



The Golf Course

Due to favourable ongoing course conditions at Houghton - and also after continued requests from golf's Rules-makers - we are stopping placing with immediate effect!

The New Rules of Golf 2019

So, as we move closer and closer to D-Day, or should I say R-Day, here are some more bits and pieces about what lies in store for us come Jan 1.

The following links are to both the R&A's (20 general Rules) and USGA's Facebook pages, and they contain visual ideas of how we're going to continue playing the game.

[Link 1.](#)

[Link 2.](#)

In **RED** penalty areas, you can proceed as follows:

- **Play the ball as it lies**, if you found it, that is. And remember, now you can ground your club, remove loose impediments, and take practice swings. (NB: NO PRACTICE SWINGS THOUGH IN BUNKERS).

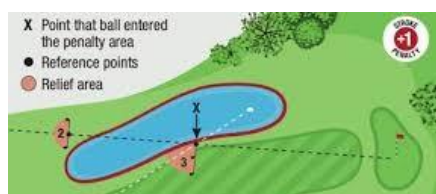
- **Under penalty of 1 stroke**, and as per the diagram below, you have the following 3 options:

1. **Stroke and distance** - in other words go back to the spot from where you last played, and drop the ball within **1** club-length of that spot, or within the teeing ground, if it was your tee-shot.

2. **Back-on-the-line relief** - take a straight line from the flag, through the point where the ball entered the penalty area, and then as far back as you like. You must then mark the spot on that line as your reference point, and then drop your ball within **1** club-length of that point.

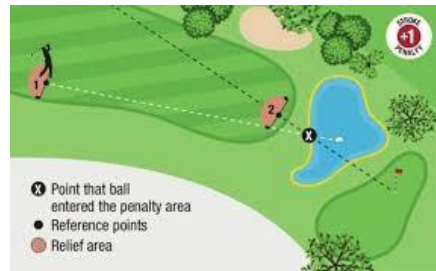
3. **Lateral relief** - drop your ball within **2** club-lengths of the reference point where your ball last entered the penalty area, and not nearer the hole.

NB: The lateral option allows a 2 club-length relief area; the back-on-the-line option only 1!





For **YELLOW** penalty areas, the 2 club-length lateral option is not available.



NB: When proceeding under option 2 in both red and yellow penalty areas – in the shaded semi-circular areas in the 2 above diagrams - and after you have determined your reference point, the ball when dropped must not bounce closer to the hole than the reference point, even though you're far back-on-the-line and nowhere close to where the ball originally entered the penalty area (point X). They're doing this to maintain consistency in the relief procedures throughout the Rules.

Remember, in all dropping procedures now, the ball must bounce inside the relief area, and then come to rest inside that area!

Other changes:

1. Relief for balls **embedded** in their own pitch marks is now a Rule, and no longer a Local Rule that we have to put in place.

2. A club damaged during a round can now be used, whether it was damaged in the normal course of play, or in anger, but not if it was changed deliberately. The club may also be repaired during the round, but it cannot be replaced.

3. The Committee – Rules speak for whoever runs the course at a club – can mark any area of the course as a penalty area, so at Houghton, we will now mark the area on hole 5 around the pump-house and surrounding areas as a penalty area. This will now help golfers, as if it's known or virtually certain – they talk about being 95% sure – that the ball is lost inside the area, then instead of taking the stroke **and** distance penalty, you can now take lateral relief where the ball entered that area. Remember, you still have the option to play it where you find it, and also that you can ground your club, and take practice swings. Just don't use these practice swings to improve the lie, or the area of your intended swing!

4. You must start a round at the advertised time, not before, and not after. This means that you must be ready to play at the right time, and not on the tee preparing to get your tees out the bag, and your glove, and then a few warm-up swings, etc, etc. I think you get my drift. If you're up to 5 minutes late, then the general penalty of 2 strokes is invoked, and if you're later than that, then you're toast!

5. Only 3 minutes to look for lost balls!

6. Pace of play recommendations include: a prompt pace of play, being ready when it's your turn, prepare in advance for your stroke, 40 seconds to play, and 'ready golf' – which is basically playing out of turn - as long as it's safe and nobody is in front of you.

7. The club used for measuring relief areas should be the longest club in your bag, other than your putter. So basically it's your driver, and if for some reason or another, your bag is far away and you only have say a 7i with you, you can estimate the extra length when determining the size of the relief area. Another time saver!

