

# 2025 RULES OF PLAY

POLICY UPDATED March, 2025

Play is governed by the Rules of Golf effective January 2023, and where applicable, by the following Local Rules and Terms of the Competition. Committee Procedures refers to the Committee Procedures section in the current *Official Guide to the Rules of Golf*. The *Committee* refers to the South Florida PGA Rules Committee. Unless otherwise noted, the penalty for breach of a Local Rule in *stroke play* is the *general penalty* (two penalty strokes).

- 1) **GOLF BALLS:** Only brands of golf balls on the most current USGA List of Conforming Golf Balls may be used to make a stroke. Penalty: Disqualification. See Rule 4.2A.
- 2) **WEATHER CONDITIONS WARRANTING LIFT, CLEAN & PLACE:** When weather conditions warrant and South Florida PGA Tournament Officials announce that lift, clean and place relief is in effect, the following procedure will apply unless otherwise posted. **Preferred Lies:** A ball lying in the general area that is cut to fairway height or less may be lifted without penalty and cleaned. The original ball or another ball must be placed on a spot in the general area, within one club length of and not nearer the hole than where the original ball lay. A player may place a ball only once and it is in play when it has been placed (Rule 14.2b). If the ball fails to come to rest on the spot on which it was placed, Rule 14.2e applies. (if the ball fails to come to rest on the spot when replaced, it must be placed at the nearest spot where it can be placed at rest that is not nearer the hole than the spot where it was replaced). If the ball when placed comes to rest on the spot on which it is placed, and it subsequently moves, there is no penalty and the ball must be played as it lies, unless the provisions of any other Rule apply. After a ball has been placed and is in play under the Preferred Lies Local Rule, if a Rule subsequently provides relief, this Local Rule may be invoked again.  
PENALTY FOR BREACH OF LOCAL RULE: Stroke Play General Penalty (Two strokes)
- 3) **COMMITTEE PACE OF PLAY POLICY:** See Rule 5.6b(3) The Local Rule setting a Pace of Play Policy, including penalties for not following this policy. See #17 & #18.
- 4) **PRACTICE:**
  - a. **Before or Between Rounds:** Rule 5.2 is modified in this way: A player must not practice on the competition course before or between rounds.  
Penalty for Breach of this Local Rule:  
Penalty for first breach: General Penalty (applied to the player's first hole).  
Penalty for second breach: Disqualification.
  - b. **Between the Play of Two Holes:** A player must not make any practice stroke on or near the putting green of the hole just completed or test the surface of that putting green by rubbing the putting green or rolling a ball.
  - c. Practice putting on a designated practice area while waiting to make the turn is acceptable.
- 5) **DOUBT AS TO PROCEDURE OR RULING:** See Rule 20.1c(3).
- 6) **SPECIFICATIONS OF CLUBS AND THE BALL**
  - a. List of Conforming Driver Heads - Model Local Rule G-1 is in effect. Penalty for making a stroke with club in breach of this Local Rule - Disqualification.
  - b. Groove and Punch Mark Specifications (except for amateurs in a Pro-Am that does not count in the official competition) - Model Local Rule G-2 is in effect. Penalty for making a stroke with club in breach of Local Rule - Disqualification.
  - c. List of Conforming Golf Balls - Model Local Rule G-3 is in effect. Penalty for making a stroke with a ball in breach of this Local Rule - Disqualification.
  - d. Replacing Club that is Broken or Significantly Damaged - Model Local rule G-9 is in effect.
  - e. One Ball Rule is NOT in effect
- 7) **OUT OF BOUNDS AND COURSE BOUNDARIES.**
  - a. Defined by the nearest inside (course side) points of white stakes at ground level. NOTE: When defined by a white line on the ground, the line itself is out of bounds.
  - b. Defined by the inside edge of all vehicular roadways or curbs. A ball that crosses the road and comes to rest on another part of the course is still considered out of bounds.
  - c. Defined by course side edge of all perimeter fencing when tied into by white stakes or dots
  - d. Above the water's edge on the opposite margin of a penalty area when tied into by white stakes.
- 8) **SCORE CARDS MUST BE SIGNED AND CERTIFIED:** For the purpose of applying Rule 3.3b(2), a player's scorecard is treated as returned when the player has first left the scoring area with both feet. FINES: \$50 fines are applicable for players failing to return a scorecard (NC or not) to the scoring area and also for players failing to notify Section officials of their withdrawal from an event.
- 9) **ABNORMAL COURSE CONDITIONS AND INTEGRAL OBJECTS.**
  - a. **Ground Under Repair:**
    - i) Any area encircled by a white line, including gallery crosswalks (except dropping zones or out of bounds).
    - ii) Newly trenched areas, including grass-covered cables.
    - iii) French drains, which are trenches filled with rocks or stones.

