

RTP GOLF LEAGUE

Special Playing Rules

April 3, 2023

Overview

This document describes the rules that govern play in the RTP Golf League, hereafter referred to in this document as RTPGL.

All league play will comply with USGA rules of golf except when altered by local course rules or RTPGL rules. In this document we will describe deviations from USGA rules that are implemented for all RTPGL league play. Most of these deviations are implemented to aid with speed of play. Slow play has been an issue in our leagues in the past and we do everything we can to eliminate or mitigate the causes of it. Slow play is highly discouraged in league play. There is only so much sunlight, particularly in the Spring and Fall. All players should facilitate fast play by helping each other look for balls, limit the time looking for balls, taking limited practice swings, lining up putts (following good golf etiquette) while others are putting, and playing 'ready golf' at all times.

Playing Rules

Maximum Strokes Per Hole

The RTPGL league employs a maximum strokes per hole rule of PAR + 4 strokes. This means that all players are *REQUIRED* to pick up their ball after taking 7 strokes on a Par 3, 8 strokes on a Par 4, or 9 strokes on a Par 5. If a player chooses to ignore this rule and continues to play after reaching Par + 4 strokes, they will be required to enter the actual number of strokes taken even if it exceeds Par + 4 strokes.

GIMMES

To speed up play, it is *mandated* that opponents allow "Gimmes" at the cup. A "Gimme" is allowed any time a ball on the green rests "inside the putter grip". To eliminate confusion, this is further defined that if any part of ball touches the putter shaft, it will be considered "inside the putter grip". This distance may not exceed two feet.

Out of Bounds

Prior to construction there were only two holes on the course where out of bounds came into play, #2 and #9. The rules for determining if your ball was out of bounds on either hole were subjective. In order to avoid confusion or controversy, any ball hit out of bounds for the 2023 season will be treated the same as a ball lost in the woods with one exception. You may not, under any circumstances, play your ball from an out of bounds location. You **MUST** take a two-club length drop from the point it crossed the hazard or out of bounds area and assess a one stroke penalty before taking your next shot. You may not use the 'ball in the woods' option of hitting the ball where it lies with no penalty.

It is likely that new out of bounds areas will become more plentiful as houses begin to go up. For any newly installed white stakes, the above rule will apply.

One Stroke Rule

Winter rules will apply for the entire season. This is because in the summer the course may be in less-than-optimal condition. This means that you may improve your lie one club length, no closer to the hole from tee through the green (and behind). Additionally, a ball landing in the rough or a hazard must remain in the rough or hazard after taking your one club length drop.

This rule does NOT apply in any of the following instances:

- When your ball rests within a course hazard that would be considered any type of water hazard such as a stream, creek, pond, or lake whether there is currently any water in it or not. If your ball lies in such an area, you may attempt to hit it as it lies, but you may not move it without incurring one penalty stroke.
- When your ball is lying on the green

This is a very generous rule that has been part of the RTPGL for many years. PLEASE abide by the rule as written. One club length means ONE club length. The following are two exceptions to this rule:

Red Stakes vs Red Lined Only Hazards – Falls Village has several areas marked as hazards that are not water hazards. Some of these are marked with red stakes, some with painted red lines, and some with both. As previously stated, when moving your ball within a hazard, it must remain in the hazard. The exception to this rule is when your ball lies in one of the hazards marked with red painted lines only. The reason for this exception is that sometimes these lines are not easy to see either due to fading, darkness, or a player's eyesight (colorblind players may have difficulty seeing a painted red line on green grass). When your ball lies in a red lined only hazard, you may move it outside that hazard area when taking your one club length drop.

Rocks/Roots – We play this league for fun, and breaking your wrists or damaging clubs on rocks or roots would not be considered fun. If your ball lies in a heavily rocked or rooted area, and a one club length drop does not provide relief, you may move your ball to the nearest point of relief, no closer to the hole, and take your drop. Please note that this does not allow you to move your ball from an area where it could be hit, drop it one club length onto a rocked or rooted area, then take relief from that area. This exception only applies if your ball was originally lying in the rocked or rooted area.

For all other circumstances, the ball must be played 'as it lies' if the ball is playable or according to USGA rules if unplayable due to being in a water hazard, etc.

Tees

Women tee off from the women's (red) tees. Men will tee off from the men's (white) tees. Seniors 62 or over have the option of using the 'Senior Tees' which at Falls Village are denoted on the scorecard as the White/Red Hybrid tees.

Sand Traps

Due to the unplayable condition of the sand traps at Falls Village, you are entitled to a free drop from any sand trap on the course (greenside or fairway). You are not required to take

this drop from back on a line that the ball entered the trap. You may take a two club length drop anywhere outside the bunker as long as the ball is not resting closer to the hole after the drop.

Provisional Ball

There are several instances (lost ball, etc.) where USGA rules allow a player to return to the previous spot where a shot was hit to re-hit. **For speed of play purposes, returning to a previous spot to replay a shot is NEVER allowed under any circumstances in the RTPGL league.** For this reason, it is recommended that league players hit a provisional ball anytime they hit a questionable shot such as:

- Their shot goes into a wooded area.
- The ball lands in an area of heavy brush or vegetation which may make it difficult to find.
- They hit their ball towards an area where there is a high likelihood the ball will be found in an unplayable lie.

