

# *Golf*

## STEPS TO SUCCESS

#1  
SPORTS  
INSTRUCTION  
SERIES



Paul G. Schempp • Peter Mattsson

# *Golf*

## **STEPS TO SUCCESS**

**Paul G. Schempp**  
University of Georgia

**Peter Mattsson**  
Swedish Golf Federation

Human Kinetics

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**Human Kinetics**

Web site: [www.HumanKinetics.com](http://www.HumanKinetics.com)

**United States:** Human Kinetics

P.O. Box 5076

Champaign, IL 61825-5076

800-747-4457

e-mail: [humank@hkusa.com](mailto:humank@hkusa.com)

**Australia:** Human Kinetics

57A Price Avenue

Lower Mitcham, South Australia 5062

08 8277 1555

e-mail: [liaw@hkaustralia.com](mailto:liaw@hkaustralia.com)

**Canada:** Human Kinetics

475 Devonshire Road Unit 100

Windsor, ON N8Y 2L5

800-465-7301 (in Canada only)

e-mail: [orders@hkcanada.com](mailto:orders@hkcanada.com)

**New Zealand:** Human Kinetics

Division of Sports Distributors NZ Ltd.

P.O. Box 300 226 Albany

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0064 9 448 1207

e-mail: [blairc@hknewz.com](mailto:blairc@hknewz.com)

**Europe:** Human Kinetics

107 Bradford Road

Stanningley

Leeds LS28 6AT, United Kingdom

+ 44 (0) 113 255 5665

e-mail: [hk@hkeurope.com](mailto:hk@hkeurope.com)

*For Dr. DeDe Owens (1946-1999),  
one of golf's most dedicated,  
talented, and knowledgeable teachers.  
She remains an inspiration to  
instructors and players everywhere.*

# Climbing the Steps to Golf Success

For beginning and intermediate players as well as teachers and coaches, *Golf: Steps to Success* will help ensure a solid foundation of fundamentals and add skills and knowledge to what a player has already achieved. The steps to success are arranged in order, beginning with putting the ball into the hole and progressing back to a smooth and accurate tee shot.

At each step, beginners will benefit from clear, concise information on the basics for every part of the game—skills, strategies, and rules. The explanations and accompanying illustrations not only provide comprehensive instruction for executing each skill, but they also reveal how these skills can be used strategically to speed success on the course.

*Golf: Steps to Success* offers thorough explanations of fundamental and specialty shots, so intermediate players will have the opportunity to refine their skills with game-specific drills as they move toward advanced performance. They will gain insight into when, why, and how to hit the right shot. They will learn to analyze a golf course and assemble their skills into a game plan that will minimize errors and maximize playing potential.

For teachers, *Golf: Steps to Success* provides an all-inclusive instructional package. The information, drills, activities, and grading methods can be easily adapted to existing instructional programs. Teachers will also find useful information on the history of golf, the latest equipment, rules, course management strategies, sport psychology, and Web-based golf resources. Add to that information key cues in executing a full range of golf shots, as well as strategy, self-paced drills, and methods of evaluating each student, and you have an invaluable teaching resource.

As coaches to amateur and professional golfers, we know that a coach is in constant search of new solutions to familiar problems and tested methods for improving player performance. *Golf: Steps to Success* represents a compilation of the knowledge, skills, strategies, and drills we have used in working with successful golfers at all levels of the game, from complete beginners to accomplished professionals. In each step, coaches will find at least one nugget of knowledge, fresh idea, or unique drill that will help them help their players improve.

Whether you are a recreational golfer or play at a competitive level, you will improve

your performance and enjoy the game more as you develop greater competency in the skills and strategies required for successful play. *Golf: Steps to Success* provides a progressive plan for developing golf skills and gaining more confidence on the course. For each step, follow this sequence:

1. Read the explanation of the skill covered in the step, why the step is important, and how to execute the step.
2. Study the illustrations, which show how to execute each skill.
3. Read the instructions for each drill. Practice the drills and record your scores.
4. Have a qualified observer—a teacher, coach, or trained partner—evaluate your skill technique once you’ve completed each set of drills. The observer can use the success checks included with each drill to evaluate your execution of the skill.
5. At the end of the step, review your performance and total your scores from the drills. Once you’ve achieved the indicated level of success, move on to the next step.

Legendary golfer Ben Hogan once said, “There are no born golfers. Some have more natural ability than others, but they’ve all been made.” As Mr. Hogan won 62 professional tournaments, including all four major championships, his words carry considerable weight. Use *Golf: Steps to Success* to make you a better golfer. The steps can help you learn the game, expand your skills, teach the game with key cues and effective evaluations, or coach with proven player-development strategies. Even advanced players will find drills to hone their shot-making skills and tactics to give them a competitive edge.

