



# Moving to the 2019 Rules of Golf: LOCAL RULES FOR CLUB SCORECARDS

---

- **The objective of this resource is to provide information to help you with the task of making your scorecard Local Rules ready for the new Rules of Golf when they come into effect on 1/1/2019.**
- **SECTION 1** (of this resource). Most of your Local Rules will only require changes to a few key words. These word-change requirements are the result of new terminology that has been introduced into the Rules by The R&A and United States Golf Association. **Section 1** lists the words to look out for.
- **SECTION 2.** A number of relief options that were previously only available by Local Rule have been moved into the actual Rules of Golf and will automatically apply at your club. As a result, it is possible that some of your Local Rules can now be withdrawn. A list of these redundant Local Rules is set out in **Section 2**.
- In **SECTION 3** we provide updated versions of more commonly-used Local Rules, together with some new Model Local Rules. We have looked to abbreviate these where possible to make them a better fit for your scorecards. (A list of the complete versions of all Model Local Rules is available via the following R&A webpage – [www.randa.org/en/rog/2019/rules/committee-procedures/section-3](http://www.randa.org/en/rog/2019/rules/committee-procedures/section-3))
- In **SECTION 4** we provide guidance on the new Local Rule that is available as an alternative to the stroke & distance penalty for Lost Ball or ball Out of Bounds.

Further points to note:

- Supplies of old scorecards can continue to be used after 31/12/2018 until they have been exhausted (provided players in competitions operate under 2019-compliant Local Rules).
  - Model Local Rules are no longer included in the Rule book, or in the Player's Edition booklet. If on your current scorecards for one or more of your Local Rules you simply list a heading and a page reference in the Rule book, this reference will need to be changed. As a new source for the full information, the options available to you include: posting on a club noticeboard, or club website, or directing to The R&A's webpage for Model Local Rules (provided above), etc.
  - If you reference Rule numbers in your Local Rules, please be mindful that all of the Rule numbers have changed in the new Rules. As a result, you will need to change the Rule numbers you list.
  - Once you have progressed to the stage of producing a final draft of your new scorecard Local Rules, feel free to email this to us if you would like us to review it (simonm@golf.org.au). But remember, you know your course and members better than us, so it will be difficult for us to identify any Local Rules you should have included but haven't!
- 
- **SECTION 1. A list of changes to terminology that is commonly-used in Local Rules.**
  - **SECTION 2. Local Rules no longer required because of incorporation into the Rules of Golf.**
  - **SECTION 3. Local Rules text for your scorecards**
  - **SECTION 4. New Local Rule that is available as an alternative to the stroke & distance penalty for Lost Ball or ball Out of Bounds.**

## SECTION 1.

### Changes to terminology that is commonly-used in Local Rules

---

When updating your scorecards and Local Rules, please be mindful of the following terminology changes:

- The term “**through the green**” is changed to “**general area**”.
- The term “**lateral water hazard**” is changed to “**red penalty area**”.  
(Note: Committees will now have the discretion to mark all penalty areas as red so that lateral relief is always allowed (but they may still mark penalty areas as yellow where they consider it appropriate). Under the 2019 Rules, The R&A encourages committees to mark most penalty areas red to give players the additional option of lateral relief. However, where part of the challenge of the hole is to carry over a penalty area such as a stream that crosses the front of the putting green and there is a good chance that a ball that carries over the stream could fall back into it, the committee can decide to mark the penalty area as yellow.)
- The term “**water hazard**” is changed to “**yellow penalty area**”.
- The term “**no play zone**” has been introduced.  
Note:
  - A committee can use no play zones for any reason.
  - A no play zone must be defined as either an abnormal course condition (i.e. ground under repair, an animal hole, an immovable obstruction, or temporary water) or a penalty area.
- The term “**integral part of the course**” is changed to “**integral object**”.
- Change any reference of “**hole made by a burrowing animal**” to “**animal hole**”.  
Note: The Rules no longer distinguish between a burrowing animal (which is a defined term in the 2019 Rules) and a non-burrowing animal.
- The term “**casual water**” is changed to “**temporary water**”.
- The term “**relief area**” has been introduced. It is the area in which a player must drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule or a Local Rule. The ball must be dropped in the relief area and it must come to rest in the relief area.
- The term “**general penalty**” has been introduced. It means “Loss of hole in match play or two penalty strokes in stroke play.”

