

**Federal Competitions and International Matches  
Terms of Competition, Local Rules and Code of Conduct (Hard Card)**

Version 01/03/2025

**I. TERMS OF COMPETITION**

The following Terms, together with any additions and/or amendments published by the RBGF at the competition venue, will apply to all Competitions and International Matches run by the RBGF. Complete version see General Regulations.

**1. Eligibility**

Players must meet the eligibility provisions established in the entry conditions for the specific competition.

**2. Entry Requirements**, see General Regulations.

**3. Format of Play**, see General Regulations.

**4. Returning a Scorecard**

The player must, within 10 minutes after finishing the last hole of the round, verify, certify and return their scorecard to the Recording Area (usually the Tournament Office). A player who fails to do so may be disqualified by the Tournament Committee.

A player's scorecard is officially returned when they have handed it over to an Official in the Recording area and they have left the Recording Area with both feet.

**5. Deciding Ties**

Except for competitions over 18 holes, in the event of a tie for first place in a Stroke Play competition, there will be a hole-by-hole Stroke Play play-off to determine the winner. Cfr. General Regulations

**6. Results of Competition - Competition Closed**

6.1 Match Play: The result of a match is officially announced when it has been recorded in the Tournament Office.

6.2 Stroke Play: The result of the competition is officially announced when the final result sheet is placed on the official noticeboard at the competition venue.

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**II. LOCAL RULES**

The following Local Rules, together with any additions and/or amendments published by the RBGF at the competition venue, will apply to all Competitions and international Matches run by the RBGF.

The Local Rules published by the host club on their scorecard or elsewhere do not apply.

**Unless otherwise noted, the penalty for breach of a Local Rule is the General Penalty (loss of hole in Match Play or two penalty strokes in Stroke Play).**

**1. Out of Bounds (Rule 18.2)**

**1.a** Beyond any boundary wall.

**1.b** Completely on or beyond any public road. This is true even if the ball comes to rest on another part of the course that is in bounds for other holes.

**Notes:**

- When a line on the ground defines the boundary edge, stakes may be used to show where the boundary edge is located, but they are boundary objects.
- Closed gates attached to boundary walls and fences are part of the boundary object. Relief is not allowed from such a gate under Rules 15.2 or 16.1. An open gate is not treated as part of the boundary object and may be closed or moved to a different position.

## 2. Penalty Areas (Rule 17)

**Penalty area no play zone:** defined by yellow or red stakes **with green top**.

**Note:** Dropping zones for penalty areas.

Where dropping zones are marked for a penalty area, they are an additional option for relief under penalty of one stroke. The dropping zone nearest to where the original ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area must be used. The dropping zone is a relief area. A ball must be dropped in and come to rest in the relief area.

## 3. Abnormal Course Conditions (Rule 16.1)

**Abnormal Course Condition no play zone:** defined by blue lines or blue stakes **with green top**.

**Note:** Dropping zones for abnormal course conditions.

Where dropping zones are marked for an abnormal course condition, they are an additional option for the relief options of Rule 16.1. The dropping zone nearest to where the original ball lies in the ACC must be used, if the ball is lost in the ACC, it is the dropping zone nearest to where the ball entered the ACC. The dropping zone is a relief area. A ball must be dropped in and come to rest in the relief area.

### 3.a Ground Under Repair

- 1) Any area encircled by white lines or blue stakes.
- 2) French drains (gravel-filled drainage ditches), whether or not marked.
- 3) If the ball lies in the general area and 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. This means that if a player has interference from any seam after dropping the ball, the player must proceed as required under Rule 14.3c(2) even when the ball is still within one club-length of the reference point (drop a second time, then place).

### 3.b Protection of trees and plantations

Staked trees and plantations surrounded by a plastic sleeve, plastic tube, wire mesh or the like are no play zones that are to be treated as an abnormal course condition. If the ball lies anywhere on the course other than in a penalty area and it lies on or touches such a tree or plantation or such a tree or plantation interferes with the player's stance or area of intended swing, the player must take relief under Rule 16.1f. If the ball lies in a penalty area, and interference to the player's stance or area of intended swing exists from such a tree or plantation, the player must take relief either with penalty under Rule 17.1e or with free relief under Rule 17.1e(2).