People play golf for many reasons. For some, golf is an enjoyable, healthy physical activity in a beautiful outdoor setting. For others, golf provides a venue for social interaction with companions. Others find golf a platform for conducting business in a relaxed atmosphere. And for those who are keen for competition, there is no shortage of tournaments. Wherever your golfing aspirations lead you, *Golf: Steps to Success* will bring you closer to becoming the player you desire to be.

# Acknowledgments

Although we are listed as the authors, this book contains ideas, activities, and effort from a great many people. It is both fitting and appropriate that we acknowledge the many people who have helped us in this endeavor.

First and foremost, we would like to recognize the players with whom we have had the privilege of working over many years. In our efforts to help them find success in golf, they have helped us to become better teachers and coaches. There are many players to whom we owe a debt of thanks, but in particular Niclas Fasth, Mathias Gronberg, Richard S. Johnson, Per-Ulrik Johansson, Fredrik Jacobson, Catrin Nilsmark, Jesper Parnevik, Carl Pettersson, and Annika Sörenstam, plus a number of not-yet-so-known players on the Swedish golf team for helping us understand the steps to success in golf. The skills, points, and drills included in this book have all been field tested by these talented players.

Several coaches have been instrumental in focusing our ideas on how success in golf is achieved. Pia Nilsson first brought us together

and has remained a friend and valued colleague. The group of coaches working with the Swedish golf team is a constant source of inspiration and new ideas. Also the Swedish Golf Federation deserves a fair bit of recognition for its great ambition to support players and coaches and to develop the game of golf.

To the staff at Human Kinetics, particularly our editor Cynthia McEntire, we are deeply indebted. This book was written on trains, planes, and in many coffee shops near golf tournaments on three continents. Coaching players and writing books are separate challenges, and the HK staff was patient and understanding as we struggled to balance both.

The final acknowledgment is expressed with the deepest sense of love and gratitude to Peter's family. Maria, Filip, and Elina have sacrificed precious time with a husband and father so that Peter could pursue excellence in his profession and he and Paul could complete this book. Their gifts of time, love, and support have always been appreciated and are here recognized.

# **The Sport of Golf**

Every round of golf begins with a bit of nervous anticipation. There is excitement in the promise of playing well, accompanied by jitters from not knowing what will actually happen out on the course. Walking onto the first tee box, pushing a tee into the ground, perching a ball upon it, stepping back for a final stretch, taking a long look down the fairway to sight your target, stepping to the ball—you are ready to play and see where the round takes you.

Golf has been a popular pastime for centuries. It was so popular in 1457 that King James II of Scotland banned it because it was interfering

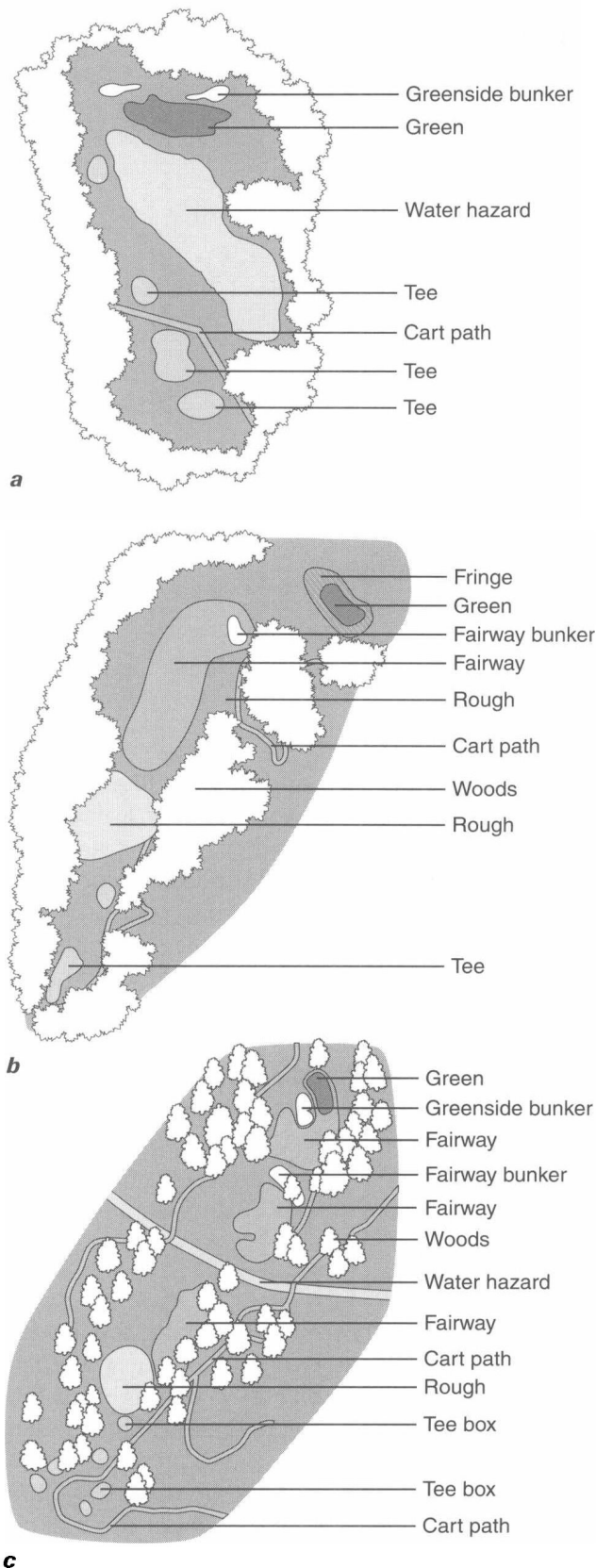
with archery practice and other military training. However, golf has won out over archery at St. Andrews, home of the first golf course in the world. In that sleepy little university town along the east coast of Scotland, you can find a game on one of the five public golf courses. The locals still stroll with dogs or baby carriages across the fairways of the famed Old Course on their way to the beach just past the first tee. Regardless of where you play—and today you can find golf courses just about anywhere in the world—you will find certain elements common to most courses.

