

Greater Cincinnati Golf Association

Local Rules, Terms of the Competition, & Code of Conduct

Play is governed by the current USGA Rules of Golf, the following Local Rules, Terms of the Competition, & Code of Conduct, Notice to Players, and the Local Rules Addendum distributed at each site subject to amendments by the GCGA Rules Committee. See applicable championship entry information for additions to the Terms of the Competition & Code of Conduct. Complete text of the Rules and Local Rules may be found in the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf, effective January 2023.

Unless otherwise provided, penalty for breach of a Local Rule is the General Penalty:

Match Play – Loss of Hole; Stroke Play – Two Strokes

LOCAL RULES

1. **LIST OF CONFORMING BALLS** - Local Rule as prescribed in Section 8 of the Committee Procedures is in effect. [Model Local Rule G-3](#)
2. **LIST OF CONFORMING DRIVER HEADS** - Local Rule as prescribed in Section 8 of the Committee Procedures is in effect. [Model Local Rule G-1](#)
3. **PACE OF PLAY** - See separate memorandum to players for pace of play guidelines, when applicable.
4. **PRACTICE** - Prior to and after his or her round in stroke play, a player may practice on the designated practice areas set by the Rules Committee. [Rule 5.2a](#) covers practice in match play, [Rule 5.2b](#) covers practice in stroke play. However, if the player finishes one round but will play another round or part of a round on the course on that same day, practicing on the course would breach [Rule 5.2b](#).
5. **FOOTWEAR** - During a round, a player must not wear shoes with:
 - Traditional spikes – spikes having single or multiple points designed to penetrate deeply into the surface of the ground (regardless of whether made of metal, ceramic, plastic or other materials); or
 - Spikes of any design that are entirely or partially made of metal if such metal may come in contact with the course. [Model Local Rule G-7](#)
6. **STOPPING & RESUMING PLAY** - Local Rule as prescribed in Section 8 of the Committee Procedures is in effect. [Model Local Rule J-1](#).

A suspension for a dangerous situation will be signaled by one prolonged airhorn note. All other types of suspensions will be signaled by three consecutive airhorn notes. In either case, resumption of play will be signaled by two short air horn notes. See [Rule 5.7b](#)

Note: All practice areas are closed during an immediate suspension for a dangerous situation until the Committee has declared them open. Players who practice on closed practice areas will be asked to stop practicing; failure to stop practicing might result in disqualification.
7. **DISTANCE MEASURING DEVICES** - Are allowed as described in [Rule 4.3\(1\)](#)
8. **GROUND UNDER REPAIR** - Defined by white lines. French drains are deemed ground under repair. Maintained landscaped areas containing flowering plants used for course beautification (including any mulch, pine straw or similar material in/surrounding such area) are deemed to be ground under repair. Please consult a member of the Committee or use [Rule 20.1c\(3\)](#) if there is any doubt on the status of such an area. Ground under repair may include areas of unusual damage, including areas where spectators or other traffic have combined with wet conditions to alter the ground surface materially, but only when so declared by a member of the Committee. An exposed bunker liner may be treated as ground under repair, but interference does not exist if the liner interferes only with the player's stance.
9. **IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS** - Includes plastic bumpers on roads and paths and mats secured to the ground with spikes when the bumpers or mats cover cables. Unless as stated in the Notice to Players, when railroad ties, curbing, and the like adjoin cart paths and roads, they are deemed to be part of the same abnormal course condition. Landscaped garden areas that are surrounded by an artificially surfaced road or path (including everything growing within that area) and the road or path are treated as a single abnormal course condition.
10. **WHITE-LINED AREAS TYING INTO ARTIFICIALLY SURFACED ROADS, PATHS, & OBSTRUCTIONS** - White-lined areas of ground under repair and the artificially surfaced roads, paths or other identified obstructions that they are connected to are a single abnormal course condition when taking relief under [Rule 16.1](#).
11. **INTEGRAL OBJECTS** - Include cables, rods, wires or wrappings when closely attached to trees, and artificial walls and pilings when located in penalty areas and bunkers, unless otherwise provided for in Notice to Players. A gate for getting through a boundary wall or fence is deemed to be an integral object. But if gate meets the definition of movable obstruction (i.e. can swing to different position with reasonable effort), the gate is treated as a movable obstruction.
12. **TEMPORARY POWER LINES AND CABLES** - Local Rule as prescribed in Section 8 of the Committee Procedures is in effect. [Model Local Rule F-22](#).

