

SSGOA Policy & Rules for Tournament Play (rev. Feb 2024)

USGA RULES PREVAIL UNLESS NOTED BELOW IN LOCAL RULES

Reminder of key USGA rules:

- **3 minute time limit to search for lost ball:** This was changed from 5 minutes years ago.
- **No changing to a “putting” ball when on the green:** This is covered in USGA rule for “*Ball used in Playing of Hole*”.
- **Rangefinders that adjust for elevation are not allowed unless you can turn the feature off:** This is covered under USGA rule for “*Allowed and Prohibited Uses of Equipment*”.
- **Doubt As To Correct Procedure:** If unsure of the ruling, play two balls from the point of uncertainty until the hole is completed. The Tournament Manager and/or Rules Official will later make a final ruling on all disputes and if necessary, which ball to use for scoring.

SSGOA POLICY ON RULES VIOLATIONS & CHEATING

- Most rule violations are unintentional but still must incur the prescribed penalty. Golf is primarily played with an honor system where the player should immediately call penalties on themselves when they violate a rule during the round. **Players that intentionally violate the rules to their advantage are labelled “cheaters” and will not be tolerated.**
- Observed rule violations, whether intentional or not, must be addressed in a non-confrontational manner and resolved immediately on the course by the players in the group, preferably directly after a violation is observed and before a score is recorded on the hole where the alleged infraction occurred. **DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE ROUND.**
- Violations can be observed and called out by you (on yourself), your partner, or fellow competitors in your playing group or nearby fellow competitors.
- Common rule violations include: not putting out or “gimme’s”; moving your ball in the rough; teeing off from an incorrect teeing area; improper relief from cart paths (wrong side); improper marking and replacement of balls on the green; improper penalty and procedure for balls out of bounds, lost, unplayable or in hazards, etc.
- **See Appendix 1 for additional details on how to proceed for observed rule violations.**

LOCAL RULES & POLICY IN EFFECT FOR SSGOA TOURNAMENTS:

Root Rule – Dangerous Condition (new for 2024): In the interest of player safety, USGA Rule 9 for “Ball played as it lies” is modified as follows:

If a ball lies directly on or very close to a tree root that interferes with the bottom of the swing path and presents a potential for player injury, relief is granted without penalty through the following procedure:

- Alert fellow competitors to the condition and allow them to observe the condition.
- Mark and lift the ball. Locate the nearest point of full relief for the bottom of your swing path and drop a ball within 6 inches of the nearest point of full relief.
- This rule does not provide any relief for an uneven stance caused by a root.
- This rule does not provide any relief for line of play i.e. the tree might still be in your line of play after taking relief from the root for the bottom of the swing path.
- This rule does not provide any relief from the tree trunk being in your swing path.

Ball Lost or Out of Bounds - Local rule E-5 is adapted: In the interest of maintaining pace of play, USGA Rule 18 is modified with USGA local rule E-5 as follows:

If a ball played from a teeing area or anywhere on the course is possibly lost or out of bounds, the player must immediately make the following decision before leaving the point from where the original ball was played:

- Announce that they will play a provisional ball and proceed with the “1 stroke and distance” penalty, if the original ball is not found within 3 minutes or is out of bounds
- **OR if not hitting a provisional ball**, proceed to the general area where the ball might be lost or out of bounds. If the ball is lost or out of bounds, add 2 penalty strokes and play the next shot from the relief area (see appendix 2 for details on relief areas). Generally, the relief area is a point no closer to the hole between where the original ball was lost or out of bounds and at the nearest edge of the fairway of the hole being played.

This eliminates the time consuming option of returning to the point from where the original ball was played, playing the next stroke from that point and adding 1 penalty stroke.