## **GOLF COURSE**

Carrying on a tradition begun at St. Andrews, today's regulation golf course has 18 holes. Each hole has a teeing ground and a closely mowed area called the green, into which a hole is cut and a flag is placed.

Along the course are par 3, par 4, and par 5 holes (figure 1). Par is the number of strokes that the golf course designer estimates a very good golfer will take to complete a particular

hole. Say a course designer estimates that a very good golfer will take two strokes to get the ball in the hole once the ball is on the green. If the designer believes a very good player should take one stroke to get the ball on the green, the hole is a par 3. Put another way, on a par-3 hole a golfer should take one stroke to get the ball on the green and two strokes to get the ball in the hole. Designers also include holes that require



**Figure 1** Sample golf holes: (a) par 3; (b) par 4; (c) par 5.

two or three strokes to reach the green (par 4 and par 5). In these cases, a fairway is cut between the teeing ground and the green so that a player can land the ball off the tee and then hit an approach from the fairway to the green.

The total length of a golf course varies from 5,000 yards to over 7,000 yards (4,572 to 6,400 meters). Short holes range from 80 to 240 yards (73 to 220 meters), medium holes stretch from 240 to 460 yards (220 to 420 meters), and long holes can run over 600 yards (550 meters). To provide various levels of challenge, multiple tee boxes are placed on each hole. For example, in Pinehurst, North Carolina, from the forward tees course 2 covers 5,035 yards (4,604 meters), but played from the back tees the same course is 7,189 yards (6,574 meters), a difference of over 2,000 yards (1800 meters)! Golf courses are designed in this manner so that players of all abilities can enjoy the same golf course. This is one factor that makes golf so popular.

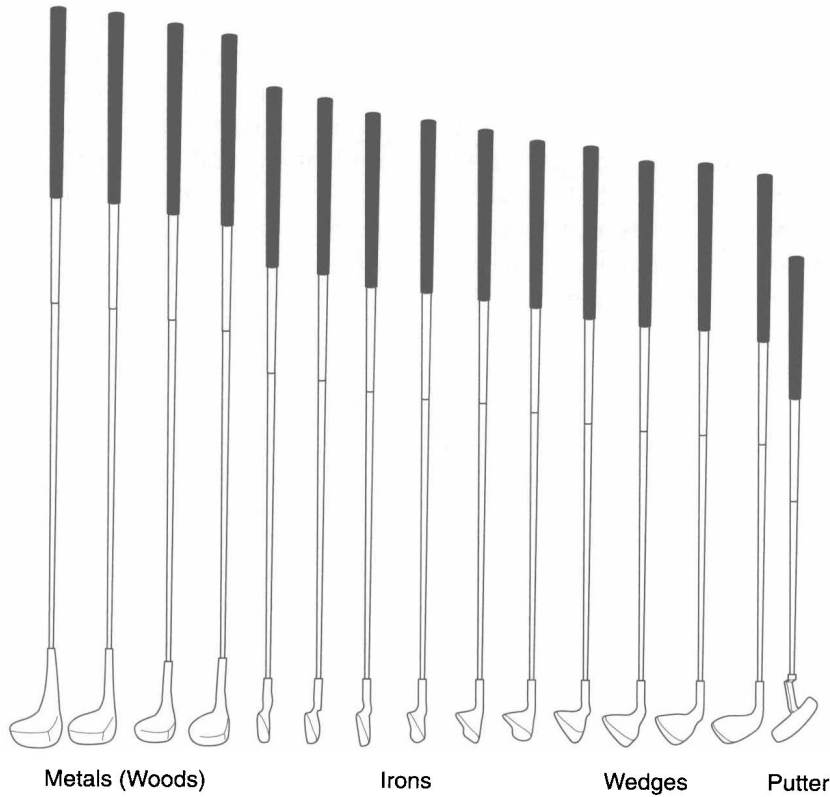
Before venturing out to play a round of golf, you will need to acquire certain equipment, understand how a game is scored, and learn basic rules and etiquette. These elements are covered in this introduction and referred to throughout the book. You will also need to develop critical skills and strategies, which you will learn in the subsequent steps.

