

Rule Tip of the Week

"Internal" Definitions

Although the Rules have been around since 1744, it was not until 1886 that one particular version of the Rules (by the Royal Isle of Wight Golf Club) included a Definitions Section. For 2019, the Definitions Section of the Rules contains 74 defined terms (up from 51 for 2018) beginning with "*Abnormal Course Condition*" and ending with "*Wrong Place*."

def·i·ni·tion n. 1.
The teacher gave definitions of the new words.
of an image (picture) on a screen

In addition to the 74 terms in the Definitions Section, interspersed within the Rules of Golf and the new Interpretations are numerous and somewhat hidden "*internal*" definitions that need to be learned if you want to have a good working knowledge of the Rules. The following table is an attempt to capture the majority of these "*internal*" definitions.

Term or Phrase	Location in Official Guide to the Rules of Golf	Meaning of Term or Phrase
Abnormal Way	Rule 4.3a (pp. 66-67)	"Abnormal way" means a way that is fundamentally different than its intended use and is not normally recognized as part of playing the game.
Administrative Mistake	Interpretation 20.2d/1 Interpretation 20.2d/2 (pp. 290-291)	An administrative mistake is when a referee or the Committee has made a procedural error in relation to the administration of the competition, for example, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miscalculating the result of a tie, or • Applying a player's full handicap strokes in a stroke-play competition when only a percentage should be applied.
Advice Giver	Rule 24.4a (p. 325)	The Committee may adopt a Local Rule allowing each team to name one person (an "advice giver") who may give advice and other help as allowed in Rule 10.2b(2) to players on the team during a round and who may be asked for advice by players on the team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The advice giver may be the team captain, a team coach or other person (including a team member playing in the competition). • The advice giver must be identified to the Committee before giving advice. • The Committee may allow a team's advice giver to change during a round or during the competition.
All Reasonably Available Information	Definition of "Known or Virtually Certain" (p. 341)	"All reasonably available information" includes all information the player knows and all other information he or she can get with reasonable effort and without unreasonable delay.
Anchoring the Club	Rule 10.1b (p. 146)	In making a stroke, the player must not anchor the club, either: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directly, by holding the club or a gripping hand against any part of the body (except that the player may hold the club or a gripping hand against a hand or forearm), or • Indirectly, through use of an "anchor point," by holding a forearm against any part of the body to use a gripping hand as a stable point around which the other hand may swing the club.
Anchor Point	Rule 10.1b Interpretation 10.1b/1 (pp. 146-147)	For an "anchor point" to exist, two things must happen: (1) the player must hold a forearm against the body; and (2) the player must grip the club so that the hands are separated and work independently from each other.
Announcing Play of Provisional Ball	Rule 18.3b Interpretation 18.3b/1 Interpretation 18.3b/2 (pp. 260-262)	Before the stroke is made, the player must announce that he or she is going to play a provisional ball: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is not enough for the player only to say that he or she is playing another ball or is playing again. • The player must use the word "provisional" or otherwise clearly indicate that he or she is playing the ball provisionally under Rule 18.3. • The announcement must be made so that people in the vicinity of the player can hear it.
As Soon as Reasonably Possible	Rule 3.2d(2) Interpretation 3.2d(2)/1 (pp. 44-45)	The broad phrase of "as soon as reasonably possible" allows for consideration of all relevant circumstances, especially how near the player is to the opponent. There is no set procedure for determining what is "as soon as reasonably possible", but it does not always mean before the opponent makes the next stroke.

Attend the Flagstick	Rule 13.2b(1) (p. 182)	Attending the flagstick means to remove it by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First holding the flagstick in, above or next to the hole before and during the stroke to show the player where the hole is, and • Then removing the flagstick after the stroke is made.
Authorizing Someone to Attend the Flagstick	Rule 13.2b (pp. 182-183)	The player is treated as having authorized the flagstick to be attended if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player's caddie is holding the flagstick in, above or next to the hole or is standing right next to the hole when the stroke is made, even if the player is not aware the caddie is doing so, • The player asks any other person to attend the flagstick and that person does so, or • The player sees any other person holding the flagstick in, above or next to the hole or standing right next to the hole, and the player makes the stroke without asking that person to move away or to leave the flagstick in the hole.
Ball Chosen by Default	Rule 20.1c(3)	If a player who is uncertain about the right procedure while playing a hole may complete the hole with two balls without penalty. The player should choose which ball will count if the Rules allow the procedure used for that ball by announcing that choice to his or her 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.
Back-on-the-Line Relief Option	Rule 17.1d(2) (p. 244) Rule 19.2b (p.270)	For a ball in a penalty area, the player may drop the original ball or another ball in a relief area that is based on a reference line going straight back from the hole through the estimated point where the original ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area. For an unplayable ball, the player may drop the original ball or another ball in a relief area that is based on a reference line going straight back from the hole through the spot of the original ball.
Ball Not Embedded	Rule 16.3(2) (p. 236)	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ball is pushed into the ground by someone stepping on it, • The ball is driven straight into the ground without becoming airborne, or • The ball was dropped in taking relief under a Rule.
Begins Taking a Stance	Rule 10.2b(4) Interpretation 10.2b(4)/1 (pp. 152-153)	There is no set procedure for determining when a player has begun to take a stance since each player has his or her own set-up routine. However, if a player has his or her feet or body close to a position where useful guidance on aiming at the intended target could be given, it should be decided that the player has begun to take his or her stance. Examples of when a player has begun to take a stance include when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player is standing beside the ball but facing the hole with his or her club behind the ball, and then starts to turn his or her body to face the ball. • After standing behind the ball to determine the target line, the player takes a step forward and then starts to turn his or her body and puts a foot in place for the stroke.
Best-Ball	Rule 23.1 (p. 310)	This is a variation of Four-Ball match play where an individual player competes against a side of two or three partners and each partner plays his or her own ball under the Rules. For Best-Ball with three partners on a side, each reference to the other partner means the other two partners.
Carried by Anyone for the Player During the Round	Rule 4.1b(4) Interpretation 4.1b(4)/1 (p. 61)	If a player is permitted to add or replace a damaged club, club components brought from the clubhouse (such as the player's locker), the golf shop, or a manufacturer's truck, or other similar locations, are not considered to be "carried by anyone for the player during the round" and are allowed to be assembled by the player or anyone else.
Cleaning Lifted Ball	Rule 14.1c Interpretation 14.1c/1 (pp. 189-190)	If a player lifts his or her ball that has grass or other debris sticking to it and throws it to his or her caddie who catches it with a towel, it is likely that some of the grass or other debris will be removed, meaning the ball has been cleaned. Similarly, if the player places that ball in his or her pocket or drops it onto the ground, these acts could result in some of the grass or other debris being removed from that ball, meaning that it has been cleaned. However, if the player takes these actions after lifting a ball that was known to be clean before it was lifted, the player is not considered to have cleaned the ball.
Club	Rule 4.1b(1) Interpretation 4.1b(1)/1 (pp. 58-59)	With respect to Rule 4.1b(1), separated parts of a club are not a club and do not count towards a player's 14-club limit.
Completing Play of a Hole	Rule 6.5 (p. 105) Rule 21.1b (p. 295)	In match play, a player has completed a hole when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player holes out or the player's next stroke is conceded, or • The result of the hole is decided (such as when the opponent concedes the hole, the opponent's score for the hole is lower than the player possibly could make or the player or opponent gets the general penalty, i.e., loss of hole). In stroke play, a player has completed a hole when the player holes out under Rule 3.3. In a Stableford competition, the hole is completed when the player holes out, chooses not to do so or when his or her score will result in zero points.

