

GOLF'S NEW RULES: TIMELINE

The R&A and the USGA are pleased to announce a major set of changes to the Rules of Golf. These changes are the result of an initiative that began in 2012. Below are a set of key milestones to remember before the new Rules take effect on January 1, 2019.



GOLF'S NEW RULES: KEY CHANGES

The R&A and the USGA have released golf's new Rules, which will take effect on January 1, 2019. Here are five of the most significant changes.

How to Drop a Ball

You will drop your ball from knee height into the relief area.



Time for Ball Search



Three minutes will be the maximum allotted time to search for a ball, rather than the current five minutes.

Repairing Spike Marks



You will be allowed to repair spike marks and any other damage on the putting green caused by a person, an animal or maintenance practices.

Leaving Flagstick in the Hole

If you make a stroke from on the green and your ball hits the flagstick in the hole, there will be no penalty.



Relaxed Rules in Penalty Area

You will be allowed to ground your club and move loose impediments in a penalty area (an expanded concept of water hazards that does not include bunkers).



For more information on golf's new Rules, please visit usga.org or randa.org.

The new Rules will go into effect on January 1, 2019.



GOLF'S NEW RULES: PACE OF PLAY IMPROVEMENTS

Implementing changes that have a positive impact on pace of play is an important aspect of golf's new Rules, which will take effect on January 1, 2019.

40 seconds



A recommendation in the Rules that you make each stroke in 40 seconds or less.



"Ready Golf"



Playing out of turn in stroke play to save time, also known as ready golf, is encouraged.



Max Score



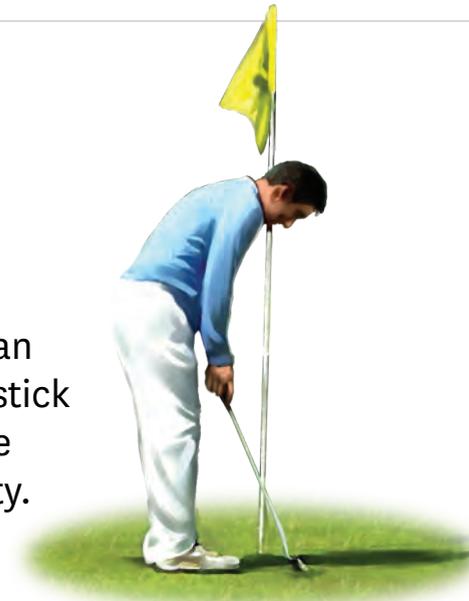
A new stroke-play format allowing the Committee to set a maximum score for a hole.



Flagstick



If your putt hits an unattended flagstick in the hole, there will be no penalty.



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GOLF'S NEW RULES: PLAYER CONDUCT AND INTEGRITY

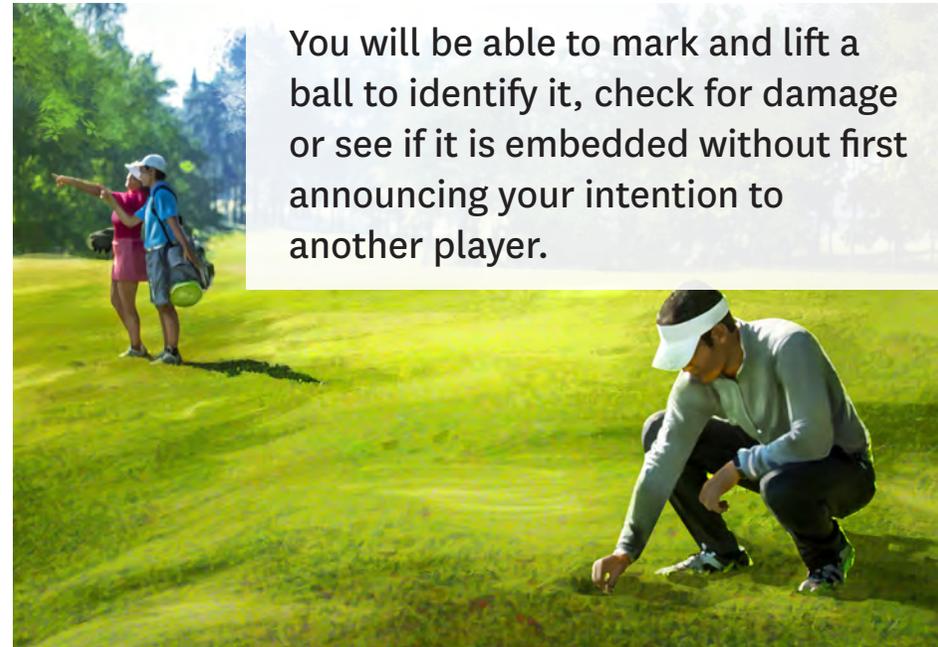
Golfers have always held themselves to high standards of conduct on the golf course. See below for some of the adjustments to Rules relating to player conduct and integrity, which will take effect on January 1, 2019.