## EQUIPMENT

To the new player and even to veteran players, equipment can be confusing and overwhelming due to the amount and variety available. However, a player needs only two things: clubs and a ball. A bag to carry your clubs, shoes to ensure good footing, and a few accessories can also increase your enjoyment and skill.

## Clubs

The rules of golf state that you can carry no more than 14 clubs during a round of golf. Precisely which clubs are the right ones for you are a matter of your skill and the golf course you are playing. Fortunately, there are some standards to guide you when selecting clubs. There are four types of clubs: metals, irons, wedges, and putters (figure 2). Regardless of the type



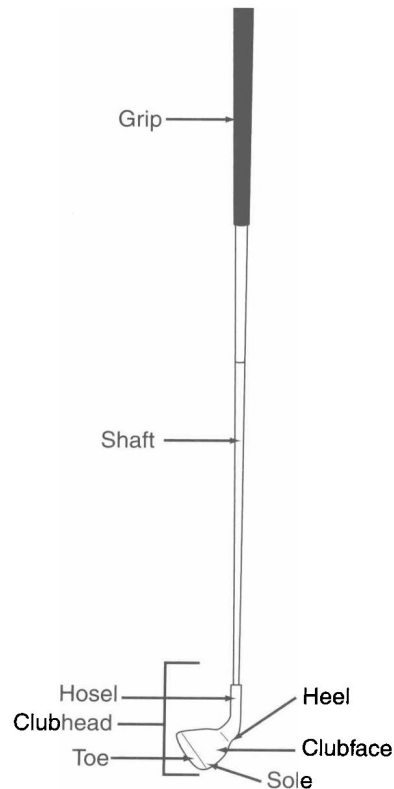
**Figure 2** Metals, irons, wedges, and putters make up a set of golf clubs. A golfer can carry no more than 14 clubs on the course.

of club, clubs have three parts: grip, shaft, and head (figure 3).

Metal clubs have the largest heads and longest shafts of all the clubs. These clubs were once called woods because the clubhead was made of persimmon wood. Today these clubs are made with a variety of metals, although titanium is preferred due to its strength and elasticity.

Metal clubs are numbered 1, 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9, with the higher-numbered clubs having the higher loft. Loft is the angle between the clubface and a line at a 90-degree angle from the surface. The more the clubface is angled to the sky when it is resting on the ground, the more loft it has. A club with more loft will send the ball higher but a shorter distance than a club with less loft. Club 1 is the driver and seldom has the number on the bottom, or sole, of the clubhead. Clubs 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9 are referred to as fairway metals and are used most often on the fairway.

The most common configuration of metal clubs in the average golfer's bag is driver, 3-metal, and 5-metal. Because they send the ball



**Figure 3** All clubs have a grip, shaft, and head.

higher and are easier to hit, many players prefer to add the 7- or 9-metal to their bag and take out some of the long irons.

Iron clubs are numbered 1 through 9. The 1-iron has the least loft and the longest shaft while the 9-iron has the shortest shaft and the most loft; the 9-iron thus sends the ball the highest but also the shortest distance of all the irons. Due to their long shaft and low loft, the 1- and 2-irons are seldom recommended for the average player, and most irons are sold in sets numbered 3 through 9. Iron clubs get their name from the original metal—iron—used in making the head. However, today's iron clubheads are a composite of metals.

Two types of clubheads are used in irons: forged and perimeter-weighted. Forged irons place more weight in the center of the clubhead while perimeter-weighted irons distribute the weight on the outside of the clubhead. For advanced players who consistently strike the ball in the middle of the clubhead, forged irons give a better feel and performance. For the average player who does not always hit the center of the clubhead, the perimeter-weighted clubhead is more forgiving and gives a better result with shots that are struck slightly off-center. In recent years, perimeter-weighted clubs have become the iron of choice for most players, including touring professionals.

