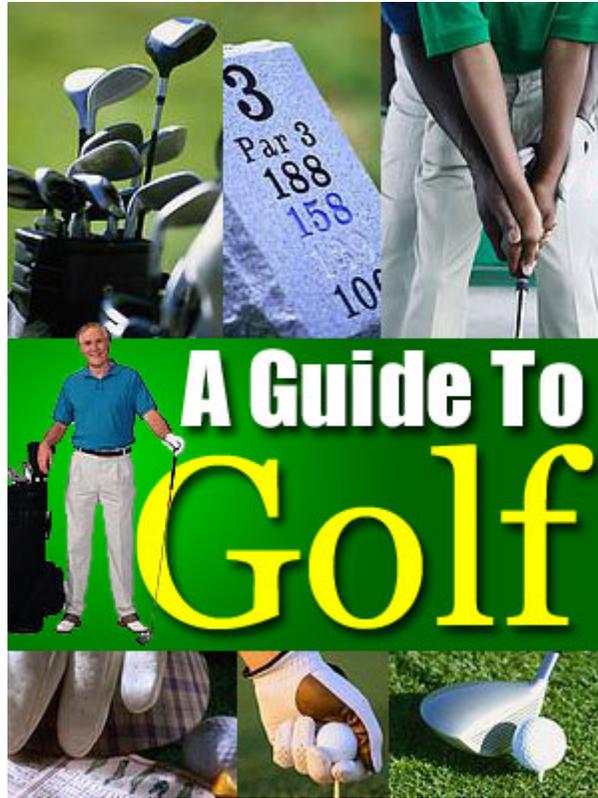


A Guide to Golf



A Guide to Golf



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What is GOLF

Golf is an easy game – It's just hard to play'

There has probably never been a truer word spoken. In principle the game is about striking a small ball with a stick with a heavy end some distance into a little hole. Then repeating the exercise 17 more times over holes of different lengths and degree of difficulty.

The golfer is equipped with a set of clubs (maximum 14 in total) of varying length, clubhead density and loft of face, which hit the ball different lengths and heights, and a putter for use on the greens.

Most amateurs play the game over 18 holes (a round), using any of a number of game formats.

The professional game normally consists of Strokeplay, with most events played over 4 rounds (72 holes and 4 days). The winner, quite simply, is the player who plays the 72 holes in the fewest shots or strokes. It's that simple.

A Golf Course

In the past, golf courses (or 'links' as they are often known – although this word has become more frequently attached to seaside courses) consisted of any number of holes – depending on the lie of the land and the amount of space available. Nowadays, courses are almost invariably 18 holes long, although a sizeable number of 9 hole courses remain. These are always played twice around, often using different teeing areas on the second occasion.

The holes consist of a combination of different pars, mostly pars 3, 4 and 5, depending on the length, and very occasionally the degree of difficulty. The par is reckoned to be the number of shots a scratch golfer would take to get the ball from tee to hole, as illustrated below. The total of the individual hole pars makes up the par of the overall course, normally between 70 & 72.

Most courses have 3 lots of Tees:

White markers - Mens' medal tees

Yellow markers – Mens' standard tees

Red markers – Ladies' standard tees

Some courses also have Championship tees – normally only used when the course plays host to a professional event. Other courses have Blue markers. These can be special tees for 'veteran' members and juniors

Golf courses

Private courses

Are for members only. Visitors may play on payment of a '**Green Fee**'. Costs of the green fee vary considerably depending on time – courses often have '**twilight rates**' – after a certain time of the day – frequently there are Winter rates – between certain months of the year. The rate will also vary depending on whether the visitor is 'introduced' by a member or not.

Many courses will not allow visitors at the weekend (unless introduced). Some courses do not allow visitors at all, unless they are introduced, but these are a small minority. If in doubt about whether you will be able to play on arrival at a course, or whether the cost of a round falls within your price structure, give the Club Secretary or Professional a call beforehand. In the vast majority of cases you will receive friendly advice, and occasionally some cost benefit!