The new Rules directly address the high standards of conduct expected from players.



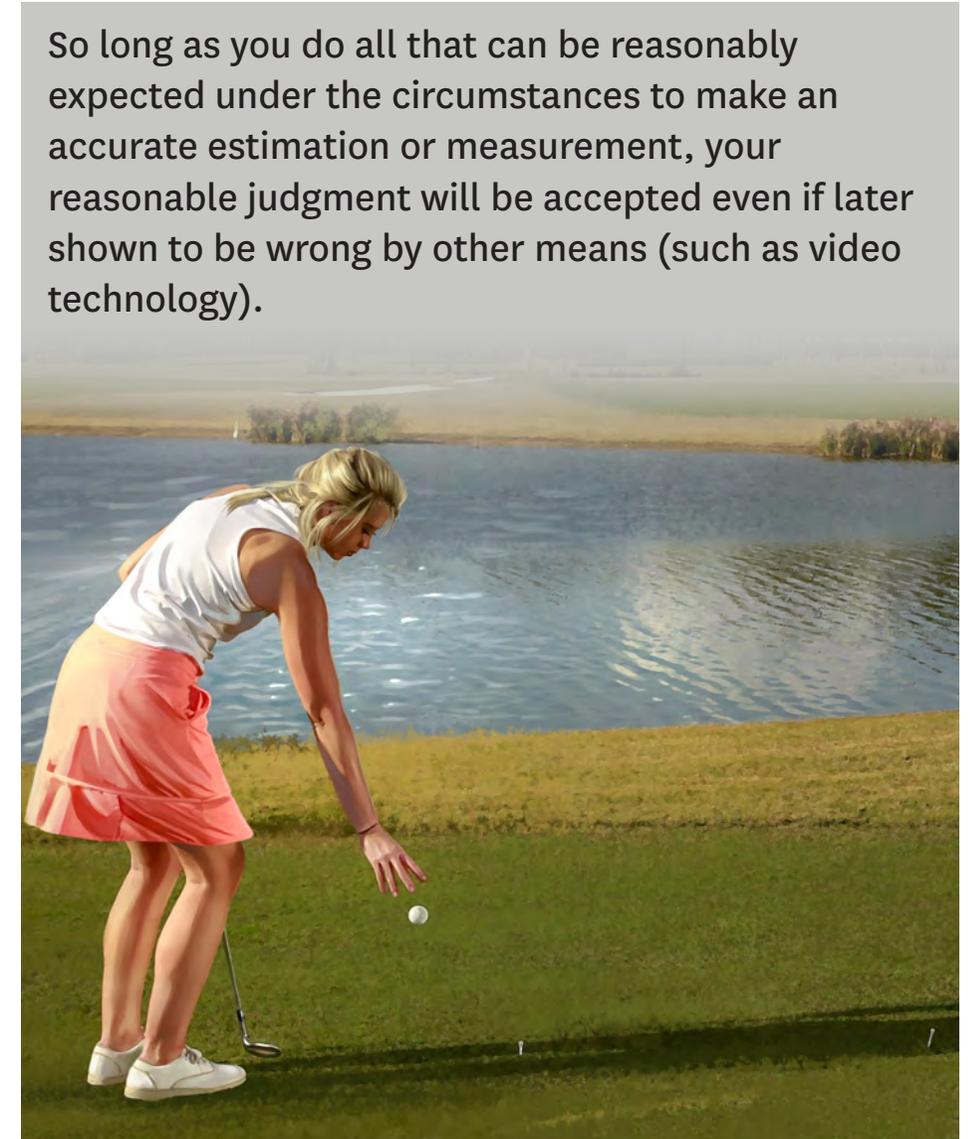
A Committee will have the authority to adopt its own code of conduct and to set penalties for breaches of that code.