Wedges are irons that have slightly modified soles to help move the clubhead through sand or green-side rough. Typical wedges include the approach wedge, pitching wedge, sand wedge, and lob wedge. Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) tour player Annika Sörenstam carries four wedges in her golf bag, but most players carry only a pitching wedge and a sand wedge.

Because wedges have the greatest loft, they produce the most spin on the golf ball, allowing the ball to bite or stop on a hard green. Wedges also have the shortest shafts, which makes them easier to control. With the greatest loft and shortest shafts, they are designed for short or scoring shots. Practicing with the wedges is a sure way to lower your scores.

Putters come in all shapes and lengths. Players can choose from a long putter, belly putter, or standard putter. With a long putter, the end

of the shaft is against the chest as the top hand and the lower hand grip the middle of the shaft. With a belly putter, the end of the shaft is pressed against the stomach. With a standard putter, the end of the shaft is gripped with both hands. The most common length by far is the standard putter. As for putter heads, many varieties are on the market, with new ones appearing each year. When selecting a putter, it is best to simply try several until you find one that feels comfortable and puts the ball in the hole. Performance is more important than looks, so go for the putter that does the job for you.

A final thought on clubs: Get fitted. Most club shops can fit you for a set based on your swing. If you are buying new clubs, this service is usually free. If the shop does not offer this service, see a professional who is certified by the PGA (Professional Golf Association of America) or LPGA to fit clubs to players. You will be fitted for the proper length and flex of the shaft, optimal lie and loft for each clubhead, and grip size. The time and money you put into this process will pay off in years of good service from your clubs. The investment is well worth it.

## Golf Balls

Over the years there have been major advances in golf ball technology. All advances have benefited the player. Today's golf balls fly farther and with less sidespin. (Sidespin is the force that redirects an otherwise perfectly good shot with a big, sweeping curve called a slice.) Like clubs, golf balls come in many varieties. The differences in golf balls are both internal and external. The design characteristics of a golf ball are on the packaging, not the ball itself, so read labels carefully.

Internally, golf balls have a one-, two-, or three-piece core. Multicore centers produce more backspin, which gives better players more control over their shots. Some multicore balls gain greater distance from the accelerated clubhead speed of a good golfer. Solid or single-piece core balls spin less but tend to fly a bit farther, characteristics appreciated by beginning and intermediate golfers and golfers with lower swing speeds.

Externally, golf ball covers come in soft and hard varieties. Soft covers provide a better feel,

particularly on short shots and putting, but only good players can detect this characteristic. Soft covers tend to be more expensive and less durable. Hard covers are more durable, spin less, and are less expensive. These qualities appeal to the beginning to intermediate player.

Which ball should you use? With so many choices available, this can be a difficult question to answer. If you are just beginning, look for a solid-center golf ball with a durable cover. These balls are less expensive, last longer, go farther, and spin less, giving you straighter shots. At this level, your golf shots will be more affected by your swing technique than the ball, so focus more on your skills and don't fret too much about the ball. As your skill increases, try a variety of mid- to upper-priced balls until you find one that fits your game. If you get serious about your game, you can seek advice directly from ball manufacturers. This information is easily accessible on the Web. Two sources for popular golf balls are Titleist ([www.titleist.com](http://www.titleist.com)) and Top Flite ([www.topflite.com](http://www.topflite.com)).

## Accessories

If you have a set of clubs and a golf ball, you have all the tools you need to play. However, you may want to consider a few accessories to make your game more efficient and comfortable.

Unless you want to walk a golf course with 14 different clubs hanging loose under your arm, you will need a golf bag. Two common types of golf bags are stand bags and cart bags. Stand bags are used by players who prefer to walk the course as they play a round of golf. These bags are smaller and lighter than cart bags and come equipped with a stand mechanism that opens automatically when the bottom of the bag is placed on the ground. The stand keeps the bag upright and angles the clubs toward the

golfer for easy selection. A cart bag is larger and heavier and is designed to be strapped to the back of a golf cart for those who prefer to ride the course. All golf bags come with pockets for storing golf balls, tees, a sweater or rain suit, and other accessories. Loops for holding an umbrella and golf towel come on most golf bags, as does a hood cover.

Balance is a critical factor in a golf swing, and golf shoes are specifically designed to hold your feet firmly to the ground during the swing. Golf shoes have the added benefit of being waterproof, as rain or heavy dew can soak your feet in a hurry. Considering that an average round of golf takes four to five hours, the support offered by comfortable, well-fitted golf shoes makes them a recommended accessory. Like any other sport shoes, it is best to try them on before making a purchase. A knowledgeable golf store employee should be able to give you advice on quality, durability, and price.

