

The Most Misunderstood and Violated Rules of Golf: A Player's Guide

According to Rule 1-1: "The Game of Golf consists in playing a ball from the teeing ground into the hole by a stroke or successive strokes in accordance with the Rules." Sounds easy, right? Unfortunately for many of us playing it, the game of golf can actually be rather complicated. Even more complex for most golfers is the last part of the previous statement, "in accordance with the Rules."

Playing by the Rules presents a challenge for most golfers. Some players choose to play the ball into the hole without any concern for the Rules, while others are simply unaware of the Rules altogether. In order for the average player to better adhere to the Rules of Golf, it is first essential to explore which Rules are most often violated or ignored by players.

One of the most violated or ignored Rules in golf is **Rule 4-4: Maximum of 14 Clubs**. Not too long ago, there was no limit to the number of clubs that a golfer could carry in his bag. No limit existed primarily because there was no reason to impose one. A player could not load up his bag even if he had sought to simply because not enough different styles of clubs were available to him.



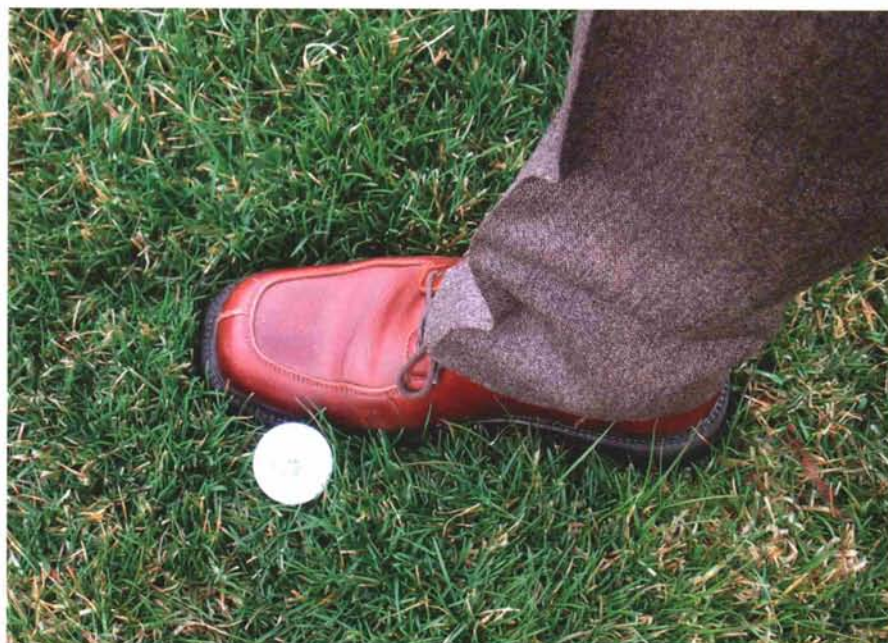
However, this changed when specialty clubs like the sand wedge came on the scene. Eventually, players, including star professionals, were carrying 20 to 30 clubs in their bags. In order to halt these excesses, in 1938 the USGA established a maximum number of clubs to be carried. Fourteen clubs were considered a full set, so that became the official USGA limit.

For most golfers, mastering the Rules of Golf can be just as complex as succeeding at playing the game itself.

If the 1930s saw a problem with an excessive amount of specialty clubs becoming available, the same issue certainly exists today. Several club manufacturers are promoting clubs that fill a gap in a player's game. Many golfers refuse to "sacrifice" a club. So rather than replace it, they simply add the new club to the bag. It is easy to go from 14 clubs to 16 or 17 if a player is constantly trying to get an edge on the competition. Because of this, Rule 4-4 is often knowingly violated when a player feels that the game is difficult enough without also having to restrict the number of clubs that are allowed in the bag.

Rule 13: Ball Played as it Lies is another of golf's most violated Rules. Even on perfectly manicured fairways, some players are compelled to improve the lie of the ball, as demonstrated in the photo of the player pressing down the

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grass behind his ball. Another example of a blatant violation of Rule 13 is when the player presses down behind the ball with the club head or rolls the ball into a more favorable position with the club head. Rule 13 is certainly a basic principle of golf, however, it is deliberately violated most often because of the overwhelming temptation to make the next stroke easier to execute.

Rule 4-4 and Rule 13 are two examples of Rules that are often intentionally overlooked. Many of the other common violations occur when a person is not familiar with a specific Rule or procedure. Take **Rule 18**, for example. What is the procedure if your ball is at rest and is subsequently moved? If the ball moves because of something other than wind, water or gravity, the ball must be re-placed. Most players are unaware that they must do this and they play it from its new position. One of the most heralded situations involving Rule 18 occurred when Davis Love III accidentally moved his ball with a practice stroke and failed to re-place it. He was eventually disqualified because he failed to apply the general two-stroke penalty for playing from a wrong place.