Completing Play of a Hole (cont.)	<p>Rule 21.2b (p. 298)</p> <p>Rule 21.3b (p. 300)</p> <p>Rule 23.3c (p. 315)</p>	<p>In a Maximum Score competition, the hole is completed when the player holes out, chooses not to do so or when his or her score has reached the maximum.</p> <p>In a Par/Bogey competition, the hole is completed when the player holes out, chooses not to do so or when his or her score exceeds the fixed score.</p> <p>For a Four-Ball competition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In match play, a side has completed a hole when both partners have holed out or had their next strokes conceded or either side has conceded the hole. • In stroke play, a side has completed a hole when one of the partners has holed out and the other partner has either holed out or chooses not to do so.
Completing Play of His or Her Final Round for That Day	Rule 5.2b Interpretation 5.2b/1 (pp. 74-76)	In stroke play, a player has completed his or her final round for that day when he or she will not play any more holes that day on the course as part of the competition.
Damaged During a Round	Rule 4.1a(2) (p. 57)	<p>“Damaged during a round” means when the club’s performance characteristics are changed because of any act during the round (Including while play is stopped under Rule 5.7a), whether:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the player (such as making a stroke or practice swing with the club, putting it in or taking it out of a golf bag, dropping or leaning on it, or throwing or abusing it), or • By any other person, outside influence or natural forces.
Damage on the Putting Green	Rule 13.1c(2) (p. 174)	<p>“Damage on the putting green” means any damage caused by a person or outside influence, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ball marks, shoe damage (such as spike marks) and scrapes or indentations caused by equipment or a flagstick, • Old hole plugs, turf plugs, seams of cut turf and scrapes or indentations from maintenance tools or vehicles, • Animal tracks or hoof indentations, and • Embedded objects (such as a stone, acorn or tee). <p>But “damage on the putting green” does not include any damage or conditions that result from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Normal practices for maintaining the overall condition of the putting green (such as aeration holes and grooves from vertical mowing), • Irrigation or rain or other natural forces, • Natural surface imperfections (such as weeds or areas of bare, diseased or uneven growth), or • Natural wear of the hole.
Dangerous Animal Condition	Rule 16.2a (p. 235)	A “dangerous animal condition” exists when a dangerous animal (such as poisonous snakes, stinging bees, alligators, fire ants or bears) near a ball could cause serious physical injury to the player if he or she had to play the ball as it lies.
Dangerous Course Condition	Interpretation 16.2a/1 (p. 235)	A dangerous course condition is a plant or bush that could cause physical harm, such as poison ivy or a cactus. While the player may be faced with challenging circumstances or may be allergic to a given plant, he or she is not entitled to free relief under the Rules.
Deliberately Deflected or Stopped	<p>Rule 11.2a (p. 160)</p> <p>Rule 13.2b(2) (p. 184)</p> <p>Rule 14.3d (p. 202)</p>	<p>A player’s ball in motion is deliberately deflected or stopped by a person when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person deliberately touches the ball in motion, or • The ball in motion hits any equipment or other object (except a ball-marker or another ball at rest before the ball was played or otherwise went into motion) or any person (such as the player’s caddie) that a player deliberately positioned or left in a particular location so that the equipment, object or person might deflect or stop the ball in motion. <p>For purposes of Rule 13.2b, “deliberately deflected or stopped” means the same thing as in Rule 11.2a, and includes when the player’s ball in motion hits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A removed flagstick that was deliberately positioned or left in a particular place on the ground so that it might deflect or stop the ball, • An attended flagstick that the person deliberately failed to remove from the hole or to move out of the way of the ball. • The person who attended or removed the flagstick (or anything the person was holding), when he or she deliberately failed to move out of the way of the ball. <p>For purposes of Rule 14.3d, a dropped ball is “deliberately deflected or stopped” when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A person deliberately touches the ball in motion after it hits the ground, or • The ball in motion hits any equipment or other object or any person (such as the player’s caddie) that a player deliberately positioned or left in a particular location so that the equipment, object or person might deflect or stop the ball in motion.
Disqualification Penalty	Rule 1.3c(2) (p. 28)	In both match play and stroke play, a player may be disqualified from the competition for certain actions or Rule breaches involving serious misconduct (see Rule 1.2) or where the potential advantage is too significant for the player’s score to be considered valid.