Most private courses are very welcoming to visitors (they need the green fee income!) Some may require sight of a 'handicap certificate'. Please ensure that your game is at an 'acceptable' level before venturing on to a full golf course. Even more important is a knowledge of the etiquette of the game, especially in knowing when to let a following group play through if you are holding them up.

Lots of clubs have a second course – sometimes 9 holes, sometimes all par 3 holes. These are often called a '**blue**' course. Most private golf clubs operate on the principle of an annual subscription for membership. These are often very much more reasonable than people are led to believe – especially if you consider the amount of time you can spend enjoying the club's facilities. What can be expensive and off-putting to the would-be member is the 'entrance fee', which combined with the subs can often double the cost of your golf in the first year. Many clubs, except for the prestige locations have now waived the entrance fee in a bid to attract new members. If you want to know, speak to a member of the club, or pick up the phone to the Secretary.

Public courses

(Sometimes '**municipal**' if the course was built or came under the control of the local authority) normally do not have a membership, and all players pay a green fee to play. Many of these do not have a tee-time booking system, but operate on a first-come basis.

It should be mentioned here that there are some superb public courses, and particularly in Scotland, but also true elsewhere, some of the municipals are championship standard.

Nowadays, there is a huge range of different types of membership between the traditional types mentioned above. One frequently-used expression is pay'n'play. At these, there are members who pay a subscription, normally lower than at private member clubs, but who then pay an additional fee each time they play. In the UK, the point is being reached where more people are playing golf on this basis than any other. And it can be a cost-effective way of playing golf – particularly if you do not envisage playing many times in the course of a year.

How do I join a golf club

If you are looking to join a club - and at present there are probably more vacancies for club membership than at any time in history! – phone around, or use the internet to look at some of the websites run by the Golf Union for your region or country. Think about the type of membership that would suit you. Weigh up the cost, and all the other factors, then find out how to go about applying'

For private members clubs, many have a procedure to be followed if you apply for membership. This will often mean completing an application form, and sometimes finding a club member who will 'sponsor' you for membership. Some clubs will invite you to interview with the Captain or a Committee member – sometimes this takes the form of playing a round with an 'officer' of the club. This can sound a bit daunting – if it does, please do not be put off. It is often much more straightforward than it sounds. And the days when Golf Clubs made would-be members jump through hoops to maintain the 'exclusivity' of their club are fast becoming a thing of the past

Driving Range

A driving range is an area where golfers go to practice. The great benefit of a range is that you can enjoy a degree of privacy (your own 'bay'), and you don't have to go and pick up all the balls you've hit afterwards!

Most ranges have individual bays, with a mat and a rubber tee if you want to use that. Many are undercover and heated, so can be used in bad weather. There are all types and sizes of range – multi-tier bays, floodlights. The most technologically-advanced ranges now have automated ball-retrieval systems (so that you don't have to try to watch your ball amongst the many thousand already out there) and self-loading tees, so that whilst you are watching one shot, another ball is set up ready for your next one. Some have a practice bunker and a special short-game area, including a putting green.

Ranges do not normally require a membership of any sort. You pay your 'fee' by buying a basket of balls to hit.

One sad fact of life is that many golfers – at whatever level – have absolutely no idea how to practice effectively. A session at the range often consists of buying a bucket of balls, then trying to reach the back fence with the biggest club in their bag – or at least to smash the ball out of sight to impress the person in the next bay. This is a pity, because a structured program of goals to achieve with each visit to a range can be one of the best opportunities for serious practice offered to a golfer.

Make a point of when to go out and practice a particular element of the program before moving on to the next activity.

Visiting a range for the first time

There is nothing worse than being called back publicly because you have tried to get in with a full golf bag – or had everyone in the place picking up your golf balls because no-one told you to put a basket under the outlet before you put your token in the machine!

Most people know of the location of a driving range in their area – often these are in very accessible locations near main road junctions. What is much less known is that a lot of golf clubs have a range which is open to the public. Sometimes these lack the sophistication of the stand-alone driving range, but often make up for this by being closer to hand, quieter and probably less expensive. Give your club a call and find out.

