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# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

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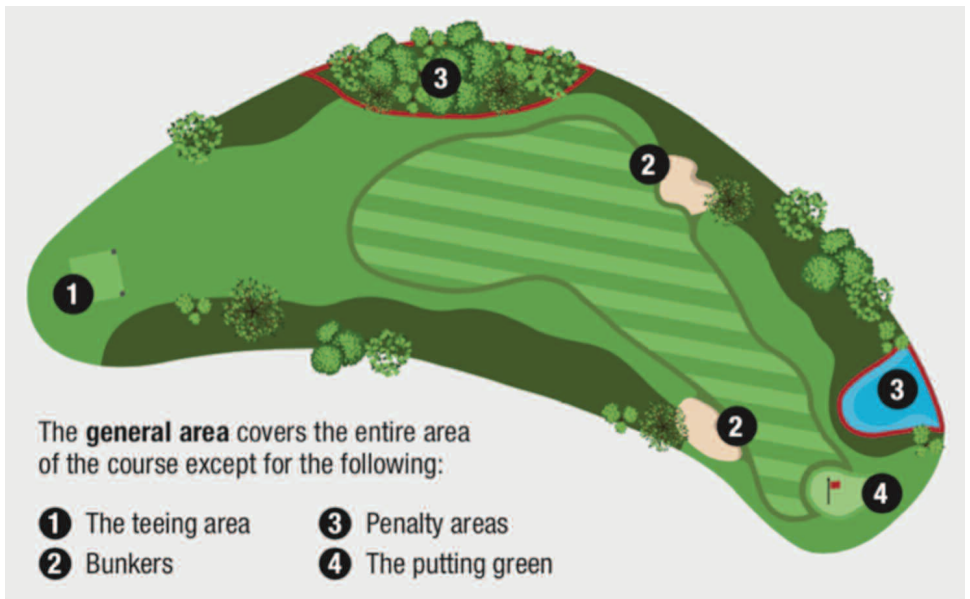


# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## THE 5 AREAS OF THE GOLF COURSE:

- **GENERAL AREA** – previously known as “Through the Green”.  
The General Area covers the entire course, except the following four specific areas.
- **TEEING AREA** - area where the player must start play of a hole.
- **PENALTY AREA** – previously known as “Water Hazards”.  
Includes all areas marked by the Committee as a penalty area (with or without water).
- **BUNKER** - A specially prepared area of sand.
- **PUTTING GREEN** - the putting green of the hole the player is playing.



# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## DROPPING A BALL:

- The ball must be dropped from knee height.
- Knee height means the height of the player's knee as if she were in a standing position.
- If it rolls against the player's foot or equipment accidentally after striking the ground, the ball is correctly back in play.

## RE-DROPPING A BALL:

- Once dropped, the ball must land in and come to rest in the relief area.
- If the ball rolls outside the relief area it must be dropped again, then if it rolls out a second time, the ball must be placed where it struck the ground on the second drop just as we do today.
- If it will not stay at rest on that spot, it must be placed on that spot a second time and if it still will not stay there, it must be placed on the nearest spot where it will stay at rest, no nearer the hole.
- If a Drop Zone is being used, the ball when dropped **must** land and come to rest in the Drop Zone.

