

# **SSGOA – Tournament Rules of Play**

## **USGA RULES PREVAIL UNLESS NOTED BELOW IN LOCAL RULES**

Reminder of key USGA rules:

- **3 minute time limit to search for ball:** USGA Rule 18.2 - Starts once reaching proximity of where ball is lost or out of bounds. Partner and fellow competitors should help in the search if other balls are located and waiting for group in front to clear. If clear, other players should hit before assisting with the search for a ball.
- **No changing to a “putting” ball when on the green:** USGA Rule 6.3 - for “Ball used in Play of Hole”.
- **Doubt As To Correct Procedure:** USGA Rule 20.1c - If unsure of the ruling, play two balls from the point of uncertainty until the hole is completed. Mark scores for both balls. The Tournament Manager and/or Rules Official will later make a final ruling as to which ball will be used for score at the turn or end of round, after hearing the facts of the situation.

## **SUMMARY SSGOA POLICY ON RULES VIOLATIONS & CHEATING (details in Appendix 1)**

Golf is played with an honor system. Many rule violations are unintentional, but some rule violations are intentional (cheating). Either way, violations must incur the prescribed penalty. **Ignorance of USGA or local rules for tournament play is not a valid excuse and does not provide any relief from prescribed penalties.**

**DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE ROUND.** Observed rule violations, whether intentional or not, must be addressed on the course immediately upon observation by the players in the group. **Rule violations can be observed and called out by you (on yourself), your partner, or fellow competitors in your playing group or nearby. Common rule violations include:**

- not putting out / “gimme’s”: 1 stroke penalty for moving ball not covered by a rule, replace ball and putt out
- Touching, moving your ball in the rough unless under a local rule: 1 stroke penalty, replace ball in original lie
- teeing off from an incorrect teeing area: 2 stroke penalty, play another ball from the correct teeing area
- improper marking / replacement of balls on green: 2 stroke penalty, place ball in proper spot, continue play

## **LOCAL RULES & POLICY IN EFFECT FOR SSGOA TOURNAMENTS:**

**Root Rule – Dangerous Condition (new for 2024):** In the interest of player safety, USGA Rule 9 for “Ball played as it lies” is modified as follows:

**If a ball lies directly on or very close to a tree root that interferes with the bottom of the swing path and presents a dangerous condition and potential for injury, relief is granted without penalty through the following procedure:**

- Alert fellow competitors to the condition and allow them to observe and confirm the condition.
- Mark and lift the ball. Locate the nearest point of full relief for the bottom of your swing path and drop a ball within 6 inches of the nearest point of full relief.
- This rule does not provide any relief for an uneven stance caused by a root, relief for tree trunk in your line of play, or relief from the tree trunk in your swing path.

**Ball Lost or Out of Bounds - Local rule E-5 is adapted to modify USGA Rule 18 to eliminate the time consuming option of returning to the point where the original ball was played:**

**If a ball played from a teeing area or anywhere on the course is possibly lost or out of bounds, the player must immediately make the following decision before leaving the point from where the ball was played:**

- Announce that they will play a provisional ball and proceed with the “1 stroke and distance” penalty, if the original ball is not found within 3 minutes or is out of bounds
- **OR if not hitting a provisional ball**, proceed to the general area where the ball might be lost or out of bounds. If the ball is lost or out of bounds, add 2 penalty strokes and play the next shot from the relief area generally defined as a point no closer to the hole between where the original ball was lost or out of bounds and at the nearest edge of the fairway of the hole being played. **See Appendix 2 for details on relief areas.**

**Pace of Play:** Pace of play is an important element to the enjoyment of a round of golf. The expected pace of play is 4:20 or less for 18 holes. Keep up with the group in front of you. Out of position is defined as more than 2 full shots behind the group in front of you. Warnings and Penalties for being out of position are addressed separately in the Pace of Play policy.

**Preferred Lies:** If a ball lies in a closely mown area, including fairway or fringe on the current hole only, the player may mark, lift, clean, and place his ball within 6 inches of the original spot, not nearer the hole.

**Scramble competition:** If a ball in the rough is selected to play, the player that hit the ball to that point must play that ball “down”, as it lies. Their partner must place their ball within 6 inches of the original point, not nearer the hole, and must not change the playing condition i.e. from rough to fairway even if the fairway is 6 inches from the original spot. The team can select which player hits first, the player playing the ball “down” or the player that is placing their ball.

**Sand Trap Negligence:** After verification of sand trap negligence by your fellow competitors, you may lift your ball, rake or smooth the area and place your ball within 6 inches of the original spot, not nearer the hole, without penalty. Examples of sand trap negligence include footprints and hoofprints.

**Embedded Ball Through the Green:** A ball embedded in its own pitch mark anywhere on the course except in a hazard may be lifted, without penalty, cleaned and dropped as close as possible to the original spot but not nearer the hole.

**All Putts Must Be Holed Out:** No one has the authority to concede a putt. “Given” putts will result in disqualification of both teams unless immediately corrected. Adherence and enforcement of this rule protects the entire field.

**Tie Break:** Any tie breaks will be determined by score card playoff, starting with hole #1.

**Cell Phone Etiquette:** **DO NOT DELAY PLAY BY TAKING CALLS ON THE COURSE.**

Be considerate of others by turning your phone off or using Silent or Vibrate mode.

