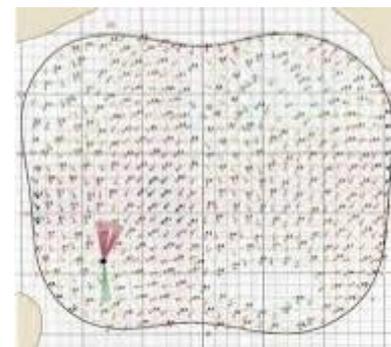


Rule Tip of the Week

The USGA is concerned that players have access to too much information when it comes to the topography of putting greens. Consider the detail of the putting green drawing to the right which has a directional arrow and a slope reading for practically every square foot! For more information on this topic, check out a very interesting Golf Digest article that shows how technology is being used to develop extremely detailed green-reading maps for players: www.golfdigest.com/story/gimme-a-break-green-reading-maps.



Given this concern, the USGA and The R&A are jointly proposing limitations on the level of detail in green-reading materials, thereby affirming the need for a player to rely on his or own judgement, skill and ability to assess lines of putt.

According to the USGA, following a six-week period of feedback and consultation with interested parties that began on July 31, regulations will be finalized in a published "interpretation" of Rule 4.3 (Use of Equipment) when golf's new rules take effect on January 1, 2019. Per the announcement issued by the Ruling Bodies, the key elements of the proposed interpretation are as follows:

- Minimum Slope Indication Limit – A minimum slope indication limit of 4 percent (2.29 degrees) is proposed (this includes lines, arrows, numbers or any other indicators); this will have the effect of eliminating such indicators of slope from those areas of the putting green where the hole is most likely to be positioned (which tend to be cut on reasonably flat sections of the putting green with a degree of slope of less than 3.5 percent - or 2 degrees). This proposed limit also equates roughly with the amount of slope that is readily visible to the naked eye.
- Maximum Scale Limit – A maximum scale of 3/8 inch to 5 yards (1:480) is proposed; this will limit the size in print form to a pocket-sized publication and has the effect of restricting the space for handwritten notes (also referenced below).
- Indicative Information - General information that is included in traditional yardage books or course guides, such as basic illustrations that show the outline of the putting green and include indicative information like the tops of ridges or general slopes, will continue to be permitted.
- Handwritten Notes - Handwritten notes will continue to be allowed, but such notes cannot be used to create either a direct copy or a facsimile (replica) of a detailed green map.

Here is the draft regulation, including the accompanying diagrams, for your review:

Green-Reading Materials

Interpretation on Putting Green Information (PROPOSED: DRAFT AS OF JULY 31, 2018)

The reading of a player's line of play on the putting green is a skill that is essential to the challenge of the game. Therefore, there are limits placed on the amount of information that is allowed in putting green maps.

General information that is included in traditional yardage books or course guides, such as basic illustrations that show the outline of the putting green and include indicative information like the tops of ridges or general slopes, is permitted. This amount of information is not considered to remove or reduce this challenge as the player and caddie's skill and judgment are still required to interpret the subtle features and slopes, especially in the area immediately around the hole.

However, more detailed and sophisticated maps of the putting green that include information on subtle features and slopes through the inclusion of many directional arrows, contour lines or numerical slope indicators, do reduce this challenge and are, therefore, not permitted.

Published Materials

The player is allowed to use a putting green map or other putting green information except that it must:

- Only depict slope of 4 percent or greater (this includes the use of lines, arrows, numbers or any other indicators)
- Be limited to a scale of 3/8" to 5 yards (1:480) or smaller

In digital form, the material must not be adaptive (meaning it must be fixed) and in particular, it must not produce a recommended line of play based on the player's ball and the hole.

Handwritten Notes

A player or caddie is allowed to include their handwritten notes on any map or within any other pre-produced material that provides information on the putting green. While the use of notes is generally not limited, they must not result in a copy or facsimile of a detailed green map (in full or in part) that does not meet the requirements in this interpretation.

