

RULES OF GOLF EXPLAINED

TRAINER'S GUIDE

THE FLAGSTICK



Introduction to the Rules of Golf Explained Video Series

Rules of Golf Explained is a collection of 12 short videos offering simple, straight-forward explanations of how to play by the Rules and what your choices are when applying the Rules in situations that happen while playing. The explanations should be familiar but each will probably contain a thing (or things) not previously known or realized by many golfers who view them.

The following information is provided to help you conduct a presentation approximately 20 minutes in length to a small group of golfers using any of the 12 Rules of Golf Explained videos as the center piece. Each presentation is divided into four parts:

- 1) **TEASER QUESTION (1 to 2 minutes):** Each video begins by showing an incident and asking a Rules question about it. Ask participants to consider the question and write down or remember their answer before continuing to view the video. This question will be reviewed and participants will have the opportunity to find out the correct answer at the end of the video. This teaser question is designed to focus the attention of participants on the topic covered in the video.
- 2) **VIDEO (3 to 5 minutes depending on the video)**
- 3) **TEASER QUESTION REVIEW AND ANSWER (2 to 4 minutes):** Most participants, after watching the video, should be clear on the correct answer to this question (even if they were not entirely sure prior to viewing the video). As the presenter, you will have the option to click the button for either the correct or incorrect answer.
 - a. If the correct answer is selected, a message communicating the answer is correct will appear.
 - b. If the incorrect answer button is selected, a message stating that the answer is incorrect will appear.

Regardless of which answer is selected, three buttons will appear.

- a. **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to review the question.
- b. **<Review>** will replay the portion of video that provides the answer to the question.
- c. **<Continue>** will advance to the next question without reviewing the answer to the question.

Notes are provided in the next section of this Trainer's Guide for this and the other three questions to help you as the presentation leader clear up any confusion participants might have with incorrect answers.

- 4) **THREE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (5 to 8 minutes):** The three additional follow-up questions are meant to reinforce other important points made in the video. As the presenter, you will once again have the opportunity to click the buttons for the correct or incorrect answers. As outlined above with the first question, you will always have the option to:
 - a. Review the question.
 - b. Replay the relevant part of the video.
 - c. Continue to the next question or the end of the video.

A note of caution: These videos are not comprehensive explanations of the Rules covered, but broad overviews meant to cover fundamental and commonly encountered aspects of each Rule presented. If questions come up that are not answered by the video, we recommend they be handled individually after the formal presentation session. If you know the answer and are comfortable answering, please do. If you are not, the USGA can be contacted at (908) 326-1850 or by email at Rules@usga.org.

Rules of Golf Explained – The Flagstick

This segment focuses on the flagstick; when is hitting the flagstick permitted, when it is a penalty, when the Rules allow players to remove the flagstick and when they are allowed to leave it in the hole.

The primary messages of this segment are:

- You may have the flagstick attended for a stroke made from anywhere on the course (whether from on or off the putting green)
- You must arrange to have the flagstick attended or removed before you make a stroke, not after you have made a stroke and your ball is in motion.
- There are four times when you will incur a penalty if your ball strikes the flagstick:
 - when it is being attended
 - when it is removed (not in the hole) when your stroke is made
 - when it is held up above the hole to indicate the hole's position
 - when it is unattended in the hole (but in this case, only when your stroke is made from the putting green)

The secondary messages of this segment are:

- There is no penalty if your ball strikes an unattended flagstick that is in the hole when you play from somewhere other than the putting green.
- If the flagstick has been removed from the hole in order for one person to play, the next player to play may have it put back in the hole before they play.

Teaser Question (Question 1)

Q1.When Birdie Kim's ball struck the flagstick, she incurred a penalty.

- ☐ True
- ☐ **False** (correct answer)

Click button "Continue to video to find the answer."

Question answered correctly: "That's correct!"

Question answered incorrectly: "Sorry, that's not correct."

Choose between the three options:

- **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to correctly answer the question, or
- **<Review>** to replay that portion of the video which answers this question, or
- **<Continue>** to go to Question 2.

