



COVID-19 RULES OF GOLF & RULES OF HANDICAPPING GUIDANCE

Updated as of May 8, 2020

The guidance outlined below is designed to assist golf course operators, committees and golfers in better understanding how the Rules of Golf and Rules of Handicapping can be adapted temporarily while COVID-19 precautionary measures are in place, as it relates to recreational golf. **All golfers are reminded to follow the guidelines that are in place from Provincial government and health officials in their province, along with any additional precautionary measures implemented by their golf club.**

SCORING IN STROKE PLAY (Rule 3.3b)

RECOMMENDATION – it is strongly recommended that Committees choose to allow methods of scoring in stroke play that do not strictly comply with Rule 3.3b of the Rules of Golf, or the normal methods used under this Rule ([click here](#) to view Rule 3.3b).

The Rules of Golf already allow for scorecards to be in any paper or electronic form approved by the Committee, and the following scoring methods may be adopted on a temporary basis to reduce touchpoints between players:

Physical Scoring

- Players may enter their own hole scores on the scorecard
- Verbal confirmation of a player's hole scores by the marker can be substituted for a signature
- Hole-by-hole scores can be communicated and confirmed verbally by the marker and player to the Committee in the scoring area

Electronic Scoring

- Markers can be instructed to send an email or text containing the player's hole-by-hole scores to the Committee and player for whom they are marking
- Players can reply to the email or text to verify the accuracy of the submitted hole-by-hole scores

Combination of Physical & Electronic Scoring

- Markers can be instructed to take a picture of the completed scorecard and send an email or text to the Committee and player for whom they are marking
- Players can reply to the email or text to verify the accuracy of the submitted hole-by-hole scores

NOTE: For any physical or electronic scoring method that is adopted, the Committee should clearly define when a scorecard has been returned.

RULES OF HANDICAPPING

All scores posted for rounds with any of the alternate scoring methods outlined above would be acceptable for handicap purposes.



BUNKERS (RULE 12)

RECOMMENDATION – it is strongly recommended that all bunker rakes be removed from the course and that one of the following options is adopted by the Committee to address the likely possibility of a player’s ball coming to rest in an unmaintained area of sand.

No Modifications to the Rules of Golf

- Players can be strongly encouraged to try their best to smooth the disturbed area with a foot or club after playing their ball
- Courses with limited play or where most players use a golf cart can request that each player takes a rake with them on the course

Modifications under the Rules of Golf

- Changing the status of bunkers to be part of the general area
 - Players will have additional relief options under [Rule 16](#) (Relief from Abnormal Course Conditions) and [Rule 19](#) (Unplayable Ball)
 - All bunker restrictions normally in effect under Rule 12 would be removed ([click here](#) to view restrictions)
- Bunkers may be declared ‘Ground Under Repair’, allowing players the option to take free relief outside the bunker under Rule 16.1 ([click here](#) to view Rule 16.1)
 - Additionally, only the disturbed areas in bunkers may be declared ‘Ground Under Repair’, allowing players to take free relief elsewhere in the bunker

NOTE: It is **NOT** recommended that Committees adopt a Local Rule permitting preferred lies in bunkers.

RULES OF HANDICAPPING

All scores posted for rounds with any of the options outlined above would be acceptable for handicap purposes.

FLAGSTICKS (RULE 13.2)

RECOMMENDATION – it is strongly recommended that all golfers are required to leave the flagstick in the hole at all times and that a sign is put on the flagstick stating that it is not to be touched.

The Committee may choose to include this requirement under their *Code of Conduct Policy* and are authorized under Rule 1.2b of the Rules of Golf to include penalties (i.e. warnings, one-stroke penalty, general penalty, etc.) for any breach of the listed standards in the Code.



As a temporary measure, flagsticks may have external attachments to eliminate the need to lift the ball out of the hole and do not need to meet the specifications outlined in Part 8 of the Equipment Rules for the purpose of player safety ([click here](#) to view the Equipment Rules).

RULES OF HANDICAPPING

All scores posted for rounds with restrictions placed on removing the flagstick or with external attachments to eliminate the need to lift the ball out of the hole would be acceptable for handicap purposes.

HOLE AND HOLED

RECOMMENDATION – it is strongly recommended that the hole liner (“cup”) be set in a way that restricts the ball from being completely below the surface of the putting green, including completely above the surface of the green.

RULES OF HANDICAPPING

A temporary measure is in place in Canada to accept scores played under these conditions for handicap purposes, using the ‘most likely score’ guidelines (see [Rules 3.3](#) of the Rules of Handicapping) outlined below, even though the player has not holed out.

Position of the Ball	Strokes to be Added
If the ball lies on the putting green, and is no more than 5 feet (1.5 metres) from the hole:	Add one additional stroke.
If the ball lies between 5 feet (1.5 metres) and 20 yards (20 metres) from the hole:	Add 2 or 3 additional strokes, depending on the position of the ball, the difficulty of the green and the ability of the player.
If the ball lies more than 20 yards (20 metres) from the hole:	Add 3 or 4 additional strokes, depending on the position of the ball, the difficulty of the green and the ability of the player.

Any questions about the guidance above or a discussion about another implication to the Rules of Golf or Rules of Handicapping can be directed to:

RULES OF GOLF

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