### 3.c Animal holes

Interference does not exist if an animal hole only interferes with the player's stance.

### 3.d Immovable Obstructions

- 1) Federal sponsor boards.
- 2) White lined areas and the immovable obstruction they tie into are treated as a single abnormal course condition.
- 3) Landscaped garden areas (and everything growing in them) that are surrounded by an immovable obstruction are treated as a single abnormal course condition.
- 4) Roads and paths surfaced with woodchips or mulch. Individual pieces of woodchip are loose impediments.

## 4. Integral Objects

Artificial retaining walls and pilings located in penalty areas are integral objects from which free relief is not allowed.

## 5. Clubs and Balls (Rule 4)

**5.a** Any driver the player uses to make a stroke must have a clubhead, identified by model and loft, which is on the current List of Conforming Driver Heads issued by the R&A. This list is regularly updated and is found at [RandA.org](http://RandA.org).

**Penalty for making a Stroke with Club in breach of this Local Rule: Disqualification**

**5.b** Any ball used in making a stroke must be on the current List of Conforming Golf Balls issued by the R&A. This list is regularly updated and is found at [RandA.org](http://RandA.org).

**Penalty for making a stroke with a ball not on Current list in breach of this Local Rule: Disqualification**

## 6. Replacement of Club that is Broken or Significantly Damaged

Rule 4.1a(2) is modified in this way:

1. A club damaged by the player or their caddie during the round or while play is stopped under Rule 5.7a may only be replaced if the damage was not caused by abuse and if the club is broken or the damage is significant.

For the purposes of this Local Rule, examples of when a club is "broken or the damage is significant" include:

### Shaft:

- The shaft is in pieces, or is bent, dented, kinked or splintered

### Clubhead (except Club Face):

- The clubhead is visibly cracked or substantially deformed (but not when it is only scratched, chipped or has a minor dent),
- The clubhead is loose or no longer attached to the shaft,
- A part inside the clubhead is loose (such as when it has a chip or minor dent but not when it is only scratched).

### Club Face:

- The club face is visibly cracked or deformed (including when it has a chip or minor dent but not when it is only scratched).

### Grip:

- The grip or part of it is loose.

2. To ensure the progression of the set is maintained, the replacement club must fill the gap created when the player took the broken or damaged club out of play.

**Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – See Rule 4.1b.**

## 7. Pace of Play Policy (Rule 5.6)

### 7.a Time Allowed

Each hole has been given a maximum completion time based upon the length and difficulty of the hole as well as upon the walking distance between the holes. The maximum time allowed for the completion of 18 holes will be available prior to play. As an average rule, the RBGF applies the following maximum time on a par-72 course:

- Groups of 2 players: 3h36' (average 12' per hole)
- Groups of 3 players: 4h12' (average 14' per hole)
- Groups of 4 players: 4h30' (average 15' per hole)

### 7.b Definition of Out of Position

The first group and any group after a starter's gap will be considered to be "out of position" if, at any time during the round, the group's cumulative time exceeds the time allowed for the number of holes completed. Any following group will be considered "out of position" if it is more than the starting interval behind the group in front and has exceeded the time allowed for the number of holes played.

### 7.c Procedure when Group is Out of Position

1) Rules Officials will monitor pace of play and decide whether a group that is "out of position" should be timed. An assessment of whether there are any recent mitigating circumstances, e.g. a lengthy ruling, lost ball, unplayable ball, etc. will be made.

If a decision is taken to time the players, **each player** in the group will be subject to individual timing and a Rules Official will advise each player that they are "out of position" and they are being timed.

The maximum time allowed per shot is 40 seconds. 10 extra seconds are allowed for the first player to play:

- a) on a par 3 hole;
- b) their approach shot; and
- c) a chip or putt.