The scorecard – what it means

All golf courses have their own **scorecard** (card of the course), which is unique to that course.

On the card, you will find a whole host of information regarding the club, including things like an outline map of the course layout, and the color of the flags on the different nines.

The only information you will find on all cards is:

The scorecard itself – sometimes clubs have separate cards for different member categories, but in the main these are all contained in the one card

The 'Local Rules' of that Club. There is provision within the rules of golf for a club committee to agree rules concerning local circumstances and features. Sometimes these over-ride the rules of golf, but in the main they are intended to give guidance regarding local conditions. You should always check the local rules before going out on a course, especially in competitions.

If a particular situation is not covered by local rules, then the rules of golf apply.

For most competitions, these details will probably have been completed.

The centre part shows the hole number, and the length in yards (or meters) – for each of the tee types – the colors normally correspond with those on the tee markers.

In this case, the Stroke Index is the same for both the white (medal) and yellow (Men's' normal) tees, but different from the Ladies' (red) tees. The card also has space for 2 players' scores + those of the marker.

The 'out' and 'in' nine totals are summarized at the bottom of the card, and the total (net score/ Stableford points etc (see the next section) written in the large box.

The card is then signed by both the player and the marker.

Failure to do this will result in disqualification!

Many cards also carry a request to avoid slow play – the worst enemy of everyone on the golf course!

What is a handicap?

This is covered in some detail in a later section. Basically, this is the number of strokes a player receives, over and above the '**par**' for a course. The higher the handicap, the more strokes received. The highest 'official' handicaps are currently **28** (men) and **45** (women). A very good golfer plays off '**scratch**' (zero handicap) or even a '**plus**' handicap!

If a player plays off an **18** handicap, he/she would receive **1** shot per hole over and above the course par.

If the handicap is lower than 18, the Stroke Index is used to determine on which holes the strokes are received. In the above example, a 15 handicap player (man) would get an extra stroke at all of the holes where the S.I is 15 or less – so no strokes at the 4th, 7th and 15th.

If the handicap is higher than 18, they would receive a second shot at the holes where the stroke index is equal to or less than the handicap – 18. So a 20-handicapper would get an extra shot at the 5th and 14th holes.

Golf Equipment for beginners

What do you need to start?

When you start out in the game, a good basic set or half-set of clubs is as good as anything. Ok, if you are unusually short or tall, you may experience some difficulty with standard sizing and may have to have something specially made. Other than that, there is no real requirement for heading to your local leading brand specialist and having a set made up of special lengths, shaft types, grip thickness and all of the other variables that can go into club design.

What does a set of clubs consist of?

Basically, a set of clubs consists of 'woods' and irons and a putter.

Woods

Woods (a generic term for the shape of the club as these are often made of other materials) are the more bulbous-headed clubs with greater club head density, designed for propelling the ball longer distances. Originally, these numbered from 1 (Driver) to 4-wood, but these days it seems that woods can have any degree of 'loft' and can number down to the higher iron numbers.

Irons

A normal set of irons consists of numbers 3 to 9, together with a pitching wedge and sand wedge for use around the greens and from bunkers. The lower the number on the club, normally the longer the shaft to give a bigger swing-arc, and the less the degree of loft on the face. These are designed to hit the ball lower over longer distances. The higher the number, the shorter the shaft and greater degree of loft. These are intended to hit the ball higher and over shorter distances.

There are a number of additional clubs, such as a 1 or 'driving' iron, and a lob-wedge with a very high degree of loft, which is intended to get the ball very high, thereby reducing the amount of 'run' on the ball once it lands.

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The Putter

Has a flat face, and is designed to cause the ball to roll along the ground in places such as the putting green.

Basically, the golfer is free to choose his/her optimal selection of clubs, the only provisos being the maximum number (14) which may be taken out on a given (competitive) round, and the fact that the design of the club must conform to the rules as laid down by the authorities and amended from time to time as part of the rules of golf.