Other commonly misguided Rules situations that result in golfers

playing from a wrong place relate to **Rules 24 through 28**. Referred to as the "Five Golden Rules" because of the frequency of their application, Rules 24-28 cover relief situations and procedures.

Rule 24: The term "obstructions" is most often violated because a player believes he is entitled to relief when in fact he is not. An example of this would be a player taking relief from a fence defining "out of bounds." Objects defining out of bounds are not considered obstructions, therefore no relief is available

without penalty. Many players are unaware of this and take relief from an out-of-bounds fence or stake as if it were a cart path or ballwasher. In reality, they should have proceeded under the Unplayable Ball Rule and applied a one-stroke penalty.

The other common violation occurs when a player believes he is entitled to relief because an obstruction intrudes on his line of play. Pump houses and halfway houses are notorious obstacles for intervening on the line of play. A player may believe that because the obstruction is in the way of a shot, interference exists. However, there is no "line of sight" relief referenced in Rule 24.

As "line of sight" is a habitually misrepresented phrase with respect to Rule 24, "line of flight" is more frequently misused when referring to the water hazard relief options under **Rule 26**. There are two types of hazards in reference to Rule 26: water hazards, marked with yellow stakes and lines, and lateral water hazards, marked with red stakes and lines. In the case of water hazards (yellow), a player has three (3) options (see 1-3 below). Lateral water hazards (red) have two additional options (4 and 5 below). The mistake that players so frequently make in taking relief from a water hazard is dropping a ball on the path that the original ball took

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Lateral Water Hazard

5 options - Same 3 plus 2

1. Play the ball as it lies--no penalty.

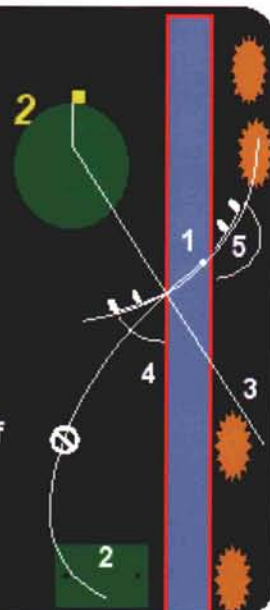
OR, Under penalty of one stroke:

2. Play a ball under the *stroke and distance* procedure.

3. Drop behind the *hazard* keeping the point between the *hole* and the spot on which the ball is dropped.

4. Drop 2 club-lengths from the point of entry into the *hazard*.

5. Drop 2 club-lengths from point on the *opposite margin*, equidistant from the hole.





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before it ended up in the hazard (the "line of flight"). Unfortunately, playing a ball that is dropped along the "line of flight" would, in most cases, result in a penalty for playing from a wrong place. If the offense for playing from a wrong place is serious enough, it could result in the disqualification of the player.

A serious breach of the Rules often occurs when a player loses the ball or hits the ball out of bounds. Rather than taking the stroke and distance penalty as prescribed in **Rule 27: Ball Lost or Out of Bounds**, a golfer drops a ball where the original ball might be lost or out of bounds. Whether this mistake is based on ignorance or is done to save time, it will result in a penalty of disqualification unless the breach is corrected. The penalty of stroke and distance has been regarded as one of the more severe penalties in golf. However, currently no other equitable alternative for a ball that is lost or out of bounds exists.

As for **Rule 28: Ball Unplayable**, how many times has a player measured two club lengths from the edge, or side, of a bush rather than where the unplayable ball lies in the bush? Unfortunately, this is another wrong-place issue that could require a penalty.

For most golfers, mastering the Rules of Golf can be just as complex as succeeding at playing the game itself. Therefore, playing by the Rules can offer a great challenge. Sometimes, this challenge of the game leads players to choose to ignore the Rules altogether or simply fail to follow the correct Rules procedure. All golfers are encouraged to learn, apply and honor the Rules as they define this game we all love.



Dan Hardy is the director of rules and competitions for the CDGA.

A RULES Q&A

Bob McCallum, CGCS Orchard Hills Golf Club

Q. What are the consequences if a ball moves after address?

A. Rule 18-2 b, Ball Moving After Address, states that if a player's ball in play moves after he has addressed it (other than as a result of a stroke), the player shall be deemed to have moved the ball and shall incur a penalty stroke. The player shall replace the ball unless the movement of the ball occurs after he has begun his swing and he does not discontinue his swing.

Q. If competing in stroke play (e.g., league activity), what is the Rule if I am chipping to the green and a fellow competitor's ball is in my line and he refuses to mark it?

A. According to Rule 22, Ball Interfering with or Assisting Play, any player may:

- lift his ball if he considers that the ball might assist any other player (or)
- have any other ball lifted if he considers that the ball might interfere with his play or assist the play of any other player, but this may not be done while another ball is in motion.