If a player's ball lies in or touches a **seam of cut turf** or a seam interferes with the player's area of intended swing in the *general area*, the player may take relief under Rule 16.1b.  
**But** interference does not exist if the seam **only** interferes with the player's *stance*. All seams within the area of cut turf are treated as the same seam in taking relief. This means that if a player has interference from any seam after *dropping* the ball, the player must proceed as required under Rule 14.3c(2) even when the ball is within one club-length of the reference point.

  - iv) Painted lines or dots in a part of the *general area* cut to fairway height or less. **But** interference does not exist if the painted lines or dots interfere **only** with the player's *stance*.
  - b. **Immovable Obstructions:**
    - i) **Asphalt and artificially surfaced roads and paths.** White lined areas of *ground under repair* tying into such roads or paths are treated as a single *abnormal course condition* when taking relief under Rule 16.1.
    - ii) **Railroad ties, curbing** or other similar artificial edges adjoining cart paths are part of the same *obstruction*.
    - iv) **Secured mats and plastic cable ramps** covering cables.
    - v) **When landscaped or garden areas** (flower beds, shrubbery or the like) are completely encircled by an obstruction, the obstruction and the landscaped area are treated as one abnormal course condition
  - c. **Integral Objects (Free relief not allowed):**
    - i) Artificial retaining walls and/or pilings when located in *penalty areas*.
    - ii) Wires, cables, wrappings, signs, and lightning rods closely attached to trees or objects defining *out of bounds*.
    - iii) **Bunker liners** in their intended position.

**Note:** The *Committee* may treat an exposed liner, not in its intended position, to be *ground under repair*, but interference does not exist if a liner only interferes with the player's *stance*.

- 10) **IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS CLOSE TO PUTTING GREEN:** Model Local Rule F-5 is in effect. The ball and obstruction must be in the general area cut to fairway height or less. The player may take relief under Rule 16.1b if an immovable obstruction is: On the line of play, and is:
  - a. Within two club-lengths of the putting green, and
  - b. Within two club-lengths of the ball.

Exception – No Relief If Line of Play Clearly Unreasonable. There is no relief under this Local Rule if the player chooses a line of play that is clearly unreasonable.  
PENALTY FOR PLAYING BALL FROM A WRONG PLACE: in Breach of Local Rule: General Penalty Under Rule 14.7a.”
- 11) **RED/YELLOW PENALTY AREAS:** Red penalty areas are defined by red lines. Yellow penalty areas are identified by yellow lines.
  - a. Relief on Opposite Side of Red Penalty Areas:  
Red penalty areas with an opposite side relief option will be indicated on the applicable “Notice to Players” Model Local Rule B-2.1. Note: When the edge of a red penalty area coincides with the boundary of the course, Model Local Rule B-2.2 is in effect and modifies the first paragraph of Model Local Rule B-2.1.
- 12) **SCORECARD RESPONSIBILITIES** Model Local Rule L-1 is in effect. Rule 3.3b(2) is modified in this way: If a player returns a scorecard without the hole scores being certified either by the player, the marker or both, the player gets the general penalty (two penalty strokes). The penalty applies to the last hole of the round.  
  