Pick up any golf magazine, and you will be presented with a bewildering array of clubs and balls – even clothing- all of which are 'guaranteed' to put additional distance on your drives or spin on your pitch shots. The reality is that for the vast majority of golfers they will probably make very little, if any, difference.

More details on clubs:

Cavity-backs

These are designed to be more forgiving - a concept that for most of us will be very attractive. Simply speaking, our off-centre strikes will travel straighter and longer than was previously possible with older technology. They are designed for the amateur player to make the game easier and more enjoyable.

These clubs do this by having the weight taken from the back of the club head and placed around the perimeter - hence perimeter weighting. Because the clubhead has this weight behind the toe and heel of the club, when a shot is hit from either, the head remains more stable and does not twist. Anything that reduces twist in the club head at impact will result in more accurate, longer shots. Cavity-backed clubs now also tend to have lower centers of gravity. This produces a higher launch angle for shots which allows the ball to get airborne more easily. This makes hitting long irons considerably easier and less daunting for the higher handicapper.

Cavity-backs are normally either midsize or oversize. This refers to the size of the club head and its 'sweet-spot'. Higher handicap golfers should go for an oversize head, as it will maximize forgiveness, enabling them to progress more quickly. More proficient amateurs may choose to go for the midsize cavity which may help their accuracy and "shotmaking" abilities.

Blades

There are few true blades left on the market, mainly down to the fact that cavity-backs are better for the vast majority of golfers. Blades are more difficult to use than other types of clubhead, as they offer little or no forgiveness for a strike anywhere other than the sweet-spot. The reason that the top end of the amateur and professional players often choose to play these is because they rarely, if ever, miss the centre of the club. With accuracy like this, the blade offers ultimate playability. This means that the user can move the ball around in the air, left to right, high or low with great accuracy and feel. For most players simply hitting the ball straight is enough and that is why the forgiving nature of a cavity is our choice. Leave the blades to the experts!

Forged Head

Clubs that have a forged head are designed for the lower handicap amateur and the professional. They offer these players a softer, better feel and above all complete consistency. The golfer will experience a softer feeling at impact, which is known to increase feedback. This will increase the players feel and therefore touch, particularly with the shorter irons, allowing the player to attack the target with complete confidence.

At the top level of golf where players rely on distances being accurate to the meter, the forged head provides a consistency of distance unrivalled by other materials.

WHY NOT FORGED FOR THE HIGHER HANDICAP

Forged clubs are made to be softer than others, and are therefore less durable. The higher handicap is unlikely to appreciate the benefit and is more likely to damage the club.

As forged clubs are more expensive (due to a more intensive production process) the higher handicap player should be advised against them as, for a lower financial outlay, they can get a set of clubs (see below) more suited to their game.

Cast Head

Cast club heads are mainly less expensive than forged, offer greater ease of use and are more durable. The higher handicapper will rarely appreciate the benefits of a forged club and as such is better opting for cast. Being generally harder than forged club heads reduces the risk of damaging (chipping), so the investment in a set of clubs is likely to be longer lasting.

Clubhead Materials

Stainless Steel

Both forged and cast clubs are most often made of quality stainless steel. It is straightforward to manufacture and offers durability and playability. They range from reasonable quality to some of the best in production, and will always be rewarding to play with when you find the set to suit you. Clubs are often finished with chrome plating to increase consistency and make them look more attractive.

Alloys

At the cheaper end of the market are the alloys. These materials are often of poorer quality and lack the durability of the steel heads, often marking and chipping easily.

You often see 'complete sets' of clubs on sale, including the irons, woods, bag, putter and trolley; check whether they are alloy. Often these prove more expensive in the longer run.

Beryllium, Copper & Nickel

These are used to give an even softer 'feel' to the club, increasing the feedback to the player. Clubs using these materials are usually of a high quality and therefore expensive. Follow the guidelines for forged clubs. Generally, they will not benefit the higher handicap player in the least.

Titanium

Titanium is the new space age material that is sought by many golfers today. It is sixty per cent lighter than steel and forty per cent harder. These qualities made it very attractive to the club manufacturers. Titanium is used for both irons and woods although it is particularly beneficial to the latter.

