

The Putting Green and The Flagstick

Rules 16 and 17

Stroke Play

Key Definitions:

Putting Green

All of the ground of the hole being played that is especially prepared for putting... A ball is on the putting green when any part of it touches the putting green.

Line of Putt

The line the player wishes her ball to take after a stroke on the putting green. ... the line of putt includes a reasonable distance on either side of the intended line, but does not extend beyond the hole.

Holed

A ball is "holed" when all of it is at rest within the circumference of the hole and all of it is below the level of the hole lip.

Flagstick

A moveable straight indicator... centered in the hole to show its position. It may have a flag attached, but it may not have padding or shock absorbing material as this could unduly influence the movement of the ball.

Outside Agency

In stroke play, any agency not part of the competitor's side. Neither wind nor water is an outside agency.

Rule 16--The Putting Green

Touching the Line of Putt (R. 16-1a)

The line of putt must not be touched except to remove loose impediments, addressing the ball, measuring, lifting or replacing the ball, pressing down a ball marker, repairing old hole plugs or ball marks and in removing movable obstructions.

If the equipment of the player or her partner causes the ball or ball marker to move, the player incurs a one stroke penalty and the ball or ball marker must be replaced (Rule 18-2a (ii)).

A player would not be penalized if her stance is inadvertently taken on or astride the line of putt (or an extension of that line behind the ball) or is taken to avoid standing on another player's line of putt or prospective line of putt. (Exception to Rule 16-1e)

What Cannot Be Done on the Line of Putt:

Mopping up casual water, removing dew or frost, touching the inside of the hole unless it was materially damaged, repairing spike marks and allowing her partner to position herself, during the stroke, on or close to an extension of the line of putt behind the ball (R.14-2 Assistance).

If the equipment of the player or her partner causes the player's ball or ball marker to move, the player incurs a one stroke penalty and the ball or ball marker must be replaced. Any action causing the ball to move must be *directly attributable* to performing permitted acts.

What Else a Player Can Do on the Line of Putt:

- ✓ A player may touch the line of putt to determine if a natural object is loose or attached. If attached it must be returned to its original position.
- ✓ A player may walk on her line of putt accidentally as long as the line is not improved.
- ✓ A player may restore the line of putt if a fellow competitor damages it accidentally or otherwise.
- ✓ A player would not be penalized if her stance is inadvertently taken on or astride the line of putt (or an extension of that line behind the ball) or is taken to avoid standing on another player's line of putt or prospective putt. (Exception to 16-1e)

Making a Stroke While Another Ball is in Motion (R. 16-1f)

A player must not make a stroke while another ball is in motion after a stroke from the putting green. However, the player incurs no penalty if it was her turn to play.

Ball Overhanging Hole (R. 16-2)

When a ball overhangs the hole, a player is allowed a reasonable amount of time to reach the hole. Once there, the player has an additional 10 seconds to determine whether the ball is at rest. If the ball has not fallen into the hole by then, it is at rest. If the ball subsequently falls into the hole, the player has holed out with her last stroke and must add a penalty stroke to her score.

If the player causes the ball at rest to move [e.g. jumps close to the hole (R. 1-2/4)] and the ball falls into the hole, the ball must be

replaced- a penalty stroke is incurred under R. 18-2a (Ball at Rest Moved).

If removal of the flagstick (moveable obstruction) causes the ball overhanging the hole to move, the ball is placed on the lip of the hole without penalty.

Rule 17—The Flagstick

This rule consists of four parts:

- ✓ *Flagstick Attended, Removed or Held Up*
- ✓ *Unauthorized Attendance*
- ✓ *Ball Striking the Flagstick or Attendant*
- ✓ *Ball Resting Against the Flagstick*

17-1—Flagstick Attended, Removed or Held Up

Before making a stroke anywhere on the course, a player may have the flagstick attended, removed, or held up (ARHU) to indicate the position of the hole. If a flagstick is not ARHU, before making a stroke, it must not be ARHU during the stroke or while the player's ball is in motion *if doing so might influence the movement of the ball.*

If a person is close enough to touch the flagstick, she is deemed to be attending the flagstick.

If before the stroke, a player knows that a person is ARHU the flagstick and makes no objection, she is deemed to have authorized attendance.

If someone attends or holds up the flagstick while the stroke is being made, she is deemed to be attending the flagstick until the ball come to rest.

An ARHU flagstick may be moved when a ball is in motion even if the flagstick could influence the movement of the ball (Rule 24-1).

17-2--Unauthorized Attendance

A fellow competitor is not permitted to ARHU the flagstick without the prior knowledge or authority of the player. If this is done during the stroke or while the player's ball is in motion, and the act might influence the movement of the ball, the fellow competitor incurs a two stroke penalty.

