

GOLF'S NEW RULES

Major Changes

The following are the main changes to the Rules of Golf taking effect January 1, 2019 that are expected to have the most impact on the game and to be of most interest to golfers. The items covered on these pages are organized into eight categories.

[Ball at Rest](#) | [Ball in Motion](#) | [Taking Relief](#) | [Areas of the Course](#)

[Equipment](#) | [Playing a Ball](#) | [When to Play During a Round](#) | [Player Behavior](#)

Ball at Rest

Ball Moved During Search

No penalty for accidentally moving a ball during search.

2019 Rule: Under [Rule 7.4](#), if a player accidentally moves his or her ball while searching for it:

- The player gets no penalty for causing it to move, and
- The ball is always replaced; if the exact spot is not known, the player replaces the ball on the estimated original spot (including on, under or against any attached natural or man-made objects which the ball had been at rest under or against).

No Penalty for Moving Ball on the Putting Green

No penalty for accidentally moving a ball or ball-marker on the putting green.

2019 Rule: Under [Rule 13.1d](#), there is no longer a penalty if a player (or opponent) accidentally causes the player's ball to move on the putting green.

The substance of this Rule change has already been implemented as of 1 January 2017 by authorizing Committees to adopt a Local Rule that eliminates the penalty for accidentally moving a ball on the putting green.

Standard for Deciding Why a Ball Moved

New standard to determine if a player caused a ball to move.

2019 Rule: Under [Rule 9.2](#), the "known or virtually certain" standard (meaning at least 95% likely) applies to all questions of fact about why a ball at rest moved:

- A player, opponent or outside influence will be found to have caused the ball to move if the player, opponent or outside influence was known or virtually certain to have caused it to move; otherwise it is assumed that natural forces caused it to move.

Replacing Ball When Original Spot is Not Known

When the original location of the ball is not known, it is replaced on its estimated spot.

2019 Rule: Under [Rule 14.2c](#), in that same situation:

