

2019 Rules Changes

Please note that as of January 1st 2019 there will be some rules changes come into force. Whilst it is every golfers duty to know and understand the rules, we have listed some of the key changes on the following pages. We have also made available some of the new 2019 rule books which have been put out in the members lounge.

If you have any queries on the changes please ask in the Golf Office or Professional Shop, there is also guidance on the changes on

www.randa.org/en/rules-modernisation

The new Rules of Golf 2019 take effect on 1st January 2019. The key changes include:

New Definitions:

Penalty Area - an area from which relief with a 1 shot penalty is allowed (formerly 'Water Hazard'). Still defined as either yellow or red.

Relief Area - the area in which the ball must be dropped (and come to rest) when taking relief under a rule.

Reference Point - the point from which the size of the Relief Area is measured.

General Area - anywhere on the course except Teeing areas, Penalty areas, Bunkers and Greens (formerly 'Through the Green')

Temporary Water - formerly 'Casual Water'

Pace-of-play support

Encouragement of Ready Golf in Stroke Play.

Players may agree to play out of turn in Match Play.

Elimination of 'Ball Moved' penalties

No penalty for accidentally moving a ball on the putting green or in searching for a ball.

Relaxed Putting Green rules

No penalty if a ball hits an unattended flagstick in the hole.

Players may repair damage to the green, whether their ball is on the green or not. This includes old hole plugs, spike marks and damage made by shoes, animals and maintenance practices (but not aeration holes, unless there is a local rule in place).

No penalty for touching the line of putt.

A ball resting against the flagstick is deemed holed as long as part of the ball is below the surface of the ground.

Interference by a Wrong Green now includes the player's stance.

Relaxed Bunker rules

No penalty for moving loose impediments (stones, leaves, etc.) in a bunker or for generally touching the sand with hand or club (but not directly in front or behind the ball or in making a backswing or practice swing).

An extra relief option for an unplayable ball, allowing the ball to be played from outside the bunker with a two stroke penalty.

Relaxed rules for Penalty Areas

Expanded use of red penalty areas where lateral relief is allowed.

No penalty for moving loose impediments, touching the ground or water or taking a practice swing in a Penalty Area.

Simplified way of Taking Relief

New procedure for taking relief by dropping in a specific Relief Area.

Ball dropped from knee height and must stay within the Relief Area.

Lost Ball & Provisional Ball

A ball is Lost if not found within 3 minutes of commencing search, although a reasonable amount of additional time is allowed to get to and identify a ball that has been spotted within the 3 minutes. A Provisional Ball may be played after the player has moved forward, at any time up to the end of the 3 minute search period.

Some other changes

The honour on the tee is determined by the player with the lowest gross score on the previous hole.

No need to announce the intention to lift a ball to identify it or determine if it is in an abnormal condition (ball must be marked first).

A ball may be marked by holding a club behind or to the side of it.

Natural objects may be moved to see if they are loose or unattached. If they are found to be attached they must be replaced as close as possible to their original position.

No penalty for a multiple hit or if the ball accidentally hits the player.

Relief for an embedded ball is available anywhere in the General Area and the Relief Area is 1 club length from a point directly behind the ball.

No "opposite side relief" from red Penalty Areas (unless there is a local rule in place).

A player may keep using and/or repair any club damaged during the round, no matter what the damage and even if the player damaged it in anger.

A player is not allowed to replace a damaged club, except when it is damaged by an outside influence or by someone other than the player or caddie.