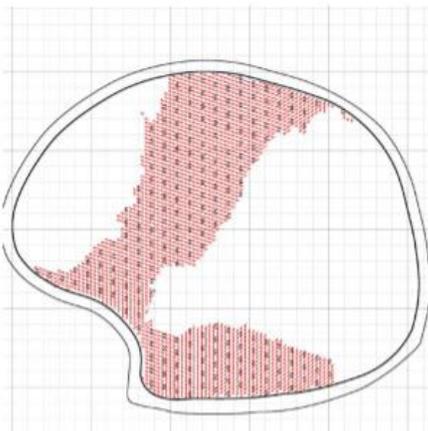
Examples include:

- Any handwritten notes may provide additional indicative information (as permitted in traditional yardage books and course guides) but must not trace contour lines or directly copy specific directional arrows or numerical slope indicators; and
- Any handwritten notes created by a player or caddie using a level must not provide any indicators of slopes less than 4 percent, as this would be a "facsimile" of a detailed green map that does not meet the requirements in this interpretation.

Developers or manufacturers that produce yardage books, course guides or images of more detailed green maps are encouraged to consult with the USGA OR R&A and submit a sample of their product to ensure that it complies with the requirements above.

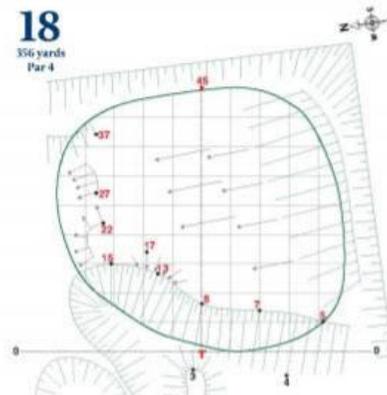
GREEN MAP WITH SLOPE INDICATORS EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN 4 PERCENT – ALLOWED

The below sample depicts a green map that includes an allowable level of detail that is equal to or greater than 4 percent slope.



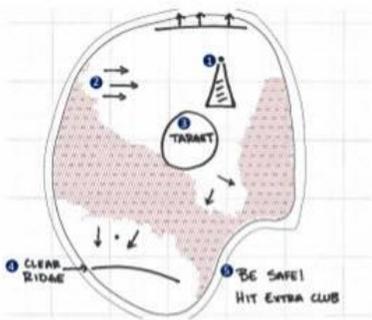
TRADITIONAL YARDAGE BOOK – ALLOWED

The below sample depicts a traditional yardage book or course guide that includes a basic illustration and indicative information such as the tops of ridges and general slopes.



HANDWRITTEN NOTES – ALLOWED

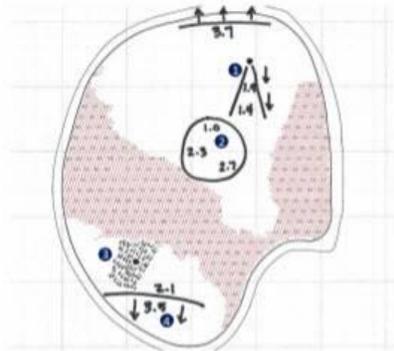
The below sample includes examples of the types of general handwritten notes that are **allowed** to be included on a green map.



1	A target line to indicate a desired location to putt to a specific hole location
2	Arrows to indicate the general slope of an area on the putting green
3	A target area to focus on for an approach shot
4	Text to describe a feature on the putting green
5	General text, such as swing thoughts or reminders on strategy

HANDWRITTEN NOTES – NOT ALLOWED

The below sample includes examples of handwritten notes that are **not allowed** to be included on a green map because they include information that would otherwise not be allowed by interpretation.



1	A target line with slope readings included
2	A target area with slope readings included
3	Detailed arrows that produce a copy or facsimile of a detailed green map
4	Slope readings included with an indicator of the top of a slope

Here's your chance to be part of the process! If you are at all interested in commenting on this proposed regulation, you are invited to contact the USGA at rules@usga.org with your questions, feedback or suggestions for improvement prior to September 14, 2018. The governing bodies plan on issuing the regulation by October 15, 2018 in advance of its planned adoption on January 1, 2019.