

Sandtraps:

Fort Gordon local rule - if there are gulleys (washouts) or standing water in the bunker, move the ball to a better position in the bunker without penalty.

RMGA rule - if your ball is in a man-made (or animal-made) depression such as a foot print or poorly raked section (by either man or machine), you may move it out of the depression and into a better position in the bunker without penalty.

Out-of-Bounds:

The recent USGA ruling allowed courses to set their own local rules on out-of-bounds balls in order to speed play. Fort Gordon's rule is that you place a ball in the "fairway" as close to the location where your ball went out-of-bounds, add two strokes, and then play on. The two strokes are the same as going back to the box, teeing your second shot, and then hitting for three. The RMGA has the same rule for our out-of-town trips. Of note: there are no out-of-bounds holes on Lake or Island.

Lost Balls:

The new USGA rule states that you only have 3 minutes to search for a lost ball, vice 5 minutes. If you can't find your ball within 3 minutes, drop a ball in the "fairway" as close to where you believe the ball was lost, add two strokes, and play on. This is similar to going back to your last position and replaying the shot.

Waste Areas (formally called penalty areas)

The USGA now allows you to ground your club in waste areas (except for bunkers). You may touch the sand in a bunker with your club without penalty, but you are not allowed to ground it behind the ball prior to your shot (unless it is a waste bunker). If you are in a waste area, you may treat the situation as if you were in the fairway as far as touching the ground with your club as long as you don't cause the ball to move.

Rocks and Roots:

The RMGA rule is that you are allowed to move your ball a club length to avoid rocks or roots if you are not in the woods. If your ball is in the woods and on rocks or roots, you have to either play it as it lies or take an unplayable and move it up to two club lengths with a penalty stroke added to your score.

A reminder of the USGA rules implemented in 2019

1: Players will be permitted to leave the flagstick in the hole while playing a shot from the green, and there is no penalty if the ball strikes the flagstick.

2: There will be no penalty if a player accidentally causes a ball or ball marker to move on a green, even if the player touches the ball with the club while addressing it before a stroke or kicks it while bending over to mark it. A player must simply move the ball back to its original spot.

3: Players will be able to remove loose impediments in the bunker such as stones, leaves or twigs without penalty. However, a player is not allowed to move a loose impediment if that action results in the ball moving.

4: A player also can accept a two-stroke penalty and drop the ball outside the bunker on a line with the flagstick, no nearer the hole.

5: Players have three minutes to search for a lost ball. Under the old rules, players were given five minutes.

6: Players should drop the ball from knee height instead of shoulder height whenever a drop is specified for relief.

7: There is no longer a penalty for hitting a ball multiple times on the same swing. If a player hits the ball more than once, the player just counts the intended shot and plays the ball from where it came to rest.

8: If a player accidentally hits himself, his equipment or his caddie, there no longer is a penalty and the ball is played from where it comes to rest. Same goes if the player hits another player, that player's caddie or equipment.