

The Golf Rules Review

An Intermittent Communique by the WWGA Golf Rules Maven

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THERE ARE NO 2 STROKE PENALTIES IN MATCH PLAY!

This is the third issue in a series on Match Play. Previous issues covered how to keep score during a match, concessions, order of play, protecting your own interests during a match and giving information. This issue covers 1 and 2 strokes penalties in stroke play versus match play, disqualification penalties and how to handle disputes during play.

Rules that have the same penalties in Stroke Play and Match Play

Free Relief -The rules for taking free relief in Stroke Play also apply to Match Play.

One Stroke Penalties -All one stroke penalties in Stroke play are also one stroke penalties in Match Play and the same rules apply. So the rules for a lost or out of bounds balls, balls in a penalty area, taking relief for an unplayable lies are the same.

Exception:

- **Moving Your Opponent's Ball at Rest**
In Match Play only, if you deliberately lift your opponent's ball it is a 1 stroke penalty. There is no penalty if you were conceding a stroke, marking their ball with their permission, or lifted your opponent's ball in error thinking it was yours.

Penalty – One Stroke

No 2 Stroke Penalties in Match Play

In Match Play, there are no 2 stroke penalties. Any rule breach that is a 2 stroke penalty in Stroke Play results in Loss of Hole in Match Play. These are covered in the prior issues of The Golf Rules Review but some examples are:

- Improving your stance or lie.
- Moving tee markers or out of bound markers.
- Carrying more than 14 clubs in your bag.
- Playing the wrong ball or playing your ball from the wrong place.
- Playing your lost ball that you find after 3 minutes are up.
- Grounding your club in a bunker.
- Lifting your ball without marking it.
- Giving or asking for advice. You may give advice to your partner in team match play event.

Exception: In Match Play teeing outside the teeing area has no penalty (2 strokes in stroke play), but your opponent may cancel the stroke and require you to re-tee.

Listed below are some exceptions or differences in Match Play versus Stroke Play.

Playing the Wrong Ball

Playing the wrong ball results in loss of hole in Match Play. If a player and their opponent inadvertently exchange balls after a hole (someone picks up your ball and theirs and then gives you the wrong ball), then the person who hit the wrong ball first loses the hole. If this cannot be determined then the hole must be played with the balls exchanged.

Match Play versus Stroke Play Strategy

The risk-reward ratio is different for Stroke Play versus Match Play.

- In Stroke Play you are trying to get the fewest strokes. Your focus is on minimizing errors that could result in big numbers. For example, avoid hitting close to bunkers you have difficulty getting out of. Play safely to the center of the green instead of going for pin tuck behind a bunker with water in front.
- In Match Play, because the gross score is immaterial, your focus is on what your opponent is doing. Adjust your strategy based on where their ball is. If they are in trouble, go for the safe shot. If they are sitting pretty, go for the risky shot in hopes that you can save the hole or at least tie it.



Missing Your Tee Time

In Stroke Play if you are late for your tee time, you are disqualified. In Match Play, you and your opponent are required to start the match on time. If you are late, but no more than 5 minutes, you lose the first hole and play starts on the second hole. If you are more than 5 minutes late you are disqualified. In neither case may your opponent take pity on you and let you play the first hole or the match. If they do, they are disqualified also.

Penalty for missing your tee time by less than 5 minutes – Loss of 1st hole

Penalty for missing your tee time by more than 5 minutes – Disqualified

Asking for a Ruling When There is a Dispute

Like any round of golf, questions or disputes arise between the player and their opponent about a possible rules violation and how to proceed. Often a Representative of the Tournament Committee is not available to resolve the dispute.

- In stroke play you are allowed to play a second ball, and you would have 2 scores on the hole: one for the way you want to play it and a second for the way your opponent thinks it should be done.
- Playing a second ball is not allowed in Match Play. Instead, you have 2 options.
 1. You and your opponent can discuss and agree on the best course of action and play in from there. Even if you were wrong in what you did, the results of the hole still stand.
 2. Or if you can't agree, advise your opponent with how you will proceed.
 - If your opponent disagrees, they should let you know they will be asking the Committee in charge of the Match for a ruling during the match if possible, or after the match.
 - This notice must be given by the Opponent prior to tee off at the next hole or if it is the last hole of the match before the players leave the putting green.
 - If the Opponent does not advise you in time they will be making a claim, the results of the hole will stand as played even if it was played wrong.

Penalty for Playing a Second Ball – Loss of Hole

Discontinuing Play

Players agree to suspend a match because of darkness, threat of lightening, or threat of dangerous weather condition. If a match is suspended by agreement, the players must resume the match from where they left off, even if it is the subsequent day.

Rules Breach that Result in Disqualification

1. Giving your opponent too high of a handicap that affects the net number of strokes you will receive (too many) or your opponent will get (too few).
2. Player's agreeing to ignore a rule they know will result in disqualification. A good example of this is when players agree in advance to give putts inside the leather. Another would be if your opponent is more than 5 minutes late but you decide to give them a break and play the match anyway.
3. Missing your tee time by more than 5 minutes.
4. Deliberately misleading your opponent by giving them bad information.
5. Turned in a scorecard with a hole lower than it should have been because a penalty was knowingly not included.
6. Serious misconduct on the course

What does it mean when someone says the match is "3 & 2"?

The first number is how many more holes won than the opponent and the second number is how many holes are left to play. In this case, it means the match is over, because the player has won more holes than are left to play. If this were an 18 hole match, the match was won on the 16th hole.

When the word "Up" is used such as in 1 Up it means at that point in the match they have won 1 more hole than their opponent. For example, instead of saying 1 & 17 after the first hole, they just say the match is 1 Up for whoever is winning.

Rules Breach that Result in Disqualification after the Competition has Ended

A player must be disqualified even after the competition is finished if the player knew before the competition ended that:

1. They turned in an scorecard that failed to take into account a penalty
2. Showed a handicap that was higher than their actual handicap and it affected the number of strokes they were given
3. They were in breach of a rules with a penalty disqualification.
4. Deliberately agreed with another player to ignore a penalty or rule they knew applied.

Remember, knowing the rules is the best defense in Match Play