

# What is Golf?

“Golf, a cross-country game in which a player strikes a small ball with various clubs from a series of starting points (teeing grounds) into a series of holes on a course. The player who holes his ball in the fewest strokes wins. The origins of the game are difficult to ascertain, although evidence now suggests that early forms of golf were played in the Netherlands first and then in Scotland.”

Source: <https://www.britannica.com/sports/golf>

## Is it a team or single sport?

It is a single sport

## Rules of Golf

Source: <https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules/rules-2019/rules-of-golf/rules-and-interpretations.html#!ruletype=pe&section=rule&rulenum=4>

Purpose of Rule: Rule 1 introduces these central principles of the game:

- Play the course as you find it and play your ball as it lies.
- Play by the Rules and in the spirit of the game.
- You are responsible for applying your own penalties if you breach a Rule, so that you cannot gain any potential advantage over your opponent in match play or other players in stroke play.

Standards of player conduct:

All players are expected to play in the spirit of the game by:

- Acting with integrity – for example, by following the Rules, applying all penalties, and being honest in all aspects of play.
- Showing consideration to others – for example, by playing at a prompt pace, looking out for the safety of others, and not distracting the play of another player.

- Taking good care of the course – for example, by replacing divots, smoothing bunkers, repairing ball-marks, and not causing unnecessary damage to the course.

You should check to see whether the Committee has adopted a Code of Conduct, as you could get a penalty if you do not follow it.

Playing by the Rules:

A penalty applies when a breach of a Rule results from your own actions, the actions of your caddie, or the actions of another person acting with your authority or knowledge.

Penalties are meant to cancel out any potential advantage. There are three main penalty levels:

- One-Stroke Penalty: Applies in both match play and stroke play.
- General Penalty: Loss of hole in match play and a two-stroke penalty in stroke play.
- Disqualification: Applies both in match play and stroke play.

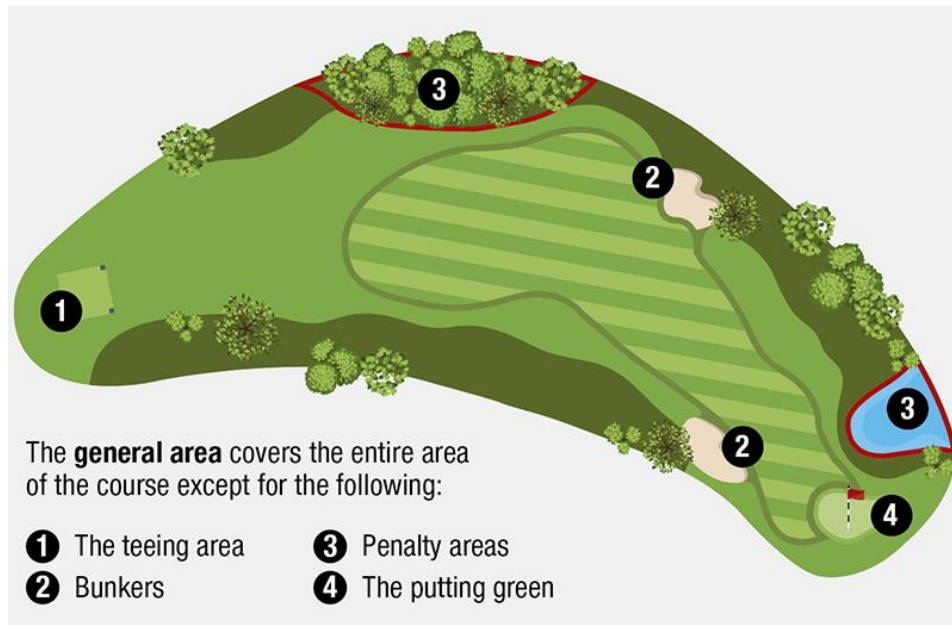
## The Course

Golf is played on a course. Areas not on the course are out of bounds.

There are five areas of the course. The general area, which covers the entire course except for the four specific areas.

- The teeing area of the hole you are playing,
- All penalty areas
- All bunkers , and
- The putting green of the hole you are playing.

It is important to know the area of the course where your ball lies as this affects the Rules that apply in playing your ball or taking relief.



Free relief (relief with no penalty) may be available from:

- Loose impediments ,
- Movable obstructions , and
- Abnormal course conditions, which are animal holes, ground under repair, immovable obstructions and temporary water .

