



ENGLAND
GOLF

2026 CHAMPIONSHIPS AND MATCHES

LOCAL RULES

The following Local Rules together with any additions or amendments published by England Golf at the host venue and England Golf General Conditions, will apply to all Championships and International Matches run by England Golf. The word 'Championships' includes all England Golf events e.g., 'Tournaments', 'Finals' and 'Competitions'.

For the full text of any Local Rule referenced below, please refer to the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf effective 1 January 2023 and the Clarifications updated quarterly by The R&A, available at www.randa.org.

Unless otherwise noted, the penalty for breach of a Local Rule is the general penalty (loss of hole in match play or two penalty strokes in stroke play).

1. Out of Bounds (Rule 18.2)

- 1a) Beyond any wall or hedge defining the boundary of the course.
- 1b) Where a white line and white stakes are used, the line defines the boundary, and the stakes are used for visibility. Such stakes are boundary objects, unless they have a black top, in which case they are obstructions.
- 1c) Closed gates that are attached to boundary walls and fences are part of the boundary object and must not be moved. Relief is not allowed from such a gate under Rules 15.2 or 16.1. But an open gate is not treated as part of the boundary object and may be closed or moved to a different position.

2. Penalty Areas (Rule 17)

- 2a) When both stakes and lines are used, the line defines the margin of the penalty area.
- 2b) When a penalty area adjoins a course boundary, the penalty area edge extends to and coincides with the boundary.

- 2c) When a player's ball is found in or it is known or virtually certain to have come to rest in a red penalty area where the ball last crossed the edge of the red penalty area at a point that coincides with the boundary of the course, opposite side relief is available under Model Local Rule B-2.2.

3. Abnormal Course Conditions (including Immovable Obstructions) (Rule 16)

3a) Ground Under Repair:

- i) Any area bounded by a white line.
- ii) Any area of damaged ground that is considered by a referee to be abnormal.
- iii) Drains (stone-filled drainage ditches).
- iv) If a player's ball lies in or touches a seam of cut turf or a seam interferes with the player's area of intended swing:
 - (a) Ball in General Area. The player may take relief under Rule 16.1b.
 - (b) Ball on Putting Green. The player may take relief under Rule 16.1d.But interference does not exist if the seam only interferes with the player's stance.

All seams within the area of cut turf are treated as the same seam in taking relief. This means that if a player has interference from any seam after dropping the ball, the player must proceed as required under Rule 14.3c(2) even when the ball is still within one club-length of the reference point.

Exception: No free relief is allowed from a seam of cut turf in a stacked turf or soil bunker face (see 3c).
- v) Yardage painted lines or dots on the putting green or in a part of the general area cut to fairway height or less are to be treated as ground under repair from which relief is available under Rule 16.1.

Interference does not exist if yardage painted lines or dots only interfere with the player's stance.

3b) Immovable Obstructions:

- i) White lined areas and the immovable obstruction they tie into are treated as a single abnormal course condition.
- ii) All artificially surfaced roads and paths on the course, including those covered with woodchip or mulch. Individual pieces of woodchip are loose impediments.

3c) Embedded Ball:

Rule 16.3 is modified in this way: No free relief is allowed for a ball embedded in a stacked turf or soil bunker face, or from a seam of cut turf in such a face.

4. Immovable Obstructions Close to Putting Greens

Model Local Rule F-5.1 is in effect:

In addition to the types of interference described in Rule 16.1a, the player may take relief under Rule 16.1b when a ball lies in the general area and an immovable obstruction is: on the player's line of play, on or within two club-lengths of the putting green, and within two club-lengths of the ball. (Exception – There is no relief under this Local Rule if the player chooses a line of play that is clearly unreasonable).

5. Integral Objects

The following are integral objects from which free relief is not allowed:

- 5a) Artificial bunker faces (whether wooden sleepers or artificial grass).
- 5b) Bunker liners in their intended position.
- 5c) Penalty area stakes physically attached to boundary objects.

6. Player May Remove Animals Not Defined As Loose Impediments From Near Ball

Model Local Rule E-13 is in effect.