## SECTION 2.

### Local Rules no longer required from 1/1/2019 because of incorporation into the Rules of Golf

---

The following are examples of Local Rules that will not be required from 1 January 2019 [the reason why each Local Rule is no longer required is listed in square brackets].

- Local Rule allowing the use of **distance measuring devices** [becomes a Rule of Golf].
- Local Rule allowing players to **remove loose stones in bunkers** [becomes a Rule of Golf].
- Local Rule **waiving the penalty for accidentally moving a ball on the putting green** [becomes a Rule of Golf].
- Local Rule allowing free relief for an **embedded ball through the green** [becomes a Rule of Golf].
- Local Rule **waiving the additional penalty for returning an incorrect score card due to an unknown penalty** [becomes a Rule of Golf].
- Local rule providing relief from **accumulations of leaves in bunkers** [leaves are loose impediments and loose impediments may be removed from bunkers under the new Rules]. However, if the accumulations are so severe that balls are regularly being lost in them (whether in bunkers or outside of bunkers), committees do still have the option of treating accumulations of leaves in the general area and in bunkers to be ground under repair.

## SECTION 3.

### Local Rules text for your scorecards

---

Text for using on scorecards is provided for the following Local Rules:

1. Penalty statement to include on your scorecard at the bottom of your list of Local Rules
2. Immovable obstructions (eg sprinkler heads) close to putting greens – line of play interference
3. Dropping zones
4. No play zones
5. Preferred lies
6. Lift, clean, and replace
7. Staked trees
8. Ball deflected by power lines
9. Line of play relief for protective fence
10. Seams of cut turf
11. Relief on opposite side of red penalty area
12. New term of condition now required to enable halved results in matches
13. Policy guidance for autoscore scorecards – which score to count

#### **1. PENALTY STATEMENT TO INCLUDE ON YOUR SCORECARD AT THE BOTTOM OF YOUR LIST OF LOCAL RULES**

*“Unless otherwise noted, the penalty for a breach of a Local Rule is the general penalty (stroke play – two strokes, match play – loss of hole).”*

#### **2. IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS (EG SPRINKLER HEADS) CLOSE TO PUTTING GREENS – LINE OF PLAY INTERFERENCE**

*“Rule 16.1b applies to immovable obstructions close to putting greens. In addition to the types of interference described in Rule 16.1a, interference also exists if an immovable obstruction is: on the player’s line of play, and is within two club-lengths of the putting green, and is within two club-lengths of the ball. (Exception – There is no relief under this Local Rule if the player chooses a line of play that is clearly unreasonable.)”*

#### **3. DROPPING ZONES**

Note: As has long been the case, committees may choose to use dropping zones either as the only relief option for a player, or as an additional relief option. Also as previously, dropping zones may be used to provide relief for various conditions, including ground under repair, unplayable ball situations, penalty areas, etc.

The change regarding dropping zones is that when a player now drops a ball in a dropping zone, the ball must come to rest in the dropping zone. As a result, whenever a committee is offering a dropping zone as a relief option for a situation, it should include the following text in any local rule that incorporates the use of dropping zones:

*“When the player is using a dropping zone, the ball must be dropped in the dropping zone and it must come to rest in the dropping zone.”*

#### 4. NO PLAY ZONES

Note: 'No play zones' are new terminology and introduce greater flexibility and options for a committee. A no play zone must be designated as either a penalty area or an abnormal course condition (an abnormal course condition is defined to include: ground under repair, an animal hole, an immovable obstruction, or temporary water).