During a Round	Rule 5.1 (p. 74)	When a Rule refers to actions taken “during a round”, that does not include while play is stopped under Rule 5.7a unless the Rule states otherwise.
Embedded [When Ball Is]	Rule 16.3a(2) (pp. 236-237)	<p>A player’s ball is embedded only if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is in its own pitch-mark made as a result of the player’s previous stroke, and • Part of the ball is below the level of the ground. <p>If the player cannot tell for sure whether the ball is in its own pitch-mark or a pitch-mark made by another ball, the player may treat the ball as embedded if it is reasonable to conclude from the available information that the ball is in its own pitch-mark.</p> <p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ball is pushed into the ground by someone stepping on it, • The ball is driven straight into the ground without becoming airborne, or • The ball was dropped in taking relief under a Rule.
Exceptional Circumstances	Exception 3 to Rule 5.3a Interpretation 5.3a/1 (pp. 77-78)	The term “exceptional circumstances” in Exception 3 under Rule 5.3a does not mean unfortunate or unexpected events outside a player’s control. It is a player’s responsibility to allow enough time to reach the course and he or she must make allowances for possible delays. There is no specific guidance in the Rules for deciding what is exceptional, as it depends on the circumstances in each case and must be left up to the determination of the Committee. One important factor is that consideration should be given to a situation where multiple players are involved to the extent that the Committee should consider the situation to be exceptional.
Fair Search	Rule 7.1a Interpretation 7.1a/1 (pp. 108-109)	<p>The player may fairly search for his or her ball by taking reasonable actions to find and identify it, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving sand and water, and • Moving or bending grass, bushes, tree branches and other growing or attached natural objects, and also breaking such objects, but only if such breaking is a result of other reasonable actions taken to find or identify the ball. <p>Examples of actions that are unlikely to be considered reasonable as part of a fair search include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking an action to flatten areas of grass beyond what is reasonably necessary to walk through or search for the ball in the area where the ball is thought to lie. • Purposely removing any growing thing from the ground. • Breaking a tree branch to allow easier access to the ball when it could have been reached without doing so.
Fairly Taking a Stance	Rule 8.1b(6) Interpretation 8.1b/3 Interpretation 8.1b/4 (pp. 118-120)	<p>Fairly taking a stance means taking reasonable actions to get to the ball and take a stance. In doing so, the player is not entitled to a normal stance or swing, and the player must use the least intrusive course of action to deal with the particular situation.</p> <p>Examples of actions that are considered fairly taking a stance and are allowed under Rule 8.1b even if the action results in improvement include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Backing into a branch or boundary object when that is the only way to take a stance for the selected stroke, even if this moves the branch or boundary object out of the way or causes it to bend or break. • Bending a branch with his or her hands to get under a tree to play a ball when that is the only way to get under the tree to take a stance. <p>Examples of actions that are not considered fairly taking a stance and will result in a penalty under Rule 8.1a if they improve conditions affecting the stroke include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberately moving, bending or breaking branches with a hand, a leg or the body to get them out of the way of the backswing or stroke. • Standing on tall grass or weeds in a way that pushes them down and to the side so that they are out of the way of the area of intended stance or swing when a stance could have been taken without doing so. • Hooking one branch on another or braiding two weeds to keep them away from the stance or swing. • Using a hand to bend a branch that obscures the view of the ball after taking the stance. • Bending an interfering branch in taking a stance when a stance could have been taken without doing so.
Forearm	Rule 10.1b (p. 146)	For the purposes of Rule 10.1b, “forearm” means the part of the arm below the elbow joint and includes the wrist.
General Penalty	Rule 1.3c(2) (p. 28)	The “general penalty” is loss of hole in match play or a two-stroke penalty in stroke play. This penalty applies for a breach of most Rules where the potential advantage is more significant than where only one penalty stroke applies.
Good Reason to Temporarily Interrupt Search for Ball	Definition of “Lost” (p. 345)	Good reasons to temporarily interrupt the search include when play is suspended or the player needs to stand aside to wait for another player to play.