**You will drop your ball from knee height into the relief area defined by the Rule you are using.**

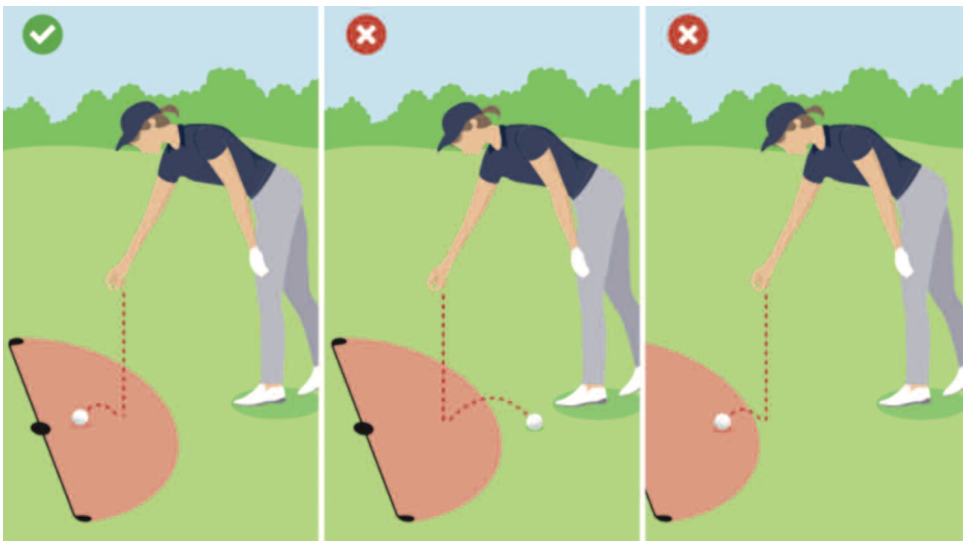


# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## THE RELIEF AREA:

- The Relief Area is the area where a player **must** drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule. This area is measured from a Reference Point, the starting point for measuring every relief area.
- The Relief Area is a defined area that is measured with the longest club carried by a player, other than a putter.
- No matter what club is used to measure, and even if an estimate is made by the player using no club, the ball must come to rest within the longest club, other than a putter. Using a putter or sand wedge will not provide a smaller relief area.
- The one club-length Relief Area will be uniform for all procedures, except when a player is using the two club-length “Lateral Relief” option from a red penalty area or from an unplayable ball.
- This change makes the Relief Area consistent. No matter if a player is dropping a ball from an immovable obstruction, from an embedded ball, from a wrong putting green, when going back on the line relief under penalty, or when using the stroke and distance option under penalty, the Relief Area is one club-length not nearer the hole.
- When taking free relief or penalty relief, a substituted ball or the original ball must be dropped in the relief area.



# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## ELIMINATION OF PENALTIES:

- There is now **NO** penalty for an accidental double hit. Just the stroke itself counts. All accidental deflections are treated the same way; **NO** penalty and the ball is played as it lies.
- During a search for a ball, there is **NO** penalty if a ball is moved by the player or her caddie. In all cases, the ball will be replaced, it will never be dropped. If the spot where the ball must be replaced is not precisely known, estimate it and replace the ball on that spot.
- There is now **NO** penalty if a ball in motion accidentally hits the player, caddie, her equipment, or the flagstick whether removed or attended. There is only a penalty if it is deliberate or if the player or caddie deliberately positions equipment to stop a ball in motion.
- There is still **NO** penalty when a ball or ball marker is accidentally moved on the putting green.
- There is now **NO** penalty for carrying a non-conforming club, penalty applies only for using it.
- If a ball has been moved by an Outside Influence, it must be replaced in all cases including when the spot is not known. **It will never be dropped.**
- On the putting green a ball which strikes a moving inanimate natural object (like a leaf) after a putt, is **NO** longer cancelled and replayed. The ball will be played as it lies.



**If a ball in motion is accidentally deflected by you or your equipment, there will be NO penalty and the ball will be played from where it came to rest.**

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES

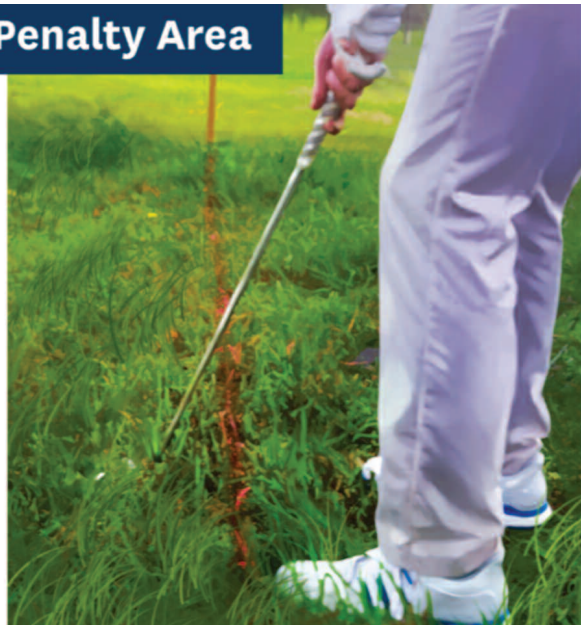


## PENALTY AREAS:

- Penalty Area is the new name for Water Hazard.
  - Penalty Areas will still be marked either Yellow or Red.
  - In a Penalty Area the player can now ground the club lightly behind the ball, move a loose impediment, take a practice swing and touch the ground or the water.
- \*NOTE:** As was the case previously, the player cannot take relief from Abnormal Course Conditions including Immovable Obstructions or an Embedded Ball when their ball is in a penalty area.