But you do not get free relief from boundary objects or integral objects that interfere with your play.

A no play zone is a part of the course that you are not allowed to play your ball from. You must also take relief if the no play zone interferes with your stance or area of intended swing when playing a ball outside the no play zone.

## The Competition

Central elements of every competition:

Forms of Play. Match play and stroke play are very different forms of play:

- In match play, you and your opponent compete against each other based on holes won, lost or tied.

- In the regular form of stroke play, all players compete with one another based on each player's total score (Rule 21 covers other forms of stroke play that use a different scoring method).

You either play as an individual competing on your own or with a partner competing together as a side. Although Rules 1-20 focus on individual play, they also apply where partners and teams are included.

Gross or Net Scores. In a scratch competition, your "gross score" for a hole or the round is your total number of strokes. In a handicap competition, your "net score" for a hole or the round is your gross score adjusted for your handicap strokes.

## Match Play

### a. Result of Hole and Match

In match play the result of the hole or match is decided as follows:

- You win a hole when you complete the hole in fewer strokes than your opponent, your opponent concedes the hole, or your opponent gets the general penalty (loss of hole).
- You tie a hole (also known as "halved") when you and your opponent complete the hole in the same number of strokes.
- You win a match when you lead your opponent by more holes than remain to be played, your opponent concedes the match, or your opponent is disqualified.
- If your match is tied after the final hole and you need to establish a winner, the match is extended one hole at a time until there is a winner.

### b. Concessions

You may concede your opponent's next stroke, a hole or the match, but a concession is only made when it is clearly communicated.

A concession is final – you cannot withdraw it once made and your opponent cannot decline the concession.

### c. Applying Handicaps in Handicap Match

You and your opponent should tell each other your handicaps before the match. If you declare a wrong handicap and don't correct the mistake before your opponent makes a stroke:

- If the declared handicap is too high and this affects the number of strokes you get or give, you are disqualified.
- If the declared handicap is too low, there is no penalty and you must play off the lower handicap.

Handicap strokes are given by hole, and the lower net score wins the hole. If a tied match is extended, handicap strokes are given by hole in the same way as in the round.

#### d. Your Responsibilities in Match Play

You have a responsibility to:

- Tell your opponent the right number of strokes you have taken when asked,
- Make your opponent aware as soon as reasonably possible after you get a penalty, and
- Know the match score.

In a match, you should protect your own rights and interests under the Rules:

- If you know or believe that your opponent has breached a Rule that has a penalty, you may act on the breach or choose to ignore it.
- But if you and your opponent deliberately agree to ignore a breach or penalty you both know applies, you are both disqualified.
- If you and your opponent disagree whether one of you has breached a Rule, you may protect your rights by asking for a ruling

## Stroke Play

#### a. Winner in Stroke Play

The player who completes all rounds in the fewest total strokes is the winner.

#### b. Scoring in Stroke Play

**Marker's Responsibility.** After each hole during the round, your marker should confirm the number of strokes you took on that hole and enter that gross score on your scorecard.

When the round has ended, your marker must certify the hole scores on your scorecard. If you had more than one marker, each marker must certify the scores for those holes where he or she was your marker.

**Your Responsibility.** When the round has ended, you:

- Should carefully check the hole scores entered by your marker and raise any issues with the Committee,
- Must make sure that your marker certifies the hole scores on the scorecard,
- Must not change a hole score entered by your marker except with the marker's agreement or the Committee's approval, and
- Must certify the hole scores on the scorecard and promptly return it to the Committee, after which you must not change your scorecard.

If you breach any of these requirements, you are disqualified.

**Wrong Score for a Hole.** If you return a scorecard with a wrong score for any hole:

- If your returned score for a hole is higher than your actual score, your higher returned score for the hole stands.
- If your returned score for a hole is lower than your actual score or no score is returned for a hole, you are disqualified.

**Scoring in Handicap Competition.** You are responsible for making sure that your handicap is shown on your scorecard. If you return a scorecard without the right handicap:

- If the handicap on your scorecard is too high and this affects the number of strokes you get, or no handicap is shown, you are disqualified from the handicap competition.
- If the handicap on your scorecard is too low, there is no penalty and your net score stands using the lower handicap.