You will be able to mark and lift a ball to identify it, check for damage or see if it is embedded without first announcing your intention to another player.

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The new Rules will go into effect on January 1, 2019.

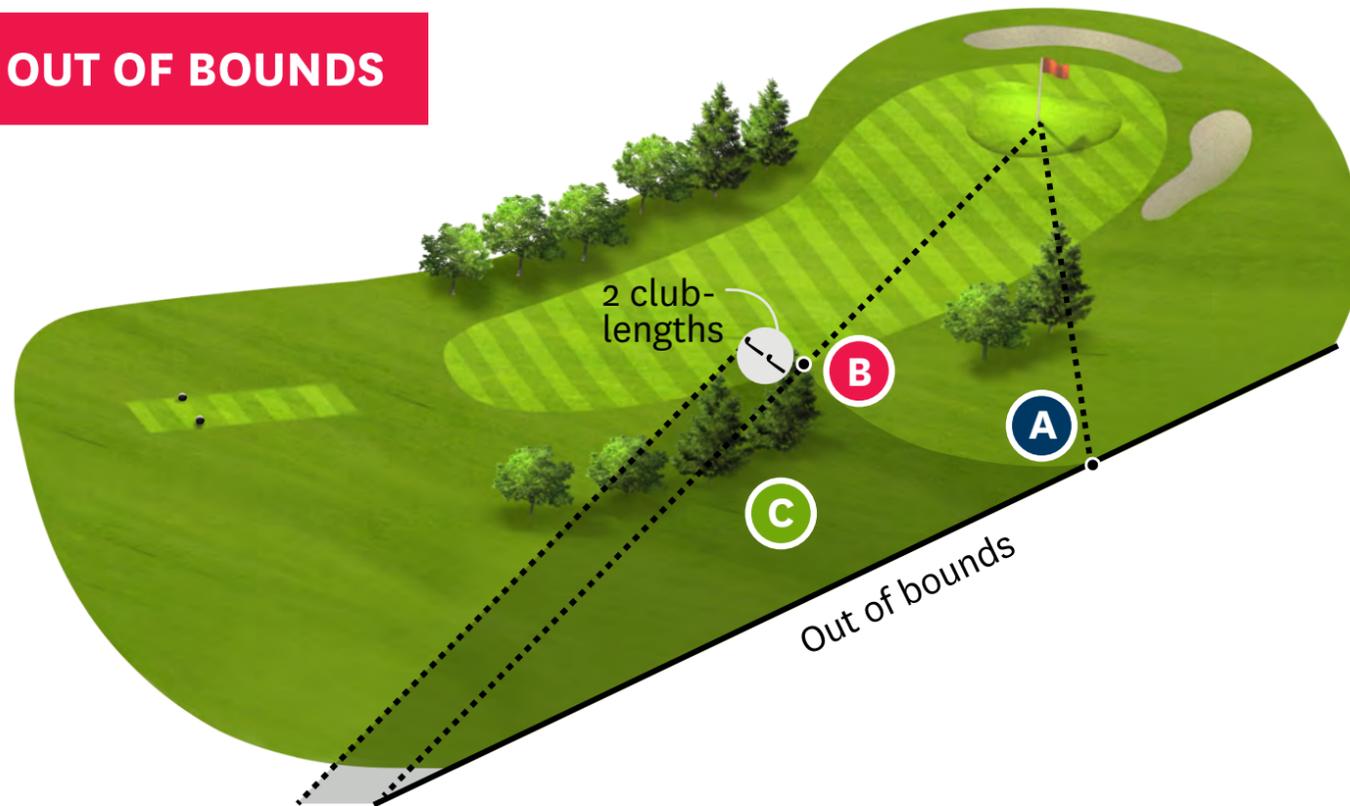


So long as you do all that can be reasonably expected under the circumstances to make an accurate estimation or measurement, your reasonable judgment will be accepted even if later shown to be wrong by other means (such as video technology).

