

WWGA RULES TOPIC – JANUARY 2025

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What to do if you have a rules question?

Most golfers, including professionals, don't always know the correct procedures under the rules. This month's topic aims to guide you on what to do when you have a rules question [during a round](#), [after a round](#), or just have a [general question about golf rules](#).



During a round

Unlike professional golfers, we at WWGA don't have the luxury of a referee on the course to guide us on rules questions. Researching the rules can take time, and it's important not to delay play. Fortunately, the Rules of Golf provides a solution: you can play two balls without penalty when you're unsure of the correct procedure. This is an essential rule to know!

[Rule 20.1c\(3\): Playing Two Balls When Uncertain What to Do](#) is shown below. This [video](#) also gives a good illustration on how to apply this rule.

The procedure requires you provide the facts of the situation to the “Committee” which in the case of WWGA is the Rules Chair <wwgarules@gmail.com> and the organizer of the competition; the Weekly Games Chair <wwgaweeklygames@gmail.com> or the organizer of the major tournament, whichever is applicable.

(3) **Playing Two Balls When Uncertain What to Do.** A player who is uncertain about the right procedure while playing a hole may complete the hole with two balls without penalty:

- The player must decide to play two balls after the uncertain situation arises and before making a *stroke*.
- The player should choose which ball will count if the Rules allow the procedure used for that ball, by announcing that choice to their *marker* or to another player before making a *stroke*.
- If the player does not choose in time, the ball played first is treated as the ball chosen by default.
- The player must report the facts of the situation to the *Committee* before returning the *scorecard*, even if the player scores the same with both balls. The player is **disqualified** if they fail to do so.
- If the player made a *stroke* before deciding to play a second ball:
 - » This Rule does not apply at all and the score that counts is the score with the ball played before the player decided to play the second ball.
 - » **But** the player gets no penalty for playing the second ball.

A second ball played under this Rule is not the same as a *provisional ball* under Rule 18.3.

If a player disagrees with another player's score, follow the Scoring Dispute procedure on Page 4 of the [WWGA Standing Rules](#). The dispute can be due to a disagreement on how to apply the rules or simply not counting strokes correctly. Here is the relevant portion of the rule as it stands the day this article was written.

In the event a player disagrees with another player's score the following steps are recommended:

- Here is an example on how to fill out the scorecard in the case of a scoring dispute.

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Other times you have rules questions

The official USGA Rules of Golf can be found at on the [USGA Rules website](#), which contains not just the Rules, but also Definitions and Clarifications. It is also a good idea to download the free USGA Rules of Golf on your mobile device for easy access.

For WWGA golf rules, reference the back of the scorecard or the WWGA Rules page: wwga.net/rules

Admittedly, it can sometimes be challenging to find what you're looking for in the rules. It's okay to search the internet for applicable rules but be aware that online information might not be accurate. **Be particularly cautious with AI-generated results, as they have been found to be incorrect on many occasions.** Instead, use your searches to help identify a rule(s), then read the Rule itself and any available clarifications.

You can also send an email to the [WWGA Rules Chair](#) or even contact the USGA directly.

If you have questions on this Rules Topic or a suggestion for a future topic, please contact the WWGA Rules Chair at wwgarules@gmail.com