## Relaxed Rules in Penalty Area

You will be allowed to ground your club and move loose impediments in a penalty area (an expanded concept of water hazards that does not include bunkers).



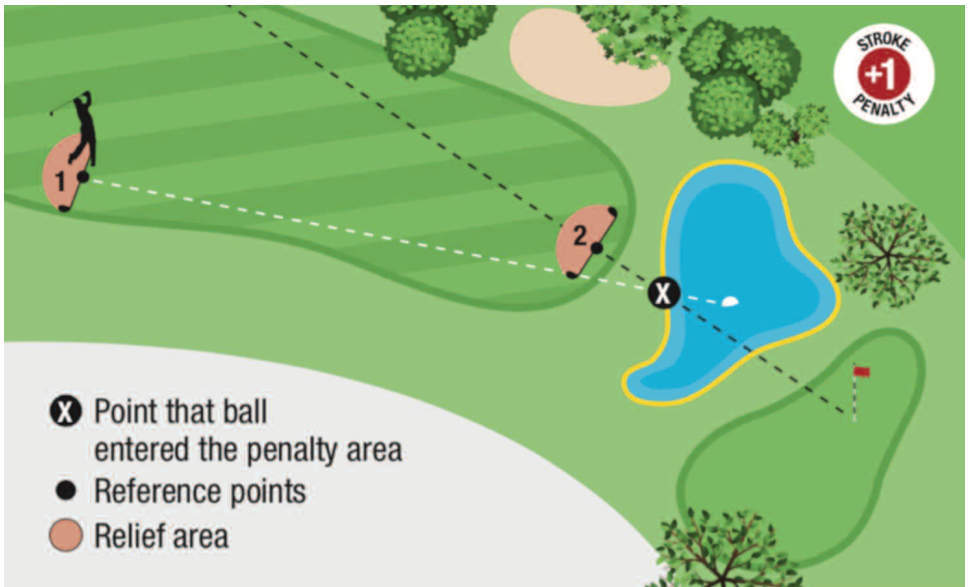
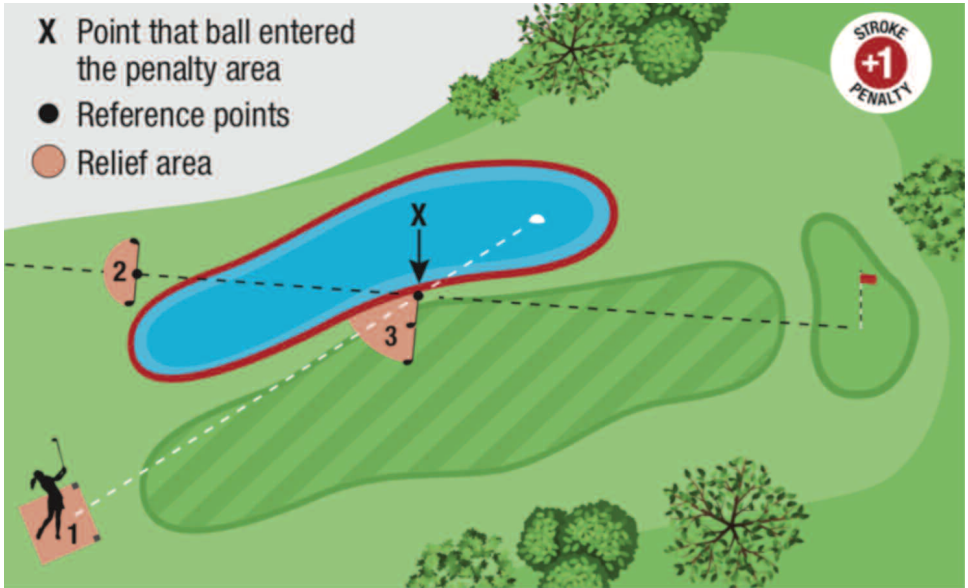


# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## DROPPING OPTIONS FROM RED and YELLOW PENALTY AREAS:

**Important Note:** Opposite Margin relief from a Red Penalty area is not available by the Rule. This option **must** be noted on the Local Rules sheet each week for each specific Red Penalty Area in order for such a drop to be an available option.



# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## REPAIRING DAMAGE ON THE PUTTING GREEN:

- Damage to a putting green may be repaired.
- Damage is described in the Rule and it means any damage caused by a person or outside influence and includes ball marks, shoe damage (such as spike marks) and scrapes or indentations caused by equipment or the flagstick. Any repair must be done promptly.
- It does not include natural surface imperfections or disease, aeration holes or natural wear to the hole.
- The line of play on the putting green may now be touched, including when pointing out a line for putting, but the line must not be improved beyond what is now permitted when repairing damage, i.e.: the player may **NOT** create a pathway or channel to the hole.





# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## FLAGSTICK:

- The player can now putt leaving the flagstick in the hole, but the player must decide this **before** making the stroke.
- If the player elects to putt with the flagstick in the hole, it must **NOT** be moved after the stroke and while a ball is in motion. There is a practical exception to this. If the player elects to putt with the flagstick left in the hole, it can be taken out of the hole while the player's ball is still in motion without penalty if there is no reasonable possibility the ball will strike it.
- There is **NO** penalty if the ball accidentally strikes an attended flagstick after a stroke made on the putting green.
- If a ball rests against a flagstick in the hole and part of the ball is below the level of the lip, the ball will be considered holed, even if the entire ball is not below the surface. There is no longer a requirement to move the flagstick to see if the ball falls into the hole. The ball may simply be picked up.



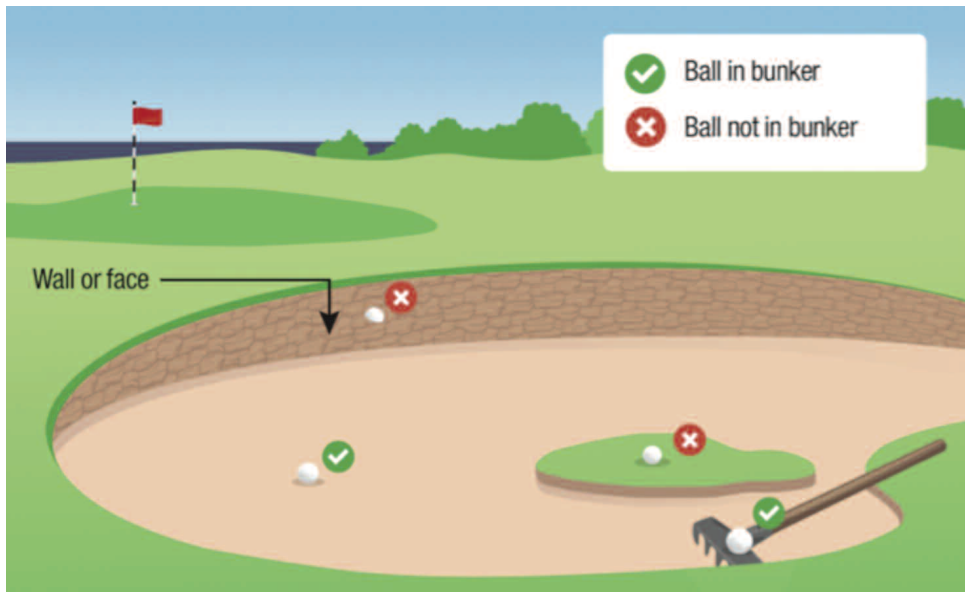
# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## BUNKERS:

- Loose impediments (like stones, leaves, twigs and acorns) in a bunker may now be removed or touched without penalty, provided the ball does not move. If the ball moves as a result, there is a one stroke penalty and the ball must be replaced. Hence, a Local Rule for Stones in Bunkers will no longer be used since the new Rule allows stones in bunkers to be moved without penalty.
- The Rules now allow the player to generally touch the sand in a bunker with a hand or a club, **but** there are limitations. For example:
- You cannot touch the sand in a bunker when making a practice swing or in the backswing for the stroke.
- You cannot deliberately touch the sand in the bunker with your hand, club, rake or other object to test the condition of the sand to learn information for the stroke.
- You cannot touch the sand in a bunker with a club in the area right in front of or right behind the ball, except when searching for or removing a loose impediment or movable obstruction.

