

NEW USGA RULES FOR 2019 INCLUDING MGC and SMGA LOCAL RULE FOR LOST BALLS AND OUT OF BOUNDS

- 1) There is **no penalty** if your ball **ACCIDENTALLY** moves either on the green (e.g., by wind, dropping your club on it or even taking a practice stroke) or in searching for it on the course (e.g., stepping on the ball, accidentally kicking it, etc.). In both cases, replace your ball in, or as close as possible to, its original position.
- 2) There is **no penalty** if your ball **ACCIDENTALLY** hits any player (*including yourself*) or equipment (*including yours and including golf carts*), but the player or equipment cannot be positioned for that purpose.
- 3) All drops, either free or under penalty, **shall be from knee height** not shoulder height.
- 4) The time to find a lost ball is limited to **3 minutes** not 5 minutes.
- 5) On the green, you can repair damage to the putting surface, **including spike marks**, but not aeration holes. And you can't tamp down the entire ball track to the hole.
- 6) A player may touch the line of play on the green (e.g., so you can indicate the line for your partner) and will not be penalized for hitting an unattended flagstick. **You can leave the flagstick in on long putt to speed play.** You can also remove the flagstick, or have it attended.
- 7) Hazards are now called **penalty areas**. You can now move loose impediments and ground your club in penalty areas, including on practice swings. You can even ground your club in a water hazard!
- 8) In a **bunker**, you may touch the sand with your hand or club to remove loose impediments and may ground the club to lean on it for support. **BUT** you **MAY NOT** test the conditions of the sand, touch the sand with a practice swing, ground the club behind or in front of the ball, or touch the sand on the backswing.
- 9) Loose impediments (stones, twigs, leaves) can now be removed from bunkers and penalty areas, but if your ball moves in the process you must replace it and take a **1 stroke penalty**.
- 10) You can still declare a ball unplayable in a bunker and take relief **WITHIN** the bunker, with a **1 stroke penalty**. You may also drop **OUTSIDE** the bunker, using the back-on-the-line-with-the-pin procedure, with a **2-stroke penalty**.
- 11) In a **lateral (red stakes) penalty area**, you may no longer take a drop on the opposite side of the hazard.
- 12) There is no penalty if you hit the ball two (or more) times on the same swing. Count it as one hit.
- 13) You may lift your ball to identify it **without notifying fellow competitors**, but you may not clean it and you must replace the ball in the same position.
- 14) You may no longer lay a club on the ground to line yourself up, nor have a caddy stand behind you to line you up.
- 15) If your ball is on the wrong green, you can't play it on the green. You must take relief at the nearest point off the green, **but you can no longer stand on the green to take your next stroke**. Your feet must be entirely off the green.

16) If you hit a shot out of bounds or think your ball may be lost, you may replay the shot with a provisional ball and proceed with a potential stroke-and-distance penalty. If your original ball is, indeed, lost or out of bounds, you continue to play your provisional ball. **The following Local Rule has been adopted by SMGA:** When a ball is lost or out of bounds, the player may, at their option, go to the edge of the fairway nearest the vicinity where the ball was lost or went OB, no closer to the hole, and measure two club lengths into that fairway; the drop area shall be between that point in the fairway and where the ball was lost or went OB, with a **penalty of 2 strokes**. ***This option is NOT available if you hit a provisional ball!***

Below is a link to a You Tube video discussing many of these above Rules changes. It's fun and less than 10 minutes long.

<http://uk.golfbunker.net/2018/09/11/new-golf-rules-2019-the-20-most-important-changes/>

Let's use these new rules to play quickly, play well and have fun!