

Rules of Golf with Specific Match Play Provision

The Rules of Golf govern match play. Here are some, but not necessarily all of the Rules which have specific provisions for match play. **Disclaimer: This document is provided as a convenience to our members. Players are responsible for knowing the Rules of Golf, are encouraged to read the Rules in their entirety, and should not rely upon this document as the official source of information on the Rules.**

Rule 2. Match Play

2-1. General

- A match consists of one side playing against another over a stipulated round unless otherwise decreed by the Committee.
- In match play the game is played by holes.
- Except as otherwise provided in the Rules, a hole is won by the side that holes its ball in the fewer strokes. In a handicap match, the lower net score wins the hole. The state of the match is expressed by the terms: so many "holes up" or "all square," and so many "to play."
- A side is "dormie" when it is as many holes up as there are holes remaining to be played.

2-2. Halved Hole. A hole is halved if each side holes out in the same number of strokes.

2-3. Winner of Match. A match is won when one side leads by a number of holes greater than the number remaining to be played.

2-4. Concession of Match, Hole or Next Stroke

- A player may concede a match at any time prior to the start or conclusion of that match.
- A player may concede a hole at any time prior to the start or conclusion of that hole.
- A player may concede his opponent's next stroke at any time, provided the opponent's ball is at rest. The opponent is considered to have holed out with his next stroke, and the ball may be removed by either side.
- A concession may not be declined or withdrawn.

2-5. Doubt as to Procedure; Disputes and Claims

- In match play, if a doubt or dispute arises between the players, a player may make a claim.
- If no duly authorized representative of the Committee is available within a reasonable time, the players must continue the match without delay. The Committee may consider a claim only if the player making the claim notifies his opponent (i) that he is making a claim, (ii) of the facts of the situation and (iii) that he wants a ruling.
- The claim must be made before any player in the match plays from the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole of the match, before all players in the match leave the putting green.
- A later claim may not be considered by the Committee, unless it is based on facts previously unknown to the player making the claim and he had been given wrong information (Rules 6-2a and 9) by an opponent.

- Once the result of the match has been officially announced, a later claim may not be considered by the Committee, unless it is satisfied that the opponent knew he was giving wrong information.

2-6. General Penalty. The penalty for a breach of a Rule in match play is loss of hole except when otherwise provided.

Rule 9. Information as to Strokes Taken

9-2. Match Play

- a. **Information as to Strokes Taken.** An opponent is entitled to ascertain from the player, during the play of a hole, the number of strokes he has taken and, after play of a hole, the number of strokes taken on the hole just completed.
- b. **Wrong Information.** A player must not give wrong information to his opponent. If a player gives wrong information, he loses the hole.

A player is deemed to have given wrong information if he:

- (i) fails to inform his opponent as soon as practicable that he has incurred a penalty, unless (a) he was obviously proceeding under a Rule involving a penalty and this was observed by his opponent, or (b) he corrects the mistake before his opponent makes his next stroke; or
- (ii) gives incorrect information during play of a hole regarding the number of strokes taken and does not correct the mistake before his opponent makes his next stroke; or
- (iii) gives incorrect information regarding the number of strokes taken to complete a hole and this affects the opponent's understanding of the result of the hole, unless he corrects the mistake before any player makes a stroke from the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole of the match, before all players leave the putting green.

A player has given wrong information even if it is due to the failure to include a penalty that he did not know he had incurred. It is the player's responsibility to know the Rules.

Rule 10. Order of Play

10-1. Match Play

- a. **When Starting Play of Hole.**
 - The Side that has the honor at the first teeing ground is determined by the order of the draw. In the absence of a draw, the honor should be decided by lot.
 - The Side that wins a hole takes the honor at the next teeing ground. If a hole has been halved, the Side that had the honor at the previous teeing ground retains it.
- b. **During Play of Hole.** After both players have started play of the hole, the ball farther from the hole is played first. If the balls are equidistant from the hole or their positions relative to the hole are not determinable, the ball to be played first should be decided by lot.

