1.0 Defined Terms. This rule contains the following defined terms:
• ball in play (35.4);
• caddie (35.7);
• Committee (35.11);
• course (35.13);
• fellow-competitor (35.12(b));
• hole (35.22);
• outside agency (35.36);
• rule (35.42); and
• teeing ground (35.50).

1.1 Description. Golf consists of playing a ball from the teeing ground into the hole according to the rules.

1.2 Primary Rules

(A) Nothing to Affect a Ball in Play. Neither you nor your caddie may do anything that intentionally affects the position or movement of any ball in play, except as the rules say otherwise.

(B) Nothing to Affect Physical Conditions. You must play the course as you find it, without modifying it, unless the rules say otherwise. Actions relating solely to course care do not violate this rule.

(C) Penalty and Procedures. If you violate this Rule 1.2, you lose the hole in match play or receive a two-stroke penalty in stroke play. In stroke play, if you affect your ball’s movement, you must play the ball from where it has stopped or come to rest after the movement. If your ball’s movement was intentionally altered by a fellow-
competitor or another outside agency, Rule 1.4 applies to you and the procedures in Rule 19.1(c) apply.

(d) **Serious Violation and Disqualification.** If you or your caddie’s conduct violating this rule allows you or another player to gain a significant advantage or places another player (other than your partner) at a significant disadvantage, the Committee may disqualify you.

**1.3 NO AGREEMENT TO IGNORE RULES.** You cannot agree with anyone to ignore a rule or penalty. If you do this, you’re disqualified.

**1.4 ISSUES NOT COVERED BY RULES.** If any issue is not specifically covered by the rules, the Committee will make a decision based on fairness. See also Rule 34.3.

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**RULE 2. Match Play**

**2.0 DEFINED TERMS.** This rule contains the following defined terms:

- caddie (35.7);
- Committee (35.11);
- handicap (35.20);
- hole (35.22);
- hole out (35.23);
- opponent (35.34);
- partner (35.37);
- penalty stroke (35.38);
- putting green (35.40);
- rule (35.42);
- side (35.44);
• stipulated round (35.46);
• stroke (35.47); and
• teeing ground (35.50).

2.1 SCORING AND WINNING THE MATCH

(A) Scoring by Holes. In match play, one side plays against another. The game is scored by holes. You win a hole by completing it in fewer strokes than your opponent. In a handicap match, the lower net score wins the hole. A hole is “halved” if you tie your opponent.

(B) Determining the Winner. You win a match if you lead by more holes than the number of holes remaining to be played. To determine the winner of a tie, the Committee may extend the stipulated round.

(c) Match-Play Terminology. Scoring in match play uses these terms: one side may be so many “holes up” or the sides may be “all square” with so many holes “to play.” You are “dormie” when you are as many holes up as there are holes remaining.

2.2 PENALTIES

(A) Generally. The general penalty for violating a rule in match play is loss of hole — except as the rules say otherwise (see the Penalty Summary Chart in Appendix 1).

(B) After Holing Out. If you receive a penalty after you’ve holed out and your opponent has been left with a stroke for the half, the hole is halved.

2.3 CONCESSION. When your opponent’s ball is at rest, you may concede the next stroke, and your opponent will be considered to have holed out. You may concede a hole or a match at any time before it’s over. Once
a stroke, hole, or match is conceded, the concession can’t be declined or withdrawn.

2.4 CLAIMS

(A) **Making a Claim.** If you believe that your opponent has violated the rules, you may make a claim by indicating that you want to apply the Rules of Golf. As long as there is no agreement to ignore the rules (see Rule 1.3), you may disregard an opponent’s rules violation.

(B) **Procedures and Decisions**

(1) **Specificity and Timeliness.** For a claim to be considered by the Committee, you must notify your opponent that you are making a claim or requesting a ruling, and state the specific facts of the situation. You must make the claim before any player in the match plays from the next teeing ground — or, in the case of the last hole of the match, before all players in the match leave the putting green. If you discover facts giving rise to a claim after all the players in the match have left the final putting green, you may make a claim anytime before the match’s result is officially announced.