## Appendix 1: SSGOA Policy – Observed Rules Violations

Golf is played with an honor system. Many rule violations are unintentional, but some rule violations are intentional (cheating). Either way, violations must incur the prescribed penalty. **Ignorance of USGA or local rules for tournament play is not a valid excuse and does not provide any relief from prescribed penalties.**

**DO NOT WAIT UNTIL THE END OF THE ROUND.** Observed rule violations, whether intentional or not, must be addressed immediately on the course by the players in the group. In some cases, you can prevent a rule violation by speaking up before the shot is taken. **Rule violations can be observed and called out by you (on yourself), your partner, fellow competitors in your playing group, other nearby competitors, or SSGOA volunteers. Common rule violations include:**

- not putting out / “gimme’s”: 1 stroke penalty for moving ball not covered by a rule, replace ball and putt out
- Touching, moving your ball in the rough unless under a local rule: 1 stroke penalty, replace ball in original lie
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Doubt as to Correct Procedure: USGA Rule 20.1c - If unsure of the ruling, play two balls from the point of uncertainty until the hole is completed. Mark scores for both balls. The Tournament Manager and/or Rules Official will later make a final ruling as to which ball will be used for score at the turn or end of round, after hearing the facts of the situation.

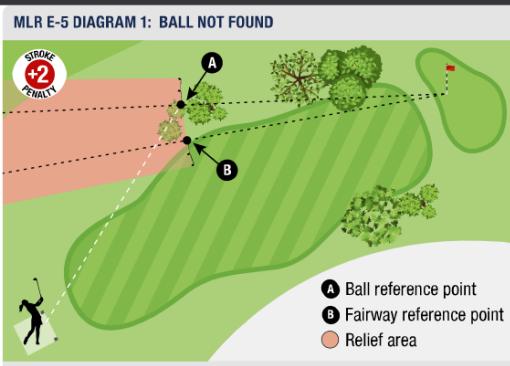
### **Procedure for Observed Rules Violations**

- Stay calm and courteous and just state the facts. Examples: “I observed you ..... while playing your second shot” or “Perhaps you were unaware that moving your ball in the rough accidentally or intentionally is not allowed and incurs a one stroke penalty and the ball must be replaced in its original spot and lie.”
- If a player is observed and called out for an alleged rules violation and the player agrees with the infraction, the appropriate penalty strokes should be applied when the fellow competitor marks the score for the player.
- **If 2 or more competitors or rangers** observe and confirm a rules violation, the infraction will immediately be brought to the attention of the player and appropriate penalty strokes will be applied when marking the score for that hole. If the player does not agree with the score recorded for the hole, the round will be completed but the scorecard will be returned unsigned to the Tournament Manager. The observers and player present the facts of the alleged infraction. The Tournament Manager will have the final say and then the scorecard shall be signed by the player and marker. If the player does not agree with penalty strokes, if assessed, and does not sign the scorecard, the team score will not be posted for the competition or skins.

## Appendix 2: Relief areas for rule E-5

### E-5 Alternative to Stroke and Distance for Lost Ball or Ball Out of Bounds

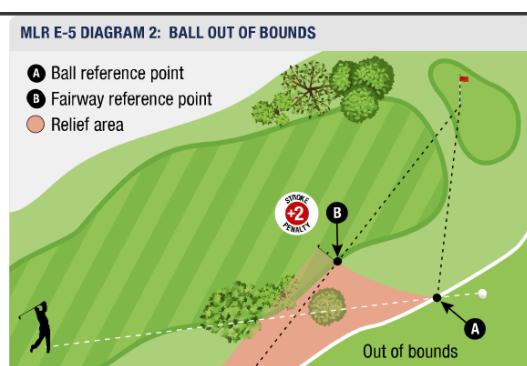
For two penalty strokes, the player may take relief by dropping the original ball or another ball in the prescribed relief areas (see Diagrams below):



When a player's ball has not been found, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes:

Reference Points	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
A. Ball Reference Point: The point where the original ball is estimated to have come to rest on the course (point A)	Anywhere between: • A line from the hole through the ball reference point (point A) (and within two club-lengths to the outside of that line), and • A line from the hole through the fairway reference point (point B) (and within two club-lengths to the fairway side of that line)	The relief area: • Must not be nearer the hole than the ball reference point, and • Must be in the general area
B. Fairway Reference Point: The point of fairway of the hole being played (point B) that is nearest to the ball reference point, but is not nearer the hole than the ball reference point		

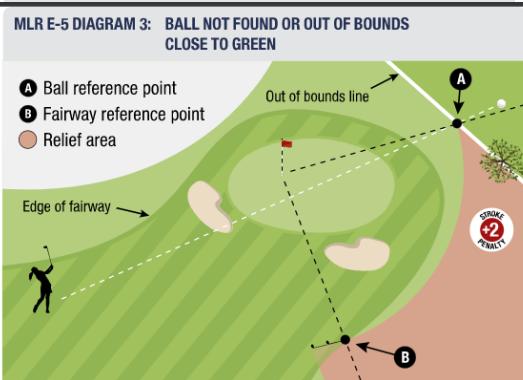
**Player Notes:**  
As the relief area is likely to be very large, the ball could roll a considerable distance from the spot where it first strikes the ground and not need to be dropped again.



When a player's ball is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes:

Reference Point	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
A. Ball Reference Point: The point where the original ball is estimated to have last crossed the edge of the course boundary to go out of bounds (point A)	Anywhere between: • A line from the hole through the ball reference point (point A) (and within two club-lengths to the outside of that line), and • A line from the hole through the fairway reference point (point B) (and within two club-lengths to the fairway side of that line)	The relief area: • Must not be nearer the hole than the ball reference point, and • Must be in the general area
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