### c. Failure to Hole Out

You must hole out at each hole in a round. If you fail to do so, you must correct that mistake before making a stroke to begin another hole or, for the final hole of the round, before returning your scorecard.

If you do not correct the mistake in that time, you are disqualified.

## Player's Equipment

### a. Clubs Allowed in Making a Stroke

You must use a club that conforms to the requirements in the Equipment Rules.

If your conforming club is damaged during your round or while play is stopped, you may continue to make strokes with the damaged club for the rest of the round, or have your club repaired by restoring it as nearly as possible to its condition before the damage happened.

### b. Limit of 14 Clubs; Sharing, Adding or Replacing Clubs During Round

You must not start a round with more than 14 clubs or have more than 14 clubs during the round.

If you start a round with fewer than 14 clubs, you may add clubs during the round up to the 14-club limit.

When you become aware that you are in breach of this Rule by having more than 14 clubs, you must immediately take the excess club or clubs out of play, using the procedure in Rule 4.1c.

**Penalty for Breach of Rule 4.1b:** The penalty applies based on when you become aware of the breach:

- While playing the hole: The penalty is applied at the end of the hole you are playing. In match play, you must complete the hole, apply the result of that hole to the match score and then apply the penalty to adjust the match score.

- Between two holes: The penalty is applied as of the end of the hole just completed, not the next hole.

Penalty in Match Play - Match Score Revised by Deducting Hole, Maximum of Two Holes:

- This is a match adjustment penalty – it is not the same as a loss of hole penalty.
- At the end of the hole you are playing or just completed, the match score is revised by deducting one hole for each hole where a breach happened, with a maximum deduction of two holes in the round.
- For example, if you started with 15 clubs and become aware of the breach while playing the 3rd hole and then win that hole to go three up in the match, the maximum adjustment of two holes applies and you would now be one up in the match.

Penalty in Stroke Play - Two Penalty Strokes, Maximum of Four Strokes: You get the general penalty (two penalty strokes) for each hole where a breach happened, with a maximum of four penalty strokes in the round (adding two penalty strokes at each of the first two holes where a breach happened).

#### c. Procedure for Taking Clubs Out of Play

When you become aware during a round that you have more than 14 clubs or made a stroke with another player's club, you must immediately take an action that clearly indicates each club that you are taking out of play (such as by advising another player or turning the club upside down in your bag).

Penalty for Not Taking Immediate Action to Indicate Each Club that You are Taking Out of Play: Disqualification.

#### a. Balls Allowed in Play of Round

You must use a ball that conforms to the requirements in the Equipment Rules. You may get a conforming ball to play from anyone else, including another player on the course.

You must not make a stroke at a ball whose performance characteristics have been deliberately altered.

Penalty for Making Stroke in Breach of Rule 4.2a: Disqualification.



#### b. Ball Breaks into Pieces While Playing Hole

#### c. Ball Becomes Cut or Cracked While Playing Hole

If you reasonably believe that your ball has been cut or cracked while playing a hole, you may lift it to check. First, you must mark the spot of the ball and then lift it without cleaning it (except on the putting green).

If you lift your ball without having this reasonable belief, fail to mark the spot of the ball before lifting it, or clean it when not allowed, you get one penalty stroke.

You may only substitute another ball (by replacing it on the original spot) if it can be clearly seen that your original ball is cut or cracked and this damage happened during the hole you are playing – but not if it is only scratched or scraped or its paint is only damaged or discoloured.

Penalty for Playing Incorrectly Substituted Ball or Playing Ball from a Wrong Place in Breach of Rule 4.2c: General Penalty.

Rule 4.3 applies to all types of equipment that you might use during your round.

This Rule only concerns how you use equipment. It does not limit the equipment that you may have with you during a round.

#### a. Allowed and Prohibited Uses of Equipment

You may use equipment to help your play during a round, except that you must not create a potential advantage by:

- Using equipment (other than a club or a ball) that artificially eliminates or reduces the need for a skill or judgment that is essential to the challenge of the game, or
- Using equipment (including a club or a ball) in an abnormal way in making your stroke. “Abnormal way” means a way that is fundamentally different than its intended use and is not normally recognized as part of playing the game.

#### b. Equipment Used for Medical Reasons

Penalty for Breach of Rule 4.3:

Penalty for first breach: General Penalty.

Penalty for second breach: Disqualification. There are limited situations where a second breach is considered a related act to the first breach and therefore only the general penalty applies.