In IRONS, titanium, owing to its light weight, allows the manufacturer to increase the size of the club head and therefore the sweetspot, making them more forgiving. Because the metal is so light it has to be offset with heavier weights. Usually these will be either tungsten or brass. These weights can be strategically positioned in the heel and especially in the toe to reduce twist and deflection. They will also be positioned to lower the centre of gravity allowing easier hitting, and sometimes placed in the form of a muscle-back to enhance the power and flight of shots.

In WOODS titanium has not only made possible the large clubhead sizes on the market today but also enabled players to hit the ball further. Titanium is so strong that manufacturers can thin the club-face wall to the extent where the so-called trampoline effect becomes possible. This is a sprung effect that increases significantly the speed the ball leaves the club-face.. This accounts for these increases in driving distances. Weight placements are used as in the irons

Clubhead construction

Groove

It appears to be common practice amongst club golfers to play with golf clubs caked in mud! A dirty club often means that the grooves on the club-face are filled in, and have no effect on the ball at impact. The point of the grooves is to create backspin as the ball runs up the face of the club at impact, which will keep the ball straight. Without this 'grip' the ball is more likely to fly with side-spin on it in the form of a slice or a hook. With short irons in particular it is this action which is responsible for stopping the ball quickly on a receptive green. Many amateurs aspire to being able to make their ball spin back to the pin just like they see on television – it is not easy, but you will certainly never achieve it with mud in the grooves!

Perimeter Weighting

See 'Cavity-backs' above. This describes the way that club manufacturers have changed the weight placing around a golf club to increase tolerance to the non-centre strike. With a blade almost all the weight is centered in the middle of the club meaning that if the toe or heel is struck the club must twist. This leads to spin on the ball and therefore poor direction as well as a lack of distance. By taking weight from the centre and placing it around the perimeter of the club, any off centre strikes will still have weight positioned behind them, meaning less deflection and so straighter, longer shots. This is the key to making golf easier for golfers of all abilities.

Flow Systems

Many clubs today incorporate flow systems, which are intended to place weight in each club where it will be most useful. In the short irons weight will be placed towards the heel/centre giving these irons greater stability for more accurate shotmaking. With these irons the player is more likely to strike the ball out of the middle of the club and therefore behind the area of most weight. As the irons become longer the weight placement moves towards the toe of the club. The idea is that as the club becomes longer it is more likely that shots will be hit off the toe. Moving the weight this way will therefore limit deflection of the clubface at impact and thus keep long iron shots straighter.

Low Centre of Gravity (LCG)

Almost all good quality clubs made for the higher handicap golfer today incorporate a LCG. This may be externally visible in the form of heavy metal bars on the sole or bottom back of the club (usually made from brass, copper or tungsten), or can be internal. An LCG is intended to make it easier to get the ball airborne by placing this weight as low as possible. Although LCG is largely responsible for the high trajectories players tend to get these days - it increases the launch angle of the ball considerably - there is no doubt that this concept makes the game easier, particularly with longer irons.

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Offset / Onset

Offset is typically described as the distance from the front edge of the hosel to the leading edge of the face.

Many of the more forgiving clubs these days will feature an offset as it will increase the launch angle of the ball and make it easier to hit.

Offsets also tend to reduce slice spin on the ball, which is the most common characteristic of the higher handicap. It is normal practice to have progressive offset where the longer irons have the most, reducing gradually, the shorter the iron.

Onset is used for wedges so that the ball may be pinched out of tight lies more easily, promoting more shot-making and backspin.

Custom Fitting

Length

The ideal length of a golf club for a particular person is dictated not necessarily by their height but by the distance from their wrists to the ground. For example, a tall man may have very long arms and be therefore better suited to standard-length clubs. This can apply in reverse, a prominent example being Tour pro, Ian Woosnam, who plays longer than standard irons.