Pace of Play: Pace of play is an important element to the enjoyment of a round of golf. We expect the pace of play to be 4 ½ hours or less for 18 holes. We encourage your group to play “ready golf” at all times but especially if you are out of position (falling behind the group in front of you). When available, SSGOA player assistants will monitor the positions of groups on the course and will request groups to speed up play when there are significant gaps between groups. **For egregious slow play where there is more than a one hole gap, an entire group may be required to move up one hole and record double bogey for the hole not played.**

Preferred Lies: When a ball lies in the fairway or any closely mown area, including fringe around the green of the hole that you are playing, the player may mark, lift, clean, and place his ball within 6 inches of the original spot, not nearer the hole.

Scramble competition: If a ball in the rough is selected, the player that hit the ball to that point must play that ball “down”, as it lies. The other partner must place their ball within 6 inches of the original point, not nearer the hole, and must not change the playing condition i.e. from rough to fairway even if the fairway is 6 inches from the original spot. **Clarification:** The team can select which player hits first, the player playing the ball “down” or the player that is placing their ball.

Sand Trap Negligence: After verification of sand trap negligence by your fellow competitors, you may lift your ball, rake or smooth the area and place your ball within 6 inches of the original spot, not nearer the hole. No penalty.

Embedded Ball Through the Green: A ball embedded in its own pitch mark anywhere on the course except in a hazard may be lifted, without penalty, cleaned and dropped as close as possible to the original spot but not nearer the hole.

All Putts Must Be Holed Out: No one has the authority to concede a putt. Adherence and enforcement of this rule protects the entire field.

Tie Break: Any tie breaks will be determined by score card playoff, starting with hole #1.

Cell Phone Etiquette: DO NOT DELAY PLAY BY TAKING CALLS ON THE COURSE.

Be considerate of others by turning your phone off or using Silent or Vibrate mode.

Appendix 1

SSGOA POLICY ON RULES VIOLATIONS & CHEATING

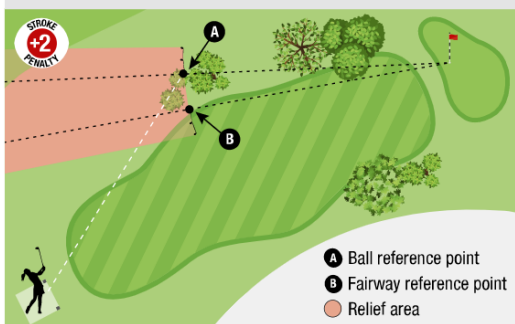
- Many rule violations are unintentional and simply occur from lack of rules knowledge. If unsure how to proceed, you should consult a rules book, your partner, fellow competitors, or on-course player assistance if nearby. Otherwise follow the USGA rule for “Doubt as to Correct Procedure” noted above in the “Reminder of key USGA rules”.
- Observed rule violations whether intentional or not must be addressed and resolved immediately on the course by the players in the group, preferably right after a violation and before a score is recorded on the hole where the alleged infraction occurred. Do not wait until the end of the round. To avoid confrontation, stay calm and just state the facts. Examples: “I observed you while playing your second shot” or “Perhaps you were unaware that moving your ball in the rough accidentally or intentionally is not allowed and incurs a one stroke penalty and the ball must be replaced in its original spot and lie.”
- Violations can be observed and called out by you (on yourself), your partner, or fellow competitors in your playing group or nearby fellow competitors.
- Common rule violations include: not putting out or “gimme’s”; moving your ball in the rough; teeing off from an incorrect teeing area; improper relief from cart paths (wrong side); improper marking and replacement of balls on the green; improper penalty and procedure for balls out of bounds, lost, unplayable or in hazards, etc.
- If a player is observed and called out for an alleged rules violation and the player agrees with the infraction, the appropriate penalty strokes should be applied when the fellow competitor marks the score for the player.
- **If more than 1 player** observes and confirms an intentional rules violation (“cheating”), the infraction will immediately be brought to the attention of the player and appropriate penalty strokes will be applied when marking the score for that hole. If the player does not agree with the score recorded for the hole, the round will be completed but the scorecard will be returned unsigned to the Tournament Manager. The observers and player present the facts of the alleged infraction. The Tournament Manager will have the final say and then the scorecard shall be signed by the player and marker. If the player does not agree with penalty strokes assessed and does not sign the scorecard, the team score will not be posted for the competition or skins.

