



2026 LOCAL RULES & TERMS OF THE COMPETITION

(March 6, 2026)

Play is governed by the Golf Canada Rules of Golf (effective January 2023), and, where applicable, by the following Local Rules and Terms of the Competition, subject to changes, additions or deletions for competitions. The player's attention is drawn to the Terms of the Competition printed on the forms accompanying applications for entry. Complete text of Local Rules may be found in the Golf Canada Official Guide to the Rules of Golf (available using the R&A or USGA Rules of Golf App).

Unless otherwise noted, the penalty for breach of a Local Rule is the General Penalty:

Match play - Loss of hole; Stroke play – Two strokes

LOCAL RULES

1. **Out of Bounds (Rule 18.2)** - Defined by the line between the course-side points at ground level of white lines, dots or stakes and fence posts defining out of bounds. A ball is out of bounds when it is beyond any wall defining the boundary of the course. Closed gates that are attached to boundary walls and fences are part of the boundary object. Relief is not allowed from such a gate under Rules 15.2 or 16.1. **But** an open gate is not treated as part of the boundary object and may be closed or moved to a different position: Model Local Rule F-26 is in effect.
2. **Penalty Areas (Rule 17)** - When a red penalty area is defined on only one side, it extends to infinity. When a red penalty area adjoins a boundary, the penalty area edge extends to and coincides with the boundary.
3. **Dropping Zones** – Where a dropping zone is marked it is an additional option for relief. The dropping zone is a relief area, and the ball must be dropped in and come to rest in the relief area.
4. **Abnormal Course Conditions (Including Immovable Obstructions) (Rule 16) -**
Ground under Repair - Rule 16.1 includes:
 - a. Areas defined by white lines.
 - b. Drainage ditches filled with stones (French Drains);
 - c. Seams of Cut Turf – Model Local Rule F-7 is in effect. Interference exists if a player's ball lies in or touches a seam of cut turf or a seam interferes with the player's area of intended swing. However, interference does not exist if the seam only interferes with the player's stance. All seams within the area of cut turf are treated as the same seam in taking relief.
 - d. White-Lined Areas Tied into Obstructions - White-lined areas and any immovable obstruction they tie into are treated as a single abnormal course condition when taking relief under Rule 16.1.
 - e. No Play Zones – Areas that are ornamental garden beds, turf nurseries or flowerbeds are no play zones that are to be treated as abnormal course conditions. Free relief **must** be taken from interference by the no play zone under Rule 16.1f.
5. **Immoveable Obstructions Close to Putting Greens** – Model Local Rule F-5.2 is in effect. For a ball in the general area, relief may be taken under Rule 16.1b when both the ball and the obstruction lie in an area cut to fairway height or less. The ball must be within two club-lengths of the obstruction and the obstruction must be located:
 - a. On or within two club lengths of the putting green, and

b. On the players line of play

6. Wood Chips and Mulch (Rule 15.1) - Wood chips and mulch are loose impediments.

7. Integral Objects – The following are integral objects from which free relief is not allowed:

- a. The portion of cables, wires, wrappings and other similar objects closely attached to trees.
- b. Artificial retaining walls and/or pilings when located within penalty areas or which are adjacent to the edge of bunkers.
- c. Bunker liners in their intended position. An exposed bunker liner may be treated as ground under repair by the Committee. However, interference by a bunker liner does not exist if the bunker liner only interferes with a player's stance.

8. Animals Near Ball – Model Local Rule E-13 is in effect. An animal that is not defined as a loose impediment and is touching or near a player's ball may be removed. If the ball moves while removing the animal, there is no penalty, and the ball must be replaced.

9. Temporary Immovable Obstructions – Model Local Rule F-23 is in effect. Temporary Immovable Obstructions include, but are not limited to, starting tents, scoring tents and pace of play stations.

10. Specifications of Clubs and the Ball -

- a. List of Conforming Driver Heads: Model Local Rule G-1 is in effect. Penalty for making a stroke with a club in breach of this Local Rule: Disqualification.
- b. Groove and Punch Mark Specifications: Model Local Rule G-2 is in effect but modified as the exception to G-2 does not apply. Penalty for making a stroke with a club in breach of this Local Rule: Disqualification.
- c. List of Conforming Golf Balls: Model Local Rule G-3 is in effect. Penalty for making a stroke with a ball in breach of this Local Rule: **Disqualification**.
- d. Broken or Significantly Damaged Club Replaced with Similar Club – Revised Model Local Rule G-9 effective January 2026 is in effect. Penalty for Breach of Local Rule – **See Rule 4.1b**.

Note: An updated List of Conforming Clubs and Balls is available via www.golfcanada.ca/rules.

11. Pace of Play (Rule 5.6) - The player **must** play without delay in accordance with the current Golf Ontario Pace of Play Policy which will be communicated prior to the start of the competition. The full policies are available at golfontario.ca and in the Golf Ontario Tournament Office. **Note:** Different Pace of Play Policies are in effect for different forms of competition.

