exist.

Observer

An “*observer*” is one who is appointed by the *Committee* to assist a *referee* to decide questions of fact and to report to him/her any breach of a Rule. An *observer* should not attend the *flagstick*, stand at or mark the position of the hole or lift the ball or mark its position.

Obstructions

An “*obstruction*” is anything artificial, including the artificial surfaces and sides of roads and paths and manufactured ice, except:

- a. Objects defining out of bounds, such as walls, fences, stakes and railings;
- b. Any part of an immovable artificial object which is out of bounds; and
- c. Any construction declared by the Committee to be an integral part of the course.

Out of Bounds

“*Out of bounds*” is ground on which play is prohibited. When *out of bounds* is defined by reference to stakes or a fence or as being beyond stakes or a fence, the *out of bounds* line is determined by the nearest point of the stakes or fence posts at ground level excluding angled supports.

When *out of bounds* is determined by a line on the ground, the line itself is out of bounds.

The *out of bounds* line extends vertically upwards and downwards.

A ball is *out of bounds* when all of it lies *out off bounds*.

A player may stand *out of bounds* to play a ball lying within bounds.

Outside Agency

An “*outside agency*” is an agency not part of the *match* or, in *stroke play*, not part of a *competitor's side*, and includes a *referee*, a *marker*, an *observer* or a *forecaddie*. Neither wind nor water is an *outside agency*.

Partner

A “*partner*” is a player associated with another player on the same side.

In a threesome, foursome, best-ball or four-ball match, where the context so admits, the word “*player*” includes his/her *partner* or *partners*.

Penalty Stroke

A “*penalty stroke*” is one added to the score of a player or side under certain Rules. In a threesome or foursome, penalty strokes do affect the order of play.

Provisional Ball

A “*provisional ball*” is played under Rule 27-2 for a ball which may be lost outside a *water hazard* or may be *out of bounds*.

Putting Green

The “*putting green*” is all the ground of the holed being played which is specially prepared for putting or otherwise defined as such by the *Committee*. A ball is on the *putting green* when any part of it touches the *putting green*.



Referee

A “*referee*” is one who is appointed by the *Committee* to accompany players to decide questions of fact and apply the Rules of Golf. He/she shall act on any breach of a Rule which he/she observes or is reported to him/her.

A *referee* should not attend the *flagstick*, stand or mark the position of the *hole*, or lift the ball or mark its position.

Rub of the Green

A “*rub of the green*” occurs when a ball in motion is accidentally deflected or stopped by any *outside agency* (see Rule 19-1).

Rule

The term “*Rule*” includes *Local Rules* made by the *Committee* under Rule 33-8a.

Sides and Matches

Side: A player, or two or more players who are partners

Single: A match in which one plays against another.

Threesome: A match in which one plays against two and each *side* plays one ball.

Three-Ball: A match play competition in which three play against one another, each playing his/her own ball. Each player is playing two distinct matches.

Best-Ball: A match in which one plays against the better ball of two or the best ball of three players.

Four-Ball: A match in which two play their better ball against the better ball of two other players.

Stance

Taking the “*stance*” consists in a player placing his /her feet in position preparatory to making a *stroke*.

Stipulated Round

The “*stipulated round*” consists of playing the holes of the course in their correct sequence unless otherwise authorized by the *Committee*. The number of holes in a stipulated round is 18 unless a smaller number is authorized by the *Committee*. As to extension of *stipulated round* in match play, see Rule 2-3.

Stroke

A “*stroke*” is the forward movement of the club made with the intention of fairly striking the ball, but if a player checks his/her downswing voluntarily before it reaches the ball he/she is deemed not to have made a *stroke*.

Teeing Ground

The “*teeing ground*” is the starting place for the hole to be played. It is a rectangular area two club-lengths in depth, the front and sides of which are defined by the outside limits of two tee-markers. A ball is outside the *teeing ground* when all of it lies outside the teeing ground.

Through the Green

“*Through the green*” is the whole area of the course except:

- a. the *teeing ground* and *putting green* of the hole being played; and
- b. all *hazards* on the course.



Water Hazard

A “*water hazard*” is any sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, surface drainage ditch or other open water course (whether or not containing water) and anything of similar nature. All ground or water within the margin of a *water hazard* is part of the *water hazard*. The margin of a *water hazard* extends vertically upwards and downwards. Stakes and lines defining the margins of water hazards are in the hazards. Such stakes are *obstructions*. A ball is in a *water hazard* when it lies or touches the *water hazard*.

Note 1: *Water hazards* (other than *lateral water hazards*) should be defined by yellow stakes or lines.

Note 2: The *Committee* may make a Local Rule prohibiting play from an environmentally sensitive area which has been defined as a *water hazard*.

Wrong Ball

A “*wrong ball*” is any ball other than the players:

- a. Ball in play;
- b. Provisional ball; or
- c. In stroke play, a second ball played under Rule 3-3 or Rule 20-7b.

Note: Ball in play includes a ball substituted for the ball in play, whether or not such substitution is permitted.

Wrong Putting Green

A “*wrong putting green*” is any putting green other than that of the hole being played. Unless otherwise prescribed by the *Committee*, this term includes a practice *putting green* to pitching green on the *course*.