

HOUSTON AMATEUR GOLF ASSOCIATION LOCAL RULES (APRIL 2023)

All tournaments are played in accordance with USGA rules and HAGA Local Rules. Each Player is responsible for knowing any additional rules for a specific tournament before play begins.

Some courses have a list of Local Rules on their scorecards. In general, rules identifying penalty areas, out of bounds, and no play zones and those protecting young trees and flowers can be used. However, local rules which modify USGA rules are **NOT VALID for HAGA** tournaments (i.e. ball drops at penalty areas, winter rules, etc.). Drop zones cannot be used unless the Tournament Director approves their use.

1. CODE OF CONDUCT

Contestants (and their caddies/guests) are to observe proper golf etiquette at all times. Any abuse or disrespect of fellow competitors, employees and other players of the host facility, or other persons conducting or attending an HAGA event can be grounds for disqualification from the event and possible rejection of entry to future HAGA events. Such abuse may be verbal, physical or by threat and includes, but is not limited to, the use of obscene language, physical damage to property or equipment of the host facility, and abuse of alcohol or controlled substances during a competitive round.

Some courses have a particular dress code and this information may be obtained from the course prior to play. HAGA's dress code is straight forward; no cut off shorts, no sleeveless tee shirts and no tank tops. It is the responsibility of each Player to present themselves in accordance with golf course policy. Remember that we are guests at ALL courses!

2. PROMPT PACE of PLAY (RULE 5.6)

A group which finishes their round more than 20 minutes behind the group in front of them has violated the Prompt Pace of Play Rule and each Player in the group may be assessed a two stroke penalty. There is no penalty if the group's total time is 4 hours 30 minutes or less. If the first group finishes their round in a time which the Tournament Committee deems unreasonable, each Player in that group may be assessed a two stroke penalty. Any appeal of a slow play penalty must be made to the Rules Committee before all scores for the group are posted.

3. HAGA occasionally plays courses that have not been marked to USGA guidelines. The following local rule has been established for such courses:

OUT OF BOUNDS

- A ball which comes to rest on or across a paved area, including roads and parking lots but not cart paths, is out of bounds.
- A ball, which comes to rest on property which is not part of the golf course, such as a residential yard, is out of bounds.

4. RELIEF FROM ABNORMAL COURSE CONDITIONS (RULE 16)

- **CRACKS IN THE GROUND** - many courses, particularly in the dry summer months, have large cracks in the ground. If a ball in the general area or on the putting green comes to rest in a crack at least one-quarter of an inch wide caused by hot dry conditions, the Player may take relief under Rule 16.1. Interference does not exist if the crack only interferes with the Player's stance or, on the putting green, the line of play.
- **AERATION HOLES** - if a ball lies in or touches an aeration hole in the general area or on the putting green, the Player may take relief under Rule 16.1. Interference does not exist if the aeration hole only interferes with the Player's stance or, on the putting green, the line of play.

5. **ALTERNATIVE TO STROKE AND DISTANCE FOR LOST BALL OR BALL OUT OF BOUNDS (RULE 18)**

When a player's ball cannot be found or is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds, the player has the option of taking a two stroke penalty rather than proceeding under stroke and distance. This option cannot be used when the ball is known or virtually certain to be in a penalty area or the player has played a provisional ball. If neither the original ball nor the provisional ball can be found, this two-stroke penalty option may be used for the provisional.

For **two penalty strokes**, the player may take relief by dropping a ball inside the relief area formed by:

- a line from the hole through the ball reference point (where the original ball is estimated to have come to rest or went out of bounds)
- a line from the hole through the point **on the fairway of the hole being played** that is nearest to the ball reference point. For purposes of this Local Rule, "fairway" means any area of grass in the general area cut to fairway height or less.
- two club-lengths to the outside of either line.

The drop must be in the general area and no nearer the hole than the ball reference point. **See Diagram on page 3.**

6. **MUD ON BALL**

Occasional mud on your ball is part of golf and the ball is just played as it lies. But when the course is so wet (or may become so wet) that mud will often be on golf balls the Tournament Director may decide ahead of an event to allow the ball to be picked up and cleaned. Players cannot decide to do this on their own. When this Local Rule is in effect:

- The ball may be lifted, cleaned, and replaced without penalty when the ball lies anywhere in the general area (fairways and rough) but not in penalty areas or bunkers.
- You must mark the spot of the ball before lifting it (see Rule 14.1).
- The ball must be replaced on its original spot (see Rule 14.2).
- If the ball does not stay on its original spot, you must try a second time. If the ball again does not stay on that spot, you must place the ball at the nearest spot where it will stay at rest that is not nearer the hole and is in the general area.
- If your ball has been replaced and is at rest, and then moves, there is no penalty and the ball must be played from its new spot, unless another Rule applies.

If you have an embedded ball or interference from temporary water you would take relief from those conditions first and then use this Local Rule.

7. Players may typically bring guests or a caddie but there are exceptions so the Player should check with the course directly. HAGA has adopted the following local rule regarding minors - Players may not bring onto the course any child under the age of 12. Breach of this rule is immediate disqualification and the Player will be asked to leave the course. HAGA takes no responsibility for the safety and well-being of any Player and/or guest during an HAGA tournament.

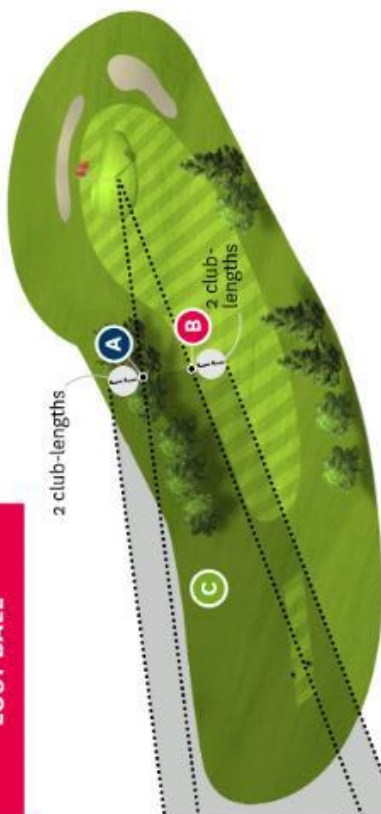
GOLF'S NEW RULES: STROKE AND DISTANCE

A new Local Rule provides an alternative to stroke-and-distance relief for a ball that is lost outside a penalty area or out of bounds, effective January 1, 2019.

BALL OUT OF BOUNDS



LOST BALL



If the Local Rule is in effect, you can still take stroke-and-distance relief, but you now have the following additional option that comes with a penalty of two strokes:

A DETERMINE SPOT where your ball went out of bounds (left diagram) or is likely to be lost (right diagram).

B FIND NEAREST FAIRWAY EDGE no closer to the hole.

C DROP YOUR BALL IN SHADED AREA as defined on one side by a line from the hole through point A and on the other side by a line from the hole through point B, and not nearer the hole. The relief area is extended on both sides by two club-lengths.

This Local Rule is not intended for higher levels of play, such as professional or elite amateur level competitions.



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