



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

Category	Sub-category	Topic	Description of change
	Putting green	Repairing damage on the putting green	New rule: A player may repair almost any damage (including spike marks and animal damage but not including natural imperfections) on the putting green. Current 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	New rule: No penalty, so long as doing so does not improve the conditions for the player's stroke. Current rule: Loss of hole/2-stroke penalty (with exceptions).
	Putting green	Putting with an unattended flagstick left in the hole	New rule: No penalty if a ball played from the putting green (or anywhere else) hits the unattended flagstick in hole. Current 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)	New rule: Red- and yellow-marked "penalty areas" may now cover areas of desert, jungle, lava rock, etc, in addition to areas of water. Current 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	New rule: No penalty. Current rule: Loss of hole/2-stroke penalty (with exceptions).
Areas of the course (continued)	Penalty areas	Expanded use of red-marked penalty areas	New rule: Committees are given the discretion to mark all penalty areas as red so that lateral relief is always allowed (but they may still mark penalty areas as yellow where they consider it appropriate). Current rule: All water hazards should be marked yellow, except where their location on the course makes it impossible or unreasonable to drop behind the hazard; only when this is the case may these water hazards be marked red as lateral water hazards.