

The Spirit of the Game

The game of golf is unique in its reliance on players to observe the “spirit of the game” by adhering to the rules and imposing penalties on themselves even when no other competitor is aware of a violation.

Purpose of the Rules

The intent of the rules is to keep the game *fair* for all players and to deal with unusual situations golfers may encounter, such as hitting the ball out of bounds. Penalties are assessed if the rules are broken.

The Purpose of Penalties

Penalties are meant to cancel out any potential *advantage*. There are three main penalty levels: one-stroke penalty, general penalty (two-stroke penalty), and disqualification.

Rule 1

1.2 Standards of Player Conduct

All players are expected to play in the spirit of the game by:

- Acting with integrity – for example, by following the Rules, applying all penalties, and being honest in all aspects of play.
- Showing consideration to others – for example, by playing at a prompt pace, looking out for the safety of others, and not distracting the play of another player.
- Taking good care of the course – for example, by replacing divots, smoothing bunkers, repairing ball-marks, and not causing unnecessary damage to the course.

There is no penalty under the Rules for failing to act in this way, unless penalties are established by the Committee (SRPGA board).

“Golf is the closest game to the game we call life. You get bad breaks from good shots; you get good breaks from bad shots—but you have to play the ball where it lies.”

“You might as well praise a man for not robbing a bank as to praise him for playing by the rules.”

—*Bobby Jones, born March 17, 1902*

1.3 Playing by the Rules

You are expected to recognize when you have breached a Rule and to be honest in applying your own penalties.

You may ask for help with the Rules, but if help is not available in a reasonable time you must play on and raise the issue later.

There are times when you must make estimates, such as the spot where to replace your ball, the point where your ball crossed the edge of a penalty area, or when taking relief under the Rules. You are expected to consider all available information and to make a reasonable judgment in the circumstances.

A penalty applies when a breach of a Rule results from your own actions, the actions of your caddie, or the actions of another person acting with your authority or knowledge.

Videos

[The Game, Player Conduct, and the Rules](#) (1:40)

[Modernized Rules of Golf: Player Conduct](#) (0:36)

[Golf Etiquette 101: A Game of Integrity](#) (2:06)