Appendix 2

E-5 Alternative to Stroke and Distance for Lost Ball or Ball Out of Bounds

For two penalty strokes, the player may take relief by dropping the original ball or another ball in the prescribed relief areas (see Diagrams below):

MLR E-5 DIAGRAM 1: BALL NOT FOUND



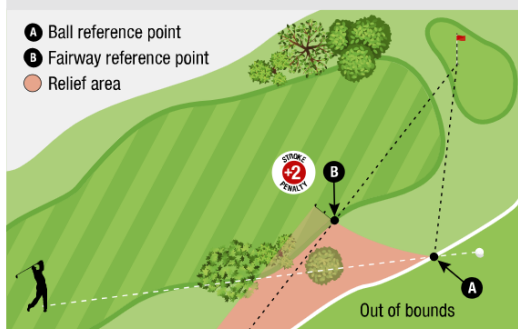
When a player's ball has not been found, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes:

Reference Points	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
A. Ball Reference Point: The point where the original ball is estimated to have come to rest on the course (point A) B. Fairway Reference Point: The point of fairway of the hole being played (point B) that is nearest to the ball reference point, but is not nearer the hole than the ball reference point	Anywhere between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A line from the hole through the ball reference point (point A) (and within two club-lengths to the outside of that line), and A line from the hole through the fairway reference point (point B) (and within two club-lengths to the fairway side of that line) 	The relief area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must not be nearer the hole than the ball reference point, and Must be in the general area

Player Notes:

As the relief area is likely to be very large, the ball could roll a considerable distance from the spot where it first strikes the ground and not need to be dropped again.

MLR E-5 DIAGRAM 2: BALL OUT OF BOUNDS



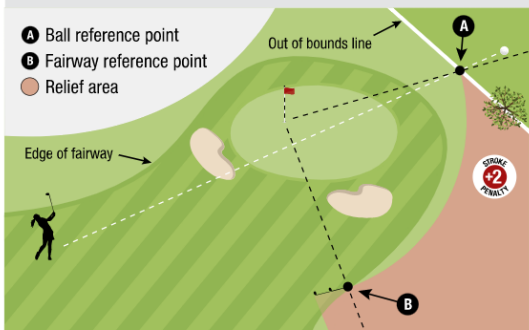
When a player's ball is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes:

Reference Point	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
A. Ball Reference Point: The point where the original ball is estimated to have last crossed the edge of the course boundary to go out of bounds (point A) B. Fairway Reference Point: The point of fairway of the hole being played (point B) that is nearest to the ball reference point, but is not nearer the hole than the ball reference point	Anywhere between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A line from the hole through the ball reference point (point A) (and within two club-lengths to the outside of that line but still on the course), and A line from the hole through the fairway reference point (point B) (and within two club-lengths to the fairway side of that line) 	The relief area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must not be nearer the hole than the ball reference point, and Must be in the general area

Player Notes:

As the relief area is likely to be very large, the ball could roll a considerable distance from the spot where it first strikes the ground and not need to be dropped again.

MLR E-5 DIAGRAM 3: BALL NOT FOUND OR OUT OF BOUNDS CLOSE TO GREEN



When a player's ball has not been found or is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes:

Reference Points	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
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 (point A) B. Fairway Reference Point: The point of fairway of the hole being played (point B) that is nearest to the ball reference point, but is not nearer the hole than the ball reference point	Anywhere between: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A line from the hole through the ball reference point (point A) (and within two club-lengths to the outside of that line), and A line from the hole through the fairway reference point (point B) (and within two club-lengths to the fairway side of that line) 	The relief area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must not be nearer the hole than the ball reference point, and Must be in the general area

Player Notes:

As the relief area is likely to be very large, the ball could roll a considerable distance from the spot where it first strikes the ground and not need to be dropped again.