You should also consider carrying an umbrella on the course. Depending on your geographical location, it may often rain when you are playing. To keep dry and comfortable, an umbrella is necessary, preferably a windproof golf umbrella. These umbrellas have large canopies so you can keep yourself and your golf bag dry during a downpour. Windproof umbrellas have a vent near the top so wind can escape the canopy and not bend or break the umbrella.

If your hands sweat easily, are soft, or are easily irritated, you may want to consider wearing a golf glove. The glove is worn on the target-side hand on all full swing shots to provide a better grip. Wearing a glove is a matter of personal preference.

Additional accessories we suggest you put in your golf bag include a mark repair tool to fix ball marks on the green, tees for teeing your ball, and sunscreen.

## SCORING

Success in golf is measured by the number of strokes it takes you to move the ball from the teeing ground into the hole; the fewer strokes, the better the player. In a round of golf, the count begins on the first tee and ends when the ball

drops in the 18th hole. One stroke is counted each time you attempt to strike the ball whether you make contact or not.

Every golf course has a par rating. Par represents the strokes a highly competent player

would need to complete all 18 holes. As mentioned, each hole on the golf course has a par rating, and the totaled par ratings of all 18 holes are the par rating for the course.

Par-3 holes are short because the highly competent golfer should reach the green from the tee box in one stroke and then take two putts to complete the hole. Par-4 holes require two shots to reach the green, one from the tee box to the fairway and one from the fairway to the green. Par-5 holes allow for three strokes from the tee box to the green. The typical 18-hole golf course is comprised of 4 par-3 holes, 10 par-4 holes, and 4 par-5 holes, for a course par of 72.

Golf has terminology to describe how you played each hole relative to par. If you took one stroke from the tee box to hole out the ball (this normally occurs only on par 3s), this is called an *ace* or a *hole-in-one*. If your score on a hole is two under par, this is called an *eagle*. Both the ace and the eagle are rare occurrences. One under par on a hole is a *birdie* and a prized score. It is common for beginning and intermediate players

to shoot scores that are over par. One over par is a *bogey*, two over par is a *double bogey*, three over is a *triple bogey*, and so on.

How you play a hole and where your ball lands affects your score. If your ball stops in the fairway on your tee shot, this is called a *fairway hit*. If you put the ball on the green in the allocated number of strokes (on a par 3, that would be one stroke), you are said to have reached the *green in regulation*. If you miss the green but are able to chip or pitch the ball on the green and then hole the ball out with one putt, this is called an *up and down*. An up and down from a green-side bunker is called a *sand save*. *Number of putts* represents your putting proficiency. Par is 36 putts. If you hit fewer putts than that, you are considered a good putter. These terms are important indicators of your success as a golfer; the greater your proficiency in any of these areas, the better golfer you are. In step 12 you will see the part these aspects of the game should play in your practice routines.

## KEEPING A SCORECARD

When you check in for your tee time, you will be provided with a scorecard for the course (figure 4). The scorecard will list the holes, the par for each hole, the distance from each set of tee boxes to the hole, and the handicap for each hole. The handicap indicates the difficulty of the hole in comparison to the other holes on the course. The hole with the lowest number (1) is the most difficult and the hole with the highest number (18) is the least difficult. Also listed on the scorecard are the course rating and slope. These numbers indicate the course difficulty in comparison to other courses. A course with a higher rating is more difficult than a course with a lower rating. For example, a course with a rating of 70.6/132 is more difficult than a course with a rating of 67.6/121.

Although the scorecard provides information regarding the course and the holes, its primary purpose is for you to record your score in stroke play. As you play a round, write down the number of strokes you took for each hole, including penalty strokes. Most players simply

write down the number of strokes, but some players prefer to add a bit more information. For example, if you score a birdie on the hole (one under par for the hole), you circle the number you record. If you eagle the hole (two under par), you circle the number twice. A bogie (one over par) is indicated by drawing a box around the number. A double bogie number receives two boxes, a triple bogie receives three boxes, and so on.

It is customary in tournament play for players to swap scorecards and keep the score of their opponent. In recreational play, players can keep their own score or one member of the group can keep the scores for everyone on a single card.

A word of caution: When playing a tournament, carefully check the hole-by-hole score and the final score. If you sign the scorecard and turn it in to tournament officials and it is later discovered that you signed an incorrect scorecard, you will be automatically disqualified from the tournament. In 1968, Roberto De Vincenzo had apparently won one of the most prestigious

DATE \_\_\_\_\_ SCORER \_\_\_\_\_ ATTEST \_\_\_\_\_

**Figure 4** Sample scorecard.

tournaments in golf, the Masters, until it was discovered that he had inadvertently signed an incorrect scorecard and was disqualified. If your

score is supposed to count, be sure to count it carefully!

