

HERNDON GOLFERS CLUB RULES 2026

Play shall be governed by the Rules of Golf of the United States Association, and as modified by the following local rules:

1. Check in is required at least 30 minutes before your tee time. Failure to do so may disqualify you from the tournament.
2. The Rules of Golf require proper scoring on score cards. Card must be signed and totaled. With our computer scoring system we do not need you to track your net scores but you can as a check. Errors in posting the individual hole scores found may result in disqualification. Both the scorer and the individual need to sign the score card before they are submitted. Unsigned cards will not be accepted. It is recommended that each player keep their own score in addition to the score card they are keeping for their playing partner making it easier to check your card at the completion of the round.
3. **SCORING** - The new Rules of Golf allow for a double bogey above any strokes for posting your scores to the GHIN. So, for example, if you get a stroke on a par four and shoot an 8, you can only post a 7. For tournament purposes you still need to show the 8 on your score card. We have put a maximum score for any hole at 10, so if you reach that you can pick up. You will need to equi-stroke back to a postable score.
4. The maximum men's handicap is limited to 28 and the women's to 36. Men's tees will be in 4 tranches divided evenly across the 28 handicap indexes. Up to and including a 7.0 GHIN index will play from the black tees. Over 7.0 index to and including a 14.0 index play from the blue tees. Over 14.0 to and including a 21.0 index will play from the combo tees. Above 21.0 will play from the white tees. Women's tees will be in 2 tranches. Up to and including a 14.0 index play from the combo tees. Above 14.0 will play from the white tees. Handicaps will be adjusted based on the tees played. You can always move back a tee if desired, but not up a tee. Keep in mind that not only do handicaps change based on the slope of the course from the tees played, but also since we are playing from different tees, the course rating for each tee box factors into the equation.
5. We will play lift clean and place within one foot no closer to the hole in closely mown areas on the hole you are playing, i.e. your own fairway or the fringe around the greens. Repair any unnatural conditions in bunkers such as human footprints or animal tracks or burrows, bad raking, or other issues that have the condition of the bunker in other than well raked condition. Ball shall be replaced in the same position and in the same condition (i.e. a fried egg lie must be replaced as a fried egg lie). Balls lying on the cloth fabric in bunkers can be replaced on raked sand no closer to the hole, or minimally closer to the hole if no closer to the hole is not possible. Playing partners must agree on what is to be done and approve it once done.
6. As always, if you are not sure where your ball landed or if it went OB, please hit a provisional ball after so notifying your playing partners. This not only applies to tee balls, but to any shots made. This will help speed up play. The provisional ball should have different markings from the original ball to identify it as a different ball. HGC has adopted the USGA local rule for dropping a ball for a lost or OB ball. This is shown clearly on the following link. <https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rules-modernization/major-changes/golfs-new-rules-stroke-and-distance.html>
7. Speed of play is a persistent problem in the league. The goal is for everyone to finish in under 4 hours and 30 minutes. It is everyone's responsibility to make sure that their group keeps up with the group in front of them. Failure to do so may result in penalty strokes being added to all the members of the group. Penalty strokes will be added to everyone in a group that is behind, assuming the group took more than the 4 hours and 30 minutes, one stroke will be added if the group is more than 20 minutes behind the group in front of them and two strokes for 30 minutes behind and another stroke for every fifteen minutes after that. If one member of the group is holding up the group, the other members can

go on without him to keep up with the group in front of them. The key is to keep up with the group in front, not ahead of the group behind.

