

Winter Rules

An explanatory note

Various measures, known as “Winter Rules” are introduced in the winter to make our golf more enjoyable and to protect the course. They are covered by local rules which are published on notice boards and the website. They will come into effect each year on the Monday immediately after the Autumn clock change and be lifted on the Monday after the Spring clock change. This is an explanation of their purpose and how to use them.

Preferred lies allow you a better lie when course conditions are poor and your ball is on a fairway or ground mown to the same or lower height such as a grass path or a tee. Under the winter rules, you must take preferred lie relief, and to protect the course, you must place your ball on a mat except when you are going to use your putter.

Taking relief is simple. Lift your ball, clean it if you wish and place it on your mat so that it is within 6 inches/15 centimetres of where it lay, not nearer the hole. There are a few do's and don't's:

- You are not allowed to tee your ball up on the edge of the mat.
- You may secure your mat with a peg tee, but you can't place your ball on the tee.
- If your ball stays at rest after placing and letting go of it, you are not allowed to move it again.
- If your ball moves or is accidentally moved after placing it on the mat, replace it without penalty. If it moves again, move your mat to the nearest spot, not nearer the hole, where the ball will stay put when placed.

In social golf, as an alternative to a preferred lie, you may drop a ball off the fairway within a club length of the edge, not nearer the hole than where it lay. But, you may not use this option in a competition or if returning a general play score.

Lift, clean and replace allows you to clean your ball anywhere in the *general area*. You may clean your ball when on a fairway under preferred lies, but this rule means you can also clean it everywhere else other than in a bunker or a penalty area. There is just one important difference. After cleaning your ball on a fairway you get a preferred lie on your mat whereas under *Lift, Clean and Replace*, you must put your ball back on the exact spot it was on, no matter how grotty a lie it is.

Deep ruts are quite likely to be made in the winter by course maintenance vehicles. When this local rule is in place, they are defined as *ground under repair* and you may take free relief from them

anywhere on the course. A rut is considered deep if a ball is lying in it and your clubhead cannot connect with it or follow through without interference from an edge of the rut or, if you have to stand on it, you cannot take a normal balanced stance. You don't get relief from wheel marks that are just minor irregularities on the surface of the ground even if it is muddy.

Artificial tee mats are commonly used in the winter. If a mat is in use, you must stand on it and play your ball from it. You are not allowed to play from the ground behind the mat even if it is within two club lengths of the tee markers.

Temporary greens are defined by local rule as areas encircled by a broken white line and are shown to be in use by the presence of the flagstick. Any green other than the one you are playing to is a wrong green and you must take complete relief from it if,

- your ball is on or touching it;
- your stance is on or partially on it; or,
- your club would touch the putting surface during your stroke.

If the main green on the hole you are playing is in use, the temporary green is a *wrong* green. If the temporary green on the hole you are playing is in use, the main one is a *wrong green*. You must never play a ball on any green other than the one in use on the hole you are playing.

Acceptable Scores

You will be able to submit general play scores from the blue tees during the winter provided there aren't more than two temporary greens in play on the day. You have to register your score before your round either with the shop if using the clubhouse terminal or on the Scottish Golf app if using it. This is a new opportunity for you to ensure your handicap measures your current ability by continuing to return scores.

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Convenor
Rules Committee
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