Gross Score	Rule 3.1c (p. 37)	The player's "gross score" for a hole or the round is his or her total number of strokes (including strokes made and penalty strokes). The player's handicap is not applied.
Ground	Rule 6.2b(2) (p. 95) Rule 14.3c(2) Interpretation 14.3c(2)/(2) (pp. 200-201)	For purposes of Rule 6.2b(2), "ground" includes sand or other natural materials put in place to set the tee or ball on. If the player is dropping into a bush in the relief area, and with both drops the ball comes to rest outside the relief area, Rule 14.3c(2) provides that he or she must place a ball on the spot it first touched the ground after the second drop. If the ball first struck the bush when dropped for the second time, the "ground" includes the bush, and the player must attempt to place the ball where it first struck the bush. But, if the placed ball does not stay on that spot after two attempts, the player must place the ball on the nearest spot not nearer the hole where the ball will stay at rest, subject to the limits in Rule 14.2e.
Ground the Club Lightly	Rule 8.1b(4) Interpretation 8.1b/1 (pp. 118-119)	"Ground the club lightly" means allowing the weight of the club to be supported by the grass, soil, sand or other material on or above the ground surface.
Handicap Competition	Rule 3.1c(1) (p. 37)	In a handicap competition, the player's gross score is adjusted for the player's handicap strokes to produce the player's net score.
Interference by Abnormal Course Condition	Rule 16.1a (p. 222-223)	Interference exists when any one of these is true: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player's ball touches or is in or on an abnormal course condition, • An abnormal course condition physically interferes with the player's area of intended stance or area of intended swing, or • Only when the ball is on the putting green, an abnormal course condition on or off the putting green intervenes on the line of play. <p>If the abnormal course condition is close enough to distract the player but does not meet any of these requirements, there is no interference under this Rule.</p>
Interference by Another Player's Ball	Rule 15.3b(1) (p. 220)	Interference under this Rule exists when another player's ball at rest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Might interfere with the player's area of intended stance or area of intended swing, • Is on or close to the player's line of play such that, given the intended stroke, there is a reasonable chance the player's ball in motion could hit that ball, or • Is close enough to distract the player in making the stroke.
Interference by Wrong Green	Rule 13.1f(1) (p. 178)	Interference by a wrong green exists when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any part of the player's ball touches a wrong green or lies on or in anything (such as a loose impediment or an obstruction) and is inside the edge of a wrong green, or • A wrong green physically interferes with the player's area of intended stance or area of intended swing.
Intervening Event	Rule 1.3c(4) Interpretation 1.3c(4)/1 (pp. 29-30)	The three types of intervening events where the player will get multiple penalties are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a stroke • Putting a ball in play • Becoming aware of a breach
Knee Height	Rule 14.3a(2) (pp. 196-197)	"Knee height" means the height of the player's knee when in a standing position.
Lateral Relief Option	Rule 17.1d(3) (p. 246) Rule 19.2c (p. 271)	For a ball in a red penalty area, the player may drop the original ball or another ball outside the penalty area within the lateral relief area which is two club-lengths from, and not nearer the hole than, the estimated point where the original ball last crossed the edge of the red penalty area. For an unplayable ball, the player may drop the original ball or another ball in the lateral relief area which is two club-lengths from, and not nearer the hole than, the spot of the original ball. For an unplayable ball in a bunker, the ball must be dropped in the bunker.
Levels of Penalties	Rule 1.3c(2) (p. 28)	There are three main penalty levels: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-Stroke Penalty • General Penalty • Disqualification
Lifting	Rule 14.1 Interpretation 14.1a/1 (pp. 188-189)	The deliberate "lifting" of a player's ball at rest includes picking up the ball by hand, rotating it or otherwise deliberately causing it to move from its spot. There are no restrictions on how a ball may be lifted so long as the ball is not lifted in a way that deliberately tests the putting green (Rule 13.1e). For example, after the spot of the ball is marked on the putting green, the player may lift the ball with the back of the putter or may move it to the side with a club.

Mark the Spot	Rule 14.1a Interpretation 14.1a/2 (pp. 188-189)	<p>“Mark the spot” means to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place a ball-marker right behind or right next to the ball, or • Hold a club on the ground right behind or right next to the ball. <p>A ball may be marked in any position around the ball so long as it is marked right next to it, and this includes placing a ball-marker in front of or to the side of the ball.</p>
Moving Ball	Rule 10.1d (p. 148)	A ball in play is “moving” when it is not at rest on a spot. If a ball that has come to rest is wobbling (sometimes referred to as oscillating) but stays on or returns to its original spot, it is treated as being at rest and is not a moving ball.
“Naked Eye” Standard	Rule 20.2c (p. 290)	<p>When the Committee is deciding questions of fact in making a ruling, the use of video evidence is limited by the “naked eye” standard:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the facts shown on the video could not reasonably have been seen with the naked eye, that video evidence will be disregarded even if it indicates a breach of the Rules. • But even where video evidence is disregarded under the “naked eye” standard, a breach of the Rules will still be found if the player was otherwise aware of facts establishing a breach (such as where the player felt the club touch sand in a bunker even though that could not be seen by the naked eye).
Net Score	Rule 3.1c (p.37)	The player’s handicap is applied, and the “net score” for a hole or the round is the gross score adjusted for the player’s handicap strokes.
No Penalty If No Effect on Result of Hole	Exception to Rule 3.2d(1) Interpretation 3.2d(1)(2) (p. 43)	In match play, after a hole is completed, if a player gives the wrong number of strokes taken, there is no penalty under the Exception to Rule 3.2d(1) if doing so did not affect the opponent’s understanding of whether the hole was won, lost or tied.
Normal Use	Rule 4.1a Interpretation 4.1a(1)/1 (p. 56)	Normal use includes strokes, practice strokes and practice swings, as well as acts such as removing a club from and replacing a club into the golf bag.
Not “Playing” the Provisional Ball	Interpretation 18.3c(1)/1 (p. 262)	Taking actions other than a stroke with a provisional ball, such as dropping, placing or substituting another ball nearer to the hole than where the original ball is estimated to be are not “playing” the provisional ball and do not cause that ball to lose its status as a provisional ball.
One-Stroke Penalty	Rule 1.3c(2) (p. 28)	This penalty applies in both match play and stroke play under certain Rules where either (a) the potential advantage from a breach is minor or (b) a player takes penalty relief by playing a ball from a different place than where the original ball lies.
Penalty Strokes Solely from Playing That Ball	Rule 6.3c(1) Interpretation 6.3c(1)/1 (p. 100)	<p>When the strokes made at a particular ball, do not count in the player’s score, any penalty strokes that the player gets while playing that ball do not count unless the player gets a penalty that could also apply to his or her ball in play.</p> <p>Examples of penalties that are disregarded because they could not also apply to the ball in play include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberately touching or causing the ball to move (Rule 9.4). • The player’s caddie standing behind the player while taking a stance (Rule 10.2b(4)). • Touching sand in the backswing for the stroke (Rule 12.2b(2)). <p>Examples of penalties that are not disregarded because they also apply to the ball in play include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a practice stroke during a hole (Rule 5.5a). • Playing a wrong ball (Rule 6.3c(1)). • Asking for or giving advice (Rule 10.2a)
Performance Characteristics	Rule 4.1a (p.55)	“Performance characteristics” means any part of the club that affects how it performs in making a stroke, such as its grip, shaft, clubhead or lie or loft (including lie or loft of an adjustable club).
Played Out of the Bunker	Rule 12.2b(3) Interpretation 12.2b(3)/1 (p. 171)	The term “played out of the bunker” in Rule 12.2b(3) also includes taking relief outside the bunker.
“Practice” Ball	Rule 4.2a(1) Interpretation 4.2a(1)/2 (p. 64)	“Practice” balls are typically listed, conforming golf balls that have been stamped “Practice” or with a similar stamping. “Practice” balls are treated in the same way as golf balls that feature a golf club or course, company, school or other logo.
Practice Stroke	Rule 5.5a Interpretation 5.5a/1 (p. 80)	<p>A “practice stroke” under Rule 5.5a covers not only hitting a conforming ball with a club, but hitting any other type of ball that is similar in size to a golf ball, such as a plastic practice ball. These are not practice strokes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A practice swing made with no intent to strike a ball. • Hitting a ball back to a practice area or to another player, when done solely as a courtesy. • Strokes made by a player in playing out a hole whose result has been decided. • Striking a tee or natural object (such as a stone or pine cone) with a club.