The timing will start (1) when a player has had sufficient time to reach their ball, (2) it is their turn to play and (3) they are able to play without interference or distraction.

On the putting green, timing will start when the player has had a reasonable amount of time to lift, clean and replace their ball, repair damage to the putting green and remove loose impediments on their line of play. Time spent looking at the line of play is taken into account for the allocated time for the stroke.

2) Timing ceases when a group is back in position and players will be advised accordingly.

#### **7.d Procedure When Again Out of Position During Same Round:**

If a group is "out of position" more than once during a round, the above procedure will apply on each occasion. Bad times and the application of penalties in the same round will be carried forward until the round is completed. A player will not be penalized if they have a second bad time before being advised of their earlier bad time.

#### **Penalty for breach of Pace of Play Policy:**

1 bad time	Player will be warned by a Rules Official and informed that a further bad time will be penalized.
2 bad times	One stroke penalty
3 bad times	Further two strokes penalty or loss of hole in Match Play
4 bad times	Disqualification

#### **7.e Excessive Shot Time**

At any time, if any player is observed by a referee taking more than 80 seconds to play a shot, they will be notified of the excessive shot time and given an official warning (1<sup>st</sup> Bad Time) to speed up play. The player will also be advised that the Committee may start individual timing at any time, even if the group is not out of position.

#### **8. Suspension of Play (Rule 5.7)**

When play is stopped by the Committee in case of imminent danger, all players must stop play at once and must not make another stroke until the Committee resumes play. When play is stopped for imminent danger, practice is prohibited on any area in and outside the course.

The following signals will be used to suspend and resume play:

Immediate stop/dangerous situation: one prolonged note of the siren

Normal non-dangerous stop: three consecutive short notes of the siren, repeated.

Resume Play: two consecutive short notes of the siren, repeated.

#### **Penalty for breach of Rule 5.7b: Disqualification**

(Exception: there will be no penalty if the Committee decides that the failure to stop was justified.)

#### **9. Practice (Rule 5)**

##### **9.a Practice areas that are situated within the boundaries of the course.**

Use of these practice areas is allowed before or between rounds.

##### **9. b Practice before or between rounds in Stroke Play (Rule 5.2b)**

Rule 5.2b is modified in this way: a player must not practice on the competition course before or between rounds.

##### **9.c Restriction on practice strokes between holes in Stroke Play (Rule 5.5b)**

Rule 5.5b is modified in this way: between the play of two holes, a player must not make any practice stroke on or near the putting green of the hole just completed and must not test the surface of that putting green by rubbing the putting green or rolling a ball.

**Penalty for breach of Local Rule:** General Penalty at the next hole.

In the case of a breach at the last hole of the round, the penalty is applied to that hole.

#### **10. Distance Measuring Devices**

For U12-competitions only, Rule 4.3a(1) is modified in this way: during a round, a player must not obtain distance information by using an electronic distance measuring device.

#### **11. Transportation Policy**

During a round, a player or caddie must not ride on any form of motorized transportation except as authorized or later approved by the Committee. [Example: when a specific situation arises, in order to save time, a Rules Official may allow a player to ride with them, or with another person, in a golf cart, not for actual play of the round, but to and from the place where a previous stroke was made (e.g. lost ball), to go to a spot where a ruling occurred, to seek shelter in case of a thunderstorm, etc. The player or their caddie must not drive the transportation vehicle themselves.]

**Penalty for breach of Local Rule:** General Penalty for each hole during which there is a breach. A breach between holes applies to the next hole.

**Note:** The Committee in charge of the concerned competition will authorize only the players (not the caddies) presenting an EDGA pass or a "RBGF Medical Committee Exemption for the Use of Transportation" to use a transportation vehicle conforming to the conditions described in the RBGF Transportation Policy.

**Any person may move the transportation vehicle without the player. [Example: when a specific situation arises, in order to save time, any person may move the golf cart when the player is on the green to the back of the green or on the path of the next hole]**

## 12. Restriction on who may serve as a Caddie (Rule 10.3)

Rule 10.3a is modified in this way:

- A player must not have a professional golfer as their caddie during the round.
- In competitions for juniors only (U18 or less) a player must not have a person older than 18 years on 31/12 of the current year as their caddie during the round.

