

Metro St. Louis Seniors Golf Association, Inc.
Policies and Procedures
Addendum 4
RULES OF PLAY

The following rules are consistent with USGA rules but are stated here for emphasis. These are rules that every player should be familiar with and must follow.

- There are no “mulligans”. Every stroke counts.
- There are no “gimmies”. Make putts until your ball is in the hole or your score is quad bogey (4 over par). If you pick up your ball without marking it before you hole out, put it back down where you think you picked it up from and continue playing. Add a penalty stroke for illegally lifting your ball. If you pick up your ball without holing out and move on to the next hole without correcting your mistake, score a quad bogey/4 over par for the hole. Violation of this rule may be reason for disqualification of everyone signing the card.
- You may search for your ball for no more than 3 minutes. If you don't find it in 3 minutes drop a ball where you think it should be and continue playing. Add a penalty stroke for a lost ball. If you find your original ball after you have dropped a new ball you must not play the original ball, unless you declared in advance the dropped ball a “provisional.” Once you drop a ball it becomes your ball in play. However, if you declare and hit a provisional ball and then find your original ball, then you may play the original ball provided it is located and played before the next shot. For Pace of Play, if your ball is clearly deep in the woods and most likely unplayable, declare a provisional and drop a new ball and play it before looking for your ball, minimize your time searching for the lost ball.
- **Back-On-The-Line (BOTL) relief** is a procedure in golf rules that allows players to take relief from certain situations, such as penalty areas or unplayable balls.
 1. The player identifies a reference line going straight back from the hole through the point where the ball last crossed the edge of a penalty area or where it lies if unplayable.
 2. The player drops a ball ON this line, with no limit on how far back they can go.
 3. The spot where the ball first touches the ground when dropped creates a relief area that is one club-length in any direction from that point, including forward.
 4. If the ball comes to rest within this one club-length area, it is in play.
 5. If the ball rolls outside this area, it must be re-dropped.

The procedure applies to:

- Marked penalty area reliefs (Red marked boundaries) and Yellow marked boundaries (Metro Seniors Committee rule)
- Heavily wooded areas, deep native grass areas, waste areas, etc. are to be played as red penalty areas (Metro Seniors Committee rule)
- Unplayable ball relief, and relief from abnormal course conditions in bunkers.

NOTE: Back-On-Line-Of Flight for the prior stroke is NEVER ALLOWED for penalty relief.

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- A ball that is accidentally hit more than once when a player makes their stroke no longer incurs a penalty. Play the ball from where it comes to rest.
- A player may move loose impediments (stones, twigs, leaves, etc.) in a bunker.
- If you accidentally move your ball or ball marker on the putting green, there is no penalty. Just put it back in its original location.
- **Identifying Ball Mark:**
 - Members playing in any MSLSGA tournaments are encouraged to place an identifying mark on any ball in play. Players are responsible for distinguishing their ball in play from others in their group.
- **Member ID Number:**
 - Members will be assigned a membership ID number that must be entered on if required by the Division VP on all submitted score cards.
- **Score Cards Completion:**
 - Members are required to complete and submit the designated Score Card(s). Listing of player names in alphabetical order by last name, then first name, is encouraged.
- **Score Card Signature:**
 - Members must sign (if so designated by the Division VP) their Score Card(s) to verify that the color of tee played, hole by hole score, name and ID number (if required) are correct and recorded properly.
- **Record All strokes and Penalties:**
 - Members are to record the actual total number of shots played, plus penalty strokes on each hole on their Score Card(s) up to a maximum of quad bogey or 4 over par.

The USGA Rules of Golf govern all play except as noted below.

Improving Lie: A player may improve their lie anywhere on the course except on a putting green, in a bunker, or in a penalty area, by rolling their ball with a club no farther than one foot. In doing so, a player must not move their ball from one cut of grass to another (i.e., rough to fairway) or improve their line of play or the area of their intended stance or swing.

