

USGA Rules Exam

In answering the following questions, Consider yourself to be acting as a Rules Official at a USGA/MGA Sanctioned Tournament

1. A player's drive is in the fairway of an adjacent hole in an area circled by white paint, marking it as *Ground Under Repair*. What area of the course does the ball lie in?

- a. General area
- b. Penalty area
- c. Abnormal course condition

2. Player A has a 9:30 a.m. tee time at an Ike Sectional Qualifying Round (SQR). Player A arrives at the golf course at 10:10 a.m. due to heavy traffic and approaches the Starter looking to see if they can still participate in the qualifier. The Starter has only two players on the tee for the 10:15 a.m. tee time. How should the Starter proceed?

- a. Allow Player A to tee off with the 10:15 group and radio the Staff-In-Charge to inform them.
- b. Let Player A know that they may be disqualified due to arriving late for their tee time. Radio the Staff-In-Charge to inform them of the situation.
- c. Flag down a fellow R&C committee member who was about to head out to the course to drive Player A out to the 9:30 group and radio the Staff-In-Charge to inform them.

3. At a USGA Sanctioned Amateur SQR, Player A's ball is greenside in deep rough. As Player A is deciding what shot to play, they notice a sprinkler head on their line of play. The sprinkler head is within 1 club-length of the putting green and within two club lengths of the player's ball. Player A is entitled to free relief in this situation.

True or False

4. In *stroke play*, a player's tee shot lands next to a *boundary fence*. Believing they are entitled to free relief, the player lifts and *drops* the ball within 1 *club-length* of their *nearest point of complete relief* and makes their next *stroke*. Which is correct?

- a. The player was entitled to relief from the boundary fence and proceeded correctly.
- b. The player gets a one-stroke penalty for taking unplayable ball relief because the drop fit the requirement of an unplayable ball.
- c. The player gets the general penalty for lifting their ball in play, not returning it to its original position, and playing from a wrong place.

5. Players A, B, and C are playing in a group at a Met Open SQR. On the 15th hole, Player C makes a *stroke* at a ball near a tree and accidentally injures his wrist by hitting a tree root. Player C is looking to withdraw after the 15th Hole. Player C is *marking* for Player A in the group and has their *scorecard*. Player A flags down an official that is on the 16th hole. The official should:

- a. Have Player C sign and attest for the holes he marked while radioing the Staff-In-Charge to alert them about the situation.
- b. Tell Player C that this is unacceptable, and they must play through their injury.
- c. Let Player C leave the group and drive him to the parking lot. Mention it to the Staff-In-Charge when you return your radio.

6. In *stroke play*, a player's ball plugs 5 yards inside a red *penalty area*. The player *drops* a ball within 1 *club-length* of where the ball *embedded*, plays a *stroke*, and informs her *marker* that she took free relief from an *embedded* ball. The player has proceeded correctly.

True or False

7. At a sanctioned USGA SQR, the teeing areas for the 6th and 8th holes are right next to one another. After finishing the 5th hole, Players A and B mistakenly played the 8th hole. The players realized their error after Player A finished the hole but before Player B holed out. What is the ruling?

- a. Both players are disqualified for playing the course in the wrong order.
- b. Both players get the general penalty for teeing off outside the teeing area and must return to the 6th tee and correct their mistake.
- c. Player A is disqualified for holing out on the wrong hole and Player B receives the general penalty for teeing off outside the teeing area and must correct the mistake

8. A player's ball is in the *general area* 170 yards from *the green*. The player notices a bird house 10 yards in front of them is directly in their *line of play*. The player is entitled to free relief from the bird house.

True or False

9. In *match play*, Player A's ball is in a *bunker*; he touches sand in the *bunker* with his club while making a practice swing. Their *opponent* (Player B) reminds Player A of the Rule but says that he is overlooking the breach and will not apply a penalty. What is the ruling?

- a. There is no penalty.
- b. Both players are disqualified.

c. Player A gets the general penalty.

10. A USGA official is stationed in the Drive Zone of Hole #4 at an Open SQR. It is a blind tee shot, and the left side of the hole is marked as *out of bounds* with a red *penalty area* running alongside the boundary. A player hits a drive down the left side, which the official does not see land and is unsure if the ball would have come to rest in the *penalty area*. The official begins to search for the ball once all players have hit. When the player arrives, he claims that he should be allowed to take penalty relief since the ball may have landed in the *penalty area*. After 3 minutes, the ball is not found. The official believes that the ruling should be that the ball is *lost* and the player must take *stroke and distance*. The player disagrees and asks for a second opinion. What action should the official take?

a. Allow the player to take penalty area relief.

b. Tell the player that he will not get a second opinion, and he must take stroke and distance.

c. Radio the Official-in-Charge to inform them of the situation and ask for assistance.

11. At a Public Links SQR, a player hits their first shot into an area of deep fescue. They declare and hit a *provisional* which is also hit into the fescue on the same line and in the same vicinity as their first ball. They are allowed two separate 3-minute search periods to find each ball.

True or False

12. During a Semifinal match of a USGA Amateur match play event, Player A and his opponent Player B hit tee shots into the right rough. Player A's caddie begins the search as the players leave the tee. During his search, A's caddie finds a ball but cannot identify it. He lifts it and realizes this is not Player A's ball. Player A's caddie calls out to Player B and asks him if the ball is his, which B confirms. What is the ruling?

a. There is no penalty, and the ball must be replaced.

b. The player gets a one-stroke penalty for his caddie's actions by picking up Player B's ball, and the ball must be replaced.

c. The player gets the general penalty for picking up Player B's ball, Player B wins the hole.