### Penalty for breach of this Local Rule:

- The player gets the General Penalty for each hole during which they are helped by such a caddie.
- If the breach happens or continues between two holes, the player gets the General Penalty for the next hole.

## 13. Code of Conduct

All players, caddies, advice givers or captains are required to act in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

### III. CODE OF CONDUCT POLICY

#### 1. Unacceptable behaviour by player, caddie, advice giver and captain

- Failure to care for the course: the player is responsible for (properly) raking bunkers after playing out of them, for replacing their divots and for repairing their pitch marks.
- Use of unacceptable language towards other players, spectators, officials, or other people, such as impolite, abusive or aggressive language.
- Being disrespectful to other players, spectators, officials or other people.
- Abuse of clubs or the course, such as intentionally throwing or damaging clubs or causing damage to the course or other property.
- Entering Zones defined as "No Entry Zones"

#### Penalty for breach

First breach: One penalty stroke.

Second breach: General Penalty.

Third breach: Disqualification (Committee decision). Additionally, other sanctions, such as a suspension for the next competition or competitions, may be imposed. The facts will be reported to the RBGF.

The Tournament Committee may decide to disqualify immediately in case of a serious breach.

#### 2. Respect for code of conduct hosting Club(s)

All participants in a Federal Competition are requested to adhere to the code of conduct of the hosting club (dress code, access to facilities and use of infrastructure).

Any participant not adhering to the dress code of the club will not be allowed to start. If during a round a player changes their clothes and is not conforming to the dress code anymore, they have to change back to the conforming clothes.

#### Penalty for breach:

First breach: One penalty stroke.

Second breach: General Penalty.

Third breach: Disqualification (Committee decision). Additionally, other sanctions, such as a suspension for the next competition or competitions, may be imposed. The facts will be reported to the RBGF.

The Tournament Committee may decide to disqualify immediately for a serious breach.

### **3. Use of Mobile Phone**

Mobile phones should be switched off or in silent mode. Use of a mobile phone by a player or caddie on the course must be limited to cases of emergency (such as for medical reasons) or danger or to call the Tournament Office.

Use of a smartphone to access the R&A Rules app, to enter scores (if requested) or to consult the course guide is not a breach of this Rule in itself.

The use of a mobile phone which is not authorized as above or is unnecessarily distracting other players is a breach of the Code of Conduct.

#### **Penalty for breach:**

First breach: The player is guilty of misconduct and should switch off their mobile phone.  
Second breach: General Penalty.  
Third breach: Disqualification (Committee decision). Additionally, other sanctions, such as a suspension for the next competition or competitions, may be imposed. The facts will be reported to the RBGF.

The Tournament Committee may decide to disqualify immediately in case of a serious breach.

### **4. Smoking Prohibition**

No player shall smoke during their round, only players older than 18 years may smoke in the restricted area if they are present.

#### **Penalty for breach:**

First breach: General Penalty.  
Second breach: Disqualification (Committee decision). Additionally, other sanctions, such as a suspension for the next competition or competitions, may be imposed. The facts will be reported to the RBGF.

### **5. Unacceptable behaviour by caddie.**

Like the players, caddies must follow the dress code and golf etiquette. This implies, among other things, a positive attitude and kindness and helpfulness, also towards other players. Negative interventions (anger, shouting, swearing, club throwing, etc.) regarding the own player, other players, parents, spectators and officials are unacceptable. Possible Rule problems are discussed calmly. It is important that the player gets the final decision in terms of club choice, line of play, etc. The caddy also has an important role in maintaining the pace of play.

#### **Penalty for breach:**

First Breach: Warning (This warning will be carried forward in all future competitions during the same year)  
Second Breach: Caddie must leave the course (A caddie who has been told to leave the course will not be allowed to caddie in future events during the same year, unless authorized by the RBGF after a meeting with the caddie).