



Additional Clarifications of the 2023 Rules of Golf

Updated 3 July 2023

New additions will normally be updated on a quarterly basis each January, April, July, and October and the next quarterly update will be in October 2023.

New Additions

Rules

Rule 8.1:

Clarification 8.1a/10 – Player Allowed to Put Movable Part of Immovable Obstruction Back in Intended Position

Committee Procedures

Model Local Rule E-13 – Player May Remove Animals Not Defined As Loose Impediments From Near Ball

RULES

Rule 5:

Rule 5.2:

5.2b/3 – Application of Penalty for Practising on Course Before Round in Stroke Play

Rule 5.2b explains when a player is not allowed to practise on the course before a round in *stroke play*. The penalty statement in Rule 5.2b is not limited to making a *stroke* as the term “practising on the course” also includes testing the surface of the *putting green* by rolling a ball or rubbing the surface.

If a player rubs the surface of a single *green*, they have only breached Rule 5.2 once no matter how many times they rub the surface of the same *green*. (Added December 2022)

Rule 8

Rule 8.1:

8.1a/10 – Player Allowed to Put Movable Part of Immovable Obstruction Back in Intended Position

Rule 8.1a(2) prohibits placing a *movable obstruction* into position to *improve the conditions affecting the stroke*. However, this restriction does not apply to returning a movable part of an *immovable obstruction* to its intended position.

For example:

- If a sprinkler head is popped up, the player may push it down before playing the ball as the sprinkler head is not in its intended position.
- If a drain cover has been removed or dislodged, the player may return it to its intended position.

In both cases, there is no penalty under Rule 8 even if this *improves the conditions affecting the stroke*. (Added July 2023)



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Rule 10:

Rule 10.2:

10.2b/1 – Use of Self-Standing Putter for Alignment Help is Not Allowed

[Note: A delay of implementation is in effect until January 1, 2025 that applies to certain uses of self-standing putters. For more information, see Clarification 10.2b(3)/2]

Provided a self-standing putter conforms to the *Equipment Rules*, it may be used to make a *stroke* (Rule 4.1a(1)). But the player (or their *caddie*) is not allowed to set such a putter down to get help in any way that would breach Rule 10.2b.

For example, the player must not set the putter down in a standing position right behind or right next to the spot where the ball lies on the *putting green* to show the *line of play* or to help the player in taking their *stance* for the *stroke* in breach of Rule 10.2b(3). (Added December 2022)

10.2b(3)/1 – Setting Clubhead on Ground Behind Ball to Help the Player Take a Stance is Allowed

[Note: A delay of implementation is in effect until January 1, 2025 that applies to certain uses of self-standing putters. For more information, see Clarification 10.2b(3)/2]

Rule 10.2b(3) does not allow a player to set down an object (such as an alignment rod or a golf club) to help the player take a *stance*.

However, this prohibition does not prevent a player from positioning their clubhead behind the ball, such as when a player stands behind the ball and places the clubhead perpendicular to the *line of play* and then, while still holding the club, walks around from behind the ball to take their *stance*. (Added December 2022)

10.2b(3)/2 – Delay of Implementation for Certain Uses of Self-Standing Putters

A two-year delay of implementation in relation to certain uses of self-standing putters under Rule 10.2b(3) is in effect as follows:

- Until January 1, 2025, a player may use a self-standing putter by setting it down right behind or right next to the spot on which the ball came to rest to help aim or to take a *stance* or position their feet.
- From January 1, 2025, Rule 10.2b(3) will apply to self-standing putters and the acts described in the previous paragraph will no longer be allowed. But a player will still be allowed to use a self-standing putter that conforms to the *Equipment Rules* to make a *stroke* or take other actions allowed by the Rules. (Added December 2022)



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Rule 14:

Rule 14.3:

14.3b(4)/1 – General Penalty Applies Under Rule 14.7a

In relation to the final bullet in Rule 14.3b(4), if a player gets the *general penalty* for making a *stroke* without correcting their mistake, the *general penalty* applies under Rule 14.7a for having played from a *wrong place*.

For example, when taking back-on-the-line relief, a player *drops* their ball almost one *club-length* to the side of the line. The ball is in a *wrong place* irrespective of where it comes to rest, even if it comes to rest on the line. The ball must be *dropped* again to avoid penalty under Rule 14.7a.

In *stroke play*, if the player makes a *stroke* from the *wrong place*, the player would need to correct this mistake if playing from a *wrong place* was a *serious breach*. (Added April 2023)

COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

Model Local Rule E-13:

E-13 – Player May Remove Animals Not Defined As Loose Impediments From Near Ball

Purpose: When an animal is touching or is near a player's ball, the player may encourage it to move, and if the animal causes the ball to move when it is being encouraged by the player, Rule 9.6 applies.

If the animal does not move, the player can choose between removing the animal and risking penalty if they cause the ball to move (Rule 9.4b), taking penalty relief (Rules 17.1 or 19.1) or playing the ball as it lies while the animal is still touching or is near the ball.

This Local Rule allows the player to remove animals that are not defined as loose impediments without penalty under Rule 9.4.

Model Local Rule E-13

"A player may remove an *animal*, other than those defined as a *loose impediment*, that is touching or near their ball without penalty and may do so in any way.

If the player's ball *moves* while they are removing the *animal*:

- There is no penalty, and
- The ball must be *replaced* on its original spot (which if not known must be estimated) (see Rule 14.2).

Penalty for Playing Ball from a *Wrong Place* in Breach of Local Rule: *General Penalty Under Rule 14.7.*" (Added July 2023)