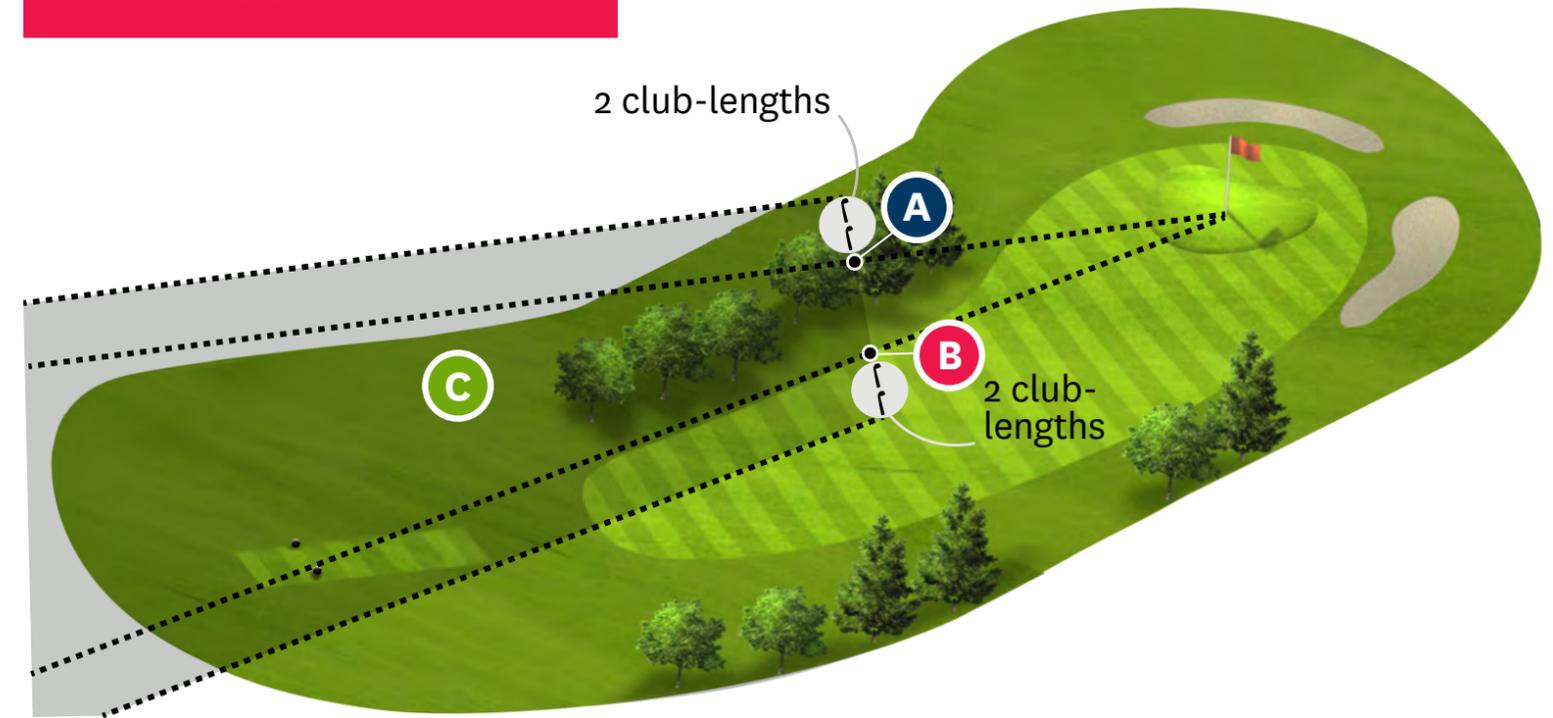
GOLF'S NEW RULES: STROKE AND DISTANCE

A new Local Rule will provide an alternative to stroke-and-distance relief for a ball that is lost outside a penalty area or out of bounds. This new Local Rule will be available beginning January 1, 2019.

BALL OUT OF BOUNDS



LOST BALL



If the Local Rule is in effect, you can still take stroke-and-distance relief, but you will now have the following additional option that comes with a penalty of two strokes:

A **DETERMINE SPOT** where your ball went out of bounds (left diagram) or is likely to be lost (right diagram).

B **FIND NEAREST FAIRWAY EDGE** no closer to the hole.

C **DROP YOUR BALL IN SHADED AREA** as defined on one side by a line from the hole through point A and on the other side by a line from the hole through point B, and not nearer the hole. The relief area is extended on both sides by two club-lengths.

This Local Rule is not intended for higher levels of play, such as professional or elite amateur level competitions.

GOLF'S NEW RULES: EVOLUTION OF KEY CHANGES

The continuous evolution of the Rules of Golf is one of the game's central traditions.

