

Explanation for Rule Change for 2019

11. Encouraging Prompt Pace of Play

Current Rule: Although intended to support pace of play, the Rules do not affirmatively emphasize this issue or encourage players to play promptly:

- Rule 6-7 provides only that “undue delay” is prohibited and that players must follow any pace of play guidelines if established by the Committee to prevent “slow play.”
- Although players are allowed to play out of turn to save time, this is neither highlighted nor particularly made clear in the text of the Rules.

2019 Rule: Rule 5.6 will encourage prompt pace of play by recommending that:

- Players should recognize that their pace of play affects others and they should play promptly throughout the round (such as by preparing in advance for each stroke and moving promptly between strokes and in going to the next tee),
- A player should make a stroke in no more than 40 seconds (and usually in less time) after the player is able to play without interference or distraction, and
- Committees should adopt a Pace of Play Policy (rather than only say they may do so).

In addition, new Rule 6.4 will expressly allow playing out of turn in match play by agreement, and for stroke play, will affirmatively allow and encourage players to play out of turn in a safe and responsible way to save time or for convenience (also known as “ready golf”).

Reasons for Change:

- By giving players affirmative guidance, support and encouragement on prompt play, these proposed Rule changes will help in:
 - Setting expectations for both beginners and experienced players on what types of behavior are considered prompt play, including the maximum amount of time it should normally take to make a stroke, and
 - Encouraging players to play faster by confirming that it is proper to play out of turn in stroke play when it is safe and responsible to do so (that is, to play “ready golf”).
- Enforcing pace of play will continue to be primarily up to each Committee, as there are limits to what the Rules themselves can do to insist that players play promptly.
- For example, it is impractical for the Rules to impose penalties whenever a player does not complete a round or a hole or make a stroke in a time fixed in the Rules:
 - Golf is played in so many different settings and by so many different people that any such time limits may naturally differ for any given competition or course.
 - There is also no practical way to require all players to follow (and to enforce against one another) any form of “shot clock” for each stroke made during a round.
- These changes will enable Committees to point to specific expectations set by the Rules when using their authority to enforce prompt play, and encourage every Committee to adopt a pace of play policy so that all players on the course, whatever the type or level of play, will know what is expected of them.

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14. "Maximum Score" Form of Stroke Play

Current Rule: The Rules now recognize two main forms of stroke play:

- The basic form of stroke play where a player must hole out at every hole, or else is disqualified (Rule 3), and
- The Stableford form of play where a point scoring system is used and a player who scores two or more than the fixed score or does not finish the hole simply gets zero points for that hole (Rule 32).

2019 Rule: "Maximum Score" will be a new, additional form of stroke play:

- A player's score for each hole is capped at a maximum set by the Committee, which may be fixed (such as 6, 8, 10, etc.), related to par (such as two times par or triple bogey), or related to the player's handicap (such as net double bogey).
- A player who does not complete a hole (often referred to informally as "picking up") will not be disqualified, but simply gets the maximum score for the hole.

Reasons for Change:

- The need to hole out on every hole in stroke play can have at least two downsides: (1) it often leads to a slow pace of play, and (2) it may discourage golfers who feel they no longer have a realistic chance to compete or to make a good score for the round once they get a very high score on one or two holes.
- Maximum Score will be an alternative form of play that addresses both concerns, by allowing a player to "pick up" when he or she scores at or above the maximum and by capping the player's score for any hole at the maximum.
- These are important reasons why Stableford is popular in various parts of the world; Maximum Score will create a similar form of stroke play, with the difference that scoring is by strokes rather than by number of points.
- The Maximum Score form of play will be unlikely to be used for elite play, but it may be useful in many other contexts, such as for play by beginners or golfers who are less skilled or experienced and, more generally, for club level and day-to-day play when pace of play is a particular concern.
- Like Stableford, Maximum Score could be used in conjunction with handicap systems that set a maximum score (such as net double bogey) that can be posted on any hole.