São Brás Golf Society

Playing Rules

Air shots

If a player makes an air shot - they swing at the ball and miss it completely - they should add one stroke to their score for every air shot.

Ball lost in an animal-made burrow/digging

A player is entitled to free relief from interference by animal holes in certain circumstances. The player must first be able to show that if there was not an animal hole, and the ball was in the same place, they could take their stance and play a reasonable stroke. If not, no free relief is granted and the ball must be treated as unplayable.

An animal hole is any hole dug in the ground by an animal except for holes dug by animals that are defined as loose impediments. It also includes the loose material dug out, a worn track or trail leading into that hole, and any area on the ground pushed up or altered as a result of an animal digging underground. Animal footprints that are not part of a track or trail leading into an animal hole do not qualify for free relief (prints on a green may be repaired).

Free drop method: mark the nearest point of relief, then drop within one club length no nearer the hole, keeping within the marked relief area so the ball comes to rest inside it. See explanatory video: https://www.nationalclubgolfer.com/rules/animal-scrapings-relief-rules/

Appointment of monitors

The Committee may, on any match day, appoint voluntary monitors to keep track of round times and help with any rule interpretations or queries that may arise in playing groups during their round. Members are asked to support and assist them where required.

Back-on-the-line relief procedure

The player drops their ball on the line, and the ball must come to rest within one club-length of where it is dropped.

Ball coming to rest against a rake

Where a ball comes to rest against a rake, the ball may be replaced in its original position without penalty. The position of the ball should be marked before lifting the rake. Please leave rakes inside bunkers at all times.

Ball moved by natural forces

A ball at rest which is moved by natural forces must be replaced if it moves to another area of the course or comes to rest out of bounds after being dropped, placed, or replaced.

Ball plugged/embedded in its own pitch mark

Within the rules of golf a plugged lie is known as an embedded ball. Relief is available to a player without penalty in all areas of the course except the tee of the hole you are playing, bunkers, penalty areas and the putting green, although you may always lift and mark your ball if it is plugged on the putting green. Please repair the pitch mark thereafter.

Casual water in a sand bunker

When there is casual water in a bunker, a player is entitled to relief without penalty in the bunker at the nearest point of best or maximum relief, no nearer the hole. The ball must be dropped and come to rest within 1 club length. When a bunker is flooded and has no available place to drop the ball, a back-on-the-line free drop option is available keeping the original ball position in line with the flag (usually means having to play over the bunker). Alternatively, the player may for a 2-shot penalty follow the Unplayable Sand Bunker rule.

Double hits

There is no penalty for a double hit of a ball - this usually happens on a player’s follow-through.

Dropping balls

Balls should be dropped from knee height.

“gimmee” putts

No “Give Me” putts should be offered, requested, or accepted in SBGS Competitions - other than in Matchplay. A score of “DNF” should be recorded for that hole, and the incident and transgressor should be reported to a member of the Committee immediately on completion of the round.

Grounding clubs in hazards

Clubs can now be grounded in hazards. In bunkers it is okay to touch the sand at address but not improve the player’s lie.

Playing Rules

Internal penalty areas

These are marked by RED or YELLOW stakes. Players may play a ball within a Penalty Area without penalty. If the ball is unplayable or lost in the Penalty Area then: For a YELLOW Penalty Area, either (1) return and play from where the original ball was struck (1-shot penalty), or (2) from the point of entry take a line back in line with the flag and drop anywhere on that line (1-shot penalty). For a RED Penalty Area, both the above apply, plus LATERAL RELIEF is available: drop a replacement ball in a relief area as near as possible to where the original last crossed the edge of the RED Penalty Area (1-shot penalty). Confirm the point of entry/exit with fellow players where possible.

Lost ball - in bounds

When a player loses a ball, they may accept a penalty stroke and play with a substitute ball dropped as close as possible to the area in which it was lost - preferably confirming this with fellow players. This must be done if the original is not found within 3 minutes. This would be the 3rd shot if the ball was lost from the original tee shot.

Out of bounds

A player hitting a ball out of bounds will play the next shot as close as reasonably possible to the point at which the original ball crossed the line of the out of bounds area. Add one penalty shot. Where there is any doubt as to where that point is, fellow players should be consulted.

Playing the wrong ball

In matchplay, the player loses the hole. In stroke play, the player receives a 2-shot penalty and must correct the mistake by going back and playing their own ball to finish the hole.

Preferred lies and/or mud on the ball - fairways only

A ball on the fairway (and only the fairway) can be marked, picked up, cleaned, and replaced within 6 inches of its position, no nearer the hole. A ball in the semi-rough, or rough, has to be played as it lies. This rule cannot be invoked to improve a player's line of sight or avoid any other obstruction to the player's shot, swing or lie. The player should consult their playing partners if there is any doubt.

Putting with the pin in the hole

A ball can be putted with the pin still in the hole. There is no penalty for hitting the pin when it is in the hole.

Ready, steady golf

To speed up play, Members must play ready, steady golf. This means that regardless of whose "honour" it is, if a player can take their next shot without interfering with other players, they may do so. This applies on the tees, fairways, and greens. Please use common sense wherever possible to speed up play.

In matchplay, good course etiquette respects "honour" on the tee. On the green, players should play in the correct order.

Searching for a lost ball

The time to search for balls is 3 minutes.

Striking another ball on the fairway

If one player's ball (A) strikes another ball (B) anywhere, fairway or green, replace ball (B) in its original position and play ball (A) from where it has come to rest.

Temporary or casual water

If a player is standing in any area on the course (fairway or rough) and is standing in temporary or casual water, even if the ball is in a dry area with no water, the player has the option to take relief in the normal manner (one club length to nearest point of relief).

Too many shots

Any player that has already played too many shots on any hole and cannot score a Stableford point should pick up their ball immediately.

Unplayable ball/lie

A player can deem that their ball is unplayable anywhere on the course except in a Penalty Area. For a 1-shot penalty they can either play the ball again from where they originally hit it or take up to a 2-club length lateral distance relief or go backwards on-line of sight relief. If the ball is in a Penalty Area, they must observe the rules for that Penalty Area.

Unplayable sand bunker

A player can deem a sand bunker unplayable and for a 2-shot penalty remove the ball on a line from the flag and then play it from outside the bunker, or for a 1-shot penalty take lateral relief or on-line relief with the ball remaining in the bunker. No-penalty relief for casual water in a bunker remains as described under that rule.