

HERON LAKES MEN'S CLUB LOCAL RULES AND RULES REMINDERS

(Adopted 3/27/13; modified: 4/24/13; 5/29/13; 2/26/14; 1/30/19; 2/18/20; 12/2/20; 6/1/21)

The USGA Rules of Golf and the Heron Lakes Course Local Rules govern all play, except when modified by the following Club Local Rules which will apply in all Club rounds.

I. PERMANENT LOCAL RULES

(In Effect at All Times)

1. Dropping Zones

On #3 & #16 of the Greenback, and #4 & #15 on the Great Blue, the dropping zone for a ball in the yellow penalty area is the **tee box** that includes the **yellow “stone/plate”** (scorecard yellow tee yardage): In addition to other options available under [Rule 17.1d](#), the ball may be dropped, under penalty of one stroke, anywhere on the tee box not closer to the hole than the stone.

Note: Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – Match play - Loss of hole; Stroke play - Two strokes.

2. Provisional Ball for Ball in Penalty Areas

In an effort to prevent unreasonable delay, [Rule 18.3](#) has been modified as follows: If there is doubt whether a ball is in or is lost in a penalty area, the player may play another ball provisionally under the options allowed in [Rule 17.1d](#), including from the dropping zone.

- If the original ball is found outside the penalty area, the player must continue play with it.
- If the original ball is found in the penalty area, the player may either play the original ball as it lies or continue with the ball played provisionally under [Rule 17.1d](#)
- If the original ball is not found or identified within the three-minute search period, the player must continue with the ball played provisionally.

Note: Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – Match play - Loss of hole; Stroke play - Two strokes.

3. Native Grass – Red Penalty Areas

On the Great Blue course, all “**native grass**” areas will be deemed as **red penalty areas**. Even if not marked with stakes or lines, “native grass” is defined as including all long grass that is clearly outside of the regular cut lines for the rough. When a player’s shot enters and/or is lost in a native grass area, in addition to the option of playing a provisional shot, they may choose to take relief, under a penalty of one stroke, using any of the options available under [Rule 17.1d](#). When in doubt if an area should be considered “native grass”, player should seek consensus of their group. If there is still disagreement, play two balls and seek a ruling after play. The use of cell phones to take a picture/video of the disputed ball position, is encouraged.

Note: Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – Match play - Loss of hole; Stroke play - Two strokes.

4. Bunkers: Disturbed Lies & Unmarked G.U.R.

The USGA Rules of Golf define a bunker as “a *specialty prepared area of sand.*” Because these reasonably expected conditions cannot always be guaranteed at municipal facilities, the Board has defined “**disturbed areas**” within any bunker in which they are found, to include “divots, footprints, vehicle/animal tracks and ball marks” and as such are to be considered unmarked

“ground under repair.” Players may therefore, take **free relief** under [Rule 16.1c](#). A ball in a “disturbed area” of a bunker may be lifted, cleaned, and placed within 1 club length at the nearest point of prepared sand, without penalty. Additionally, whenever a bunker is estimated to be at least *roughly* $\frac{3}{4}$ full of visible temporary water, without any available prepared sand or potential to create prepared sand, the **entire bunker** shall be considered unmarked **“ground under repair.”** Players may take 1 club-length relief from the entry point into the bunker, no closer to the hole, **without penalty**. When in doubt, consult with group. If doubt remains, player should take a picture of the area in question, play two balls, and seek a ruling after the round.

Note: Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – Match play - Loss of hole; Stroke play - Two strokes

5. **Power Lines on Great Blue – Holes #13, #14, #17**

In accordance with [Rule 14.6](#) (Making Next Stroke from Where Previous Stroke Made), if a player’s ball strikes the power **lines** on holes #13, #14 or #17 of the Great Blue, the stroke is canceled and the player **must** replay the shot from a place as near as possible to the place from which the original ball was played. Note: this rule **does NOT apply** to the wooden poles.

Note: Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – Match play - Loss of hole; Stroke play - Two strokes.

6. **Music on the Course**

According to [Rule 4.3a\(4\)](#), “Listening to audio or watching video on matters unrelated to the competition being played (such as a news report or **background music**)” **is allowed** during a round, however “Listening to music or other audio to eliminate distractions or to help with swing tempo” **is not allowed** and “consideration should be shown to others” at all times.

To ensure that these rules are followed and enforced, the Board has determined the following:

- Headphones/earbuds are banned, as they render the nature of the audio unverifiable
- Audio/Video may not be played during a player’s pre-shot routine or stroke
- Audio/Video may only be played at a level low enough as not to distract others
 - If any player in a group asks that A/V not be played, the entire group must comply
 - If any nearby group hears audio and asks for it to be lowered, players must comply

Note: Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – First offense, warning; Second offense, disqualification.

II. TEMPORARY LOCAL RULES

(In effect seasonally, depending on conditions, when invoked by the Committee)

1. **Aeration Holes.**

When the Committee declares the “aeration rule” to be in effect, a ball that comes to rest in or on an aeration hole, in the general area of the course, may be lifted, without penalty, cleaned and dropped, as near as possible to the spot where it lay but not nearer the hole. The ball when dropped, must first strike a part of the general area of the course.