The text for these two Local Rule options are:

- **Penalty area no play zone**  
*"The area within the [red] [yellow] penalty area defined by [specify how the area is marked, for example, with green stakes] [specify where it is located, for example, on the right of the fairway on hole 8] is a no play zone. When a ball is in the no play zone within the penalty area, the ball must not be played as it lies and relief must be taken from interference by the no play zone under Rule 17.1e."*
- **Abnormal course condition no play zone**  
*"The area defined by [specify how the area is marked, for example, with green stakes] [specify where it is located, e.g. on the right of the fairway on hole 8] is a no play zone that is to be treated as an abnormal course condition. Free relief must be taken from interference by the no play zone under Rule 16.1f."*

#### 5. PREFERRED LIES

*"When a player's ball lies in a part of the general area cut to fairway height or less [OR identify a specific area such as 'on the fairway of the 6<sup>th</sup> hole' OR you may include non-fairway areas that are in the general area], the player may take free relief once by placing the original ball or another ball within [specify size of relief area, such as one club-length, one scorecard length, etc] of the spot of the original ball (but with these limits: must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and must be in the general area). For a ball that does not come to rest on the spot it is originally placed, see Rule 14.2e."*

#### 6. LIFT, CLEAN, AND REPLACE

*"When a player's ball lies in [identify area, such as the general area, at the 6<sup>th</sup> hole, in the general area cut to fairway height or less, etc.], the ball may be lifted (after having been marked), and then cleaned and replaced without penalty."*

#### 7. STAKED TREES

*"Staked trees and staked shrubs [are no play zones and – only include this text in yellow if it is the committee's intent to make it compulsory for players to drop away from a staked tree/shrub] are ground under repair (the GUR includes the stake [and any wrapping]."*

#### 8. BALL DEFLECTED BY POWER LINES

*"If it is known or virtually certain that a player's ball hit a power line [or tower or a wire or pole supporting a power line – add in one or more of these options if the committee believes it to be appropriate] during the play of [specify hole number], the stroke does not count. The player must play a ball without penalty from where the previous stroke was made (see Rule 14.6 for what to do)."*

## 9. LINE OF PLAY RELIEF FOR PROTECTIVE FENCE

*"During play of the [specify hole number], if the protective fence on the [specify hole number] is on a player's line of play, the player may take free relief by dropping a ball in and playing it from the dropping zone (describe location of dropping zone). But this relief is allowed only if the ball is in play nearer the hole than where the dropping zone is located (see Rule 14.3).*

## 10. SEAMS OF CUT TURF

*"If a player's ball in the general area lies in or touches a seam of cut turf, or a seam interferes with the player's area of intended swing, the player may take relief under Rule 16.1b. But interference does not exist if the seam only interferes with the player's stance. All seams within the area of cut turf are treated as the same seam in taking relief."*

## 11. RELIEF ON OPPOSITE SIDE OF RED PENALTY AREA

Note: A Committee can introduce a Local Rule to allow lateral relief on the opposite side of a red penalty area as an extra relief option under Rule 17.1d. When considering a Local Rule to allow additional relief:

- The Committee should only introduce the Local Rule in situations where a player could be seriously disadvantaged if it was not introduced. Two such examples are:
  - Where a boundary coincides with the edge of a penalty area down the side of a hole such that if a ball last crossed into the penalty area on the boundary side, the player would be likely to have no realistic relief option other than to play again under stroke and distance.
  - Where the layout of the penalty area is such that there could be doubt as to where the ball last crossed into the penalty area and the decision on which side of the penalty area the ball last crossed has a considerable impact on where to take relief. This applies if a relatively narrow penalty area is bounded by bushes or thick rough on one side and fairway on the other.
- It is recommended that the Committee limit the extra option to specific penalty areas rather than applying it to all red penalty areas on the course.
- This Local Rule should not be used to allow a player to use the opposite side relief option to get across a red penalty area to a more favourable location than is available if only normal lateral relief under Rule 17.1d is used and available.
- It may also be desirable to mark the penalty areas where this option is available in a special way such as putting a different coloured top on any stakes where the extra option is available, and this should be stated in the Local Rule.
- Instead of using this Local Rule, the Committee may decide to put one or more dropping zones in place.