Practising on the Course	Rule 5.2 (p. 74)	“Practising on the course” means playing a ball or testing the surface of the putting green of any hole by rolling a ball or rubbing the surface.
Push	Rule 10.1a Interpretation 10.1a/1 (p. 145)	A player holes a short putt by striking the ball with the bottom of the clubhead, using a motion similar to that used in making a shot in billiards or shuffleboard. Moving the ball like this is a push.
Ready Golf	Rule 6.4b(2) (p. 103)	In stroke play, playing out of turn in a safe and responsible way for convenience or to save time.
Ready to Play	Rule 5.3a Interpretation 5.3a/3 (pp. 77-78)	The term “ready to play” means that the player has at least one club and ball ready for immediate use.
Reasonable/ Unreasonable Actions Causing Ball to Move	Exception 4 to Rule 9.4b Interpretation 9.4b/5 (pp. 138-139)	<p>In many situations, the Rules require a player to perform actions near or next to the ball (such as lifting, marking, measuring, etc.). If the ball is accidentally moved while taking these “reasonable actions”, Exception 4 to Rule 9.4 applies. However, there are other situations when the player is taking actions farther from the ball where, even though the ball might be moved as a result of those actions, Exception 4 also applies because those actions are “reasonable”. These include when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player approaches his or her ball for the purpose of taking relief and accidentally kicks a rock or accidentally drops his or her club that strikes and moves the ball. • The player removes stakes and rope (movable obstructions) used for gallery control purposes some distance ahead of the ball and in removing one of the stakes, he or she causes the others to become loose and fall to the ground, moving his or her ball in play. • The player restores the line of play by brushing sand away from the fringe with his or her hat under Rule 8.1d (Restoring Conditions Worsened After Ball Came to Rest), and the sand splashes onto the ball and causes it to move. <p>In other situations, Exception 4 to Rule 9.4 does not apply because the player’s actions are not “reasonable”. These include when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player approaches his or her ball to take relief and kicks a rock in frustration that accidentally strikes and moves the ball. • The player throws a club down into the relief area in preparing to measure, and the club accidentally strikes and moves the ball. • The player lifts a bunker rake or his or her club and throws it out of a bunker. The rake or club falls back into the bunker, striking and moving the ball.
Reasonable vs. Unreasonable Actions as Part of a Fair Search	Rule 7.1a Interpretation 7.1a/1 (pp. 108-109)	<p>The player may fairly search for the ball by taking reasonable actions to find and identify it, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moving sand and water, and • Moving or bending grass, bushes, tree branches and other growing or attached natural objects, and also breaking such objects, but only if such breaking is a result of other reasonable actions taken to find or identify the ball. <p>Examples of unreasonable actions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taking an action to flatten areas of grass beyond what is reasonably necessary to walk through or search for the ball in the area where the ball is thought to be. • Purposely removing any growing thing from the ground, or • Breaking a tree branch to allow easier access to the ball when it could have been reached without doing so. <p>Examples of reasonable actions include when the player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believes his or her ball has come to rest in a tree and shakes the tree hoping to dislodge and find the ball, or • Is walking through long grass while sweeping his or her feet back and forth hoping to step on or move the ball to find it.
Reasonable Judgement	Rule 1.3b(2) (p. 27)	<p>The player doing what can be reasonably expected under the circumstances to make an accurate determination of a spot, point, line, area or other location under the Rules, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Estimating where a ball last crossed the edge of a penalty area. » Estimating or measuring when dropping or placing a ball in taking relief. » Replacing a ball on its original spot (whether the spot is known or estimated).
Reasonable Time for Player to Reach the Hole	Rule 13.3a Interpretation 13.3a/1 (pp. 185-186)	<p>Determining the limits of a reasonable time to reach the hole depends on the circumstances of the stroke and includes time for a player’s natural or spontaneous reaction to the ball not going into the hole.</p> <p>For example, a player may have played the shot from well off the putting green and it may take him or her several minutes to reach the hole while other players play their shots and all walk to the putting green. Or, the player may need to take an indirect route to the hole by walking around the line of play of another player on the putting green.</p>

