

Get Ready for 2019 – Checklist and Overview for Committees

0. Introduction

It is recommended that all Committees read the [Committee Procedures](#) part of the Official Guide in full. This “Get Ready for 2019” document is designed to provide Committees with an overview of the key changes to the Rules of Golf and Committee Procedures that will potentially impact on the running of competitions from 1 January 2019, and should therefore be considered a priority.

The references to “Rules” in this document are to the [Rules of Golf](#) and the references to sections and Model Local Rules (MLRs) are to parts of the [Committee Procedures](#). The MLRs are in [Section 8](#) of the Committee Procedures.

It should be noted that this document is written on the assumption that ‘the Committee’ is the person or group in charge of the competition or the course. This is in line with the definition of Committee in the Rules of Golf.

1. Get Ready for 2019 Checklist

It is recommended that each Committee considers each of the following points for competitions it plans to run in 2019:

- 1.1 Educate your Committee members**
- 1.2 Educate your golfers**
- 1.3 Course Marking**
- 1.4 Entry Forms (including Terms of the Competition)**
- 1.5 Local Rules**
- 1.6 Pace of Play**
- 1.7 Code of Conduct**

The key aspects of each of these items are considered in detail below.

1.1 Educate your Committee members

There are lots of resources available to help Committee members learn the new Rules before they run competitions in 2019. Why not encourage your Committee members to:

- Read the Committee Procedures in full.
- Read this document.
- Learn the basics of the new Rules of Golf by completing the 2019 Rules Academy when it becomes available towards the end of 2018

Further resources will also be available in the Committee Toolkit Resource Section from November 2018.

1.2 Educate your golfers

It will be important to advise your members of any changes to your course marking or Local Rules. You could do this through a web-site, newsletter, notice boards etc. You might also consider having a member of your Committee on the first tee for the first competition of the new season to help explain the key changes to your players.

It will also be important to help to encourage your golfers to learn the new Rules of Golf before they

play in 2019. There are lots of resources available to educate golfers, but it would be helpful if your Club and Committee also look to do what you can to help with this.

Here are just some ideas of how you might do this:

- Include a link to the R&A Rules videos on your club web-site / monthly newsletter (Rules Modernisation Videos)
 - [Rules Videos Link](#)You could even make these videos available to view in the clubhouse before the first couple of competitions in 2019
- Run a Rules night using The R&A Club Presentation
- Organise a fun golf event at the end of 2018 / start of the 2019 where it doesn't count for handicap and it gives everyone a chance to try the new Rules

Encourage your members to:

- Download the 2019 Rules of Golf App ([available on iOS and Android](#))
- View the Rules Essentials videos on the App, on The R&A web-site or on social media - these will be available in full towards the end of 2018
- Read the Player's Edition
- Complete the Rules Academy

Contact your National Governing Body to enquire about further opportunities to learn, for example through face to face Level 1 and Level 2 Rules of Golf Seminars.

1.3 Course Marking

While there are no changes that a Committee has to make in relation to course marking for 2019, there are several changes which affect how a Committee may mark their golf course. Therefore, each Committee should consider the following:

A. Marking Penalty Areas

- Existing Penalty Areas
 - Consider whether any existing water hazards (marked as yellow), should be marked as red penalty areas.
 - From 2019 there is no longer the option for a player to drop on the opposite margin and so there is less opportunity for a player to drop on the green side of a penalty area when the ball has last crossed on the tee side.

- Most penalty areas should therefore be marked red to give players the additional option of lateral relief and to make it easier for players to know their relief options.
 - However, where part of the challenge of the hole is to carry over a penalty area such as a stream that crosses the front of the putting green and there is a good chance that a ball that carries over the stream could fall back into it, the Committee may decide to continue to mark the penalty area as yellow. This ensures that a ball that lands on the far side of the penalty area before rolling back into the penalty area cannot be dropped on the far side under the lateral relief option.
 - For further considerations, see CP [Section 2C\(4\)](#).
- Marking Additional Areas as Red Penalty Areas
- A Committee may now mark areas other than those containing water as penalty areas.
 - See Committee Procedures [Section 2C\(1\)](#) for the points to be considered when deciding whether to mark an area that does not contain water as a penalty area.
- Other Considerations
- If moving the edges of existing penalty areas or adding (or removing) penalty areas, your local handicapping authority may require you to advise them.
- B. Defining No Play Zones
- A Committee now has the permission to define abnormal course conditions or penalty areas as no play zones from which play is prohibited.
- See [Section 2G\(1\)](#) for details of what may and may not be marked as no play zones.