The text for the Local Rule is:

*"When a player is taking relief from a red penalty area[/s] on hole[/s] [specify hole number/s] which [is/are] identified by [specify how the area is marked, for example, with red stakes with black tops], the player may take relief using one of the options under Rule 17.1d or, as an extra relief option, the player may drop a ball on the opposite side of the penalty area. The reference point for the extra option is: the point on the opposite edge of the penalty area that is the same distance from the hole as the point where the original ball last crossed the edge of the red penalty area – the size of the relief area is two club-lengths from the reference point. The relief area does not include ground that is nearer the hole than the reference point. The relief area may be in any area of the course except the same penalty area, but if more than one area of the course is located within two club-lengths of the reference point, the ball when dropped must come to rest in the same area of the course that the ball first touches when dropped.*

## **12. NEW TERM OF CONDITION NOW REQUIRED TO ENABLE HALVED RESULTS IN MATCHES**

If a match is tied after the final hole, the match is extended one hole at a time until there is a winner (see Rule 3.2a(4)), unless the Terms of the Competition state otherwise.

The Terms of the Competition should specify if the match may end in a tie or if the play-off method will differ from that specified in Rule 3.2a(4). Options include the following:

- The match ends in a tie,
- The match will be extended starting at a specific hole other than the first hole, or
- There will be a play-off over a fixed number of holes (for example, 9 or 18 holes).

In a handicap match, the stroke index allocation as set by the Committee should be used to determine where handicap strokes should be given or received in extra holes unless the Terms of the Competition state otherwise.

## **13. POLICY GUIDANCE FOR AUTOSCORE SCORECARDS – WHICH SCORE TO COUNT**

Golf Australia is regularly asked questions about autoscore score cards. A common query is: “If two different scores are recorded for the same hole (e.g. the number ‘5’ autoscore box is selected but a ‘4’ has been written down) which score should count?”

After discussion with The R&A, GA has produced the following statement to assist those clubs and competition organisers who use autoscore score cards.

***“The R&A considers the use of ‘autoscore score cards’ to conform with the Rules of Golf. However, The R&A does not currently consider the Rules to stipulate which recorded individual hole score should count in the instance of a discrepancy between a written score and an entry in the autoscore section of the card. It is The R&A’s view that each individual Committee has the authority to make its own determination in this respect. To assist Committees in making such a determination, Golf Australia recommends that the following policy be adopted by those Committees using autoscore score cards: If two different scores are recorded for the same hole (eg the number ‘5’ autoscore box is selected but a ‘4’ has been written down) the higher score will count. (If only a number is recorded, or only an autoscore box is selected, that number or autoscore selection will be the score to count.)***

Note: This is only a recommendation. Each Committee is free to develop its own policy in this regard after taking into consideration all local circumstances. (For example, it is permissible for a Committee to adopt a policy deeming that only a recording in the autoscore section of the card will be accepted.)

## SECTION 4.

### **New Local Rule that is available as an alternative to the stroke & distance penalty for Lost Ball or ball Out of Bounds**

---

#### **Purpose**

When a provisional ball has not been played, significant issues with pace of play can result for a player needing to take stroke-and-distance relief for a ball that is out of bounds or cannot be found. The purpose of this Local Rule is to allow a Committee to provide an extra relief option that allows a player to play on without returning to the location of the previous stroke.

This Local Rule is appropriate for general play where golfers are playing casual rounds or playing their own competitions. The Local Rule is not appropriate for competitions limited to highly skilled players (that is, professional competitions and elite amateur competitions).

Where a Committee has introduced such a Local Rule for general play, and removes it for competitions, it should ensure that all players are aware of this before play begins.

A Committee may introduce such a Local Rule for all play on the course or only for one or two specific holes where it may be especially useful (for example, where players are unable to see the landing area and therefore may not know whether or not to play a provisional ball).

This option allows the player to drop in a large area between the point where the ball is estimated to have come to rest or gone out of bounds and the edge of the fairway of the hole being played that is not nearer the hole.

The player gets two penalty strokes when using this relief option. This means that the relief is comparable to what could have been achieved if the player had taken stroke-and-distance relief.

