

THE EXCEPTIONS

CREATED BY RYAN FARB

If you've attended a Rules seminar in the past, you've probably heard how important the Exceptions are to learning the Rules of Golf. There are 43 distinct Exceptions listed under 38 Definitions or Rules subsections. Many of the Exceptions simply remind you that another Rule explicitly permits or prohibits a certain action, but the majority clarify a disputable point under the Rule, lessen potential double-whammy penalties or permit specific actions by the Committee under special circumstances.

Exceptions Pointing To Another Applicable or More Specific Rule:

8-2a | 10-1b | 10-2a | 10-2b | 13-2 | 14-5 | 17-3 | 19-1 | 19-2 | 19-3 | 19-4 | 20-3b | 30-2b

Rule 8-2a prohibits the player from having anyone positioned on or close to the line of play or an extension of the line beyond the hole while a stroke is being made. The Exception points you to Rule 17-1 which permits the player to have a Flagstick attended or held up. This would clearly be positioned on or close to the line of play.

Rule 10-1a governs the order of play in match play. The Exception points to Rule 30-3b which permits players to breach that order of play by permitting partners to play in whatever order they deem is best.

Rule 10-2a governs the order of play when starting a hole in stroke play. The Exception points to Rule 32-1 where honor is determined by using the low net score instead of the gross score.

Rule 10-2b governs order of play during the play of a hole in stroke play. The Exception points to Rule 22 which permits a player to play out of order rather than lift a ball when required to because it may interfere with another player's play.

Rule 13-2 addresses the actions a player may and may not take with regards to his area of intended swing, line of play, lie of ball or the area in which he is to drop or place a ball. The Exception points to 13-4 which more specifically governs actions that are permissible when the ball lies in a hazard.

Rule 14-5 states a player must not make a stroke at a ball while it is moving. The Exception refers to several other Rules where a player would not be penalized under Rule 14-5 because they are subject to the other Rules. Specifically, there is no 14-5 penalty for a ball falling off a tee (11-3), striking the ball more than once (14-4), or a ball moving in water (14-6). Under 14-4 a player would be subject to penalty, just not under 14-5. A second part of the Exception governs when a ball begins moving after the backward movement of the club for a stroke has begun. You would not be penalized under 14-5 in this case, however, you could still be subject to penalty under Rule 18-2.

Rule 17-3 penalizes a player when his ball strikes a flagstick that is being attended, has been removed or is being held up, the attendant of that flagstick, or an unattended flagstick when the stroke is made from the putting green. The Exception points to Rule 17-2 which would not penalize the player if this occurred when the flagstick attendance was unauthorized.

Rule 19-1 governs what happens when a ball in motion is stopped or deflected by an outside agency. The Exception points to Rule 17-3b because frequently a person attending the flagstick is an outside agency. The more specific Rule applies in this case and the player would be subject to 17-3b, not 19-1.

Rule 19-2 governs a ball in motion stopped or deflected by the player, his partner, caddie or equipment. The two Exceptions point to more specific Rules that apply in those cases. First, Rule 17-3b would apply if it strikes the partner, caddie or equipment when attending the flagstick. Second, Rule 20-2a would apply if a dropped ball strikes any person or equipment (unlimited re-drop required).

Rule 19-3 governs a ball in motion stopped or deflected by an opponent, his caddie or equipment in match play. The Exception points to Rule 17-3b which as we now know, would be if the opponent is attending the flagstick.

Rule 19-4 governs a ball in motion stopped or deflected by a fellow-competitor, his caddie or equipment in stroke play. The Exception again points to Rule 17-3b, because just like in 19-1, a fellow-competitor is an outside agency even when attending the flagstick.

Rule 20-3b tells us what to do if the lie of the ball to be placed or replaced has been altered. The Exception points to Rule 12-1a which is a more specific Rule that applies when the lie has been altered when searching for or identifying a ball covered by sand.

Rule 30-2b governs a ball stopped or deflected by an opponent accidentally in three-ball match play. The Exception again points us to Rule 17-3b which would apply if either opponent were attending the flagstick.

Golf Math Exceptions (Limiting Double-Penalties): 15-2 | 20-1 | 21

Rule 15-2 penalizes the player two strokes for substituting a ball when not permitted. The Exception under this Rule states that you will not incur the penalty if you have already incurred a two stroke penalty for playing from a wrong place.