1.4 Entry Forms (including Terms of the Competition)

Most aspects of entry forms will remain unchanged, i.e. there are no required changes to entry forms in relation to the likes of; eligibility criteria, entry requirements and dates, format, how ties will be decided or anti-doping terms.

However, the changes that must be made are as follows:

- From 2019, Terms of the Competition (previously 'Conditions of Competition') will focus on determining the structure of each competition including who may enter, how to enter, what the schedule and format of the competition will be and how ties will be decided. The following changes will therefore be required:
- Change of terminology from 'Conditions of Competition' to 'Terms of the Competition'
 - Many provisions that were termed Conditions of Competition in the 2016 Rules of Golf are being recategorized as Local Rules. In general, any condition that carries a penalty will be considered a Local Rule from 2019. This may impact on the terminology use in Entry Forms, although many of these relate to elite level competitions. (See [table D](#) at the end of this document for a list of Conditions of Competition that are now considered to be Local Rules.)
 - Note - it is expected that such Local Rules which were previously advised to players in advance (e.g. any limitations of use of transportation, limitations on use of caddies, etc), will continue to be communicated to players in advance.
- How to Decide Ties:
- It is important to be aware that the default for a match which ends in a half is now that extra holes must be played to find a winner.

- If a Committee wants a match to end in a tie, or if the play-off method will differ from that detailed in [Rule 3.2a\(4\)](#), the Committee must specify that in the Terms of the Competition.
- It is highly recommended that each Committee ensures that their Terms of the Competition are revised in relation to **how ties are to be decided**, for match play competitions in particular.
- See Committee Procedures [Section 5A\(6\)](#) for further details.

1.5 Local Rules

Given the extent of changes to Rule numbers, terminology and wording of Local Rules for 2019 (as detailed in [Section 8](#) of the Committee Procedures), it will be necessary for Committees to update their Local Rules for 2019. It will be important for each Committee to make the following updates:

- Ensure that the wording of any Local Rules is consistent with the wording provided in section 8 of the Committee Procedures.
 - Ensure Local Rules reflect the terminology in the 2019 Rules of Golf (see [table A](#)) and remove any “old” local rules that are no longer applicable or necessary (see [table C](#))
 - Ensure Local Rules reflect the Rule numbers in the 2019 Rules of Golf (see [table B](#))
- Consider if any additional Local Rules are required (see [table D](#) below for an overview of key changes that may merit consideration)

We recommend that you access the Local Rules Creator (available on [RandA.org](#) from November), which is designed to help you ensure that your Local Rules are consistent with the recommended wording in [Section 8](#).

1.6 Pace of Play

There is no requirement to make changes to your pace of play provisions. But there are a couple of changes in the Rules of Golf that relate to Pace of Play, and Committees are encouraged to act on these:

Ready Golf

- In stroke play, players are encouraged to play ‘Ready Golf’ ([Rule 5.6b](#)) in a safe and responsible way. Committees should therefore encourage and educate players in playing ‘Ready Golf’.

Pace of Play Policy

- Committees should consider adopting a Local Rule setting a Pace of Play Policy
- For guidance on this, see [Section 5G](#) and the Pace of Play section in the Committee Toolkit

1.7 Code of Conduct

As per [Rule 1.2b](#) a Committee may set its own standards of player conduct in a Code of Conduct, however there is no requirement for a Committee to do so. For further details on setting a Code of Conduct see [Section 5H](#).

TABLES

A. Key Terminology Changes

The following is not a full list but covers the terms that are most commonly used in Local Rules.

2016 Rules of Golf Term	2019 Rules of Golf Term
Casual Water	Temporary Water
Conditions of Competition	Terms of the Competition
Environmentally Sensitive Area	No Play Zone
Nearest Point of Relief	Nearest Point of Complete Relief
Outside Agency	Outside Influence
Teeing Ground	Teeing Area
Through the Green	General Area
Water Hazard	Penalty Area
Wrong Putting Green	Wrong Green

B. Changes to Key Rule Numbers

The following is a list of Headings and Rule numbers that are often used in Local Rules. There have been a large number of changes to recommended wording for Local Rules and you are encouraged to review [Section 8](#) of the Committee Procedures in full. But often clubs have relatively generic Local Rules on scorecards and this is aimed to assist with a basic update.