Note: When it becomes known that the original ball is not to be played as it lies and the player is required to play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was last played (see Rule 20-5), the order of play is determined by the spot from which the previous stroke was made. When a ball may be played from a spot other than where the previous stroke was made, the order of play is determined by the position where the original ball came to rest.

c. Playing Out of Turn

- If a player plays when his opponent should have played, there is no penalty, but the opponent may immediately require the player to cancel the stroke so made and, in correct order, play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was last played (see Rule 20-5).

Rule 11. Teeing Ground

11-4. Playing from Outside Teeing Ground

- a. Match Play. If a player, when starting a hole, plays a ball from outside the teeing ground, there is no penalty, but the opponent may immediately require the player to cancel the stroke and play a ball from within the teeing ground.

Rule 12. Searching for and Identifying the Ball

12-2. Identifying Ball. The responsibility for playing the proper ball rests with the player. Each player should put an identification mark on his ball.

- If a player has reason to believe a ball at rest is his and it is necessary to lift the ball in order to identify it, he may lift the ball, without penalty, in order to do so.
- Before lifting the ball, the player must announce his intention to his opponent in match play and mark the position of the ball. He may then lift the ball and identify it, provided that he gives his opponent, marker or fellow-competitor an opportunity to observe the lifting and replacement. The ball must not be cleaned beyond the extent necessary for identification when lifted under Rule 12-2.

Rule 15. Substituted Ball; Wrong Ball

15-3. Wrong Ball a. Match Play.

- If a player makes a stroke at a wrong ball, he loses the hole.
- If the wrong ball belongs to another player, its owner must place a ball on the spot from which the wrong ball was first played.
- If the player and opponent exchange balls during the play of a hole, the first to make a stroke at a wrong ball loses the hole; when this cannot be determined, the hole must be played out with the balls exchanged.

Exception: There is no penalty if a player makes a stroke at a wrong ball that is moving in water in a water hazard. Any strokes made at a wrong ball moving in water in a water hazard do not count in the

player's score. The player must correct his mistake by playing the correct ball or by proceeding under the Rules.

Rule 17. The Flagstick

17-3. Ball Striking Flagstick or Attendant

The player's ball must not strike:

- a. The flagstick when it is attended, removed or held up;
- b. The person attending or holding up the flagstick or anything carried by him; or
- c. The flagstick in the hole, unattended, when the stroke has been made on the putting green.

Rule 18. Ball at Rest Moved

18-3. By Opponent, Caddie or Equipment in Match Play

- a. **During Search.** If, during search for a player's ball, an opponent, his caddie or his equipment moves the ball, touches it or causes it to move, there is no penalty. If the ball is moved, it must be replaced.
- b. **Other Than During Search.** If, other than during search for a player's ball, an opponent, his caddie or his equipment moves the ball, touches it purposely or causes it to move, except as otherwise provided in the Rules, the opponent incurs a penalty of one stroke. If the ball is moved, it must be replaced.

Rule 19. Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped

19-5. By Another Ball

At Rest. If a player's ball in motion after a stroke is deflected or stopped by a ball in play and at rest, the player must play his ball as it lies. In match play, there is no penalty. The ball hit by the player's ball must be replaced.

Rule 20. Lifting, Dropping and Placing; Playing from Wrong Place

20-7. Playing from Wrong Place

- a. **General.** A player has played from a wrong place if he makes a stroke at his ball in play:
 - i. on a part of the course where the Rules do not permit a stroke to be played or a ball to be dropped or placed; or
 - ii. when the Rules require a dropped ball to be re-dropped or a moved ball to be replaced.

Note: For a ball played from outside the teeing ground or from a wrong teeing ground - see Rule 11-4.

- b. **Match Play.** If a player makes a stroke from a wrong place, he loses the hole.