## BASIC RULES

The fundamental goal of golf is to get the ball in each hole on the course in the fewest number of strokes. The rules of the game provide a framework that regulates what a player can and cannot do in this quest. The rules permit fair and impartial competition between players and with the course (we play against par). The better you understand the rules, the better you understand golf and the more enjoyment you can derive from the game.

The rules of golf are often defined in terms of the penalties a player incurs for certain actions and events on the course. Violation of a rule results in a one- or two-stroke penalty or a disqualification. The rules also provide options for certain course conditions. The rules specify a player's actions when preparing to strike the ball, conditions surrounding the ball at rest, and course conditions not under a player's control.

The rules of golf are intended to maintain the integrity of the game. As a golfer, you are expected to know the rules and follow them. If you are uncertain of a rule, you may ask your playing partners or opponents to state the rules. At all times, you must abide by the rules; otherwise you are not playing golf.

As you will see in the following rules, in many situations you must replay a ball from its original position. If you believe your ball may be lost, in a hazard, or out of bounds, you may declare your belief that your ball is unplayable and hit a provisional ball, which you hit from the original spot in case your first ball must be returned under the rules. This courtesy is intended to keep the pace of play by not making a player walk back on the course. If, after hitting the provisional ball, you discover that your first ball is playable, you can pick up the provisional ball and play with your original ball. If the first ball is unplayable, declare it so and play your provisional ball as the ball in play, assessing the required penalty.

In this section we will review the key rules of stroke play, the most common scoring system,

and typical situations that occur in a round of golf. However, as you get more serious about the game, particularly if you are going to be competitive, you need to familiarize yourself with the rules of golf as established and published by the United States Golf Association (USGA) ([www.usga.org](http://www.usga.org)).

### Relief and Free Drops

On the golf course, the ball may come to rest in certain situations that are beyond your control and therefore result in no penalty. In such cases, you may elect to play the ball as it lies (always an option in golf), or seek relief from the obstruction with a free drop. The latter option allows you to relocate the ball fairly (figure 5).

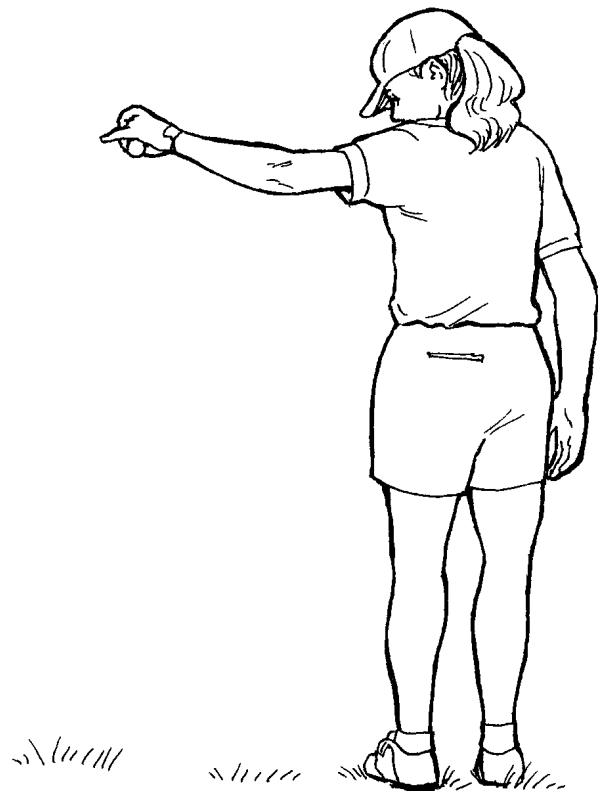


Figure 5 Free drop.

To exercise the free-drop option, you must stand outside the trouble area at the closest point where an unencumbered strike at the ball is possible. At this point, you raise the ball to shoulder height, extend your arm, and drop the ball within one club length of your spot. The ball must come to rest no closer to the hole than the original spot from which you are seeking relief.

Conditions from which you are entitled to seek relief include but are not limited to the following:

- Ground under repair (usually marked with a sign or white paint)
- Man-made objects embedded in the course such as paved cart paths, sprinkler heads, and metal grates
- Holes made by burrowing animals
- Casual water (water not normally on the course) left by rain or sprinklers
- Staked trees or shrubs

## One-Stroke Penalties

Some situations result in a one-stroke penalty. For a one-stroke penalty, one stroke is added to your score even though you did not strike at the ball. Further procedures govern how you continue play once you have been assessed the penalty.