Note: Rule 5.6a (Unreasonable Delay of Play) is still applicable.

12. Stopping and Resuming Play (Rule 5.7) – Model Local Rule J-1 is in effect as follows:

- a. **Immediate suspension** (Dangerous Situation): One prolonged note of the air horn.
- b. **Normal Suspension** (Non-Dangerous situation): Three short notes of the air horn.
- c. **Resume Play:** Two short notes of the air horn.

Note: During an immediate suspension for a dangerous situation, all practice areas are closed until the Tournament Committee has declared them open. Players who practice on closed practice areas will be asked to stop practicing. Players who fail to do so will be subject to penalties under the Code of Conduct.

13. Practice (Rules 5.2 and 5.5)



- a. **Before or between rounds in Stroke Play** – Model Local Rule I-1.1 is in effect and Rule 5.2b is modified in this way: A player must not practice on the competition course (except on or near the first teeing area or any practice area) on the day of a competition or between rounds. Penalty for first breach: General Penalty (applied to the player's first hole). Penalty for second breach: Disqualification.
- b. **Between holes in Stroke Play** – Model Local Rule I-2 is in effect and Rule 5.5b is modified in this way: Between the play of two holes, a player must not:
 - Make any practice stroke on or near the putting green of the hole just completed, or
 - Test the surface of that putting green by rubbing the putting green or rolling a ball.

- 14. Transportation** – Model Local Rule G-6 effective 2026 is in effect and is modified as follows: During a round, players or caddies must not ride on any form of transportation, unless authorized or later approved by the Tournament Rules Committee, during the following Golf Ontario events: Men and Women's Amateur championship and practice rounds, all Junior championships, including practice rounds and qualifiers. See the Golf Ontario Motorized Transportation Policy for medical exemptions. A player who will play, or has played, under penalty of stroke and distance is always authorized to ride on motorized transportation for that purpose.

The player gets the **General Penalty** for each hole during which there is a breach of this Local Rule. If the breach occurs between the play of two holes, it applies to the next hole.

- 15. Caddies** – Rule 10.3a is modified in this way: A player must not have another player in the competition, who has played or will play in the same round, as their caddie during a round.

The player gets the **General Penalty** for each hole during which there is a breach of this Local Rule. If the breach occurs between the play of two holes, it applies to the next hole.

- 16. Prohibiting or Restricting Use of Audio and Video Devices** - Model Local Rule G-8 is in effect and Rule 4.3a(4) is modified in this way: During a round, a player must not listen to or watch content of any nature on a personal audio or video device. Penalty for Breach of Local Rule - see Rule 4.3.

TERMS OF THE COMPETITION

17. Scorecard Responsibilities

- a. **Scorecard Returned** – A player's scorecard has been returned to the Committee 15 minutes after the last player has completely exited the defined scoring area.
- b. **Missing Player or Marker Certification** – Model Local Rule L-1 is in effect and Rule 3.3b(2) is modified in this way – If a player returns a scorecard without the hole scores being certified either by the player, the marker or both, the player gets the General Penalty. The penalty applies to the last hole of the player's round.

- 18. How to Decide Ties** - The Golf Ontario Tie Breaking Policy – Stroke Play is in effect for all Qualifying Rounds. Copies of the policy are posted on www.gao.ca and available at all qualifying sites.

- 19. Meaning of Round (For Qualifying Rounds and Single-Day Championships/Tournaments that start on the same hole)** - Qualifying rounds and single-day championships/tournaments will be comprised of two consecutive 9-hole rounds when all play starts on the same hole. In the event every player is unable to complete 18 holes but has

completed the first 9-hole round and the second round is subsequently cancelled, the score for the first 9-hole round will count and results for qualifying or the single-day championship/tournament will be based on this score. Nine holes **must** be completed by every player for the round to count.

20. Finalizing Results –

- a. **Qualifying Rounds:** The competition is deemed to be closed when the results have been transmitted and approved by Golf Ontario tournament staff.
- b. **Stroke Play Championships:** The competition is deemed to be closed when the trophy has been presented to the winner.
- c. **Match Play Championships:** The result of a match is considered to have been "officially announced" when Golf Ontario tournament staff have posted the results on the Golf Ontario website.

21. Anti-Doping – Players are required to comply with and be bound by the Golf Ontario Anti-Doping Policy as detailed on the entry form, webpage on gao.ca, any prior notice to the competition or at the golf course.

22. Code of Conduct – (Rule 1.2b) Golf Ontario has adopted a Local Rule under Rule 1.2b setting standards of player conduct on the golf course during play at all competitions. The full policy is available at golfontario.ca and in the Golf Ontario Tournament Office. The Golf Ontario Tournament Rules Committee may assess any or all the following penalties outlined below, based on the severity and frequency of the violation:

- **Warning**
- **One-stroke penalty**
- **General penalty**
- **Disqualification**