In stroke play, a player required to lift his ball may play first rather than lift. A ball lifted under this Rule shall be re-placed.

Penalty for breach of Rule: in match play, loss of hole; in stroke play, two strokes. Note that this Rule also stipulates that except on the putting green, the ball may not be cleaned while lifted.

Q. If vandalism has left scratches on a green, am I allowed to repair the damage prior to putting or chipping to the hole?

A. Rule 16-1 c, The Putting Green, Repair of Hole Plugs, Ball Marks and Other Damage, permits the player to repair an old hole plug or damage to the putting green caused by the impact of a ball, whether or not the player's ball lies on the putting green. If the ball is moved in the process of such repair, it shall be re-placed, without penalty. Any other damage to the putting green shall not be repaired if it might assist the player in his subsequent play of the hole.

Q. How much time is allowed if a ball is overhanging the hole to see if it will fall into the hole? (We've all seen *Caddyshack*, right?)

A. Rule 16-2, Ball Overhanging Hole, states that when any part of the ball overhangs the lip of the hole, the player is allowed enough time to reach the hole without unreasonable delay and an additional 10 seconds to determine whether the ball is at rest. If by then the ball has not fallen into the hole, it is deemed to be at rest. If the ball subsequently falls into the hole, the player is deemed to have holed out with his last stroke, and he shall add a penalty stroke to his score for the hole; otherwise, there is no penalty under this Rule. (For an explanation of undue delay, see Rule 6-7.)

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Make Your Golf Course A Sanctuary

This year, the MAGCS Environmental Committee is working to promote participation in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program (ACSP) for Golf Courses and the annual North American Golf Course Birdwatching Open, which is sponsored by ACSP.

The ACSP is designed to help golf courses take stock of their environmental resources and then develop an environmental plan that is tailored to the specific needs of the course.

Since 1991, the ACSP for Golf Courses has promoted the ideals of ecologically sound land management through education and conservation. Membership in the ACSP has grown to more than 2,100 courses in the United States and Canada. More than 300 of these courses have received certification by completing projects in a series of six categories. Currently, 144 courses in Illinois participate in the ACSP. Of these, 24 have been recognized as Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuaries. These courses include:

- Village Links of Glen Ellyn
- Aldeen Golf Club
- St. Charles Country Club
- Forest Hills Country Club
- Silver Lake Country Club
- Ivanhoe Club
- Aurora Country Club
- Flossmoor Country Club
- Olympia Fields Country Club
- Pottawatomie Golf Course
- Cantigny Golf Club
- Jackson Park Golf Course
- Arrowhead Golf Club
- Settler's Hill Golf Course
- Skokie Country Club
- Sandy Hollow Golf Course
- Naperville Country Club
- Kemper Lakes Golf Course
- Countryside Golf Course
- The Den at Fox Creek
- Brae Loch Golf Course
- Elgin Country Club
- Bryn Mawr Country Club
- Itasca Country Club

As you can see, the members of the MAGCS are no strangers to the ACSP and the idea of environmental stewardship. As someone who has just started the Audubon program, I have a great deal of respect for the individuals at these facilities who were willing to put forth the time and effort to achieve certified status.

The ACSP is designed to help golf courses take stock of their environmental resources and then develop an environmental plan that is tailored to the specific needs of the course. To accomplish this, you complete a site assessment and environmental plan. Audubon International then assists you with information and planning in six categories:

- Environmental Planning: This stage helps course personnel evaluate the course and current management strategies. You work to define goals and outline objectives.

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Blue heron.

Photos by Craig Nowack

- **Wildlife and Habitat Management:** This involves the management of nonplay areas to provide habitat for wildlife on the golf course, taking into account course location, size and layout.
- **Chemical Use, Reduction and Safety:** Principles of IPM and education of workers and patrons are emphasized.
- **Water Conservation:** Conservation management focuses on increasing irrigation efficiency, reducing irrigated acreage, use of drought-tolerant plant species and recapturing water.



Wood duck.

- **Water Quality Management:** This deals with management of ponds, streams and wetlands. It also emphasizes monitoring of water quality, and proper equipment such as chemical rinsate pads and chemical storage areas.
- **Outreach and Education:** Through outreach, courses work to increase golfer awareness and public understanding of wildlife and the environmental benefits that golf courses have to offer.

Participants in the program have undertaken a variety of projects, including use of native plants, butterfly gardens, recycling programs, nesting boxes, monitoring water quality and prairie restoration. These projects cover all aspects of environmental stewardship.

How you choose to incorporate the projects into your management program is flexible. All decisions concerning the implementation of various projects remains with the superin-

tendent and the course officials. You can choose to seek certification in one category or all six categories.

Or you can simply enroll as a member and complete the site assessment as a means of documenting the environmental resources at your facility.