- **Lost ball.** If you cannot find your ball after a five-minute search, the ball is declared lost and you must strike another ball from the spot at which you struck the original ball, with a one-stroke penalty. This is known as loss of stroke and distance.
- **Out of bounds.** If your shot passes the white stakes on the perimeter of a golf course, it has gone out of bounds (OB). If any portion of the ball lies inbounds, the ball is considered inbounds. Like a lost ball, the penalty for OB is loss of stroke and distance. You play the next shot from the place of the previous shot, with a one-stroke penalty.
- **Direct water hazard.** A water hazard marked by yellow stakes is a direct water hazard. If your ball comes to rest

inside the yellow stakes, you have three options. First, you may play the ball as it lies with no penalty stroke assessed, although your club cannot touch any object within the hazard until you initiate your swing to strike the ball or you will be assessed a one-stroke penalty. Second, you may replay the ball from the previous spot from which it was struck, with a one-stroke penalty. Third, keeping in line with the point at which the ball entered the hazard and the hole, you may back away from the hole as far as desired and drop the ball, with a one-stroke penalty.

- **Lateral water hazard.** A water hazard marked with red stakes is a lateral water hazard. Lateral water hazards normally run parallel to the course. You have four options if your ball comes to rest within a lateral water hazard. First, you may play the ball as it lies with no penalty as long as your club does not contact any object within the hazard until you make a fair strike at the ball. Second, you may return to the original location of the shot and replay the stroke, with a one-stroke penalty. Third, you may determine where the ball entered the hazard and, with a one-stroke penalty, drop a ball within two club lengths of this spot, no closer to the hole. Fourth, you may go to the far side of the hazard directly across from where the ball entered. Keeping the hole and the point of hazard entry on line, drop a ball as far as desired and in line with the hole and point of entry, again with a one-stroke penalty.
- **Unplayable lie.** If you determine that a ball is unplayable, for example if it is against a tree or under a thick bush, you may declare it unplayable and assess yourself a one-stroke penalty. Now you have three options. First, you may replay the ball from the original spot. Second, you may drop the ball within two club lengths of the spot in which it came to rest. Third, you may go back as far as desired to drop the ball on a line from the hole through the unplayable point.

- **Accidentally moving the ball.** When a ball has been struck from the tee but not yet holed out, if you move the ball from its original position while it is in play, you must return it to the original position and take a one-stroke penalty. If you fail to return the ball to the original point of play, you are assessed a two-stroke penalty.

## Two-Stroke Penalties

Some situations result in a two-stroke penalty, in which two strokes are added to your score even though you do not strike at the ball. Additional procedures govern how you continue play once you have been assessed the penalty.

- **Grounding the club in a hazard.** If your club touches the ground or any object affixed to the ground (for example, a tree or a post) while in a hazard (for example, a water hazard or sand bunker) before you initiate a swing, you are assessed a two-stroke penalty.
- **Playing the wrong ball.** If you strike a ball that is not the ball in play, you are assessed a two-stroke penalty and must find your own ball and continue play. It is appropriate for players to mark their golf balls for the purpose of identification. You may not alter the playability of the ball as you mark it. A waterproof marker works best, and it is customary to use a line, symbol, dots, or initials as markers. PGA tour player Duffy Waldorf has his children draw pictures and symbols on the balls he plays in tournaments, making it easy to spot his ball on the golf course.
- **Striking the flag or another ball when putting from on the green.** If you play

a ball from the putting green and your ball strikes either the flag stick or another player's ball, you are assessed a two-stroke penalty. You should play the next stroke where your ball came to rest but return your opponent's ball to its original location. It is your responsibility to have the flag tended or removed before playing a ball from the putting green. There is no penalty if you hit the flag stick when shooting the ball from off the green. If you believe your opponent's ball lies within your putting line, ask your opponent to mark the placement of the ball with a small object and remove the ball from the green.

- **Asking advice.** If you are playing a competitive round, you may not ask for any advice that will aid your play, such as which club to play or how to swing. You may, however, ask for general course information such as the location of yardage markers or the hole. This rule would not apply if you were receiving on-course instruction and were not planning to use your score for a competition or for handicap purposes.

## Disqualification

You can be disqualified, or not have your score count in a competition, if you play the wrong ball and do not correct the error before teeing off on the next hole. As mentioned, scoring errors also may result in disqualification. Scoring errors usually result from recording an incorrect score on a particular hole. If you incur a penalty on a hole and do not assess yourself for that penalty, you have recorded an incorrect score and could be disqualified.

## ETIQUETTE

The rich history of golf has left a legacy of social protocol that will enhance your enjoyment and improve playing conditions. No penalties are assessed for violating the rules of etiquette, but such offenses are considered rude. By following the rules of etiquette, you allow all golfers to

enjoy the game and you send the message that you understand the sport. Most of the golfers you meet on a course won't be concerned about your skill level, but they will be concerned if you do not exhibit the social graces of the sport. Following are 10 keys to etiquette on the golf course.