STANDARD LENGTH OF STEEL SHAFTED IRONS :

1 iron : 39.75 inches

2 iron : 39.25

3 iron : 38.75

4 iron : 38.25

5 iron : 37.75

6 iron : 37.25

7 iron : 36.75

8 iron : 36.25

9 iron : 35.75

PW : 35.25

SW : 35.25

LW : 35.25

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Loft

It is possible for manufacturers to make clubs more or less lofted (tour lofting). This will produce, in the case of de-lofted irons a lower ball flight and a slight increase in distance. However, less loft means the possibility of increased side spin for shots hit with an open or closed clubface leading to less accuracy. Most players would be well advised to leave lofts at the standard value.

Typical lofts for irons are :

1 iron : 15 - 16 degrees

2 iron : 18 - 20 degrees

3 iron : 21 - 23 degrees

4 iron : 24 - 25 degrees

5 iron : 27 - 28 degrees

6 iron : 31 - 32 degrees

7 iron : 35 - 36 degrees

8 iron : 37 - 39 degrees

9 iron : 41 - 43 degrees

PW : 46 - 48 degrees

SW : 55 - 58 degrees

LW : 60 - 64 degrees

Lie

When having the lie of a club custom fitted it is essential that the fitter measures the position of the club head at impact. There are those who ask for your height and then say two degrees upright or whatever - the lie at address can often bear little resemblance to how it is at the crucial point of impact. The idea of checking the lie is to make sure the club is completely flat on the ground at impact.

The shaft will move during the course of the swing and will flex downwards towards impact. The pro should position tape on the sole of the club which will rub on an impact board as it is struck during the swing. Marks on the tape towards the toe of the club suggest an upright club to varying degrees, to the heel means a flatter lie and central shots a standard lie.

The wrong lie can affect the shots players produce. For example, if a player should be three degrees upright but plays standard clubs, then the toe can hit the ground first and cause the club to twist. This will lose the player distance and direction.

Grips

The correct size grip is another important aspect. A grip too large for the player may limit hand action and cause the player to lose the ball to the right. Too small a grip will do the opposite, increase hand action and the player may lose it to the left. Both may well affect the quality of the strike. For the amateur, small differentials will not noticeably affect performance, but just make sure the grips on the clubs you like feel comfortable in your hands.

Shafts

In its most simple terms the correct shaft for you depends upon your swing speed through the ball. The fitter should measure this speed and then recommend a regular or stiff shaft accordingly. Shafts are thought by many pros to be more important than the head of a golf club and so we go into more detail in this section.

Modern shafts come in two basic categories - steel and graphite. Contrary to popular belief good quality graphite is not more "whippy" than its steel counterpart of the same flex. The difference is that graphite is about 30% lighter than steel, which may or may not suit a particular player. When choosing a new set, a good idea is to start by hitting shots with a golf club of the same model in both steel and graphite. To most people the different feel will be evident. Go for what feels better to you, and gives the most consistent shotmaking. When first introduced, graphite was seen as a material to increase flex for older golfers. Nowadays it is very much a matter of personal choice – look at some leading players such as Phil Mickelson and Scott Verplank.

Flex

The flex of shaft a person chooses for their golf clubs is absolutely paramount to the way the clubs will perform for them. Guidelines for flex in graphite irons and woods are that a swing speed of ; 70 - 80 mph requires a senior flex (M -70)
80 - 90 mph requires a regular flex (R - 80)
90 - 100mph requires a stiff flex (S - 90)
100 mph + requires a tour flex (X - 100)

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Guidelines for the flex of steel irons and woods are ;
Regular flex R - 100 ranging to R - 500 (500 being stiffer)
Stiff flex S - 100 ranging to S - 500
Tour stiff flex X - 100 and above.

As a general rule players with smooth swing speeds may benefit from a lighter shaft whilst those who have faster swings may prefer heavier options.

Finding the correct shaft will give the player the maximum chance of playing to the potential of his / her clubs. If a player does have the wrong shafts then a mass of poor shots can result. For instance a strong player using clubs with regular shafts may well find they flex too much causing the toe to fall and twist resulting in a pull or hook. Conversely a player using shafts that are too stiff for their swing speed may well find the ball goes off to the right with a low ball flight. In both cases, loss of distance will result.