On the putting green, a ball that comes to rest in or on an aeration hole may be placed at the nearest spot not nearer the hole that avoids the situation.

Note: Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – Match play - Loss of hole; Stroke play - Two strokes.

2. Accumulation of Leaves (“Leaf Rule”).

When the “leaf rule” is in effect, an accumulation of leaves in which a ball is known or virtually certain to be lost, if in an area where the ball is virtually certain to be found otherwise, is to be considered an “abnormal course condition” in addition to conditions defined under [Rule 16.1](#). A ball may be substituted without penalty, except in a penalty area, at the point where the original ball last crossed the margin of the abnormal course condition. This area ends in each direction, from the location as near as possible to where the ball is believed to be lost, at the nearest point where a ball may be dropped without being entirely or partially obscured by leaves.

- If the abnormal course condition is in a bunker, the substituted ball must be dropped in the bunker; when removing accumulated leaves, no penalty for accidental ball movement
- If no other person observed the path of the original ball struck, it cannot be “known or virtually certain” that the ball is at rest in an accumulation of leaves; thus, the ball is lost
- Ordinarily, a player should seek concurrence from other members of his group that his ball is known or virtually certain to be lost in the accumulation of leaves at a location where the ball would be virtually certain to be found otherwise.

3. Preferred Lies (playing the ball “UP”).

When “preferred lies” are in effect, a ball lying in the **general area** of the course may be **lifted, cleaned and placed**, without penalty. Before lifting the ball, the player must mark its position. Failure to mark the original spot, improper contact or movement of the ball after it has been placed and come to rest, is a violation of [Rule 14.2](#). When in the **rough**, the player must place the ball on a spot within **six inches** of the original position. When in the **fairway (including “fringe”)**, the player must place the ball within **one club length** of the original position. When in a **bunker**, the player may lift and clean the ball, rake the area to have prepared sand, and replace the ball as near as possible of the original position. In all cases, the ball must be placed no closer to the hole and maintain the same surface type (ball in rough, stays in rough etc.).

- Exception 1: If a ball is within one club-length (using the player’s shortest club other than a putter) of the base of any tree, shrub or the like, the ball may be lifted and cleaned but must be placed **directly on the original position**.
- Exception 2: If a ball is in a bunker at least roughly ¾ full of temporary water (see pg. 2)
- Exception 3: If the area is an abnormal course condition, proceed using [Rule 16.1](#)

Note: Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – Match play - Loss of hole; Stroke play - Two strokes

III. RULES REMINDERS

1. When taking relief (under one stroke penalty) for a ball in a penalty area marked by **yellow stakes/lines**, the dropping area is generally **behind the penalty area**, even if the original ball travelled to a point beyond the penalty area and bounced or rolled back into the penalty area. See [Rule 17](#) for clarification. The procedure whereby a ball is dropped within two club lengths of the point where the ball last crossed the margin of the penalty area is available only for red penalty areas. Thus, for example, if a shot on Hole #4 of the Great Blue course hits

the bank in front of the green outside of the yellow stakes/lines and rolls back into the penalty area, the next shot (if the ball is not played from the penalty area) must be played:

- from the place where the original ball was played (if on tee shot, the teeing area)
- from the designated dropping area (the tee box of the yellow stone/plate)
- at a point behind the penalty area keeping the point where the ball last crossed the margin of penalty area between the player and the hole (back-on-the-line)

Another common example is when a shot played from a back left bunker on Hole #4 of the Great Blue, crosses the green and rolls into the yellow penalty area. In such a case, the possible drop locations would be the original place (inside of the bunker) or the designated drop zone. Back-on-the-line relief would take the player back onto hole #3, which is not practical without delaying play. Similar cases can occur on #3 & #16 of the Greenback and #15 of the Great Blue.

2. Only water visible on the surface during an ordinary stance is temporary water. For temporary water to qualify as an abnormal course condition, the water must be visible “before or after the player takes his stance.” That means water appearing only after a player presses his foot into the ground, with pressure in excess of the that which would result from a normal stance, is not temporary water and is not a condition from which relief may be taken.

3. Dew is not a “loose impediment” that can be swept from the line of a putt. A player may of course move “loose impediments” on the putting green (as well as throughout the rest of the course). However, dew is not a “loose impediment.” Thus, sweeping dew from the line of a putt violates the rule against touching the line of a putt ([Rule 13.2](#))

IV. DESIGNATIONS UNDER RULES

1. The Committee

For decisions regarding any temporary local rules in effect for an event, the Committee, as used in the Rules of Golf, is typically the Captain or Captains responsible for that day’s game, or the Tournament Chair(men) if for a monthly tournament. Otherwise, the Committee is all Board members present at the time any issue arises that requires a decision by the Committee.

The Committee may consult with other knowledgeable persons as it deems appropriate.