8. The **Modified Embedded Ball** rule is in effect. This means: Anywhere 'through the green' a ball which is embedded in its own pitch-mark in the ground, may be lifted without penalty, cleaned and **dropped** as near as possible to the spot where it lay but not nearer the hole. This does not apply to balls in any hazard, including bunkers.
9. **Ground Under Repair (GUR)** - Marked with white lines. If not clearly marked or covered in the following rules, you may take appropriate relief if your playing opponents agree. This applies if the ball is in the GUR or if your normal stance is in the GUR. Unmowed areas in the fairway, unless subject to casual water, are not deemed GUR. If your ball is in an area deemed as GUR you may lift the ball, clean it and drop it within one club length of the nearest point of relief, but not nearer the hole. Areas on the greens that are bare allow you to move your ball away to the closest spot no near to the hole. If these areas fall in the line of your putt, you can move your ball to a clear path, no closer to the hole, all must be approved by your playing partners.
10. **Cart Paths:** If your ball is on a cart path you may lift the ball and drop it within one club length of the nearest point of relief, but not nearer the hole. This means that whichever side of the cart path that your ball lies on is the side you must drop on. Also at Herndon there are many spots with gravel near the cart path, during HGC events these gravel areas are considered part of the cart path and you may take appropriate relief. Your playing partners need to agree to any relief taken. Failure to obtain agreement will result in a penalty of one stroke.
11. **Balls Lost or Out of Bounds:** Alternative to Stroke and Distance: A new Local Rule has been adopted by HGC permitting golfers the option to drop the ball in the vicinity of where the ball is lost or out of bounds (including the nearest fairway area), under a two-stroke penalty. It addresses concerns raised at the club level about the negative impact on pace of play when a player is required to go back under stroke and distance. This is shown clearly on the following link.
<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/videos/2018/03/06/36-local-rule---alternative-to-stroke-and-distance-5746234763001.html>
12. **Water Hazards** are identified with Yellow Stakes; Lateral Water Hazards are identified with Red Stakes. The stakes are to be treated as being totally within the hazard. If the stakes are easily removed they may be considered as 'movable obstructions. Follow the Rules of Golf for appropriate drop procedures. Get your playing partners agreement on the point of drop.
13. **Planters:** You are allowed a free lift and **drop** within one club-length from the nearest point of relief, not nearer the hole, from small staked seedlings or shrubs (one club-length in height or less), all flower beds with **flowering** plants (does not include tree wells), resodded areas, cart paths, service roads, and posts and ropes around greens - if post is not movable. We do not have a root rule. If your ball lands on a root and you need to move it to hit safely, you can take an unplayable lie.
14. Under the current Rules of Golf, you must identify your ball, even in a hazard. You should have **distinctive markings** on your ball to facilitate this process. If you must lift your ball to identify it, it must be replaced to the same condition and lie as it was when you found it. This should be approved by another member of the group before it is done. In a hazard, you are not allowed to remove any loose impediments or plant materials to access the ball or to hit the ball. If you hit the wrong ball you incur a two stroke penalty and must correct the mistake by playing the correct ball by going back to the original spot of your ball.
15. After raking the traps and in accordance with the recommendations of the USGA, all **rakes** shall be left **inside** the traps with the end of the handle resting on the surrounding grass to allow it to be retrieved without entering the trap. Feel free to rake other areas of the trap that need raking if nearby the area that you are raking.

16. Local rules for boundary markers are defined below; in general boundary markers are fences, walls, white stakes or white lines. **You may not take a free drop from any boundary marker.**
17. Any area on the course that has been altered due to a downed tree or tree removal shall be considered ground under repair. This needs to be confirmed by your playing partners.

Boundary Markers on Course:

Hole #1: Fence on left and driving range on right are out of bounds (O.B.). The fence is considered the O.B. line. No free drop is allowed from this fence or any boundary marker.

Hole #2: The left woods is O.B. as marked. The ditch in front of tee is a hazard. The ditch left of cart path is a hazard. The ditch front-right of green is a water hazard. The ditch behind green is a hazard. The driving range to the right is O.B. The mound on the left of cart path is in play and no free drop is permitted.

Hole #3: The ditch lateral to tee box is a hazard up to the cart path, or-as marked. The lake is a lateral hazard as marked. High grass areas to the left of the fairway and the right of the right cart path are in play. Wooded area to the left of the fairway and green is in play. Balls lost in this area must be deemed a lost ball and played accordingly.

Hole #4: The ditch (creek) in front of tee is a hazard; complete relief (stance and swing only, not line of sight) with free drop from old pump house structure. Maintenance area to right of tee is O.B.

Hole #5: Ditch in front of tee is a hazard, and extends left of cart path. Rock piles are within the boundary of the hazard. Left of cart path, past where creek ends, is a lateral hazard.

Hole #6: O.B. left fence or as marked, and extends all along the left side, where marked. Area behind green marked as a lateral hazard. Rock pile (right side of fairway, next to #5 tee) is a lateral hazard, as marked.

Hole #7: Areas on left side, including fenced or wooded areas left and past green, are lateral hazards; rock area to the right of the green and the cart path is a lateral hazard.

Hole #8: O.B. fence and as marked (boundary fence on left ends before corner, along creek, but the creek-wooded area around corner and along the left side up to and including maintenance building is all to be considered as O.B.).

Hole #9: O.B. along left side as marked and behind the green as defined by the fence; ditch (creek) is hazard; bridge inside hazard is part of the hazard. Gravel path along left side is also considered a cart path.

Hole #10: Drainage ditch and rocky area on left is a hazard. High grass to the left of the cart path is in play.

Hole #11: Ditch from right to left and in front of tee is a hazard. High grassy area left of cart path in front of the left Black/Blue tees is a hazard. Lake behind green played as a lateral hazard.

Hole #12: Ditch right and left of fairway in front of green are hazards. All French drains (gravel areas) are ground under repair.

Hole #13: O.B. as marked and left of cart path and includes left fence and fence behind green; ditch in front of tee is a hazard.

Hole #14: O.B. fence line left of cart path; pond on right is a water hazard.

Hole #15: Ditch right and left of fairway are hazards. Drainage areas in fairway (small rocks, French drains, etc.) are ground under repair. Maintenance area to the left of the mounds on the left side of the fairway is a lateral hazard. Fence around superintendent's house to the right of the green is a boundary marker for the course (i.e. if you are inside the fence you are out of bounds). The road behind the green is considered to be a cart path.

Hole #16: O.B. fence line on right or as marked.

Hole #17: O.B. fence line and building & wooded area along the right side including the drainage ditch right of cart path. Screen on right near green is O.B. and along right side of path following white stakes. Balls resting

against screen do not get a free drop. No line of sight relief allowed for balls behind screen. Wooded area to the left of the fairway and front tee is in play. Balls lost in this area must be deemed a lost ball and played accordingly. Ditch to the left of the green and behind it is a hazard.