8. Closely mown is now **fairway height**.

9. Abnormal Ground Conditions are now **Abnormal Course Conditions**.

10. Casual Water is now **Temporary Water**.

Sunshine Tour Stuff

It was not only good to see Louis Oosthuizen win last week's SA Open at Randpark, but just to see our top-ranked Pro teeing it up and supporting his home Tour was a win to start with.

He's faced quite a bit of criticism of late for not playing here, and I understand these guys have scheduling issues, but you still should make the effort to play at home, and he's probably and finally realised it.

Or Els someone threatened him with grievous bodily harm if he didn't pitch for this event at some stage!!

And even better, he's up again this week at Johann Rupert's Dunhill event at Leopard Creek, the best 13 hole course in the world.

And I say this with the greatest of respect, as the finishing 5 holes at 'Leopard' are spectacular, but for me, after putting out on 13, I could grab my binocs, and something malty, and just park there at that view site over the Crocodile River and just check things out for hours.

That's about all for this week.

I'll bring you more on the Rules next week, and we do have the new Rules books in the shop.

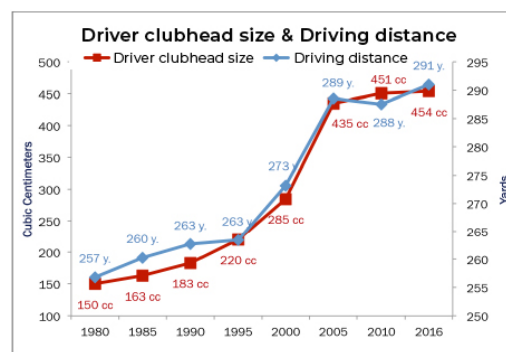
Hope you have a good one, and if you're travelling away for the holidays, then travel safely.

Kappy.

The direction of technology

Are you making the most of what we have?

The PGA Tour has seen spectacular increases in distance off the tee. Our sense is that the percentage increases have by now way been replicated for the average golfer. The good news is that means that there is a ton of potential available to you.



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Sometimes a golfer has the right tool, but is using them in the wrong way. Sometimes just a change in ball position; an improvement in setup; or the sequence of the downswing; produce that 10 – 15% improvement.

[Contact us >](#)

Choose your Weapon



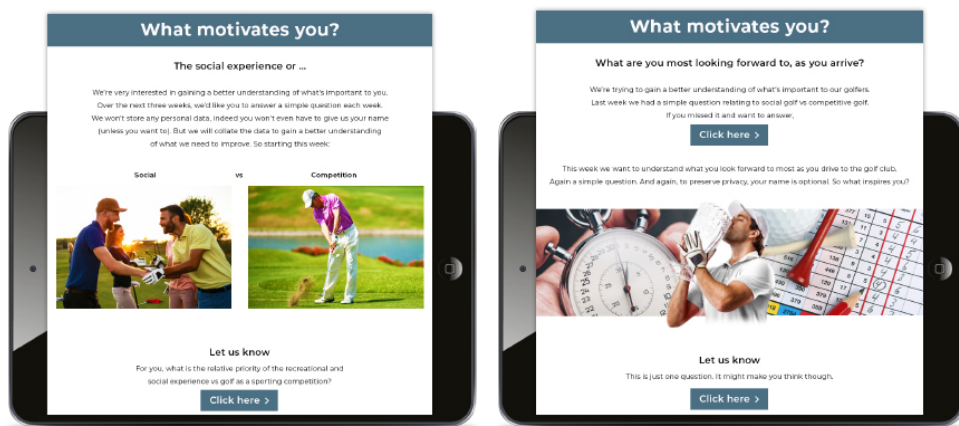
The new Srixon Fairways, Hybrids, and Utility all provide ease of use, but now you can choose the shot versatility you wish without losing forgiveness. We think that's a big win.

[Here's why >](#)

What motivates you?

Is there a particular format you enjoy most?

We're trying to gain a better understanding of what's important to our golfers. In the last two weeks, we've really appreciated the responses to the simple questions asked. If you didn't answer and want to help out, we've got the first two weeks below.



This week we examine formats. We sense that this is an area of the game where golfers of different ages, and those with different handicaps, might have different views.

Let us know

This is one question. Let us know your most and least favorite format.

[Click here >](#)

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