Rule 20-1 has a procedural one-stroke penalty if the player fails to mark the position of the ball before lifting. The Exception waives this penalty if a one-stroke procedural penalty has already been incurred by the player for breaching the procedures of Rule 5-3 or 12-2.

Rule 21 governs when a player may and may not clean the golf ball. The Exception waives the one stroke penalty for cleaning if the player has already incurred a one-stroke penalty for a breach of the procedure under Rules 5-3, 12-2 or 22.

**Committee Action Exceptions:
6-3 | 14-3(1) | 33-2b | 34-1b**

Rule 6-3 states the player must start at the time established by the Committee. The Exception allows the Committee to permit a player to start late under exceptional circumstances, (i.e. providing medical assistance to an accident on the way to the course).

Rule 14-3 governs the use of unusual equipment or using equipment in an unusual manner. The first Exception permits players to use medically approved equipment. The third section of the Exception specifies that the Committee may be the final word on the use of the equipment if they are satisfied that it does not give the player an undue advantage.

Rule 33-2b requires all competitors in a single round play with each hole cut in the same location. The Exception allows the Committee to make a new hole in a nearby similar location during a round if it is damaged and cannot be repaired to conform to the definition of hole.

Rule 34-1b states that a penalty must not be rescinded, modified or imposed after the competition has closed. The Exception gives four circumstances in which the Committee must act by imposing a penalty of disqualification after the competition is closed. The Committee must disqualify a player after the competition has closed if he had agreed to waive the Rules, returned a score card with a higher handicap than he was entitled to, returned a score for any hole lower than actually taken (except if he failed to include a penalty he didn't know about), or knew before the competition had closed that he was in breach of a Rule for which the penalty was disqualification.

**Match Play Only Exceptions:
Ball in Play | Referee | 6-8a**

The Exception in Match Play to the **Definition of Ball in Play** addresses the unique situation when the player plays from outside the teeing ground and the stroke is not recalled by the opponent. In stroke play, that ball would not be in play because Rule 11-4 applies and the error must be corrected. In match play, however, if the opponent does not recall the stroke with the ball played from outside the teeing ground, you have to continue with that ball and therefore it needs to be in play.

The Exception in Match Play to the **Definition of Referee** helps define what authority a referee who is not following the match. Because a referee not assigned to a match is not involved in every hole of the match, the referee only may intervene with issues that would affect the competition and proper playing of the game such as 1-3 (waiving rules), 6-7 (undue delay) or 33-7 (serious breach of etiquette/Committee imposed disqualification).

Rule 6-8a specifies when a player is permitted to discontinue play. In match play, however, discontinuing play really only affects the players involved in the match. So if the competition is not delayed by the discontinuance of a match, the players are not subject to disqualification.

All Other Exceptions:

1-2 | 6-6d | 7-1b | 7-2 | 13-4 | 14-2b | 14-3(2) | 15-3a | 15-3b | 16-1d | 16-1e | 20-3c | 24-2b | 25-1b | 27-1c | 27-2b

Rule 1-2 is the infamous intent Rule. The first Exception states Rule 1-2 does not apply to actions expressly permitted or prohibited by other Rules. The second Exception states an action taken for the sole purpose of caring for the course is not a breach of 1-2. When applying Rule 1-2 first you must make sure another Rule doesn't govern that action and second you need to know why a player did a particular action.

Rule 6-6d disqualifies a player if they sign and return a score card with a hole lower than what was actually taken. This new Exception lets the player off the hook (partially) if the reason they signed for a lower score is because they failed to include a penalty that they did not know they had incurred. They are only partially off the hook because the new Exception provides a fairly stiff penalty. The player will not only receive the penalty (or penalties) they should have incurred in the first place, but an additional two-stroke penalty for EACH hole the player signed incorrectly. If you didn't know grounding your club in a hazard was a penalty, and did so three times during the round, this could lead to an additional 12 strokes!

Rule 7-1b prohibits a player from practicing on the competition course in stroke play on any day of the competition or between rounds. The Exception permits practice putting or chipping near the first teeing ground or any practice area before starting the round.

Rule 7-2 prohibits practice during a stipulated round. The Exception allows practice prior to resuming play during a suspended stipulated round in accordance with the Rule or guidelines set by the Committee.

