



Tips Regarding the Rules of Golf for Match Play

1. Rules 3.1 and 3.2 cover the specifics about how match play is played. These rules cover how holes are won, tied, or conceded, how to apply handicaps (if applicable), and the player and opponent responsibilities.
2. A player and opponent are not allowed to agree to concede holes to each for the purpose of shortening the match (Rule 3.2b). If they do so knowing it is not allowed, they are **disqualified**. For example, if playing St John, and the weather is foul, after ending the 12th hole you agree to skip 13, 14 and 15, just counting the holes as being square, and then go straight to the 16th hole.
3. One important difference to Stroke Play is that in Match play if the player knows or believes that the opponent has breached a Rule that has a penalty, the player may act on the breach or choose to ignore it. (Rule 3.2d(4))
4. Playing Outside Teeing Ground (Rule 6.1b)
Opponent may recall the stroke, at their option if done immediately. The stroke does not count and there is no penalty. Ball may be re-teed.
5. Playing Wrong Ball (Rule 6.3)
Playing a wrong ball is loss of hole (General Penalty). There is an exception which is if a player makes a stroke at a ball moving in water, and it turns out to be the wrong ball, the stroke does not count and there is no penalty.
6. Opponent May Cancel Player's Stroke Made Out of Turn (Rule 6.4a(2))
If the player plays when it was the opponent's turn to play, there is no penalty but the opponent may cancel the stroke:
 - This must be done promptly and before either player makes another stroke.
 - If the opponent cancels the stroke, the player must, when it is his or her turn to play, play a ball from where that stroke was made.
 - If the opponent does not cancel the stroke, the stroke counts and the ball is in play.Exception – Playing Out of Turn By Agreement to Save Time
 - The player may invite the opponent to play out of turn or may agree to the opponent's request to play out of turn, therefore giving up the right to cancel the stroke. But you do not have to agree to play out of turn if you don't wish to do so.
7. Ball At Rest Moved (Rule 9.4 and 9.5)
There is no penalty if player or opponent moves ball whilst searching for it. There is no penalty if the ball is moved by the opponent's ball in motion. (Rule 11.1)
There is a one stroke penalty if opponent moves a player's ball except when conceding the next stroke, hole or match, or at the player's request. So **NEVER** mark your opponent's ball on the green unless you first ask them for permission to do so.
8. Ball in Motion Stopped or Deflected (Rule 11.1a)
If a player's ball in motion **accidentally** hits any person or outside influence:
 - There is no penalty to any player
 - This is true even if the ball hits the player, the opponent or any other player or any of their equipment.



Unlike in stroke, there is no penalty if a ball played on the putting green strikes another ball at rest, which is why it is not necessary to mark your ball in match play unless asked to.

9. Ball in Motion **Deliberately** Deflected or Stopped by Person (Rule 11.2)

This rule applies when it is known or virtually certain that a player's ball in motion was deliberately deflected or stopped by a person.

This is when a person deliberately touches the ball in motion, or the ball hits equipment or other object (except a ball-marker or another ball at rest before the ball was played) or any other person that the player deliberately positioned or left in a particular location so that they might deflect or stop the ball in motion.

Exception – Ball Deliberately Deflected or Stopped in Match Play When No Reasonable Chance it Can be Holed. For example when opponent is giving a concession or when the ball needed to be holed to tie the hole (Rule 3.2a(1) or Rule 3.2b(1)).

10. Playing Ball from Wrong Place (Rule 14.7)

Playing a ball from the wrong place is loss of hole (General Penalty).

11. Ball must be dropped in Relief Area. (Rule 14.3b(3))

If the ball is dropped in the relief area in an incorrect manner, and then played from the relief area, there is a penalty of one stroke.

12. Ball Overhanging Hole (Rule 13.3b)

If the opponent deliberately lifts or moves the player's ball overhanging the hole before the waiting time has ended (i.e. a reasonable time for the player to reach the hole and ten more seconds), the player's ball is treated as holed with the previous stroke, and there is no penalty to the opponent under Rule 11.2b (deliberately moving ball).

13. Actions Not Allowed by Caddies (Rule 10.3b(3))

A caddie is not allowed to concede the next stroke, hole or match to the opponent or agree with the opponent on the match score (Rule 3.2)

14. Penalty for carrying more than 14 clubs (Rule 4.1b)

How penalty is applied depends on if it is discovered during the play of a hole or between holes. If the player becomes aware of the breach during the hole, the player must complete the hole, apply the result of the hole to the Match score, and then apply the penalty to adjust the Match score. For example, player discovers extra club whilst playing 2nd hole, and is currently 1 up. Player loses hole, going back to square. Then applies the penalty for extra club and is now 1 down.

Match score is revised by deducting hole, maximum of two holes. For example, a player is 3 up, and between the 4th and 5th hole discover they are carrying 15 clubs, the match score is adjusted to 1 up.

15. In Match Play, players may practice on the course on the day of the match prior to the match commencing. (Rule 5.2a). In some competitions, (e.g Pennant) it may be a Condition of the Competition that practice is not allowed specifically for that competition.

16. Resolving Issues During Round (Rule 20.1)

Player's may protect their rights by asking for a ruling in Match play (Rule 20.1b(2)).



Players may agree how to decide a Rules issue and the agreed outcome is conclusive even if it turns out to have been wrong, so long as the players did not deliberately agree to ignore any Rule or penalty.

If there is a referee assigned to the competition, then players should request for Rules assistance if there is doubt. The referee's ruling is final.

If no referee is available and players do not agree or have doubts how the Rules apply either player can request a ruling under rule 20.1b(2).

The circumstances when a Ruling Request Made After the Result of Match is Final is covered in Rule 20.1b(3). This essential involves the player discovering some facts they were not aware of before the result of the match was final, and the opponent breached Rule 3.2d(1) (giving wrong number of strokes taken) or Rule 3.2d(2) (failing to tell player about penalty) and knew of the breach before the result of the match was final.

If uncertain about the right procedure, there is **no** Right to Play Two Balls. That procedure only applies in Stroke Play (Rule 20.1c)

17. Situations Not Covered by the Rules (Rule 20.3)

Any situation not covered by the Rules should be decided by the committee:

- Considering all the circumstances, and
- Treating the situation in a way that is reasonable, fair and consistent with how similar situations are treated under the Rules.

General Penalty: Loss of hole in Match Play or two penalty strokes in Stroke Play