

USGA Rules of Golf 2008 Changes

Rule 4-1 & 4-2

Conforming Clubs

Carrying a non-conforming club is no longer a disqualification penalty. The penalty for carrying a non-conforming club is 2 strokes for each hole the club is carried with a maximum penalty of 4 strokes. A player who discovers he or she is carrying a non-conforming club must immediately declare it out of play. A player would still be DISQUALIFIED if he or she makes a stroke with any non-conforming club.

Rule 12-2

Identifying Ball

If a player wishes to make a stroke at a ball in a hazard (including a bunker), it is now his or her responsibility to identify it as his or her ball (See change to Rule 15-3 below).

Rule 13-4

Allowable Actions in a Hazard (Bunkers)

After a player makes a stroke from a bunker, he is entitled to rake his or her footprints regardless of whether or not the ball is successfully extricated from the bunker. If, however, the player fails to get the ball out of the bunker he or she is restricted from smoothing sand if doing so will improve any of the following with respect to his or her NEXT STROKE:

- Lie of the Ball
- The player's stance
- Area of intended swing
- Line of play

If the ball is outside the bunker after a stroke from the bunker, a player may smooth sand without restriction.

Rule 14-3

Distance Measuring Devices

Distance measuring devices are allowed to be used at all times during normal daily play. During competition, however, the committee in charge must have on the conditions of competition that distance measuring devices (that measure distance only) are

permitted. Penalty is DISQUALIFICATION.

Rule 15-3

Wrong Ball (In a Hazard)

If a player makes a stroke at a ball that is not his or hers in any hazard, he or she now will incur a two stroke penalty (See Rule 12-2 above) unless the player makes a stroke at a wrong ball moving in water in a water hazard in which case, no penalty is incurred.

Rule 19-2

Ball in motion deflected or stopped (By the Player, his Caddie or his Equipment)

If a player's ball is accidentally deflected or stopped by the player, his caddie, or his equipment, he will incur a penalty of one stroke (previously a two stroke penalty) and the ball shall be played as it lies.

Rule 24-1

Moveable Obstructions (Flagstick)

At any time, if any player believes that a ball in motion may strike a flagstick lying on the ground, he or she may remove it without penalty.

Key Reminders:

- Free Relief equals one club length before dropping ball
- Penalty involved equals two club lengths before dropping ball
- Always announce intention to your opponent
- When identifying your golf ball; Ball must not be cleaned beyond the extent necessary to identify it
- All distances are public information; if someone in the group has a distance measuring device and is on your side or your opponent; there is no breach of rule 8.