“Refurbished” Ball	Rule 4.2a(1) Interpretation 4.2a(1)/2 (p. 64)	“Refurbished” refers to a second-hand golf ball that has been cleaned and stamped as “refurbished” or a similar stamping.
Related Acts	Rule 1.3c(4) Interpretation 1.3c(4)/3 (p.31)	Examples of related acts in the context of Rule 1.3c/4 where only one penalty applies include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making several practice swings that touch sand in a bunker. • Asking for two different pieces of advice, such as what club the player used and what the wind direction is, both related to the process of selecting what club to use for the next stroke.
Repair	Rule 4.1a(2) Interpretation 4.1a(2)/1 (pp. 56-57)	Examples of repair include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replacing lead tape that fell off during a stroke. Given the nature of lead tape, if the lead tape will not remain on the club in the same location, new tape may be used. • Tightening clubs with adjustable mechanisms that come loose during the round, but not adjusting the club to a different setting.
Replaced Divot	Interpretation 8.1a/9 (p. 117)	A divot has been replaced when most of it, with the roots down, is in a divot hole (whether or not the divot is in the same divot hole that it came from).
Rules	Rule 1.3a (p. 24)	The “Rules” means: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules 1-24 and the Definitions in these Rules of Golf, and • Any “Local Rules” the Committee adopts for the competition or the course.
Rules Allow the Procedure Used	Rule 20.1c(4) (pp. 288-289)	“Rules allow the procedure used” means that either: (a) the original ball was played as it lies and play was allowed from there, or (b) the ball that was played was put in play under the right procedure, in the right way and in the right place under the Rules.
Ruling Request	Rule 20.1b(2) (p. 281)	When a player wants a referee or the Committee to decide how to apply the Rules to his or her own play or the opponent’s play, the player may make a request for a ruling.
Ruling Request Made “In Time”	Rule 20.1b(2) Interpretation 20.1b(2)/1 (pp. 281-282)	In match play, a ruling will be given only if the request is made in time, which depends on when the player becomes aware of the facts creating the Rules issue: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » <u>When Player Becomes Aware of the Facts Before Either Player Starts the Final Hole of the Match.</u> When the player becomes aware of the facts, the ruling request must be made before either player makes a stroke to begin another hole. » <u>When Player Becomes Aware of the Facts During or After Completion of the Final Hole of the Match.</u> The ruling request must be made before the result of the match is final (see Rule 3.2a(5)). <p>If the player requests a ruling about an earlier hole, a ruling will be given only if all three of these apply:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The opponent breached Rule 3.2d(1) (giving wrong number of strokes taken) or Rule 3.2d(2) (failing to tell the player about a penalty), • The request is based on facts the player was not aware of before either player made a stroke to begin the hole being played or, if between holes, the hole just completed, and • After becoming aware of these facts, the player makes a request for a ruling in time (as set out above).
Sand	Definition of “Bunker” (p. 331)	The word “sand” as used in this Definition and Rule 12 includes any material similar to sand that is used as bunker material (such as crushed shells), as well as any soil that is mixed in with the sand.
Scoop	Rule 10.1a Interpretation 10.1a/1 (pp. 145-146)	A player slides a club beneath and very close to the ball. The player then lifts and moves the ball by use of a forward and upward motion. Moving the ball like this is a scoop.
Scrape	Rule 10.1a Interpretation 10.1a/1 (pp. 145-146)	A player moves the club along the surface of the ground pulling it towards him or her. Moving the ball like this is a scrape.
Scratch Competition	Rule 3.1c(1) (p. 37)	In a scratch competition, the player’s handicap is not applied to the player’s gross score for a hole or the round.
Serious Breach	Rule 14.7b (p. 209)	A serious breach means that the player gained a significant advantage by playing from a wrong place.

