



Date: March 1, 2017

To: WPGA Member Clubs

From: Championship Committee of the Western Pennsylvania Golf Association

Contained in this document you will find important information regarding Local Rules and Conditions of Competition at golf clubs. Having a Local Rules and Conditions of Competitions sheet specific to your club will help ensure that all players are treated equally in competitions.

As provided in Rule 33-8a, the Committee may make and publish Local Rules and Conditions of Competition consistent with the policies established in Appendix I of the Rules of Golf (page 136). Such Local Rules must be posted or disseminated appropriately at each individual club to be in effect during club competitions. It should be noted that the Committee may not modify a Rule of Golf without authorization obtained from the United States Golf Association.

The Western Pennsylvania Golf Association suggests that all clubs employ the use of Local Rules and Conditions of Competition at their club for all events. Such information should be displayed prominently on club bulletin boards and other areas such as locker rooms and golf shops. It is also suggested that such a document be distributed at the beginning of the golf season and if possible to competitors prior to the start of a competition.

It is important to understand that specimen Local Rules are not Rules of Golf and must be invoked at each individual competition or club. Without the appropriate posting of such Local Rules, any ruling will revert to the procedures and policies found within the Rules of Golf. Conditions of Competition must not be altered after the start of a competition, while Local Rules may be added or removed between stipulated rounds within a competition (eg. lift, clean and place).

In addition to Local Rules, the Committee is responsible to accurately define:

- i. The course and out of bounds
- ii. The margins of water hazards and lateral water hazards
- iii. Ground under repair
- iv. Obstructions and integral parts of the course

Attached to this email you will find the Conditions of Competition and Local Rules for all WPGA and USGA competitions for reference. Additionally, you will find an editable Local Rules and Conditions of Competition document for you to modify for your club specifically as well as a draft Notice to Players, which may supplement Local Rules and Conditions of Competitions for any specific event.

Attached Documents for Reference: *2017 WPGA & USGA Local Rules and Conditions of Competition; Sample Editable Local Rules and Conditions of Competition; Sample Editable Notice to Players; Sample Editable Notice to Players & Hole Locations; Infographic: Ball Accidentally Moved on Putting Green*

Local Rules and Conditions of Competition suggested for use at all clubs:

- **Embedded Ball Through the Green** – Local Rule as prescribed in Appendix I is in effect.
- **Distance Measuring Devices** – A player may obtain distance information by using a distance measuring device (DMD). If, during a stipulated round, a player uses a DMD to gauge or measure other conditions that might affect his play (e.g. gradient, wind-speed, temperature, etc.) the player is in breach of Rule 14-3.
- **Accidental Movement of a Ball on a Putting Green** – When a player's ball lies on the putting green, there is no penalty if the ball or ball-marker is accidentally moved by the player, his partner, his opponent, or any of their caddies or equipment. (NOTE: Full text of Local Rule available at <http://www.usga.org/2017LocalRule>).
- **Pace of Play** – See separate memorandum to players for pace of play guidelines, when applicable.
- **Ground Under Repair** – Defined by white lines. Sod-covered trenching for temporary cables and French drains are deemed to be ground under repair. Rule 25-1. When immediately adjacent to an obstruction, such an area is part of the obstruction. Damage that is clearly identifiable as having been caused by animal hoofs on the putting green may be repaired. (Rule 25-1 does not apply)
- **Turf Plugs on the Putting Green** – May be repaired even if they are not 4 ¼ inches.
- **Aeration Holes** – Through the green, a ball that comes to rest in or on an aeration hole may be lifted without penalty, cleaned and dropped as near as possible the spot where it lay but not nearer the hole. The ball when dropped must first strike a part of the course through the green. On the putting green, a ball that comes to rest in or on an aeration hole may be placed at the nearest spot not nearer the hole that avoids the situation.
- **Seams of Cut Turf (Sod Seams)** – The Local Rule as prescribed in Appendix I is in effect.
- **White-Lined Areas Tying Into Artificially-Surfaced Roads and Paths** – have the same status as roads and paths, that of obstructions.
 - **Note:** The above Local Rule could be modified to include unmarked areas of bare earth or cart and equipment damage adjacent to roads and paths.
- **Practice** – Practice on any day of or between rounds of a competition is permitted.
- **Close of Competition** – 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 all scores have been approved by the Committee.

Local Rules and Conditions of Competition that should be considered based on circumstances at clubs:

- **Integral Parts of the Course** – Includes cables, rods, wires or wrappings when closely attached to trees; artificial walls and pilings when located in hazards, unless otherwise provided for in Notice to Players.
 - **Note:** Without such a Local Rule in effect, all items mentioned above would revert to the status of an immovable obstruction, from which relief is permitted.
- **Movable Obstructions** – Includes stones in bunkers. (Rule 21-4 applies)
 - **Note:** The Committee should determine whether stones found in bunkers has the potential to impact a competition at their club. Without such a Local Rule, stones found in bunkers are loose impediments which may not be moved.

- **Wood Chips and Mulch** – are loose impediments, unless otherwise provided for in Notice to Players.
 - **Note:** A club may wish to deem all decorative areas containing wood chips, mulch or decorative stone to be ground under repair. In such cases it would also be appropriate to require relief in such areas if the club wishes to protect such areas.
- **Out of Bounds** – All public roads, driveways and parking lots define out of bounds when present. In these areas, stakes identify the boundary and the course side edge of the pavement defines the boundary. A ball which crosses a public road and comes to rest beyond that road is out of bounds even though it may lie on another part of the course.
 - **Note:** If such situations are present at your club, you may adopt all or some of this Local Rule depending on circumstances.
- In the case that a club employs the use of dropping zones, it should be noted in the Local Rules which dropping zones are authorized for use and for what condition.
 - **Example:** Dropping Zones – For a ball that enters the water hazard on hole X and hole Y a dropping zone is provided as an additional option to Rule 26 (Water Hazards). A player, may proceed to the dropping zone under penalty of one stroke.
- If you must employ a lift, clean and place procedure for a competition, be sure to provide a specific procedure for all contestants to follow. Such a temporary Local Rule and should not be included in the formal Conditions of Competition document. Below is the procedure used by the WPGA in the rare instances in which lift, clean and place is invoked:

Lift, Clean & Place Procedure

A ball lying on a closely mown area of fairway height or less 'through the green' may be lifted without penalty, and cleaned. Having lifted the ball, the player must replace within six (6) inches of the spot where it originally lay, not nearer the hole.

A player may replace the ball only once, and it is in play when it has been placed. If the ball, when replaced, subsequently moves there is no penalty and the ball must be played as it lies, unless the provisions of any other Rule applies.

If the player fails to mark the position of the ball before lifting it or moves the ball in any other manner, such as rolling it with a club, he incurs a penalty of one (1) stroke.

In addition to the items mentioned above, it is appropriate to make other Local Rules that define margins of items such as out of bounds or a water hazard. (eg. The course side edge of the road defines out of bounds on holes X, Y & Z or the inside edge of the cart path on hole X defines the margin of the lateral water hazard.) Several of the Local Rules mentioned above have options depending on the situation at your club. The penalty for breach of a Local Rule or Condition is two-strokes in stroke play and loss of hole in match play.

While Rule 6-1 indicates that it is the responsibility of the player to know the Rules, creating a Rules template with regard to conditions or situations that may be unique to your course is incumbent of the Committee to ensure the competition is officiated in the most fair and equal way for all contestants.

A clear and concise Local Rules and Conditions of Competition document will assist you in conducting competitions. If you have any questions about situations present at your club or would like assistance in writing your Local Rules please contact the Association.