

Golf Rules Made Easy

by Mick Euan Tait

The official rules of golf are governed by the Royal and Ancient in St. Andrews. They are the World's rules and development body for Europe, Africa, Asia-Pacific and The Americas (outside the USA and Mexico). The United States Golf Association (USGA) is the game's governing body in the United States and Mexico.

Since 1952, the R & A and the USGA have worked together to continually review, revise and clarify the golf rules. The idea behind this is to have consistency for rules in golf, so that players all over the World can play with the same laws.

All PGA professional golfers should know every single golf rule as the penalty for not can be very costly for them. But for the casual golfer, there is normally much need of going into some of the complicated golf ball or club rules as regards to equipment specifications.

In this article, I will not go into all of the golf rules and regulations; instead we will look at etiquette and golf rules made easy for the average or casual golfer. Even if you are just playing for fun or if you occasionally enter local amateur golf tournaments, you will get more enjoyment out of the game if you know the more important basic golf rules.

Golf Etiquette

As golf is still considered to be "the gentleman's game", it is important to understand what behavior on the golf course is frowned upon. As golf is played without close supervision, it is up to the individual golfer to show integrity, honesty, and sportsmanship. This is what golf etiquette is all about - it is the spirit of the game of golf. Here are some more specific golf etiquette rules:

- * Safety - Don't swing your club when someone is standing nearby and could be hit by your club, ball, or some other object.
- * Don't tee off or hit your approach shot to the green until the group in front is well out of reach or have departed the green.
- * When your ball is hit in the direction of someone and there is a danger that it may hit them, you are obliged to shout a warning such as "fore".
- * If you lose your ball or think that it may be lost, you should first play a provisional ball. When looking for your ball, you should spend no more than five minutes doing so, and you should signal the group behind to play through if you are holding them up.

- * Once your group has finished on the green, you should immediately vacate it to let the group behind play. Don't fill in your scorecard on the green, wait until you are well clear of the green to do so.
- * If your group is consistently playing slower than the group behind, then let them play through. You should always be ready to play your shot when it is your turn.
- * Show consideration to other golfers - don't make any noises, cast a shadow, or make movements when they are taking their shots.
- * Tending the pin - if you are nearest to the pin when another player is taking their putt, it is customary to tend the pin.
- * After hitting out of a bunker, you should rake away your footmarks and any other marks you make. In fact, golf etiquette dictates that you should leave the bunker in a better condition than you found it.
- * On the green, you should repair the mark your ball made when it landed with your divot tool plus one other mark.
- * You should always replace or fill in your divots on the fairway.

Basic Rules Of Golf

If you don't want to annoy your golf partners, you should learn the following basics:

- * Golf club rules - the maximum number of clubs that you are allowed to carry is fourteen. There is nothing to say that you can't have two drivers or two different types of putter, just that the total number of clubs is limited to fourteen.
- * Order of play - the player who tees off first has the "honors". In other words, the player who scored the lowest score on the previous hole. If it is the first hole, you can decide amongst yourselves or toss a coin. On the fairway or green, the player who is furthest from the green or hole goes first.
- * When the ball is in play (after teeing off), you are not allowed to touch or move the ball until it is holed out. The exceptions being; on the green you can mark your ball to clean it before putting; when taking a drop, you have to lift your ball; or you have hit the ball out of bounds and you remove the ball.
- * When on the fairway or especially in the rough or amongst trees, you can remove loose twigs and leaves from around your ball but the ball must not move when doing so.
- * When teeing off, you have to place the ball between the two markers and never in front of them. You can stand outside of the teeing area to hit a ball that is inside, but you can't move the markers if they are in your way.

* When addressing the ball on the tee and the ball falls off, you may replace it without a penalty.

* On the green, you can remove any loose objects from your line of putt.

* When it is your turn to putt, you must wait until the previous player's ball has stopped moving.

* You will be penalized if you hit the flag stick with your ball while putting from on the green, but not from off the green.

* If you hit your ball into a water hazard or out of bounds, you must play another ball from the designated drop zone or from a position any distance behind the hazard (including the original position of where your ball was) but no closer to the hole - you will be penalized a stroke.

These are a few of the golf rules made easy to understand for the casual golfer so that they get more enjoyment out of the game and so that there are no conflicts between players.

There are many more that you should learn to have a full understanding of the game. You can download a PDF file of the R & A golf rules from their website and learn a few more every day.

Mick Euan Tait is the owner of [Online Golf Tips](#) where you will find [Golf Tips for Beginners](#) and free golf tips to improve your game.