Torque

The torque in a shaft can be described as the amount of degrees the shaft will deflect upon impact - particularly off centre shots. Subsequently shafts with lower torque are thought to be higher performance and more forgiving. Torque in high quality shafts should be less than 5 degrees. Many manufacturers believe that as in shaft flex, stronger players will benefit from less torque but higher handicappers may benefit from slightly more movement as this will help to get the ball airborne.

Fat Shafts

Designed by Wilson Golf the fatshaft irons are designed to keep torque to a minimum. Some people find the extra width in the shafts make them feel rather cumbersome but if a player does like the feel of them then they will limit twist and therefore increase accuracy.

Swing Weight

This is described as how heavy the club will feel when it is actually swung, rather than the actual physical weight of the club. A swing weight can be altered by the redistribution of weight in either the head or the shaft.

Other golf equipment

Golf Shoes

The single most important thing to remember when buying golf shoes is that they must be extremely comfortable. A typical round of golf will mean walking five miles - for those just starting considerably more!!

Do not fix your mind on a particular brand or style but try various until you find something suited to you. Some manufacturers, for example, tend to produce generally narrow fits - fine for some people but disastrous for others with wider feet.

Have comfort in mind when you set your price limit. As with most things the quality is generally better the more you spend.

Weight

Lightness should be a consideration - again remember how far you have to walk in your round.

Waterproofing

Look out for a waterproof membrane. This is a sort of bag that lines the shoes so that if the water penetrates the exterior it should not make it to your feet. There are few things more uncomfortable than trudging around with sodden feet.

Does the shoe breathe?

It is helpful to choose breathable shoes. As you play, particularly in hotter weather your feet will sweat. In shoes that are breathable the air is allowed to circulate which lets the moisture evaporate. The difference is marked.

The make up of the shoe

UPPER - Decent quality leather is a major bonus over synthetic materials. It should be soft and resilient, adding to comfort and longevity.

LOWER - Usually this will be made of rubber, as this is flexible, resilient and waterproof. Check for the amount of give your choice of shoe allows. You do not want the shoe fighting against your step.

The bottom of the shoe will in most cases be spiked with either traditional spikes or modern soft spikes. There may also be additional track grips, which will further aid balance and stability in the swing.

SPIKES - Soft or traditional

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In recent years soft spikes have become more popular. Many golf clubs actually insist on them as they are thought to be better for the greens. This is probably true in hotter climates, but in wetter conditions they can leave small craters in the greens rather than spike holes, and are generally felt not to give as much grip during the full swing.

Waterproofs clothing

Apart from the obvious - being waterproof - a waterproof suit should be light, breathable, windproof and have room in the right places not the wrong ones.

The best materials to look out for are gore-tex and teflon. Both are lightweight and waterproof, windproof and breathable.

THE JACKET - This should be comfortable across the chest, waist and shoulders. It should not go further down than the waist as this inhibits certain shots and certainly putting.

There should not be any more than the minimum of material gathering over the stomach as again it can impair certain shots. There should be plenty of extra room underneath the armpits, which will allow a full turn and free movement in the swing. The less the rustle from the material, the better.

THE TROUSERS - Comfort around the waist is imperative. Many trousers are elasticised which allows a little 'give' to take account of variances in the waist size! The leg should reach down so it covers the top of the shoe heel when you walk. No further or you are liable to put a spike through the material.

A useful addition is a zip at the bottom of the trouser leg, which lets the player to put on and take off the trousers according to the conditions and without removing shoes.

Waterproofs are expensive, so expect to pay between £100 and £300 for the better quality suits. Please [click here](#) for some great outlets. You will appreciate the investment one day.

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Gloves

There are two basic categories of glove, namely leather and synthetic. There is no real doubt that in the ideal conditions, leather is the preferred option due to the fact fine quality cabretta is thinner and more pliable than its synthetic counterparts. This gives the player more feel and comfort.