On March 1, 2017, The R&A and the USGA released a set of proposed changes to the Rules of Golf, which started a six-month period of public feedback on the proposals. We received and listened to more than 30,000 comments from golfers around the world, which helped inform further analysis, review and updates.

The new Rules were then finalized and are set to take effect on January 1, 2019. See how three topics evolved from the current Rule to last year's proposed modification to the final Rule scheduled to take effect in 2019.

	Current Rule	Proposed Rule (March 1, 2017)	New Rule (January 1, 2019)
Dropping a Ball	<p>SHOULDER HEIGHT</p>	<p>ANY HEIGHT</p>	<p>KNEE HEIGHT</p>
Taking Relief	<p>CLUB-LENGTHS</p>	<p>FIXED DISTANCE 20"</p>	<p>CLUB-LENGTHS</p>
Double Hit	<p>ONE-STROKE PENALTY</p>	<p>ONE-STROKE PENALTY</p>	<p>NO PENALTY</p>

BALL IN MOTION ACCIDENTALLY DEFLECTED

2019 Rule

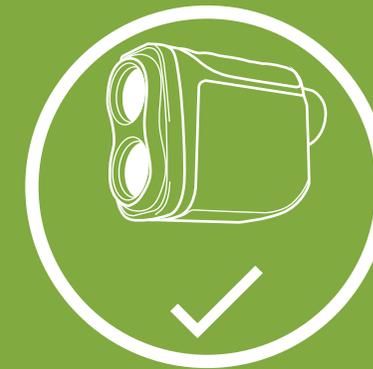
If a ball in motion is accidentally deflected by you or your equipment, there will be no penalty and the ball will be played from where it comes to rest.