There is **NO** longer a penalty for striking the sand in anger or frustration, or for leaning on a club in the sand away from the ball while waiting to play.

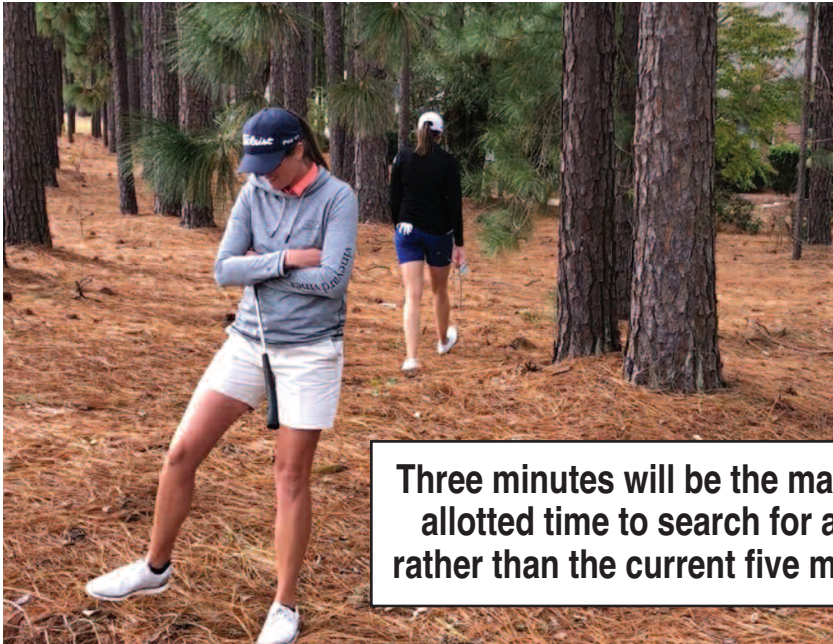


# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## LOST BALL and PLAYING A PROVISIONAL BALL:

- The time to search for a ball is reduced from 5 minutes to **3 minutes**. The time of search still starts when the player **or the caddie** begin to search. If the original ball is found, the provisional ball must be abandoned.
- Once the search time has begun, there is **NO** penalty if the ball is accidentally moved during the search by **anyone** including the player or caddie. Simply replace the ball back to its original spot. If the original spot is not known, estimate it and replace the ball there.
- The player can now go back to where the ball was last played and play a provisional ball at any time before the original ball is found.
- The player must still announce that the ball about to be played is a provisional ball. The player must use the word “provisional” or otherwise clearly indicate that she is playing the ball provisionally.

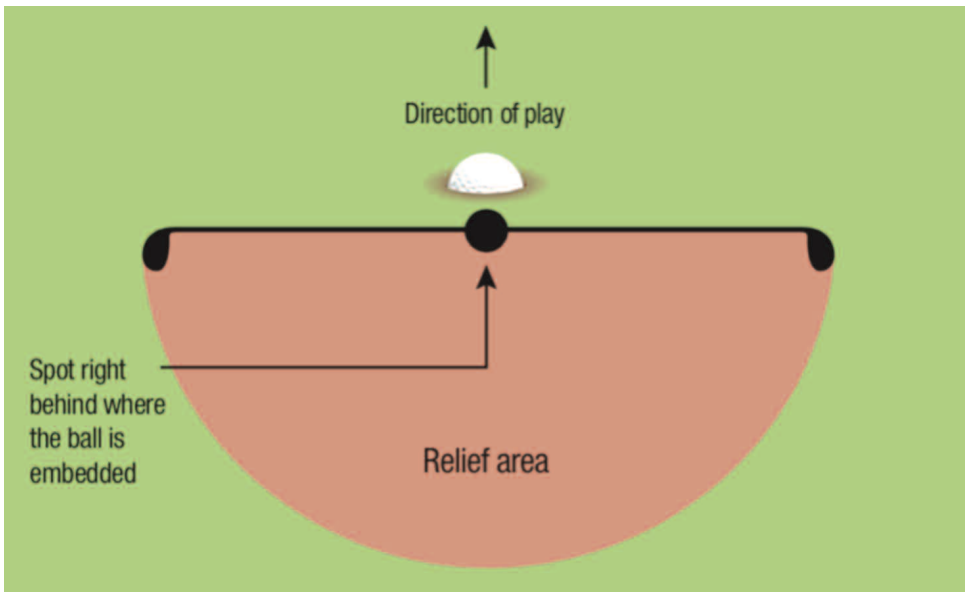


# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## EMBEDDED BALL:

