

## **A REVISED APPROACH TO WRITING AND PRESENTING THE NEW RULES OF GOLF FOR 2019**

In addition to proposing many substantive Rule changes, this Rules Modernisation initiative has focused on changing how the Rules are written and presented. This has resulted in a new writing style and format, a reorganisation of the Rules and the introduction of a “Player’s Edition” of the Rules.

### **A. New Writing Style and Format**

- A Simpler Writing Style: There is a deliberate move away from the legalistic drafting style used in previous editions of the Rules. The new writing style uses more commonly used and spoken words. Where possible, shorter sentences, bulleted lists and additional white space are used. The new style also includes more explanatory headings and easier to read formatting. The Rules of Golf are translated into over 30 languages, and we feel that the simpler, more consistent writing style will make the Rules easier to translate for those undertaking this important task. While our goal has been to make the language less complex, we realise that the Rules need to be clear and accurate to ensure consistency of application, and this does create some limitations on how simple the wording in the book can be.
- Referring to the Player as “He or She”: In the current edition of the Rules, the player is referred to as “he” and there is a statement at the front of the book indicating that this should be understood to include both males and females. The new Rules will now be written to refer to “he or she” throughout.
- Using Examples to Explain What the Rules Mean and How They Work: We are adding examples to many of the Rules to help show what is meant by the words. One such instance is in Rule 6.2 where we state:

“But Rule 6.2 does not apply:

- In any situation when a player will play a ball in play that lies in the teeing area (for example, after the player made a stroke at a teed ball and missed it or it came to rest in the teeing area). “

While providing this type of explanatory text increases the length of the Rules, it makes them easier to read and understand, which is the principal aim.

- Using Visual Tools to Explain Key Concepts and Procedures: Even with a simpler style of writing and the use of examples, some key concepts and procedures in the Rules are not easily explained in words. In recognition of this, the new format will include diagrams, illustrations and photos to deal with common situations that lend themselves to visual explanations, such as identifying the nearest point of complete relief and taking relief for an unplayable ball.
- Statement of Purpose of Each Rule: A statement of purpose will be included to give guidance on the key concepts in each particular Rule. This should help golfers understand the background of the Rule they are reviewing. For example, Rule 12 in the Player's Edition of the Rules concerning bunkers has the following statement describing a bunker and reasoning for the special provisions that apply when a ball lies in a bunker:  
*Purpose of Rule 12: Rule 12 is a **specific Rule for bunkers**. A bunker is a specially prepared area intended to test your ability to play a ball from the sand. To make sure you confront this challenge, there are some restrictions on touching the sand before the stroke is made and on where relief may be taken for a ball in a bunker.*
- Embracing Technology: The number of golfers and referees accessing the Rules of Golf on smart phones, tablets and computers is increasing all the time. We will continue to explore and embrace technology in presenting the new Rules on various digital platforms, compatible with various electronic devices. Even greater use of links, videos and search capabilities will give fast and efficient access to Rules answers and other explanatory material, on and off the course. We hope to take advantage of technological advances when providing digital resources for the implementation of the new Rules.

**b. Reorganising the Rule Book**

- Focus on What the Player Needs to Know: The new Rule book will focus on what the typical player needs to know. Information that is only relevant to Committees who organise competitions or oversee the golf course is moved to a separate “Committee Procedures” document sitting outside the Rules of Golf. For example, that document will cover all matters about running a competition (such as giving out score cards) and about adopting Local Rules and their recommended wording. The “Committee Procedures” document is currently in draft form, and we hope to share the draft at a later stage of the process.
- Number of Rules Reduced from 34 to 24: This has been achieved by restructuring the Rules, combining certain relief procedures and removing the Committee specific information. The basic Rules for individual match play and individual stroke play are covered in Rules 1-20. Other forms of play (including those involving play with a partner) are covered in Rules 21 to 24.
- Moving Key Decisions into the Rules: It has been a valid criticism that there are some “hidden Rules” that are found only in the Decisions book. An example would be the current Decisions dealing with restoring conditions that are altered after a player’s ball has come to rest (such as the specific case when another player’s stroke from a bunker deposits sand on the player’s ball lying just off the putting green); nothing in the current Rules themselves alerts the player to the fact that he or she is entitled to the relief of restoring the situation back to the way it was. To address this concern, we are moving the contents of more than 100 key Decisions into the body of the Rules. This approach makes the Rule book itself longer, but reducing the word count in the book is much less important than allowing the reader to find all Rule answers in a single document.
- Guidance Handbook: The traditional “question and answer” Decisions book will be replaced with a “Handbook”. The Handbook will give organised explanatory guidance

on each Rule where needed rather than using “Decisions” as the sole method of providing interpretations of the Rules. The Handbook is currently in early draft form, and we hope to share the draft at a later stage of the process.

### **c. The Player’s Edition**

- **A Shorter Edition of the Rules:** A major change in our approach to presenting the Rules is issuing a much shorter “Player’s Edition” of the Rules. This is intended to be widely circulated to golfers worldwide, as the version of the Rules that golfers will be able most easily to access and use. We hope that the Player’s Edition will encourage many more golfers to read and understand the Rules, and will make it easier to find answers when situations arise on the course.
- **Written in the Second Person:** The Player’s Edition will be written in the second person with the focus on “you” the golfer. This golfer-focused style is another key step in making the Rules more accessible. An example of this golfer-focused style is as follows:

#### **a. When Lifted or Moved Ball Must Be Replaced**

If you lift or *move* your ball at rest, your ball must be *replaced* on its original spot (which you must estimate if you don’t know it), **except:**

- When you lift the ball to take relief under a Rule or to *replace* the ball on a different spot, or
  - When the ball *moves* only after you have started the backswing for a *stroke* and then make the *stroke*.
- **It is a Rule book:** The Player’s Edition will be an actual Rule book, not merely a summary or a “Quick Guide”. It will look like the full Rules and, although the text of the Player’s Edition will be condensed, it will give the reader the same answer that is found in the full Rules. The Player’s Edition will include the Rules that describe the essential characteristics of the game of golf - for example, the fundamentals of the game, such as playing by the Rules, the different parts of the course and the equipment to be used. It also covers the most commonly used Rules. For the less

frequently occurring situations that are not included, the Player's Edition will tell the golfer where to find those answers in the full Rule book.

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### **Evaluation and Feedback**

We hope that this summary of the thinking behind the new approach to writing and presenting the Rules will help you in reviewing the drafts of the full Rules and the Player's Edition. We look forward to your comments on the new writing style and format, the proposed reorganisation of the Rules and the introduction of the Player's Edition.