DISTANCE-MEASURING DEVICES

2019 Rule

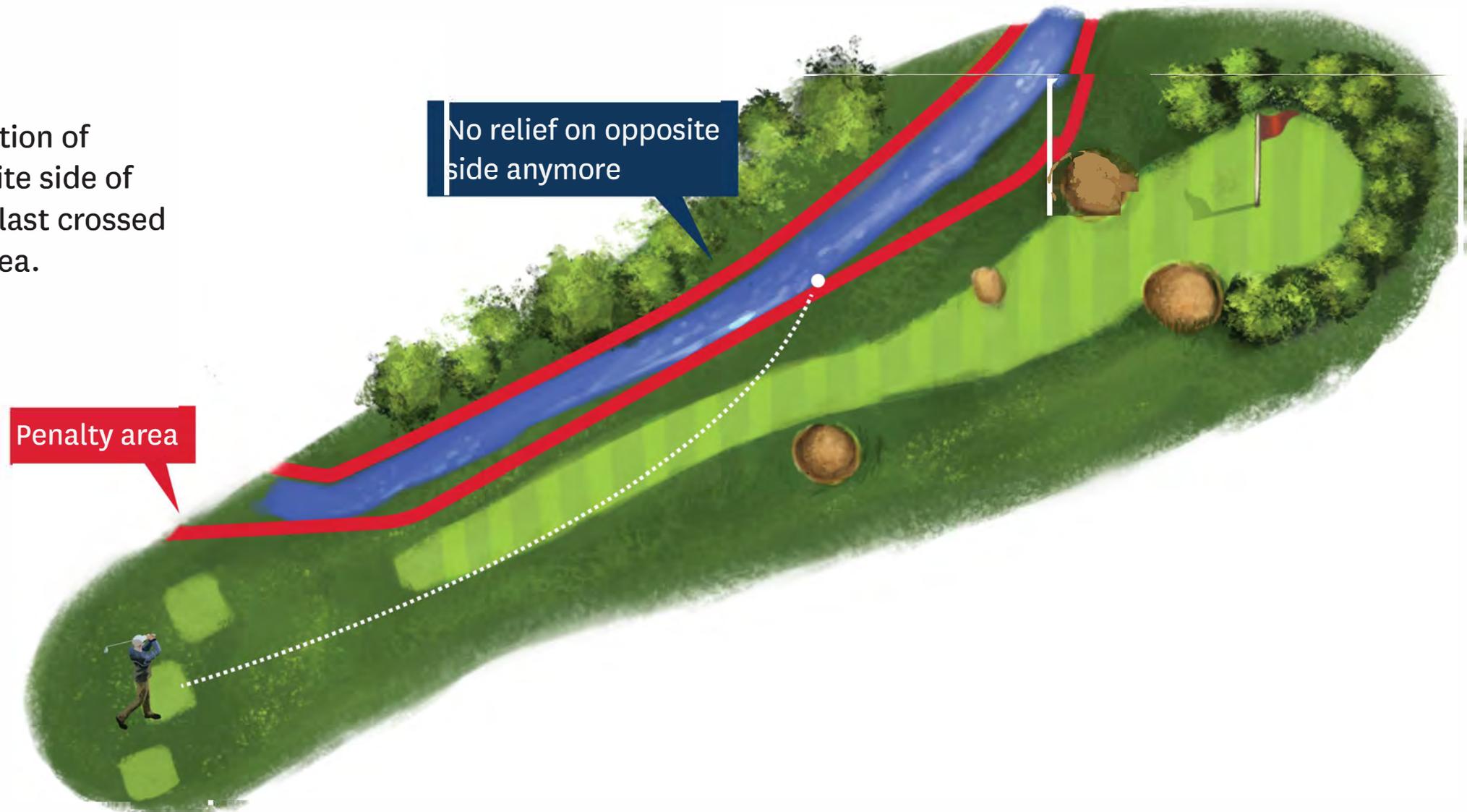
You will be permitted to use a distance-measuring device, unless a Local Rule has been adopted prohibiting its use.



ELIMINATION OF OPPOSITE-SIDE RELIEF FOR RED PENALTY AREAS

2019 Rule

You no longer have the option of taking relief on the opposite side of the point where your ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area.