13. During a USGA Junior semifinals match, Player A lifts their ball without marking it because of a reasonable misunderstanding that their opponent, Player B's statement was a concession of A's next stroke. There is no penalty and A's ball must be replaced on its original spot.

True or False

14. At the conclusion of Round 2 of a USGA Open Championship, Player A and their marker Player B sign their scorecards, return them to the USGA official and leave the scoring area. As they are sitting

down for lunch, Player A realizes there is a mistake on his scorecard and returns to the scoring area. How should the official proceed?

- a. The official must disqualify Player A and inform him there are no corrections allowed once the card is signed, returned, and the player has left the scoring area
- b. The official should ask Communications to check the time stamp on Player A's scorecard, and radio the Staff in Charge.
- c. The official should take Player A's word for it and allow the change

15. In stroke play, a player takes lateral relief from a red penalty area. The player properly drops a ball, but it rolls and comes to rest more than two club-lengths from the reference point. The player plays the ball. How many penalty strokes does the player get?

- a. One
- b. Two
- c. Three

16. When stakes or fence posts define out of bounds, they are not out of bounds.

True or False

17. In stroke play, a player places a ball in the relief area when he should have dropped it and makes a stroke at the ball. What is the ruling?

- a. There is no penalty.
- b. The player gets a one-stroke penalty.
- c. The player gets the general penalty.

18. A spectator deliberately deflects a player's ball in motion after a stroke from the general area. The ball would have come to rest in a bunker. What is the ruling?

- a. The player must play the ball as it lies.
- b. The player must estimate the spot where the ball would have come to rest if the spectator had not deflected it. A ball must be placed on that spot.
- c. The player must estimate the spot where the ball would have come to rest if the spectator had not deflected it. A ball must be dropped within a one club-length relief area of the reference point.

19. A player starts the round with 14 clubs and loses one club during the round. They are permitted to replace that club without penalty.

True or False

20. In stroke play, a player's ball comes to rest near a large bush. In making several practice swings, the player causes water on a branch of the bush to be removed, thus eliminating the distraction from the water during their stroke. What is the ruling?

- a. No penalty.
- b. The player gets a one-stroke penalty.
- c. The player gets the general penalty.

21. A player marks their ball on the putting green and sets it aside one foot away from the mark without intending for it to be in play. By mistake, the player putts the ball from the spot where it was set aside. The player has played from a wrong place, gets the general penalty, and must continue without correction of the mistake.

True or False

22. In stroke play, to free their hands while attending the flagstick, a player's caddie casually places the player's sand wedge on the putting green but not to indicate the line of play. After the player putts and the ball nears the hole, the caddie removes the flagstick. The caddie also removes the wedge from the putting green, fearing that the player's ball will strike it. What is the ruling?

- a. There is no penalty.
- b. The player gets a one-stroke penalty.
- c. The player gets the general penalty.

23. During a Public Links SQR, Player A's tee shot on the 4th hole was hit towards a red penalty area. After searching for 2 minutes, Player A and his playing competitors Players B and C are "99% certain" the ball lies in the penalty area. Player A drops and plays a new ball under penalty area relief. As the group approaches the putting green, A finds his original ball in the general area and decides to play two balls declaring his original ball will be the one he will score with. Player A brings up the situation in the scoring area. How many penalty strokes does the player get?

- a. One-stroke penalty.
- b. The general penalty.
- c. No penalty.

24. In the general area, a player makes a practice swing and accidentally moves their ball in play with their club; the player receives one penalty stroke and must play the ball from the new spot.

True or False

25. In match play, which one of the following is true?

- a. A player may not concede their opponent's next stroke while the ball is in motion.
- b. A player may never deliberately lift their opponent's ball while it is in motion without getting a penalty.
- c. A player may concede a hole to their opponent at any time prior to the start or conclusion of the hole.

26. At an USGA event, a Player must play with the same make and model golf ball that they start the round with, also known as the "One Ball Rule".

True or False

27. Which of the following are loose impediments?

- a. Leaves and twigs that are still attached and/or growing.
- b. Loose blades of grass that are sticking to the ball.
- c. Plugs of compacted soil produced through aeration of fairways.

28. On the 7th hole of a MGA Open SQR, a group calls an MGA official over to discuss the pace of play of the group in front of them. They claim the group is behind and are holding up the field. The official references their Pace of Play Matrix to find the group in question 5 minutes behind pace after finishing Hole #7. What action should the official take?

- a. Radio the Staff-in-Charge to notify them of the situation and wait for any further instructions.
- b. Speak to the group in question on the 8th tee and penalize them for slow pace of play.
- c. Speak to the group in question on the 8th tee and warn them that they are behind time, then radio the Staff in Charge to notify them.

29. A player drops a ball while taking relief from an immovable obstruction. The ball is dropped properly but plugs into the soil. The player may now take relief for an embedded ball.

True or False

30. A player marks and lifts their ball on the putting green. The player replaces their ball but does not remove the ball-marker. What is the status of the ball?

- a. In Play.
- b. Wrong Ball.

c. Substituted Ball.

31. If a player finds a ball in penalty area and the ball is unplayable, what are the players options?
(choose one or more correct answers)

a. Take Stroke and Distance Relief - - Play from where the previous stroke was made, e.g., “go back to the tee” and accept a one stroke penalty.

b. Take Back-on-the-line Relief - - Drop a ball on the line that extends straight back from the hole through the estimated point where the ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area, drop the ball one-club-length of the chosen point with no limit how far back, and accept a one stroke penalty)

c. Take Lateral Relief (only for Red penalty areas) - - If the penalty area is marked with red stakes; Drop a ball within two club-lengths of the point where the ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area (the relief area must not be nearer the hole) and accept a one-stroke penalty.

d. Declare the ball to be unplayable and take unplayable ball relief and accept a one stroke penalty.