

Virginia Beach Seniors Golf Club

CLUB LOCAL RULES

Revised - March 5, 2025

USGA Rules always apply for Club tournaments, but the USGA authorizes Tournament Committees to establish Local Rules to accommodate course conditions and provide a more level playing field. VBSGC has established the following Local Rules for club play:

Preferred Lies. During club play, players ARE permitted to improve their lie. This action is limited to rolling their ball no more than one club length, no closer to the hole and only in the fairway of the hole they are playing. The ball MAY NOT be lifted or cleaned. This rule is in effect at all times unless modified by the below Cart Path Only/Special Conditions rule.

Cart Path Only / Special Conditions (Restated 3-20-23)

When the Course prescribes “Cart Path Only”, the lift, clean and place rule will automatically be in effect, through the green. “Through the green” means all areas of the course except teeing grounds, greens and penalty areas; essentially this includes all rough and fairways.

When it is Cart Path Only a physically challenged player should request a “handicap flag” for the golf cart to permit driving to the ball during play. If the Course denies this request, the player may have one of his teammates pick up his ball and place it in a similar lie (i.e., rough or fairway), closer to the cart path, but not closer to the hole.

When any course conditions warrant, the Tournament Committee Chairman may invoke the lift, clean and place rule, through the green, even though the course has not called for “Cart Path Only.” If invoked in this situation it will always be announced before the start of play.

Lift, Clean and Place. Whenever the lift, clean and place rule is invoked, the ball can be lifted and moved no more than one club length, no closer to the hole, and the ball MAY be cleaned before replacing.

Lost or Out-of-Bounds Balls. Rule 18 permits playing a provisional ball if a shot MAY be OB or lost inside or outside a penalty area. However, if a ball is unexpectedly found to be OB (i.e., no provisional shot played), or lost outside a penalty area, the player, under penalty of two strokes, may place his ball in the fairway at the edge of the fairway nearest to where it was lost or went OB. This rule prevents players from having to return to the spot of a previous shot, thus speeding play. The effect is the same as “loss of stroke and distance”, but with the ball spotted as described. Do not hesitate to hit provisional shots.

Maximum Allowable Search Time. (Added 3-20-23) Maximum allowed time to search for a lost ball is TWO MINUTES, starting immediately upon arrival in the area of the ball’s expected location. If you are behind with an open hole ahead the maximum allowable search time is ONE MINUTE.

Obstructions. Obstructions are anything artificial (man-made) except as described in Rule 15. “Moveable obstructions” interfering with either stance or swing path may be moved without penalty and the ball replaced if caused to move. If a player’s lie is blocked or his swing impeded

by an obstruction that, using common sense, is immovable, a player may take relief of one club length, no closer to the pin, without penalty to avoid injury.

Environmental Areas of Preservation. Environmentally sensitive areas must be designated by the Course as ground-under-repair, penalty areas, or out of bounds. Free relief or penalties apply according to their designation if a ball rests therein. Freshly planted areas or staked young trees, etc. should be respected as ground-under-repair.

Bunker Play. All sand bunkers will be treated as bunkers unless otherwise announced before the start of play and will be played in accordance with the Rules of Golf. The course or Tournament Committee Chairman may on occasion declare one or more entire bunkers, or all bunkers, as “Ground Under Repair”; in those instances ground under repair rules will be applied.

Bunker Conditional Relief. (Added: 1-1-22) If any or all bunkers are declared to be in play and abnormal conditions are subsequently encountered during the course of play the following guidelines may be applied:

- (1) If there is sand packed down in the bunker that has NOT been raked by the course maintenance staff, the player may lift his ball without cleaning it, rake or rough up the spot and replace the ball on the same spot, and resume play from the bunker, without penalty.
- (2) If there are areas within the bunker which have no sand, the ball is lying in mud, or if there is unintended grass or weeds growing within the boundary of the bunker, that area of the bunker may be treated as ground under repair. Player may find the nearest point of relief in the same bunker, no closer to the hole. Player may clean the ball and then drop within one club length of the point of relief, no closer to the hole and proceed to play without penalty.
- (3) If the ball is in standing water in a bunker relief may be taken in accord with the Rules of Golf. If relief is not possible within the bunker the ball may be dropped at the nearest point of relief outside the bunker, no closer to the hole, without penalty.

Root Rule. (Added 3-20-23) If a players ball comes to rest on or against the root of a tree such that making a stroke would likely result in the club contacting the root, to prevent injury, relief is allowed in accordance with the following:

- (1) Tree between hole and ball. If the tree is between the hole and the ball, the player may lift his ball without cleaning it and move it back along a line from the pin to the ball, sufficiently to avoid hitting the root, not more than one club length on that line away from the root, and replace the ball without penalty.
- (2) Ball between the tree and the hole. If the ball is on a root between the hole and the tree trunk, the player may lift his ball without cleaning it, and the ball may be moved laterally, no closer to the hole, only sufficiently to allow a stroke to be made without contacting the tree root with the club.
- (3) **NOTE:** Local root safety rule (1) above MAY NOT be abused to move a ball laterally to get out from behind a tree. Local root safety rule (2) above MAY NOT be abused to take relief from a tree trunk interfering with the stroke.

REMINDERS

Speed of Play. IF YOU ARRIVE AT A TEE BOX AND THE GROUP IN FRONT HAS ALREADY LEFT THE GREEN, YOU ARE A HOLE BEHIND! You MUST implement all

possible means described in **IMPROVING PACE OF PLAY** to catch up to your position on the course.

Ready Golf. Play “ready golf” by implementing ALL suggestions in the **IMPROVING PACE OF PLAY** document. All putts for points must be holed.

Mandatory Pick-up. The Board of Directors has established the following mandatory policy: a player “out of the hole” (i.e., unable to improve his team’s points for the hole) must pick up his ball. His score will be recorded as a double bogey in accordance the Rules of Handicapping.

Maximum Club Handicap. (Revised 3-5-2025) The maximum club handicap recognized by VBSGC for Stableford scorekeeping is **35**. This means every member is challenged to contribute at least minimal Stableford points per 18 holes played.

Equitable Stroke Control. (Revised 12-8-20) USGA Equitable Stroke Control was eliminated on January 1, 2020 with the adoption of the worldwide Rules for Handicapping; the new maximum allowable score per hole for ALL players is double bogey. Do not enter a score greater than the double bogey maximum for weekly 36-Minus or Peers tournaments. This “double bogey max” rule does not apply for Club Championship rounds.

VBSGC Stableford Scoring System (Revised 3-5-2025)

Bogey - 1-point	Par – 2-points	Birdie – 3-points
Eagle (hole-in-one on par 3) – 5-points	Double Eagle – 6-points	