EXPANDED USE OF RED-MARKED PENALTY AREAS

2019 Rule

Any penalty area (water hazard) can be marked as red, which means that lateral relief will be available to you.



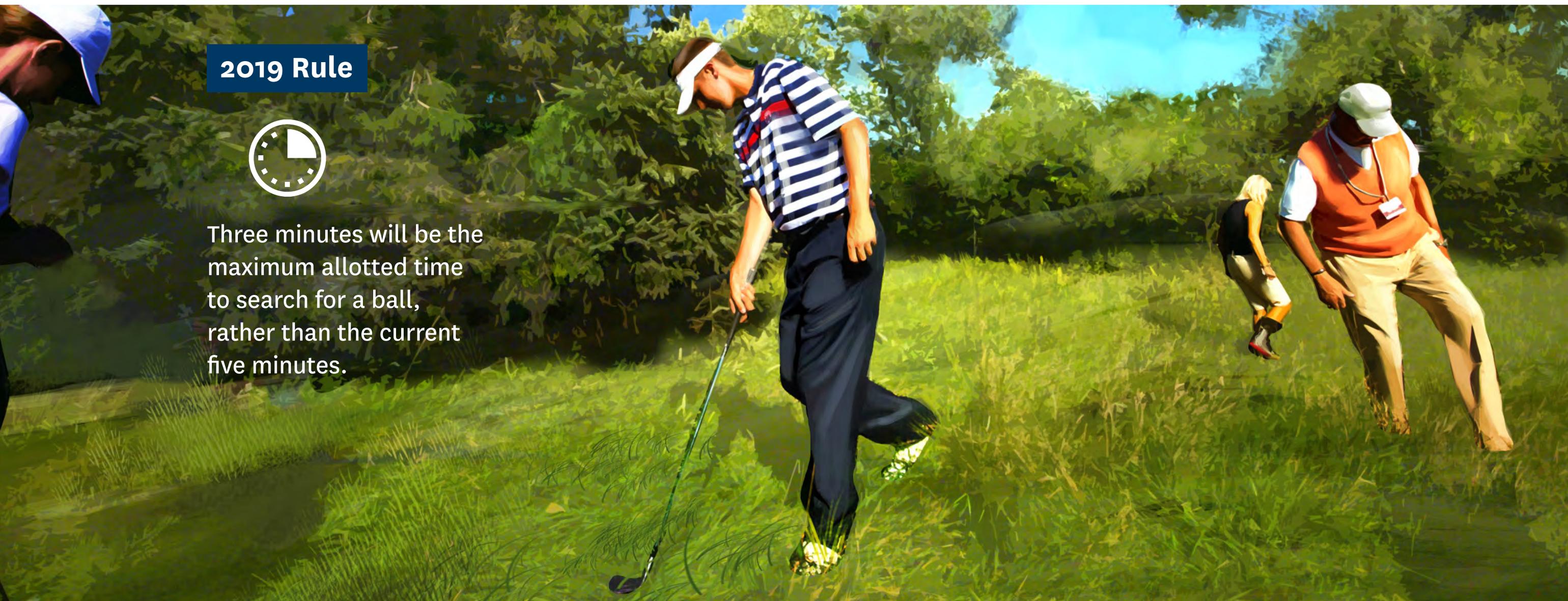
2 club-lengths

REDUCED SEARCH TIME FOR A LOST BALL

2019 Rule



Three minutes will be the maximum allotted time to search for a ball, rather than the current five minutes.



USE OF DAMAGED CLUB

2019 Rule

You will be allowed to keep using any damaged club, even if you damaged it in anger.



