

BASIC MATCH PLAY RULES

This is by no means a complete breakdown of rules. It's only intended as a general help and addresses some of the more frequent scenarios that occur on our course.

A breach of a rule in match play usually results in the loss of the hole. **Players are not allowed to agree to exclude the operation of any rule or to waive any rule.** The penalty for doing so results in the forfeiture of both sides of the match.

However, you can completely ignore a rule breach made by your opponent! Let's say your opponent accidentally kicks a ball and hits the ball from the new position or worse plays a ball that is clearly out of bounds. If you feel that mentioning it will serve no purpose as you're already in position to win the hole or maybe even the match, you can ignore it completely. There's a catch though, you must ignore it completely and remain silent. You cannot bring it to their attention or discuss it while the hole is in progress. You can't say "I saw you do that but I will ignore it". Discussing it means you are either making a claim or you agree to violate a rule if you let it go on. The latter costing you both the match. You are allowed to tell the opponent once the play has started on the next hole or the players have left the last green, which means you cannot make a claim anyway and the result of the hole stands.

When you cannot ignore a breach - One example would be if your opponent discovered they have 15 clubs in their bag, you cannot suggest they can ignore the rule and play on. The extra club **MUST** be declared out of play and any penalty assessed or you will both be disqualified. By the way, the penalty for extra clubs in match play is loss of hole if found after teeing off on the first hole and two holes if after teeing off the second hole, never more than two holes. The club(s) declared out of play cannot be used during the remainder of the match.

There are however scenarios in match play where an infraction may result in your opponent canceling your shot and requiring you to replay it. Here are some examples:

Playing out of turn: In stroke play, order of play is a matter of etiquette. In match play, the player farthest from the hole must **ALWAYS** play first. If you hit out of turn your opponent can require you to replay the shot in the proper order. And if your first shot was good one, you can bet that you'll be replaying it. If you hit it into the water or out of bounds he can and likely will allow the shot. Another example is leaving a putt 2 feet short and walk up and hit it in the hole but your opponent's ball is outside yours. Your opponent has the option to tell you to mark the putt and re-hit after they do if they so choose. Remember, you and your opponent cannot agree to break a rule, he may concede the putt but he cannot say "go ahead and finish"

Hitting from outside the teeing ground: The "teeing ground" is the starting place for the hole to be played. It is a rectangular area two club-lengths in depth, the front and the sides of which are defined by the outside limits of two tee-markers. A ball is outside the teeing ground when all of it lies outside the teeing ground. In match play, there is no penalty but your opponent may cancel your shot and require you to replay it. Again, if you roll the ball off the tee he's likely to ignore the infraction.

These are a few examples of commonly run into rules that under no circumstances are up to the players to AGREE to breach.

Playing the wrong ball: In stroke play hitting the wrong ball is a two-stroke penalty. In match play it is loss of hole. If both players hit the wrong ball, the first player still loses the hole because the first penalty resulted in loss of hole before the second player hit regardless of when it was determined.

~~**Hitting yourself or your equipment:** In match play your equipment includes yourself and any playing partner (teammate, not opponent) and his equipment regardless of who placed it there. If your teammate pulls the cart up beside the green, you shank one into the cart and hit either the cart or your partner, it's a penalty. As of 2008 the penalty was changed to a one stroke penalty in both Match and Stroke play. The ball must be played where it came to rest. If the ball were to be in the golf cart or a players bag, the ball should be dropped as near as possible to the spot directly below where the ball came to rest.~~

Hitting an opponent or his equipment: In match play, you have the option to replay the shot without penalty however it must be done immediately without discussion or later review.

Hitting a ball at rest on the green: In match play, there is no penalty for hitting another ball on the green during your putt. This is not the case in stroke play where it would be a two stroke penalty. In either case you play the ball where it comes to rest.

Known or Virtually Certain: This was introduced in 2008 and has been completely misunderstood. This pertains to hazards, be they water or canyons in our case. When a player's ball has been struck toward a hazard, he may not just "assume" the ball is in the water hazard to take relief under the water hazard rule. It must be "known or virtually certain" that it lies in the water hazard. The "possibility" that a ball is in the water hazard does not meet the criteria for making that decision. "Knowledge" of the ball in the water hazard may be gained from the player or other players in that group that may observe the ball disappear into the water hazard. Other observers such as an observer, spectators or other outside agencies can confirm the ball came to rest in the hazard. Assume that you are on hole #9 and your ball is headed for the water on the left of the green. If either the player or anyone else on the course sees the ball come to rest in the hazard, the ball should be played as if it is in the hazard with all the relief options available under Rule 26-1 as it is "Known" to be in the hazard. If no one sees what happened to the ball once it left sight of the players. It's possible the ball hit a tree and did not end up in the hazard but it cannot be located. Therefore, it is not "Virtually Certain" and the player should play a provisional ball and try to locate the original ball under the 5 minute rule. If the location and identity cannot be confirmed as is in the hazard it must be played as a lost ball under Rule 27-1 which you have already done by hitting the provisional ball. The opposite of this would be on Hole 2, where a ball lands on the fairway and bounds over the hill towards the water. Based on the topography, grass heights, visibility etc. it can be "Virtually Certain" that the ball is in the water and should be played as such.

Playing a second ball: In match play, if a player is doubtful of his rights or the correct procedure, he may NOT complete the play of the hole with two balls. The lack of understanding of the rules is not an excuse to do it two ways. You must either agree with your opponent or play the ball as you believe it should be and make a claim that will be addressed as quickly as possible.

Making a claim: If a dispute arises and the sides cannot agree, a player can make a claim. Claims must be declared to the opponent that he request a ruling and the declaration must occur prior to either player teeing off on the next hole or in the case of the last hole, before leaving the green. Players must continue the match without delay and the claim will be resolved after round. A claim may only be considered if it is based on facts previously unknown to the player making the claim and he had been given incorrect information by an opponent.