On May 11, watch the birdie!

Each spring, Audubon International sponsors the North American Golf Course Birdwatching Open. It is held during the first part of May and coincides with the International Migratory Bird Day. This year's event

will take place on May 11. In past years, more than 50 courses nationally have participated in this event. During this one-day event, participants have documented more than 350 different bird species, including several federally threatened or endangered species. These results verify that golf courses play a valid role in bird conservation and wildlife habitats in general.

This year, the Environmental Committee's goals are twofold:

1. To increase participation of MAGCS members in the ACSP at whatever level of participation is best suited for individual facilities.
2. To encourage ACSP members to participate in the North American Golf Course Birdwatching Open. We would like to follow up the event with a press release that would highlight the involvement of MAGCS members.

Membership in Audubon International is \$150 annually. Membership information is available online at www.audubonintl.org or by calling Audubon International at 518-767-9051. Membership application forms will also be available at our monthly meetings. To participate in the Birdwatching Open, you can register online and download rules and information as well as a bird checklist. If you don't have Internet access, contact Jean Mackay at Audubon International, extension 13.

If you plan to participate in the birdwatching event, please contact me so that we can include your information in a follow-up press release. Also, it would be helpful to network and identify sources for volunteers who are experienced birdwatchers.

The ACSP presents a win-win opportunity for the game of golf and the environment. Please take a moment to consider this program and the many benefits that it has to offer.



Shoot That Goose!

With your camera, that is. Have you captured wildlife in action on your golf course? *On Course* wants to publish your photos . . . whether the subject is bird or beast, reptilian or amphibian. Come to think of it, we'd love to see photos of stunning vegetation (a lush display of wildflowers, perhaps) and weather events (looming storm clouds or a stunning sunset), too. When we gather enough submissions, we'll publish a photo gallery and repeat as warranted. Please send your print or slide to the editor at 68 S. Waterford Dr., Round Lake, IL 60073. All submissions will be scanned and returned. Or submit your photo digitally—call Cathy Ralston at 847-740-0758 for technical requirements.

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Effluent Irrigation, Part III: Logistics and Management

Editor's Note: This article—the last part of a series—originally appeared in the January/February issue of The Grass Roots, the official publication of the Wisconsin GCSA. The August 2001 and April 2002 issues of On Course featured parts one and two of the series. Our thanks to the WGCSA for permission to reprint this discussion of a topic that is sure to come to the forefront in the near future.

The previous two installments of the series on effluent irrigation defined effluent water and described its increasing use for golf course irrigation and agronomic issues associated with effluent water. Depending on the circumstances, several or all of the following characteristics are likely to be associated with an effluent irrigation source:

- Bacterial pathogens (human).
- Solids.
- High pH.
- Bicarbonates and carbonates.
- Salts and sodium.
- Heavy metals/toxic ions.
- Dissolved nutrients (N and P).

Special efforts may be required to deal with effluent irrigation. These include agronomic, financial, legal and sometimes simply logistical considerations.

Agronomic Considerations

High pH can cause deficiencies of iron, manganese and zinc. Conventional soil-applied fertilizers may be unlikely to correct the deficiencies, but they can usually be overcome by using chelated and foliar applications. Addition of sulphurous or phosphoric acids, injected into the irrigation system at the pump, are useful to control moderate levels of bicarbonate (HCO_3^-) and carbonate (CO_3^{2-}). If left unchecked, these ions form lime in the soil, allowing sodium to adsorb onto the soil peds, which causes loss of soil structure. The acid reduces water pH and keeps calcium and magnesium solubilized in the soil solution by interacting with the bicarbonate and carbonate ions.

If the soil has already turned sodic and soil structure loss has occurred or is imminent, gypsum (calcium sulfate, CaSO_4) can be applied to the turf. Since gypsum can cause phytotoxicity, rates to putting greens are typically limited to 0.5 to 1.0 lb. per thousand square feet on greens, and 300-500 lb. per acre for fairways. The finer the grade (above 90 is best), the quicker the gypsum will dissolve into the turf. Generally, the process may take years. Gypsum can eventually restore soil structure because the excess calcium dislodges sodium ions from the soil peds. The sodium bonds with the sulfate from the gypsum to form water-soluble sodium sulfate (Na_2SO_4), which can be leached from the soil. Currently, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection does not allow the sale of gypsum for use on turf in Wisconsin because there is not a problem with sodium in our soils.

Heavy metal accumulation such as chlorine can usually be minimized by removing and spreading clippings in nonaffected areas to dilute the heavy metals by applying them across a large area. Nutrients such as N and P should be monitored and fertility adjusted (reduced) to take advantage of N and P in the effluent.

Since much golf turf, especially putting greens, essentially “lives on the edge,” it is important to minimize the potential negative impacts of effluent water.