(2) **Promptness of Decision.** If you make a claim against your opponent, the Committee should make a decision as soon as possible so that the status of the match will be certain.

(3) **Continuing Play When Committee Unavailable.** If a doubt or dispute arises between the players when no authorized Committee representative is available within a reasonable time, the players must continue the match without delay and await a decision. In match play, when
you are doubtful of your rights or procedures, you cannot complete the hole with two balls.

(4) Late Claims. A late claim is governed by Rule 34.1(A)(2) (dealing with claims in match play).

2.5 INFORMATION ABOUT STROKES TAKEN

(A) Asking and Telling About Strokes Taken

(1) Asking. During or after the play of a hole, you may ask a player—or the player’s caddie or partner—the number of strokes that player has taken for the hole, and that player must respond timely (see Rule 2.5(b)(1)).

(2) Disclosing a Penalty. If you’ve received a penalty, you must tell your opponent as soon as practicable, unless you’re obviously proceeding under a rule involving a penalty and your opponent has seen this.

(3) Not Disclosing a Penalty. If you don’t tell your opponent about a penalty, you’re considered to have given wrong information, even if you’re not aware that you’ve received the penalty. You’re responsible for knowing the rules.

(B) Penalty for Giving Wrong Information

(1) While Playing a Hole. If you give or are considered to have given wrong information about the number of strokes taken during the play of the hole, there is no penalty if you correct the mistake before your opponent makes the next stroke. If you don’t correct the wrong information, you lose the hole if your opponent makes a valid claim.

(2) After Completing a Hole. If you give or are considered to have given wrong information
about the number of strokes you’ve taken on the hole just completed and this affects your opponent’s understanding of the result of the hole, there is no penalty if you correct your mistake before any player plays from the next teeing ground—or, in the case of the last hole of the match, before all players leave the putting green. If you don’t correct the wrong information, you lose the previous hole if your opponent makes a valid claim.

**RULE 3. Stroke Play**

3.0 DEFINED TERMS. This rule contains the following defined terms:

- Committee (35.11);
- competitor (35.12);
- handicap (35.20);
- hole (35.22);
- hole out (35.23);
- penalty stroke (35.38);
- provisional ball (35.39);
- putting green (35.40);
- rule (35.42);
- scorer (35.43);
- stipulated round (35.46);
- stroke (35.47); and
- teeing ground (35.50).

3.1 SCORING

(a) Determining Winner. The competitor who plays the stipulated number of rounds in the
fewest strokes wins. In a handicap competition, the competitor with the lowest net score for the stipulated rounds wins.

(b) Penalties. If you incur a penalty, you should inform your scorer and include those penalty strokes in your total.

3.2 Penalties

(A) General. The general penalty for breaching a rule in stroke play is two strokes, except as the rules say otherwise (see the Penalty Summary Chart in Appendix 1).

(B) Refusal to Comply. If you refuse to comply with a rule and your doing so affects another competitor’s rights, you’re disqualified.

3.3 Failing to Hole Out. If you don’t hole out on a hole and fail to correct your mistake before making a stroke from the next teeing ground — or, in the case of the last hole of the round, before you leave the putting green — you’re disqualified.

3.4 Player’s Doubt about Procedures

(A) Second-Ball Procedures

(1) In stroke play, if you’re doubtful about your rights or about the correct procedure during the play of a hole, you may play a second ball without penalty.

(2) Before taking any other action, you must declare your decision to use this rule and the ball you prefer to score with, rules permitting.

(3) You may play either ball first.

(4) A second ball played under this rule isn’t considered a provisional ball under Rule 27.2.

(B) Determining Score When Second Ball Is Played

(1) You must report the facts to the Committee