To play a provisional ball, the player **must** identify that they are hitting a provisional ball, take 1 penalty stroke and then hit. This **MUST** be done **BEFORE** leaving the spot where the original shot was taken. As an example, if a player takes a provisional on a tee shot, they would be hitting their third shot (1 stroke for the original shot, 1 penalty stroke, and the stroke used to hit the provisional ball).

If a provisional shot is shorter than the original shot, the player may continue to play the provisional ball up to the point where the original shot is believed to have landed. Once a provisional ball has been struck at a point past where the original ball was found, the provisional ball becomes the ball in play for the remainder of the hole.

If the player has played a provisional ball up to the point where the original ball landed, and finds the original ball, they may abandon the provisional ball and play the original ball with no penalty (unless to play the original ball they must take a penalty like dropping from a hazard).

If a player hits a questionable shot and chooses not to hit a provisional ball, they will need to play their next shot based on the result of the questionable shot result. **Just to reiterate, once they leave the spot where a questionable shot was taken from, you may NOT return to that spot to hit your next shot.**

Upon reaching the point where the questionable shot likely landed, the following describes the typical results that might occur.

Ball is found to be playable – The player may proceed to hit their next shot per USGA and RTPGL rules.

Lost Ball – If you are unable to find your ball you have two options. You may continue to play your provisional ball if you hit one or take a two club length drop from where you think the ball was lost or crossed into the hazard area, take a one stroke penalty, and hit your next shot. While the USGA calls for a two-stroke penalty in these situations, we only assess a one stroke penalty. This was implemented to provide an incentive to limit the time you search for a ball as this is the #1 cause of slow play in the league.

Most balls lost at Falls Village occur when hit well right or left of the fairway into the woods or heavily brushed areas. When determining where to take your drop after declaring the ball lost, you would need to determine where the ball entered the wooded/brushed area, not where it might have ended up.

Only assessing a one stroke penalty is another generous rule provided by the RTPGL. **PLEASE** limit the time you spend looking for balls. Your group, and fellow league members, would greatly appreciate it.

15th Hole

The RTPGL has a special rule when hitting your tee shot on the 15th hole from the White Tees. If your initial tee shot lands in the water, rather than re-teeing on the White Tees you would move to the Senior Tee, take a one-shot penalty, and re-tee from there. The Senior Tee on the 15th hole that the RTPGL uses is the manicured area along the cart path leading from the White Tees just before turning to drive towards the fairway. (i.e., it is not the Red Tee).

Balls Hit into Water

You may only hit a maximum of two (2) balls into the same water hazard. If you hit two balls into the same water hazard you are required to play your next shot (which will be your 5th stroke) from the other side of the water hazard in either in a designated drop area, or from a spot that the ball would have likely landed had it made it over the water.

Unplayable Lie

A player may deem his ball unplayable at any place on the course, except when the ball is in a water hazard. If the player deems his ball to be unplayable, he must, under penalty of one stroke:

- Drop a ball behind the point where the ball lay, keeping that point directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit to how far behind that point the ball may be dropped
- Drop a ball behind the point where the ball lay, keeping that point directly between the hole and the spot from which the ball was originally hit, with no limit to how far behind that point the ball may be dropped
- Drop a ball within two club-lengths of the spot where the ball lay, but not nearer the hole

This varies from USGA rules and is implemented for speed of play purposes.

18th Hole Special Falls Village Rule

During the 2022 season Falls Village implemented a course rule on hole #18 concerning balls hit into the construction area on the right side of the fairway. This entailed creating a drop area just short of the fairway and providing a free drop at that point for tee shots hit out of play on the right side of the hole. There was some confusion with that rule last season with several league members on exactly how it was implemented. For clarification purposes, if the rule remains for the 2023 season, it will be enforced as described below:

- This rule applies to the initial tee shot only. It would also apply to a provisional tee shot under the following condition only:
 - If you hit your tee shot into the construction area on the right side of the fairway, AND you choose to hit a provisional tee shot instead of taking your next shot from the drop zone. Please note that your next shot from the drop zone would then be your fourth shot since your provisional tee shot, which would have been your third stroke, will be considered your ball in play.
 - If you choose to hit a provisional tee shot for any other reason and hit that into the construction area on the right, you are not entitled to take a free drop in the drop zone and must take a drop where that shot crossed the line to the hazard and assess a one stroke penalty before taking your next shot.
- In order to qualify for a free drop, your initial tee shot must have reached or exceeded the distance to the drop area. If you hit your ball into the woods on the right short of the drop area, it would be treated the same as any ball hit into the woods. You can either hit it where it lies (moving one club length as needed), consider it unplayable, or hit another tee shot after taking a one stroke penalty. If you choose to hit another tee shot, and that shot hit into the construction area, you are NOT entitled to a free drop.

Construction Zones

Under no circumstances should any league player walk into a construction area to hit a shot. A 'Construction Zone' is defined as any area of the course that has been modified or altered in any way due to the home building going on around the course. Unless another special rule has been implemented (such as on the 18th Hole), if you hit your ball into a construction area you will need to take a two club length drop from the spot it crossed into the construction area and assess a one stroke penalty.

It is likely that at some point white stakes will be added to denote out of bounds areas near the new homes being built. Any balls landing past any white stakes that were added during the season shall be treated the same as balls hit into construction zones. You would take a two club length drop from the point it crossed into the out of bounds area, take a one stroke penalty, and hit your next shot.