The scorecard of a player or a side is returned to the committee 15 minutes after the scorecard is accepted into the electronic scoring system. If a mistake is discovered before it is accepted into the scoring system and the player is not present to correct the mistake, the scorecard is returned 15 minutes after that mistake is discovered.
- 13) **PERMANENT ELEVATED POWER LINES OR CABLES:** Model Local Rule E-11 is in effect and modified as follows: If it is known or virtually certain that a player's ball hit a power line in bounds, the stroke does not count. The player must play a ball without penalty from where the previous stroke was made in accordance with Rule 14.6.
- 14) **CONDUCT:** Entries are subject to rejection at any time, including during the competition by the SFPGA. The reason of rejection may be unbecoming conduct (club throwing, use of abusive language, etc).
- 15) **TRANSPORTATION, CONTESTANTS/CADDIES ONLY MAY RIDE:**
  - a. An automotive cart is part of the player's equipment.
  - b. SFPGA events require that each contestant must have use of a golf cart and no more than two people in a cart at one time.
  - c. Golf bag(s) must be on a cart, with or without a caddie. NOTE: This does not apply to junior or qualifying events, which may preclude the use of automotive transportation.
  - d. Only the Committee may authorize the use of single carts when it deems necessary.
  - e. Use of the cart by anyone other than a player, his/her caddie or other players employing it is prohibited. Any player allowing unauthorized use of his cart is subject to penalty as follows: Stroke Play – General Penalty. Match Play – Loss of Hole. NOTE: Continued misuse may result in disqualification.
- 16) **PROCEDURES FOR BAD WEATHER AND SUSPENSIONS OF PLAY**

**Methods for Stopping and Resuming Play:** A suspension of play for a dangerous situation will be signaled by one prolonged note of a club siren or horn. All other suspensions will be signaled by three consecutive notes of a siren or horn. In either case, resumption of play will be signaled by two short notes of a siren or horn. See Rule 5.7b.

When play is suspended due to a non-dangerous situation (heavy rain, darkness), players in the process of playing a hole may continue until completion of that hole and must discontinue play immediately thereafter. All players between the play of two holes must discontinue play immediately. When play is suspended for a DANGEROUS SITUATION (lightning, tornado) all players must stop play immediately and not resume until the Committee has ordered. Unauthorized play will result in a penalty of disqualification. In case of suspension of play and/or cancellation of a round, the Committee may step down a tournament to as few as 18 holes.

**Note:** All practice areas are closed during an immediate suspension for a dangerous situation until the Committee has declared them open.
- 17) **SLOW PLAY MONITORING PROCEDURES:** A standard rate of time for groups of three (4:14/round) and groups of four (4:34/round) will be set to play at all South Florida Section PGA tournaments. This rate of time will be listed on your scorecard at each event. All groups are “on the clock” when they tee off. When a group is over their allotted time par and have an open hole in front of them, SFPGA officials will inform them that they are being officially timed. NO WARNINGS. It is the responsibility of each player in a group to know when they are behind and out of position.
- 18) **SLOW PLAY TIMING PROCEDURES:** When a group or individual will be timed, all players in the group or the specific individual will be informed. The timing of a player's stroke will begin when it is clearly his/her turn to play and he/she can play without interference or distraction. A player will have a maximum of 40 seconds to complete his/her stroke. It is reasonable for a player to have a few extra seconds for trouble shots. The person who is to play first from a given area (e.g.: the teeing ground, approach shot, putting green) has an additional 10 seconds for preparation. Any player being timed who exceeds the applicable time to play a stroke will be informed as soon as practicable. Penalties for violation of slow play will be applied individually as follows:

➤ FIRST OFFENSE:	Warning.
➤ SECOND OFFENSE:	One stroke penalty and a \$50 fine.
➤ THIRD OFFENSE:	Disqualification and a \$50 fine.

NOTE: Timing of individuals will discontinue when their group is no longer out of position.
- 19) **EDGE GROOVING AROUND PUTTING GREENS:** The edging grooves around the aprons or fringes of putting greens are ground under repair. If a player's ball lies in or touches a groove or if the groove interferes with the area of intended swing.
  - (a) Ball in General Area: The player may take free relief under rule 16.1b.
  - (b) Ball on the Putting Green: The player may take free under rule 16.1d. But interference does not exist if the edging groove only interferes with the player's stance or line of play.
- 20) **AERIFICATION HOLES / GROOVES:** If a player's ball lies in or touches an aerification hole or maintenance groove, the player may take free relief. The player will proceed under rule 16.1b in the general area or 16.1d on the putting green.