- The relief procedure has changed for an embedded ball.
- The relief area starts at the spot immediately **behind** where the ball was embedded, and a ball must be dropped in the one club-length relief area, no nearer the hole than this spot, and in the General Area.
- There is **NO** longer a requirement to announce to your marker or fellow competitor your intention to mark and lift the ball to check if it is embedded, but it is still good practice to do so.
- A ball is **NOT** embedded if it is below the level of the ground as a result of anything other than the player's previous stroke, such as when the ball was dropped in taking relief under a Rule.
- As with other relief procedures, another ball may be substituted and dropped when taking relief. The original ball may be used, but it is not required.

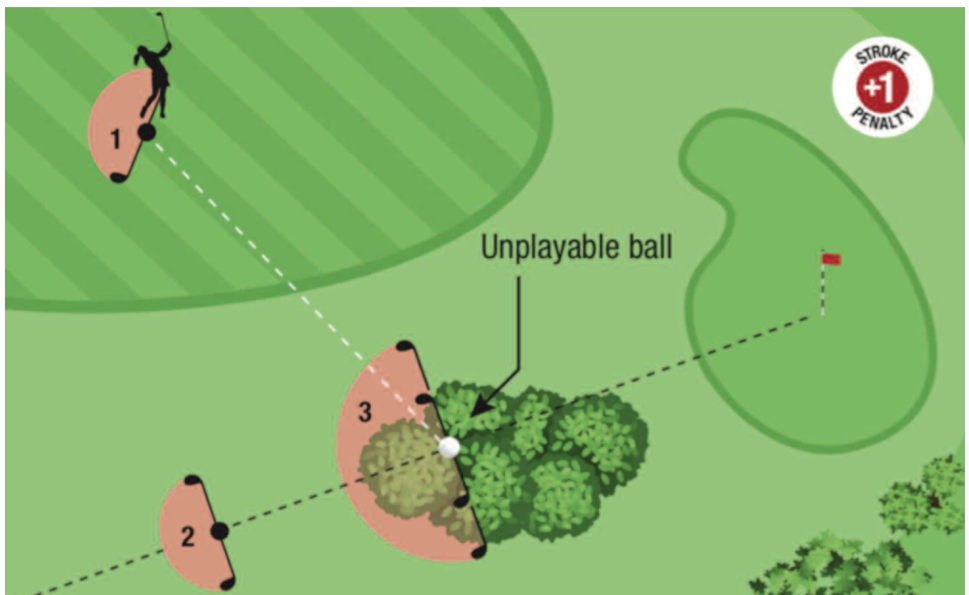


# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## DROPPING OPTIONS FOR AN UNPLAYABLE BALL:

- Using the 2 club-length “**Lateral Relief**” option (#3 below) the ball must stay in the 2 club-length relief area when dropped. A ball dropped in this relief area that rolls more than 2 club-lengths and comes to rest in the relief area is correctly back in play.
- When using the “**Back-on-the-Line Relief**” option (#2 below), by keeping the place where the ball lies between you and the hole, the player can now drop in a one club-length relief area rather than exactly on the line itself as was done previously. The player can go back on the line as far as she wants, choose a reference point on the line and drop within a one club-length relief area no nearer the hole. (The player should indicate the spot by using an object such as a coin or tee). The ball when dropped cannot go forward of the reference point because that would mean it is not in the relief area.
- When using the “**Stroke and Distance Relief**” option (#1 below) the player must now estimate where the previous stroke was played and drop a ball within one club-length of that spot no nearer the hole, except when going back to the tee when the ball can be played from anywhere within the teeing area.





# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## ALIGNMENT:

- No one can help the player with her alignment for the stroke.  
This is an essential skill which the player must do for herself.
- A caddie is **NO** longer allowed to stand behind the player to help with alignment.  
When the player begins to take her stance, the caddie must not deliberately stand directly behind the player. The penalty is two strokes in stroke play.
- There is one exception which applies **only** on the Putting Green. The penalty can be avoided if the player backs away and starts again without the caddie directly behind her. Provided the player backs away and starts again on the Putting Green, there is no penalty.
- The player cannot set something down (such as a club) to help with alignment for a stroke. Once this is done the penalty is two strokes in stroke play.