Serious Misconduct	Rule 1.2a Interpretation 1.2a/1 (p.23)	Player misconduct that is so far removed from the expected norm in golf that the most severe sanction of removing a player from the competition is justified. This includes dishonesty, deliberately interfering with another player's rights, or endangering the safety of others.
Spirit of the Game	Rule 1.2 (p. 22)	All players are expected to play in the spirit of the game by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting with integrity • Showing considerations to others • Taking good care of the course
Spot Where Ball Is Replaced	Rule 14.2c Interpretation 14.2c/1 (pp. 192-193)	The "spot" of the ball includes its vertical location relative to the ground.
Starting Point	Rule 5.3a Interpretation 5.3a/2 (pp. 77-78)	The "starting point" is the teeing area of the hole where the player will start his or her round as set by the Committee. For example, the Committee may start some groups on the 1 st tee and some groups on the 10 th tee. In a "shotgun" start, the Committee may assign each group a different hole to start on. The Committee may set a standard for what it means for the player to be at the starting point. For example, the Committee may state that, to be at the starting point, the player must be within the gallery ropes of the teeing area of the hole to be played.
Starting Time	Rule 5.3a (p. 77)	A starting time set by the Committee is treated as an exact time (for example, 9 am means 9:00:00 am, not any time until 9:01 am).
Stopping Play	Rule 5.7a Interpretation 5.7a/1 (pp. 85-86) Rule 5.7b Interpretation 5.7b/1 (pp. 86-88)	Stopping play in the context of Rule 5.7a can either be an intentional act by the player or it can be a delay long enough to constitute stopping. Examples where the Committee is likely to disqualify a player under Rule 5.7a for stopping play include when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player walks off the course in frustration with no intent to return. • The player stops in the clubhouse after nine holes for an extended time to watch television or have lunch when the Committee has not allowed for this. • The player takes shelter from rain for a significant amount of time. Stopping play in the context of Rule 5.7b means making no further strokes. Therefore, if, after a suspension of play, a player proceeds under a Rule, such as by dropping a ball, determining the nearest point of complete relief, or continuing a search, there is no penalty.
Team	Rule 24.1 (p. 324)	A "team" is a group of players who play as individuals or as sides to compete against other teams. Their play in the team event may also be part of another competition (such as individual stroke play) that takes place at the same time.
Team Captain	Rule 24.3 (p. 325)	Each team may name a team captain to lead the team and make decisions for it, such as which players on the team will play in which rounds or matches, in what order they will play and who will play together as partners. The team captain may be a player in the competition.
Terms of the Competition	Rule 1.3a (p. 25) Committee Procedures Section 5A (pp. 396-405)	Players are also responsible for complying with all "Terms of the Competition" adopted by the Committee such as entry requirements, the form and dates of play, the number of rounds, and the number and order of holes in a round.
Testing of Greens	Rule 13.1e Interpretation 13.1e/1 (pp. 177-178)	During a round and while play is stopped under Rule 5.7a, a player must not deliberately rub the surface or roll a ball to test the putting green or a wrong green. An example of testing is when a player roughens or scrapes the grass on the putting green to determine which way the grain is growing. However, a player may place the palm or his or her hand on the surface of the putting green to determine the wetness of the putting green. Also, a player may rub a ball on the putting green to clean off mud.
Threesomes	Rule 22.1 (p. 305)	Threesomes is a variation of Foursomes match play where an individual player competes against a side of two partners who play alternating shots.
Trying to Find	Rule 9.4b Interpretation 9.4b/2 (p. 137)	"Trying to find" includes actions that can reasonably be considered part of searching for the ball including the actions allowed by Rule 7.4 (How to Fairly Search for Ball). It does not include actions before a search begins such as walking to the area where the ball is expected to be.

Unreasonable and Reasonable Delays	Rule 5.6a Interpretation 5.6a/1 Interpretation 5.6a/2 (pp. 83-84)	Unreasonable delays in the context of Rule 5.6a are delays caused by a player's actions that are within the player's control and affect other players or delay the competition. Brief delays that are a result of normal events that happen during a round or are outside the player's control are generally treated as "reasonable." Determining which actions are reasonable or unreasonable depends on all the circumstances, including whether the player is waiting for other players in the group or the group ahead. Examples of actions that are likely to be treated as reasonable are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefly stopping by the clubhouse or half-way house to get food or drink. • Taking time to consult with others in the group to decide whether or not to play out the hole when there is a normal suspension of play by the Committee. Examples of actions that, if causing more than a brief delay in play, are likely to be treated as unreasonable are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Returning to the teeing area from the putting green to retrieve a lost club. • Continuing to search for a lost ball for several minutes after the allowed three-minute search time has expired. • Stopping by the clubhouse or half-way house to get food or drink for more than a few minutes if the Committee has not allowed for it. • Failure to continue play after a 15-minute recovery period for a sudden illness or injury.
Unrelated Acts	Rule 1.3c(4) Interpretation 1.3c(4)/3 Interpretation 1.3c(4)/4 (pp. 30-32)	Unrelated acts in the context of Rule 1.3c/4 are acts of the player that are of a different type or associated with a different process. Examples of unrelated acts where multiple penalties apply include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making a practice swing that touches sand in a bunker and bending an overhanging tree branch that interferes with the player's swing. • Moving an immovable obstruction that improves the area of the player's swing and pressing down grass behind the ball. Per Interpretation 1.3c(4)/4, the failure to replace a moved ball may be considered a separate and unrelated act.
Wear Through Normal Use	Rule 4.1a Interpretation 4.1a(1)/1 (p. 56)	Examples of wear through normal use include when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Material inside a clubhead has broken loose and may rattle during the stroke or when the head is shaken. • A wear mark has formed on the club's grip where the thumbs are placed. • A depression is formed on the face of the club through repeated use. • The grooves on the club's face are worn.
When Ball Is in Penalty Area	Rule 17.1a (p. 242) Interpretation 17.1a/1 Interpretation 17.1a/2 (p. 243)	A ball is in a penalty area when any part of the ball: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lies on or touches the ground or anything else (such as any natural or artificial object) inside the edge of the penalty area, or • Is above the edge or any other part of the penalty area. A ball is in a penalty area even if the penalty area is improperly marked. If it is known or virtually certain that the ball has come to rest in a penalty area and an adjacent abnormal course condition, but both are equally likely, the ball is deemed to be in the penalty area.
When Ball Is in Teeing Area	Rule 6.2b (p. 94)	A ball is in the teeing area when any part of the ball touches or is above any part of the teeing area.
When Ball Is on Putting Green	Rule 13.1a (p. 173)	A ball is on the putting green when any part of the ball: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Touches the putting green, or • Lies on or in anything (such as a loose impediment or an obstruction) and is inside the edge of the putting green. If part of the ball is both on the putting green and in another area of the course, see Rule 2.2c.
When Ball Is Out of Bounds	Rule 18.2a(2) (p. 257)	A ball at rest is out of bounds only when all of it is outside the boundary edge of the course. A ball is in bounds when any part of the ball: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lies on or touches the ground or anything else (such as any natural or artificial object) inside the boundary edge, or • Is above the boundary edge or any other part of the course.
When Hole Starts	Rule 6.1a (p. 92)	A player has started a hole when he or she makes a stroke to begin the hole. The hole has started even if the stroke was made from outside the teeing area or the stroke was cancelled under a Rule.
When Player Is Between the Play of Two Holes	Rule 5.5b Interpretation 5.5b/1 (pp. 80-81)	A player is between holes when the player has completed play of the previous hole, or in a form of play involving a partner, when the side has completed play of the previous hole.