Hole #18: Ditch in front of tee and pond are hazards. Driving range is O.B.

All water-filled ditches, natural drainage ditches, or ponds, are water hazards and should be played accordingly (even when not clearly marked and as noted above). All French drains, if they have exposed gravel, are free drops.

ATTENTION: ALL Pampas grass areas are no longer considered a free drop. As with any unplayable lie, ball must be identified in pampas grass. You cannot assume ball went into pampas grass. If not identified, ball must be played as a lost ball.

PRACTICE: Practice on the course once play has started or practice putting on the green of any hole, even after the hole is complete, is prohibited and subject to a two stroke penalty for each offense. If the practice occurs after the hole is completed then the penalty is applied to the next hole.

PLEASE REPAIR ALL BALL MARKS, REPLACE ALL DIVOTS AND RAKE SAND BUNKERS. RAKES SHOULD BE LEFT INSIDE BUNKERS WITH THE HANDLES RESTING ON THE GRASS EDGE SO THAT THEY CAN BE REACHED WITHOUT ENTERING THE BUNKER.

Herndon Golfers Club
How to Score Common Golf Penalty Shots

Penalty	How to Score
Out-of-bounds/Lost Ball	<p>When a player's ball has not been found or is <i>known or virtually certain</i> to be <i>out of bounds</i>, the player may proceed as follows rather than proceeding under <i>stroke and distance</i>. For two penalty strokes, the player may take relief by <i>dropping</i> the original ball or another ball in this <i>relief area</i> (see Rule 14.3):</p> <p><u>Two Estimated Reference Points:</u></p> <p>a. Ball Reference Point: The point where the original ball is estimated to have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Come to rest on the <i>course</i>, or• Last crossed the edge of the <i>course</i> boundary to go <i>out of bounds</i>. <p>b. Fairway Reference Point: The point of fairway of the <i>hole</i> being played that is nearest to the ball reference point, but is not nearer the <i>hole</i> than the ball reference point. For purposes of this Local Rule, "fairway" means any area of grass in the <i>general area</i> that is cut to fairway height or less. If a ball is estimated to be lost on the course or last crossed the edge of the course boundary short of the fairway, the fairway reference point may be a grass path or a teeing ground for the hole being played cut to fairway height or less.</p> <p><u>Size of Relief Area Based on Reference Points:</u> Anywhere between:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A line from the <i>hole</i> through the ball reference point (and within two <i>club-lengths</i> to the outside of that line), and• A line from the <i>hole</i> through the fairway reference point (and within two <i>club-lengths</i> to the fairway side of that line). <p>But with these limits:</p> <p><u>Limits on Location of Relief Area:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Must be in the <i>general area</i>, and• Must not be nearer the <i>hole</i> than the ball reference point. <p>Once the player puts a ball <i>in play</i> under this Local Rule:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The original ball that was <i>lost or out of bounds</i> is no longer <i>in play</i> and must not be played.• This is true even if the ball is found on the <i>course</i> before the end of the three-minute search time (see Rule 6.3b). <p>But, the player may not use this option to take relief for the original ball when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• That ball is <i>known or virtually certain</i> to have come to rest in a <i>penalty area</i>, or• The player has played another ball provisionally under penalty of <i>stroke and distance</i> (see Rule 18.3).

A player may use this option to take relief for a provisional ball that has not been found or is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds.

Unplayable lies	1-stroke penalty. Drop the ball within two club lengths of the original spot, no nearer to the hole. Or drop the ball as far back as you want, as long as you keep the original unplayable lie point on a line between you and the pin. You may also return to the spot from which you played your original shot if you prefer.
Penalty Areas (yellow and red stakes)	If a player's ball is in a penalty area, including when it is known or virtually certain to be in a penalty area even though not found, the player has these relief options, each for one penalty stroke: (1) Stroke-and-Distance Relief. The player may play the original ball or another ball from where the previous stroke was made (2) Back-On-the-Line Relief. The player may drop the original ball or another ball (see Rule 14.3) in a relief area that is based on a reference line going straight back from the hole through the estimated point where the original ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area: Reference Point: A point on the course chosen by the player that is on the reference line and is farther from the hole than the estimated point (with no limit on how far back on the line): In choosing this reference point, the player should indicate the point by using an object (such as a tee). Size of Relief Area Measured from Reference Point: One club-length, but with these limits: Must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and May be in any area of the course except the same penalty area, but if more than one area of the course, the ball must come to rest in the relief area in the same area of the course that the ball first touched when dropped in the relief area.
Free Drops	Free drops from cart paths or other man made immovable objects are to be made from the closest point of relief. On a cart path the drop must be made on the side of the path that the ball lays on, not either side. You can take a clear stance off of the path and one club length from that point. Complete relief must be taken.

IF THERE IS A QUESTION, PLAY A SECOND BALL AND THE ISSUE WILL BE RESOLVED AT THE CLUBHOUSE BY THE PRO OR THE COMMITTEE.