**A caddie is NO longer allowed to stand behind the player to help with alignment.**

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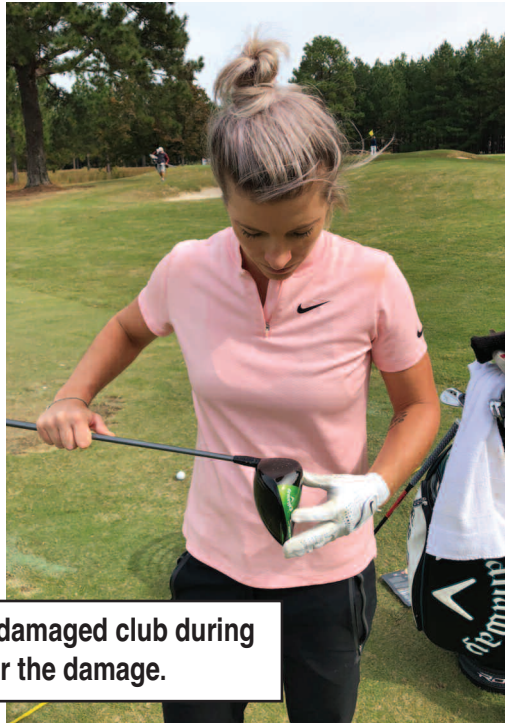


## CLUBS:

- No matter how a club is damaged, even by abusing it, the player can continue to use the club in its damaged state for the rest of the round or have the club repaired, but she will **NOT** be allowed to replace it.
- There will be **NO** replacement of a club unfit for play (such as a cracked driver face), unless the damage is caused by an outside influence, natural force or any person other than the player or player's caddie. No matter what the nature or cause of the damage, the damaged club is treated as conforming for the rest of that round only.
- The player will be allowed to have the damaged club repaired but the repair is limited to the original components of the club - the same grip, shaft and head. Damage that existed prior to the round must not be repaired.
- A club **MUST** still conform when starting a new round or when starting a play-off in stroke play, if it is to be used. There is **NO** penalty for carrying a non-conforming club, only for using it.

## BALLS:

- The player is **NO** longer required to announce that she is lifting the ball to determine if it is cut or cracked or for identification. Simply mark the ball and lift it.
- Cut or Cracked replaces the term Ball Unfit for Play. Hence a ball out of shape may not be replaced. A ball can only be replaced if it is cut or cracked and that damage happened on the same hole.



**You will not be allowed to replace a damaged club during the round if you were responsible for the damage.**

# 2019 RULES OF GOLF CHANGES



## CADDIES:

- A caddie will now be able to mark, lift and replace the player's ball (if the caddie lifted it) on the putting green **ONLY**, without needing authorization. The player is still responsible for any related breach of the Rules.
- A caddie will **NO** longer be able to align the player for any shot. There are strict Rules about where the caddie may not deliberately stand when the player begins to take their stance. Other than on the putting green, there is no way out of the penalty if the caddie is deliberately standing directly behind the player when she starts to take her stance.

## DISTANCE MEASURING DEVICES:

- Although in 2019 the Rules of Golf will allow the everyday use of Distance Measuring Devices (DMD's) without measuring elevation changes; the LPGA TOUR will be adopting a Local Rule on our Hard Card which will **prohibit the use** of DMD's during any tournament rounds. Penalty for first breach of this Local Rule during a tournament round is two strokes in stroke play; second breach during the same round Disqualification.

## TEMPORARY IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS:

- The TIO Local Rule was recrafted to enable a player to treat a TIO as an Immovable Obstruction when any physical interference exists, if the player so chooses. This should simplify the process for players when taking relief.
- When a player has **both** Physical Interference and Line of Sight Interference, she has a choice of either procedure. However, once this option is made, the other option may not be used.

## PREFERRED LIES:

- The position of the ball may be marked before being lifted, but it is not required. Simply lift the ball and place a ball once within one club length of the original spot, but no nearer the hole. As with relief procedures, a ball may be substituted when a ball is lifted under this Local Rule.