When Player Has Begun to Take His or Her Stance	Rule 10.2b(4) Interpretation 10.2b(4)/1 (pp. 152-153)	<p>There is no set procedure for determining when a player has begun to take a stance since each player has his or her own set-up routine. However, if a player has his or her feet or body close to a position where useful guidance on aiming at the intended target could be given, it should be decided that the player has begun to take his or her stance.</p> <p>Examples of when a player has begun to take a stance include when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player is standing beside the ball but facing the hole with his or her club behind the ball, and then starts to turn his or her body to face the ball. • After standing behind the ball to determine the target line, the player takes a step forward and then starts to turn his or her body and puts a foot in place for the stroke.
When Provisional Ball Becomes the Ball in Play	Rule 18.3c(2) (p. 263)	<p>The provisional ball becomes the player's ball in play under penalty of stroke and distance in either of these two cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the original ball is lost anywhere on the course except in a penalty area or is out of bounds. • When the provisional ball is played from a spot nearer the hole than where the original ball is estimated to be.
When Result of Match Is Final	Rule 3.2a(5) (pp. 38-39)	<p>The result of a match becomes final in the way stated by the Committee (which should be set out in the Terms of the Competition), such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When the result is recorded on an official scoreboard or other identified place, or • When the result is reported to a person identified by the Committee.
When Round Ends	<p>Rule 5.3 (p. 79)</p> <p>Rule 21.1e (p. 297)</p> <p>Rule 21.2e (p. 299)</p> <p>Rule 21.3e (p. 302)</p> <p>Rule 23.3b (p. 315)</p>	<p>A player's round ends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In match play, when the result of the match is decided under Rule 3.3a(3) or (4). • In stroke play, when the player holes out at the final hole (including correction of a mistake, such as under Rule 6.1 or 14.7b) <p>In a Stableford competition (Rule 21.1), a player's round ends when the player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holes out on his or her final hole (including correction of a mistake, such as under Rule 6.1 or 14.7b), or • Chooses not to hole out on the final hole or already cannot get more than zero points on the hole. <p>In a Maximum Score competition (Rule 21.2), a player's round ends when the player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holes out on his or her final hole (including correction of a mistake, such as under Rule 6.1 or 14.7b), or • Chooses not to hole out on the final hole or already will get the maximum score on the hole. <p>In a Par/Bogey competition (Rule 21.3), a player's round ends when the player:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holes out on his or her final hole (including correction of a mistake, such as under Rule 6.1 or 14.7b), or • Chooses not to hole out on the final hole or has already lost the hole. <p>In a Four-Ball competition, the side's round ends:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In match play, when either side has won the match (see Rules 3.2a(3) and (4)). • In stroke play, when the side completes the final hole, either by both partners holing out (including correction of a mistake, such as under Rule 6.1 or 14.7b), or by one partner holing out on the final hole and the other partner choosing not to do so.
When Round Starts	<p>Rule 5.3a (p. 77)</p> <p>Rule 22.4a (p. 308)</p> <p>Rule 23.3a (p. 315)</p>	<p>A player's round starts when the player makes a stroke to start his or her first hole.</p> <p>In a Foursomes event, the side's round starts when that partner makes a stroke to start the side's first hole.</p> <p>In Four-ball events, the side's round starts when one of the partners makes a stroke to start his or her round.</p>
While	Exception 4 to Rule 9.4b Interpretation 9.4b/4 (p. 138)	<p>Exception 4 uses "while" to govern the time period when the Exception will apply to a player who moves his or her ball in play as a result of "reasonable actions." The use of the word "while" indicates that every reasonable action in applying a Rule has a beginning and an end and, if the ball's movement occurs during the time that such action is taking place, the Exception applies.</p> <p>Examples of situations covered by Exception 4, therefore resulting in no penalty for causing the ball to move, include when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The player finds a ball that he or she believes to be his or her ball in play. In the process of identification, the player approaches the ball to mark and lift it and accidentally slips and moves the ball. Even though the player was not marking or lifting the ball when it was moved, it was still moved while the player was identifying the ball. • The player has dropped a ball when taking relief and then reaches down to lift the tee that was marking the relief area. When standing up, he or she accidentally drops a club that he or she was holding and the club hits and moves the ball in play. Even though the player has already dropped the ball to take relief, the ball was moved while he or she was taking relief.
Winner in Stroke Play	Rule 3.3a (p. 47)	The player who completes all rounds in the fewest total strokes (including strokes made and penalty strokes).

Wrong Ruling	Rule 20.2d Interpretation 20.2d/1 (p. 290)	A wrong ruling has occurred when a referee or the Committee has attempted to apply the Rules to a situation but has done so incorrectly, for example, by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Misinterpreting or misunderstanding a Rule, • Failing to apply a Rule, or • Applying a Rule that was not applicable or does not exist.
"X-Out" Ball	Rule 4.2a(1) Interpretation 4.2a(1)/2 (p. 64)	"X-Out" is the common name used for a golf ball that a manufacturer considers to be imperfect (often for aesthetic reasons only, such as paint or printing errors).