13. **BALL DEFLECTED BY A POWER LINE** - Local Rule as prescribed in Section 8 of the Committee Procedures is in effect. [Model Local Rule E-11](#).
14. **OUT OF BOUNDS** - Defined by course-side points, at ground level, of white stakes, walls, fence posts, and/or other objects as defined on the Notice to Players. A ball coming to rest on or beyond a road defined as out of bounds is out of bounds, even if it comes to rest on another part of the course that is in bounds for other holes.
15. **RELIEF FROM SEAMS OF CUT TURF (SOD SEAMS)** - Local Rule as prescribed in Section 8 of the Committee Procedures is in effect. [Model Local Rule F-7](#).
16. **TEMPORARY IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS** - Local Rule as prescribed in Section 8 of the Committee Procedures is in effect. [Model Local Rule F-23](#). Maintenance fans used to support air flow near a putting green & their supporting posts are deemed to be temporary immovable obstructions. *Note:* Artificially propelled air & water are Outside Influences.
17. **IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS CLOSE TO PUTTING GREENS** - Local Rule as prescribed in Section 8 of the Committee Procedures is in effect. [Model Local Rule F-5.1](#). For a ball in the general area, relief is allowed only when both the ball and the immovable obstruction lie in an area cut to fairway height or less. There is no relief under this Local Rule if the player chooses a line of play that is clearly unreasonable.
18. **YELLOW & RED PENALTY AREAS** - When both stakes and lines are used to define yellow and red penalty areas, stakes identify and lines define margins. When a penalty area is defined on only one side, it is deemed to extend to infinity. If the color of a penalty area has not been marked or indicated by the Committee, it is treated as a red penalty area.

When yellow & red penalty areas are bounded by out of bounds, the penalty area margin extends to and coincides with the out of bounds line. When a red penalty area is bounded by out of bounds and where the ball last crossed the penalty area margin coincides with the out of bounds line, as an extra relief option, adding one penalty stroke, the player may drop the original ball or another ball on the opposite side of the penalty area equally distant from the hole. [Model Rule B-2.2](#)
19. **WOOD CHIPS AND MULCH** are loose impediments unless otherwise provided for in Notice to Players.
20. **MODIFICATION OF PENALTY UNDER RULE 3.3B(2) FOR MISSING PLAYER OR MARKER CERTIFICATION** - Local Rule as prescribed in Section 8 of the Committee Procedures is in effect. [Model Local Rule L-1](#)

TERMS OF THE COMPETITION

1. **RETURNING SCORECARDS IN STROKE PLAY** - For the purpose of applying [Rule 3.3b\(2\)](#), a player is considered to have returned his or her scorecard when he or she has first left the scoring area, or if a drop box is used, when the scorecard has been placed in the box.
2. **CLOSE OF COMPETITION** – In match play, the result of the match is final when the result is recorded on an official scoreboard, or in absence of a scoreboard, when the result is reported to a member of the Rules Committee. In stroke play, the competition is deemed to have closed when the trophy has been presented to the winner or, in the absence of a prize ceremony, when the Committee has approved all scores. In stroke-play qualifying followed by match play, [Rule 20.2e\(2\)](#) stipulates that the stroke-play portion of the competition is closed when the player has teed off to start his or her first match.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Penalty for breach of the Code of Conduct is as follows:

First Breach: Warning; Second Breach: One-Stroke Penalty;

Third Breach: Two-Stroke Penalty; Fourth Breach or Any Serious Misconduct: Disqualification

1. **UNPROFESSIONAL CONDUCT** - Players & caddies are expected to act in a professional manner. Conduct that would be unacceptable includes: Failure to care for the course, unacceptable language, abuse of clubs or the course, and/or being disrespectful of other players, referees, or spectators.
2. **DRESS ATTIRE** - Players and caddies must be properly attired both on the golf course and the premises of the club. See [gcga.org](#) for proper attire requirements.
3. **ELECTRONIC DEVICES** - May be used by players and caddies in a private manner provided that such use does not breach [Rule 10.2a](#) (Advice) or disrupt practice or play. Background music (whether through video or audio) can NOT be played during the round.
4. **SPECTATORS** - Spectators must remain on cart paths or in the rough and approximately 15 yards from the players at all times (including practice areas).

If a player gets advice from someone other than his or her caddie (such as a spectator) without asking for it, he or she gets no penalty. However, if the player continues to get advice from that same person, the player must try to stop that person from giving advice. If the player does not do so, he or she is treated as asking for that advice and gets the penalty under [Rule 10.2a](#).