

ESSO GOLF PARTNERS - RULES OF PLAY Rev March 9, 2016

The Esso Golf Partners play by some unique rules that haven't yet found their way into the British, Canadian or U.S. Open Championships. They were formulated years ago by Gerry O'Neill, Bob Moir, Gilles Barbeau, Phil Haley and Dave West. This is an update that retains their enlightened rationale for improving the game. It has been reviewed and approved by Ray Burton, Brian McGarva, Brian Thompson and Bob Willson.

*Rule 13 introduced in 2010 was formulated by Denis Lanoue with support from Dave Ross, Wayne Norman, Ian Fraser, Tony Pasteris, Tony Florio and Cam Mc Alpine. The same group amended Rule 12 in 2011 and introduced Rule 14 in 2012 to align our guest policy with Private Golf Clubs. **Rule 11 was amended by the schedulers/scorers in 2016 as a result of a Continuous Improvement Session where Pace of Play was identified as greatest area of dissatisfaction by several members.***

Rules of the Royal & Ancient Golf Club shall be adhered to in all events – with the following slight adjustments:

1. **The Ginsberg**

On the first hole only, a golfer may hit a second tee shot, without penalty. The golfer may then select either of the two tee shots without penalty, as we always play early in the morning and it is too dark to go to the driving range first.

2. **Improving the Lie**

Since most of our golf requires “winter rules”, a player may “nudge” his ball a short distance (no more than **ten inches**) on the fairway or even in the rough (as the courses we play on are too cheap to provide proper width of fairways) – without penalty, but no closer to the hole and he cannot move the ball more than ten inches to avoid a tree or other obstacle. Notwithstanding, the ball should be moved a club length if needed to avoid damage to a young or staked tree.

No!! You can't use the ten inches to move the ball out of a hazard – sand, grass or water.

3. **Gimme**

To preserve the area around the cup for the following groups and to speed up the game, any putt inside the distance between the blade and the grip of the shortest putter in the group may be conceded by another golfer. Remember to count the stroke!!

4. **No Out-of-Bounds**

Because the golf course owners didn't buy enough land, we direct that no golf shot can cost a player more than one penalty stroke. Thus there is no “stroke and distance” penalty on these narrow fairways. He may (after adding one penalty stroke), drop a second ball on the exit line of the first shot. But the player may re-

tee or hit again from the location of the wild shot while adding one penalty stroke. Remember to count the original stroke.

5. **Mulligan**

Due to the aging population and the OAS claw-back, a player may replay one shot on each nine holes, without penalty, by saying “mulligan”. The shot must be from the same location as the errant one.

However, the player must use the mulligan ball even if it ends up in a worse location than the original.

A provisional mulligan is permitted only in cases where the ball is not visible from where it was hit. See also Rule #6.

The mulligan from the first nine may not be carried over to the second.

6. **Provisional Shots**

If a player believes that his ball may be lost in the water or woods, etc., and can't decide whether or not to use his mulligan, he can say “provisional” fairly quietly and hit a second ball.

If the original ball is *playable*, he must pick up the provisional ball and play the original ball – even if the second ball is perfect. However, he may elect to play the provisional ball if he still has a mulligan available and decides to use it up.

If the original ball is found but is *unplayable* (majority vote of your friendly foursome), he may count a stroke for the lift, pick up the provisional ball, and drop the original ball at point of entry to the hazard for the next shot (subject to the Haley Rule following).

7. **The Haley Rule**

Since we are on fixed incomes, we do not subscribe to losing golf balls and thus have a special rule intended only for river, creek and lake crossings where there is no alternative which would allow play around the water. In these situations, if the golf ball is hit into the water the golfer can play the next shot where the ball would have just crossed the water if he had hit it a little bit better. Add one stroke for the lift. (Note that this does not apply where the fairway runs around a pond. The golfer must then play around the hazard.)

8. **The Burton Bunker Rule**

Because some courses seem unaware that we play a large number of shots from the bunkers and therefore place a low priority maintaining them, if the ball comes to rest on compacted sand, the player may lift the ball, rake up the sand at that location, and reposition the ball on top of the raked sand. No penalty.

9. **Unplayable Lie**

In cases where a player decides that his lie is unplayable and takes a penalty stroke, he may move the ball to the nearest playable lie, but no closer to the hole.

10. Environmental Areas

In view of the unreasonable proliferation of environmentally protected areas on golf courses and unreasonable restrictions upon entering them, players are entitled to a free lift even if they do not find their ball. **The area though must be clearly identified with a sign.**

11. Pace of Play (Amended March 9, 2016)

Starting in 2016, we are asking all players to put a greater emphasis on pace of play for the benefit of all players, schedulers and scorers.

- a. **Players are requested to maintain the pace of play specified on your score card for most venues.**
- b. **We request each foursome to report with the scores, Time of Tee-Off, Time of Finish and Time Spent on the course. Elapsed times will be stewarded weekly with your scores.** There should be only 9 minutes between groups. Watch the group in front, and step up the pace of play whenever there is an open hole ahead. Please keep in mind that we are not playing in the Masters Tournament.
- c. **Play "ready golf" whenever it is safe to do so – have your next club in hand and don't wait for someone who is walking to his ball. Tee-off in any order when you are ready.**
- d. **Limit searches for a lost ball to 30 seconds maximum.** Help others in the search when close by.
- e. **Limit yourself to 1 or 2 practice shots.**
- f. **Play from the forward tees to make it easier on you.**(See rule 13) We will adjust your handicap accordingly and your game will likely be more enjoyable.
- g. **Pick-up your ball as soon as you score double par as per rule 12**

12. Scoring (Amended June 14, 2011)

In order to increase pace of play, so-called "mercy rules" limiting score to double par are now in place.

This means that a player on a par 3 has to pick up the ball after six shots even if on the green and the designated scorer has to circle the 6 on the score card. Same rule applies to par 4 limited to 8 shots and par 5 limited to 10 shots.

Similar practice is in place at several private golf courses as it allows members to recover from a difficult hole and start fresh on the next one while maintaining the pace of play.

13. Play from Forward Tees (NEW in 2010)

Because Esso Partners play golf essentially for their enjoyment, we want to give the opportunity to all Partners to play from the forward tees if they think it will improve their enjoyment. We expect that this will also improve the pace of the game.

Therefore any Partner can request one of the 5 schedulers or the handicaps coordinator to be given the designation FTP (Forward Tee Player).

Upon receipt of that designation, the player will be able to always play from the Forward Tees and his handicap will be adjusted accordingly by the coordinator.

14. Guests Policy(New in 2012)

In order to maximize interactions between members and former work colleagues, starting in 2012, same guest participation will be limited to twice/month and 6 times maximum per year. This policy is similar to most private golf courses.

Guests will also not be allowed to participate in the annual tournament as it is subsidized by EACTN.