- **Cleaning the Ball and Substituting:** A player may lift, clean, and place their ball back within 1 foot from its original spot at any time, except when it is in a bunker or penalty area. If a player is taking relief from a bunker or penalty area, the ball may be cleaned at that time. Any time a ball is legally lifted another ball may be substituted.
- **Out of Bounds:** When a ball is hit out of bounds a player may take relief as if the ball had been lost in a red penalty area. The player should determine the point where the ball crossed the boundary and proceed with 2 club lengths or Back-On-The-Line relief, for a penalty of one stroke. The ball may not be played from out of bounds.

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- **Lost Ball:** When a player loses their ball in an area that is not out of bounds or in a penalty area, they may drop a ball where they believe it was likely lost, for a penalty of one stroke.
- **HITTING WRONG BALL:** A wrong ball is any ball other than the player's "ball in play", a called provisional ball, or a second ball played under specific rules.
 - Any Player hitting a wrong ball will be penalized one stroke. The wrong ball hit now becomes the player's "ball in play" through to the green. Player does not go back to where the error occurred, even if the original ball is found.
 - If the error is realized after the stroke, and the ball belongs to another Player (#2) in his group, Player #2 will not endure a lost ball penalty for dropping a ball on that hole. At the next position, Player #1 returns the ball to Player #2, both players replace their respective balls where they lie, with no additional penalty to Player #1.

Balls hit or found out of bounds are subject to the normal penalties. It is up to the player, when realizing the wrong ball was hit and to add a one stroke penalty to his score on that hole.

- **Bunkers:**
 - **Improving lies in bunkers** is allowed if the ball is in a footprint, wet sand, or other depression not caused by the impact of the ball itself
 - The ball may be lifted, sand smoothed with a rake, and the ball replaced as close to the original spot as possible.
 - **Abnormal Conditions in Bunker** (temporary water, ground under repair – USGA) – This is declared by player and is available if some portion of the bunker is playable. Completely unplayable bunker – see below.
 - **Free Relief (Playing from inside Bunker):**
 - The nearest point of complete relief and the relief area must be in the bunker.
 - If there is no nearest point of complete relief in the bunker, the player may use the point of maximum available relief in the bunker as the reference point.
 - The ball must be dropped in the relief area, which is one club-length from the reference point, no nearer to the hole.
 - **Penalty Relief – One Stroke:**
 - Back-On-The-Line relief outside the bunker.
 - **Unplayable Bunkers - Declared by Course or Division VP**
 - Play it as it lies
 - Free Drop - Back-On-The-Line relief outside the bunker
 - **Unplayable Ball in Bunker: (Declared by Player, any reason)**
 - 1 Penalty Stroke - Back-On-The-Line relief inside the bunker
 - **2 Stroke Penalty - Back-On-The-Line relief outside of the bunker**

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- **Penalty Area Carry Over Procedure:** An additional option of relief from penalty areas has been adopted to help players who may not be able to hit their ball all the way across. If a player's ball is lost in or comes to rest in a penalty area, the player may drop their ball "across" the penalty area from where it went in, no more than two club lengths from the margin of the penalty area. The use of this option will incur a three-stroke penalty. For example, if a player hits their tee shot into a lake in front of the tee, they may place their ball across the lake. They will have taken one actual stroke plus three penalty strokes, for a total of four. This option does not preclude a player from taking other, possibly more favorable, relief options, such as dropping in a designated drop zone.
- **Putts on Temporary Greens:** Score no more than two (2) putts on any designated temporary green.

The following local rules of competition are adopted for our tournaments:

- **Maximum Strokes or Quad Bogey or 4 Over Par Per Hole:** Once a player has reached a score of triple bogey or 3 over par on a hole (including penalty strokes), the player must discontinue play, pick up their ball, and score a quad bogey or 4 over par on the hole.
- **Unmarked Areas are Declared Penalty Areas:** Heavily wooded areas, deep native grass areas, waste areas, etc. are to be played as red penalty areas.
- **All Penalty Areas are RED Penalty Areas:** All penalty areas, whether marked red, yellow, or unmarked, will be played as RED penalty areas. This enables the two-club-length relief option, Back-On-The-Line relief, and also allows a player to take relief from the far side of the penalty area if the ball carries over the penalty area and rolls back into it.