If a player strikes a ball on the putting green and it hits the flagstick or attendee during unauthorized attendance, the stroke is canceled. The ball must be replaced and replayed. If the player strikes the ball from off the putting green the ball is played as it lies.

17-3—Ball Striking Flagstick or Attendant

The player's ball must not strike: the flagstick when it is being ARHU; the person or anything carried by her while she is attending or holding up the flagstick; or an unattended flagstick when the flagstick is in the hole and the stroke has been made from the putting green. Penalty--2 strokes and play the ball as it lies.

Generally, the player's ball must not strike the flagstick when removed from the hole. Here are a couple of exceptions: the player hits a second shot to the green and hits a flagstick which has been blown down by the wind—no penalty; a player hits a ball to the green while it is occupied by another group and the ball strikes the removed flagstick—no penalty.

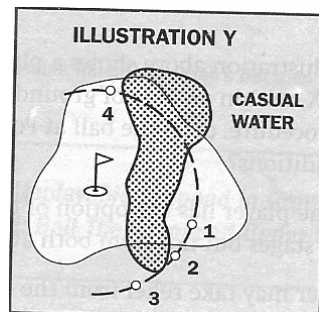
17-4—Ball Resting Against Flagstick

When the flagstick is in the hole and a player's ball, not holed, rests against it, the player or authorized person may move or remove the flagstick. If the ball falls into the hole, the player has holed out with her last stroke; otherwise, the ball, if moved, is to be placed on the lip of the hole—no penalty. If an unauthorized person, in stroke play, removes the flagstick and the ball moves away from the hole, replace the ball against the flagstick without penalty to anyone.

Other Situations on the Putting Green

Relief from Casual Water

Relief may be taken from casual water on the putting green. Casual water is any temporary accumulation of water on the course that is not in a water hazard and is visible before or after a player takes her stance. On the putting green, relief may be taken if the ball lies in or touches the condition *or if there is interference with the line of putt* (Rule 25-1.) **Place** the ball at the nearest point of relief (NPR), not in a hazard. The NPR may be off the putting green. This relief is also available for other abnormal ground conditions.



Ball Deflected or Stopped on the Putting Green

If a player's ball in motion *after a stroke on the putting green* is accidentally deflected, stopped or comes to rest on any moving or animate outside agency, *the stroke is canceled* and must be replayed. *If the stroke is made from off the putting green* to the putting green, the ball is played from where it comes to rest after a deflection or from where it was moved if it was picked up (Rule 19-1). If the ball is accidentally deflected by the player or partner or their equipment, the player incurs a one stroke penalty (19-2) and the ball is played as it lies except when it comes to rest in or on the player's, her partner's or either of their caddies' clothes or equipment, in which case the ball on the putting green must be placed as near as possible to the spot directly under the place where the ball came to rest in or on the article but not nearer the hole.

Ball at Rest on the Putting Green Moved

If a player addresses a ball overhanging the hole and the ball falls into the hole, it is not holed. The player caused the ball to move. The ball must be replaced—1 stroke penalty (Dec.18-2b/10).

If a ball moves as a result of wind or gravity, there is no penalty and the ball is played from its new position (Rule 18).

Temporary Greens

The Committee cannot make a local rule under which a player is not required to hole out (Rule 33-8/1).

Indicating the Line of Putt

The player, partner or either of their caddies may, *before, but not during the stroke*, point out the line for putting, but in doing so the putting green must not be touched. A mark may not be placed anywhere to indicate the line of putt (Rule 8-2b). In making a stroke, a player may not allow her caddie, her partner or her partner's caddie to position herself on or close to an *extension of the line of putt* behind the ball (Rule 14-2b).

Rotating a Ball on the Putting Green without Marking Its Position

Under Rule 18-2a, the player incurs a one stroke penalty for touching the ball other than as provided in the Rules. A player may, without penalty, rotate her ball on the putting green for the purpose of lining up the trademark with the hole provided the position of the ball is marked (Dec. 18-2a/33).

Agreement to Concede Short Putts

Players in stroke play must hole out. DQ penalty applies unless error is corrected before the player tees off from the next teeing ground (Rule 3-2).

Putting from the Wrong Place

If a competitor replaces her ball at a wrong place (e.g. at another player's ball marker) and holes out, she has played from a wrong place. Penalty—2 strokes (Dec. 20-7c/1 & 2)

Putting with a Wrong Ball

If a fellow competitor marks and lifts a player's ball and sets it aside and the player knew this, but still putted the ball from where it was set aside, the player has played a wrong ball. It is a wrong ball because it had been lifted and therefore was not in play. Penalty—2 strokes, replace the ball correctly and play out the hole (Dec. 15-3b/3).

Moveable Obstructions on the Putting Green

When a ball is in motion, an obstruction on the putting green that might influence the movement of the ball must not be moved, other than equipment of any player or an attended, removed or held up flagstick (R. 24-1).