

2019 GOLF'S NEW RULES

- I. There is no penalty if you accidentally **move your ball (or ball marker) on the green**. The same applies if you're searching for a lost ball and mistakenly move it
- II. There is no penalty for **hitting a flagstick left in the hole while putting** on a green.
- III. There is no penalty for **fixing almost any damage on the green** (including spike marks, animal damage, indentations from a club or flagstick). You can also **touch the line of your putt** with your hand or club so long as you're not improving it.
- IV. There is no penalty if a player's **ball in motion is accidentally deflected** by a player, a player's equipment or caddy.
- V. There is no penalty for **hitting a ball twice with one swing** (i.e. double hit). It counts as only one stroke.
- VI. **Relief is allowed without penalty for an embedded ball** anywhere (except in sand) in the "general area" (a new term for "through the green").
- VII. To improve pace of play, golfers now have just **three minutes to search for a missing ball** rather than five minutes.
- VIII. To drop a ball back in play, instead of letting go from shoulder height, players will **drop from around their knee**.
- IX. You're free to **touch/move loose impediments and ground your club** in a hazard (now defined as "penalty area") without incurring an additional penalty. There is a caveat: you still can't put your club down and use it to improve the conditions for the stroke. You can **remove loose impediments in bunkers**, too, although touching the sand in a bunker in front of or behind the ball or in your backswing is still prohibited.
- X. **Alternate to the stroke-and-distance penalty for lost balls or shots hit out-of-bounds is offered**. A player may drop a ball anywhere between where the original ball was believed to come to rest (or went out-of-bounds) and just into the edge of the fairway, but no nearer the hole. **The golfer takes a two-stroke penalty and plays on instead of returning to the tee**.
- XI. You can play a **club that has become damaged** in any fashion. If you caused the damage, however, you can't replace the club with a new one.