Pre 2019 Title and Rule Number	Rule Number from 1 Jan 2019	Comments
Ground Under Repair (Rule 25-1)	Ground Under Repair (Rule 16.1)	Alternatively all of these could be listed under: Abnormal Course Conditions (Rule 16.1)
Immovable Obstructions (Rule 24-2)	Immovable Obstructions (Rule 16.1)	
Out of Bounds (Rule 27-1)	Out of Bounds (Rule 18.2)	
Practice before or between rounds (Rule 7-1)	Practice before or between rounds (Rule 5.2)	
Water Hazards (Rule 26)	Penalty Areas (Rule 17)	
Exception to Rule 6-6d Local Rule	No longer required – covered by Rule 3.3b((3)	
Ball Accidentally Moved on Putting Green Local Rule	No longer required – covered by Rule 13.1d	
Suspension of play due to a dangerous situation (Note to Rule 6-8b)	No longer required – covered by Rule 5.7b	

C. Key Changes to Local Rules

The changes to the Rules of Golf and permissible Local Rules will impact on the Local Rules that your club may have in place. The following list is designed to advise you of the changes to the most commonly used Local Rules. However, this is not a complete list and it is recommended that you review [Section 8](#) of the Committee Procedures in full.

Local Rule	2019 Change	Model Local Rule (MLR) Reference
Stones in Bunkers defined as movable obstructions	Players are now allowed to remove loose impediments in a bunker without penalty. Stones are loose impediments and so this Local Rule is no longer required.	N/a
Embedded Ball Through the Green	Rule 16.3 now allows free relief for an embedded ball anywhere in the general area (including the rough). A Local Rule is allowed to reverse this permission and limit relief to closely-mown areas only.	MLR F-2
Distance Measuring Devices	Rule 4.3a(1) now allows a player to use a distance measuring device to get information on distance or direction (but not elevation changes). A Local Rule is allowed to reverse this permission and prohibit their use.	MLR G-5
Practice	Rule 5.2b allows a player to practise on the course after completing play of his or her round for that day. A Local Rule is allowed to reverse this permission.	MLR I-1
Practice	Rule 5.2b stops a player from practising on the course on the day of a competition itself. A Local Rule is allowed to reverse this permission.	MLR I-1
Relief from a Wrong Green	A player will be considered to have interference from a wrong green when he or she has interference to stance (previously there would have been no relief for interference to stance) (Rule 16.3). A Local Rule is allowed denying relief from a wrong green when the only interference is with the area of intended stance.	MLR D-3
Denying relief to stance from an abnormal course condition	A committee may deny relief for interference to stance from any type of abnormal course condition. Previously such a Local Rule was not permitted for immovable obstructions.	MLR F-6
Opposite Margin option for red penalty area	The Rules of Golf no longer allow the option of dropping within two club-lengths of the opposite edge of the penalty area to where it last crossed the edge. This additional option may be permitted by Local Rule, but only where the design of a penalty area would merit it.	MLR B-2
Alternative to Stroke and Distance for Lost Ball or Ball Out of Bounds	A new Local Rule is available to provide an extra relief option that allows a player to play on without returning to the location of the previous stroke. It is important to check with your Local Handicapping Authority if this Local Rule is permitted for handicap counting competitions.	MLR E-5

Temporary Immovable Obstructions	There have been some changes to the Temporary Immovable Obstruction Local Rule. These are not detailed here, but Committees using this Local Rule should consult the relevant Model Local Rule in the Committee Procedures. This is mainly for use in elite level competitions.	MLR F-23
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D. Changes from Conditions of Competition (2016) to Rules of Golf (2019)

Note – most of the items in the table below are mainly used in elite level competitions.

2016 Condition of Competition	2016 Reference(s)	2019 Local Rule Reference(s)
List of Conforming Driver Heads	Appendix 1B, section 1a	Model Local Rule (MLR G-1)
Groove and Punch Mark Specifications	Decision 4-1/1	MLR G-2
List of Conforming Golf Balls	Appendix 1B, section 1b	MLR G-3
One Ball condition	Appendix 1B, section 1c	MLR G-4
Caddie - Limits or prohibitions	Note to Rule 6-4, and Appendix 1B, section 2	MLR H-1
Pace of Play	Note 2 to Rule 6-7, and Appendix 1B, section 3	CP Section 8K
Suspension of Play Due to a Dangerous Situation	Note to Rule 6-8b, and Appendix 1B, section 4	Rule 5.7 , and MLR J-1
Practice – general amendments to permissions and prohibitions	Note to Rule 7-1, Exception (c) to Rule 7-2 Note 2 to Rule 7-2, and Rule 33-3c	Rules 5.2 and 5.5 MLR I-1
Practice between holes	Note 2 to Rule 7, and Appendix 1B, section 5b	MLR I-2
Advice in Team Competitions	Note to Rule 8, and Appendix 1B, section 6	CP Section 8H
Transportation	Appendix 1B, section 8	MLR G-6

Note: Anti-doping and ‘how to decide ties’ remain Terms of the Competition. See [sections 5A\(9\)](#) and [Section 5A\(6\)](#) of the Committee Procedures for further information of these Terms.