Three Follow-up Questions (Questions 2, 3 and 4)

Q2.Before you make a stroke from anywhere (on the green or off the green) you may have the flagstick attended.

- ☐ **True** (correct answer)
- ☐ False

Question answered correctly: "That's correct!"

Question answered incorrectly: "Sorry, that's not correct."

Choose between the three options:

- **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to correctly answer the question, or
- **<Review>** to replay that portion of the video which answers this question, or
- **<Continue>** to go to Question 3.

Q3.When you make a stroke from the green, is it a penalty if your ball hits an unattended flagstick in the hole?

- ☐ **Yes** (correct answer)
- ☐ No

Question answered correctly: "That is correct!"

Question answered incorrectly: "Sorry, that's not correct."

Choose between the three options:

- **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to correctly answer the question, or
- **<Review>** to replay that portion of the video which answers this question, or
- **<Continue>** to go to Question 4.

Q4. If the flagstick was taken out for someone else, may you have it put back into the hole before playing your shot?

- ☐ **Yes** (correct answer)
- ☐ No

Question answered correctly: "That's correct!"

Question answered incorrectly: "Sorry, that's not correct."

Choose between the three options:

- **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to correctly answer the question, or
- **<Review>** to replay that portion of the video which answers this question, or
- **<Continue>** to go to the end of the video.

Resources:

Script:

► – VIDEO CLIP WITH INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

In golf, the primary use of the “flagstick” is to show players the location of the hole when they are too far away to see it otherwise. Another use for the flagstick is as a backstop to help stop a ball near the hole and maybe even to help it go in the hole.

When is hitting the flagstick permitted and when is it a penalty? When do the Rules allow players to remove the flagstick and when are they allowed to leave it in the hole?

PART 2 – REMOVING FLAGSTICK

A player may remove the flagstick from the hole, or have it removed, before the play of ANY stroke, whether the stroke is played from the putting green or from some other place.

If the flagstick has been removed in order for one player to play, it may, at the choice of the player who is to play next, be left out of the hole or put back in the hole.

PART 3 – ATTENDING FLAGSTICK

There are times when a player may want the flagstick in the hole while they make a stroke then taken out of the hole before the ball reaches it. The Rules permit this and call this having the flagstick ATTENDED.

Players may have the flagstick ATTENDED no matter where their stroke is played. Most frequently players have done this when putting from a long distance or when chipping or pitching to the putting green.

Having the flagstick ATTENDED must be arranged before a stroke is made, not after making a stroke, while a ball is in motion.

PART 4 – BALL STRIKING FLAGSTICK

There are four times when it is against the Rules for your ball to hit the flagstick. The first three are penalties no matter where your stroke is played: one, when the flagstick is being attended; two, when it is somewhere other than in the hole when your stroke is made, and three, while the Rules allow you to have the flagstick held up above the hole to indicate the hole's position before and when you play, it is a penalty if your ball hits the held up flagstick. Four, it is also a penalty to hit the flagstick when it is unattended in the hole, but in this case only when your stroke is played from the putting green.

In all four cases the penalty is loss of hole in match play and two strokes in stroke play.

Hitting a flagstick when it is in the hole and unattended is permitted, as long as your stroke is played from somewhere other than the putting green. For example: when you chip or putt from off the putting green as Tom Watson did in the final round of the 1982 U.S. Open to help secure his victory;

when you play from a bunker as Birdie Kim did to win the 2005 U.S. Women's Open; and when you play a full shot into the green as Jack Nicklaus did in 1972 with his 1 iron tee shot on the 71st hole en route to his 3rd U.S. Open victory.

PART 5 – QUESTIONS

For more information on the Flagstick refer to the Definition of Flagstick on page 25 of the Rules of Golf and to Rule 17 (The Flagstick) on page 73.

(pause)

The USGA and the R&A jointly govern the game worldwide, administering the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status, Equipment Standards and World Amateur Golf Rankings.