7. Temporary Immovable Obstructions

Model Local Rule F-23 is in effect, to include all on-course scoreboards, gazebos and signage around the 1st Teeing Area, with any additions or amendments in the additional Local Rules published by England Golf.

8. Ball Deflected by Power Line

If it is known or virtually certain that a player's ball hit an elevated power line, the player must replay the stroke by playing the original ball or another ball from the spot where that stroke was made (see Rule 14.6). If the player replays the stroke but does so from a wrong place, they get the general penalty under Rule 14.7.

If the player does not replay the stroke, they get the general penalty and the stroke counts, but the player has not played from a wrong place.

9. Protection of Young Trees

Young trees identified by wrapping, stakes or otherwise protected are no play zones:

If a player's ball lies anywhere on the course other than in a penalty area and it lies on or touches such a tree or such a tree interferes with the player's area of intended stance or area of intended swing, the player must take relief under Rule 16.1f.

If the ball lies in a penalty area, and interference to the player's stance or area of intended swing exists from such a tree, the player must take relief under Rule 17.1e.

10. Clubs

10a) List of Conforming Driver Heads: Model Local Rule G-1 is in effect.

Penalty for making a stroke with a club in breach of Local Rule:
Disqualification.

10b) Prohibiting Use of Clubs Longer than 46 inches:

In making a stroke, the player must not use a club, except for a putter, which exceeds 46 inches in length. Penalty for Making a Stroke with a Club in Breach of this Local Rule: Disqualification. There is no penalty under this Local Rule for carrying but not making a stroke with a club that does not conform to these length specifications.

Note 1: 10a and 10b do not include England Golf handicap competitions.

Note 2: An updated List of Conforming Equipment is available on

www.randa.org

11. Pace of Play (Rule 5.6)

Every Championship or Match has a Pace of Play Policy that will be strictly enforced. Please ensure you read it carefully before playing.

12. Suspension of Play (Rule 5.7)

The following signals will be used to suspend and resume play:

Immediate stop for imminent danger - one prolonged note of a siren

Stop for a non-dangerous situation - three consecutive notes of a siren

Resumption of play - two consecutive notes of a siren

Penalty for breach of Local Rule: Disqualification. See Rule 5.7b and 5.7c

Note: When play is stopped for imminent danger, all practice areas will be immediately closed.

13. Practice (Rule 5.2)

13a) Rule 5.2a is modified in this way: On the day of a match play competition, a player must not practise on the course before their first match of the day, excluding the limited exceptions described in Rule 5.2b.

13b) Rule 5.2b is modified in this way: On the day of a stroke-play competition, a player must not practise on the course between rounds or after completing play of their final round for that day.

14. Standards of Player Conduct (Rule 1.2)

Every Championship or Match has a Code of Conduct Policy that will be strictly enforced. Please ensure you read it carefully before playing.

15. Prohibiting Use of Motorised Transportation

During a round, a player or caddie must not ride on any form of motorised transportation except as authorised or later approved by the Committee.

A player who will play, or has played, under penalty of stroke and distance is always authorised to ride on motorised transportation.

Penalty for breach of Local Rule: The player gets the general penalty for each hole during which there is a breach. A breach between two holes applies to the next hole.

Note 1: Only applies to 'Elite Scratch Events', as outlined in the Transportation Policy.

Note 2: See England Golf's Transportation Policy, which includes provisions for people with disabilities (www.Englandgolf.org/competition-policies)

16. Caddies

There are no restrictions on the use of caddies, except in the following Championships when Rule 10.3a is modified in this way:

- i) in under 16 Championships, a player must not have a caddie during the round.
- ii) in under 18 Championships, when either caddies are not allowed, or they must be under 18 on 1st January of the year in which the Championship is being played.

Penalty for Breach of Local Rule: The player gets the general penalty for each hole during which they have a caddie when not allowed or a caddie who does not meet the age criteria. If the breach happens or continues between two holes, the player gets the general penalty for the next hole.

17. Modification of Penalty Under Rule 3.3b(2) for Missing Player or Marker Certification

Rule 3.3b(2) is modified in this way: If a player returns a scorecard without the hole scores being certified either by the player, the marker or both, the player gets the general penalty (two penalty strokes). The penalty applies to the last hole of the player's round.