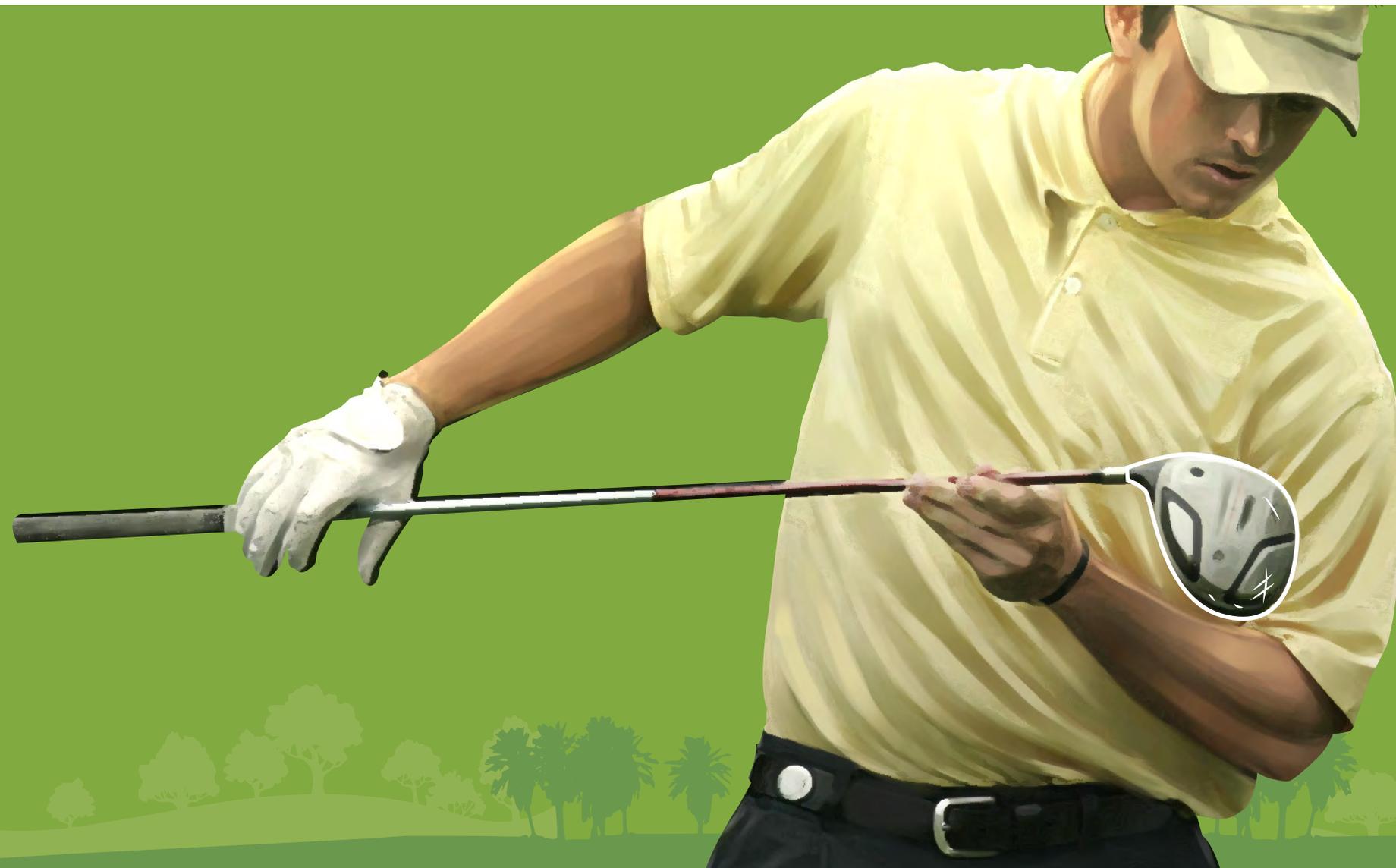
RELIEF FOR EMBEDDED BALL



2019 Rule

You may take relief for an embedded ball anywhere in the “general area” (except in sand). “General area” is the new term for “through the green.”

REPLACING DAMAGED CLUB



2019 Rule

You will not be allowed to replace a damaged club during the round if you were responsible for the damage.