This Local Rule cannot be used for an unplayable ball, or for a ball that is known or virtually certain to be in a penalty area.

If a provisional ball is played and neither the original ball nor the provisional ball can be found, then the Local Rule may be applied for the provisional ball that cannot be found.

**The R&A has produced an excellent 1-minute video which explains the operation of this Local Rule in simple terms. The video is available from the following webpage –**

**[www.golf.org.au/LR-oob-lostball](http://www.golf.org.au/LR-oob-lostball)**

#### **Text of new Local Rule**

On the next two pages we provide two text options of the new Local Rule. The first is the full R&A version. The second is an abbreviated version produced by Golf Australia (which is still quite lengthy given the space limitations for a scorecard). Both have the exact same effect. If you are looking to refer to this Local Rule on your scorecards, we would suggest adopting a pragmatic approach and using the following text:

***“The Model Local Rule for Alternative to Stroke and Distance for Lost Ball or Ball Out of Bounds is in effect. For full details, diagrams, and video, go to the following webpage – [www.golf.org.au/LR-oob-lostball](http://www.golf.org.au/LR-oob-lostball)”***



**OPTION 1. Text of new Local Rule that is available as an alternative to the stroke & distance penalty for Lost Ball or ball Out of Bounds**

---

“When a player’s ball cannot be found or is *known or virtually certain* to be *out of bounds*, the player may proceed as follows rather than proceeding under *stroke and distance*.

Once the player puts another ball *in play* under this Local Rule:

- The original ball is no longer *in play* and must not be played.
- This is true even if the original ball is found on the *course* before the end of the three-minute search time (see Rule 6.3b).

For **two penalty strokes**, the player may take relief by *dropping* the original ball or a *substituted ball* in this *relief area* (see Rule 14.3):

Two Estimated Reference Points:

**a. Ball Reference Point:** The point where the original ball:

- Is estimated to have come to rest on the *course*, or
- Last crossed the edge of the *course* boundary to go *out of bounds*.

**b. Fairway Reference Point:** The point of fairway of the *hole* being played that is nearest to the ball reference point, **but** is not nearer the *hole* than the ball reference point.

For purposes of this Local Rule, “fairway” means any area of grass in the *general area* that is cut to fairway height or less.

Size of Relief Area Based on Reference Points: Anywhere between:

- A line from the hole through the ball reference point (or within two club-lengths to the outside of that line), and
- A line from the hole through the fairway reference point (or within two club-lengths to the outside of that line).

**But** with these limits:

Limits on Location of Relief Area:

- Must be in the *general area*, and
- Must not be nearer the *hole* than the ball reference point.

**But**, the player may not use this option when:

- The ball is *known or virtually certain* to have come to rest in a *penalty area*, or
- The player has played another ball provisionally under penalty of *stroke and distance* (see Rule 18.3).”

**OPTION 2. Text of new Local Rule that is available as an alternative to the stroke & distance penalty for Lost Ball or ball Out of Bounds**

---

When a player's ball has not been found or is *out of bounds*, the player may drop a ball under penalty of two strokes in this *relief area* (see Rule 14.3):

- A. Anywhere on a line FROM:
- the 'ball reference point' (the 'ball reference point' is the spot where the ball is estimated to have come to rest on the course or gone *out of bounds*)
- TO
- the closest point on the hole being played that has grass cut to fairway height or less, and which is not nearer the hole than the 'ball reference point'.

This line must be the most direct line between the two points with the condition that no part of it may be nearer the hole than the 'ball reference point'.

- B. On a line starting at any spot that meets the requirements of A and then which goes directly away from the hole from that spot (with no limit on how far back).
- C. Anywhere within two club-lengths of any spot that meets the requirements of A or B, but not nearer the hole than the 'ball reference point'.

When a ball is put into play under this Local Rule it is not a *provisional ball*, it has become the *ball in play*.

**But**, the player may not use this Local Rule when:

- It is *known or virtually certain* that the original ball came to rest in a *penalty area*, or
- The player has already played a *provisional ball*.