Rule 13-4 governs actions when the ball lies in a hazard. The first Exception permits a player to touch the ground or loose impediments in order to prevent falling, remove an obstruction, measure, mark, retrieve, lift, place or replace a ball, and to place his clubs in a hazard. In doing these, the player must not test the condition of the hazard or improve his lie. The second Exception permits a player to smooth sand or soil in a hazard for the sole purpose of caring for the course, provided nothing is done to breach Rule 13-2 with respect to his next stroke. The third Exception means that any action taken in a hazard after a ball has been removed from the hazard does not constitute testing, even if the ball comes to rest in another similar hazard.

Rule 14-2b prohibits positioning a partner or caddie on an extension of the line of play behind the ball. The Exception waives the penalty if the caddie or partner does so inadvertently.

Rule 14-3's second Exception states using equipment in a traditionally accepted manner is not a breach of the Rule. This means that although holding a ball between your forearm and putter grip while making a stroke is a breach of Rule 14-3, using a golf ball is most obviously not. Using a glove underneath your arm to try and keep your elbow close to the body is a breach, wearing the glove as a glove is not.

Rules 15-3a and 15-3b govern playing a wrong ball in match play and stroke play. The Exception under each of these Rules is exactly the same and waives the penalty for making a stroke at a wrong ball if the wrong ball is moving in water in a water hazard. The reason for this is that there is no penalty for playing a ball moving in water in a water hazard but the stipulation is that the player must do so immediately and without delay. This means the player is not permitted any time to identify the ball as his, and therefore it would be impracticable to apply a penalty for playing a wrong ball if the player is not given the opportunity to determine if it is a wrong ball or not.

Rule 16-1d prohibits a player from testing the surface of any putting green during the stipulated round. The Exception permits this action on any putting green or on the putting green of the hole last played if it is not prohibited by the Committee. Because a player is allowed to practice putting in such a manner, it makes sense that the Rules would permit testing the surface in similar places.

Rule 16-1e prohibits standing astride the line of putt. This is the Rule that prohibited Sam Snead's croquet-style stroke. The Exception waives the penalty if the stance is not purposely taken on or astride the line of putt or if it is taken in order to avoid standing on another player's line of putt.

Rule 20-3c tells us what to do when it is impossible to determine the spot where the ball is to be placed or replaced. Generally, the ball would be dropped (unless on the putting green). The Exception, however, tells us that the ball must be placed on an estimated spot when resuming play after a suspension. This gives us one of very few general Rules guidelines that you always place the ball when resuming play.

Rules 24-2b and 25-1b gives us the relief procedures for interference from obstructions and abnormal ground conditions. The Exceptions under these Rules are virtually identical. The Exceptions state that relief should be granted if interference occurs only through the use of an abnormal stance or direction of play, or if something other than the obstruction or abnormal ground condition makes the stroke clearly impracticable. It is difficult to apply these Exceptions. In general, the player should be asked how they would play the stroke if the obstruction or abnormal ground condition were not present. If the answer is that they would declare the ball unplayable and proceed under Rule 28, then the Exception should apply.

Rule 27-1c has us proceed under stroke and distance if the ball is not found within five minutes. By definition that ball is lost. The Exception, however, allows us to proceed under the applicable Rule in four known or virtually certain (KVC) situations: if it is KVC that the ball has been moved by an outside agency, Rule 18-1 applies; if it is KVC the ball is in an obstruction, Rule 24-3 applies; if it is KVC the ball is in an abnormal ground condition, 25-1c applies or; if it is KVC the ball is in a water hazard, Rule 26-1 applies. The catch is that the player may proceed under the applicable Rule. The Exception permits the player to proceed under the Rule, but also allows the player to proceed under stroke and distance. After all, the ball is lost.

Rule 27-2b tells us when the provisional ball becomes the ball in play. It has a very similar Exception to 27-1c, giving the player options in three KVC situations: if it is KVC the ball has

been moved by an outside agency, Rule 18-1 applies; if it is KVC the ball is in an obstruction, Rule 24-3 applies or; if it is KVC the ball is in an abnormal ground condition, Rule 25-1c applies. Again, the player has an option. In these KVC situations the player may choose to continue with the provisional ball OR proceed under the applicable Rule. One notable difference here is that if it is KVC that a ball is in a water hazard, the player does not have the option to proceed with the provisional ball, he must proceed under Rule 26-1.