The synthetic glove does of course have its advantages: First and foremost they tend to be significantly cheaper than leather. In the rain the synthetic glove will normally maintain grip longer and better. Synthetic gloves tend to be more durable.

There has recently been a wave of new gloves being launched on the market, which are technologically advanced to offer the player increased breathability and superior comfort. These new products do of course come at a price. When purchasing a new glove the key is to first think whether you want leather or synthetic.

You may determine this by price, the time of year or how frequent a golfer you are. For example during the winter months buying a synthetic glove is often the best choice as they are better in poor conditions and will last longer if you leave them in your bag for some time whilst not playing.

Once you have determined the material, try a few on and find what feels good to you.

Remember that the glove must be like a second skin to you. Make sure you have the right size by checking with your professional or retailer. As a general guide, they should always feel a little tight when first tried on (not to the extent that you can't bend your fingers!). They will ease (stretch) with wear, and you certainly don't want them to feel loose.

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Bags

There are two basic categories of bag: TROLLEY BAGS - LIGHTWEIGHT CARRY BAGS

To find the bag that is right, you must think how you personally play. If you tend to use a trolley, then a trolley bag is the obvious answer. These bags will sit better on the trolley than other types and have the advantage of being bigger which offers you much more storage space for all the bits and pieces golfers tend to accumulate. They also offer better protection for the clubs as they are generally more solid. Another advantage is that in the rain the trolley bag will normally be more water resistant.

For the many who carry, the trolley bag is not the answer. These bags are heavy, if not at first certainly after the five miles around the course. So the better option for these players is the carry bag. These are smaller and made of lightweight materials, which make them considerably easier on the body.

There have, in the last few years, been some useful innovations in the world of carry bags.

Standbags

These are the now the most popular of the carry bags. The bag is equipped with retractable legs which come out when the bag is put down on its base. This prevents the clubs from being damaged as they are put down, keeps the bag and its contents cleaner, and is easier to pick up again afterwards.

Double Straps

These are designed to spread the weight of the bag equally on both shoulders. The traditional one-shouldered bag can be uncomfortable as your body requires to lean to counterbalance the weight on one shoulder. Anybody who has changed from a single to a double strap will notice a difference.

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Trolleys

When choosing the golfer should consider size, weight and durability. The size of a trolley is important from a storage point of view, either at home or in the car. Although when erect they will all be of similar dimensions, modern trolleys tend to fold down into smaller units. In my opinion the smaller the better and therefore a tri-fold trolley is a good option. Although these are more expensive than two fold trolleys they are a good buy in the long run.

Aluminum or steel are the materials used to make trolleys. Aluminum is advantageous as it is much lighter than steel.

When you are buying a trolley make sure it has a sturdy, durable frame regardless of the style. As with many things in golf spending a little more money initially will be cheaper in the long run.

If it is an electric trolley you are buying, look for exactly the same characteristics as with a standard trolley initially. Then be careful to assess the following criteria: Battery lifetime - will it go for two rounds if necessary, if not you may wish to buy a second battery. The charge time of the battery Guarantees - power trolleys are expensive Service requirements

Balls

When you are buying golf balls you will find that the sheer number of different types and varieties is very confusing.

In reality, balls can be categorized as follows:

HARD BALLS (Low spin, distance balls) Handicaps over 12

For most higher handicappers these are the balls of choice because:

1. They are usually cheaper
2. They are more resilient and will not cut after mishit shots
3. They have lower spin rates (this means that if hit with an open or closed clubface the ensuing shot will be less wayward).
4. They tend to be distance balls and so will go further with lower swing speeds.

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SOFTER BALLS (High spin, feel balls) 12 handicaps and below

For most lower handicappers a softer ball is the choice because:

1. More backspin can be obtained from these balls to keep the ball on line in flight
2. Pitches and chips can be better judged as the player can impart backspin to stop the ball quickly
3. The player will receive more feedback and feel with the putter and shorter scoring irons.

Whichever type of ball you play it is worth the money to choose a good brand. The key to a good golf ball is consistency and the better brands will offer this.

Golf shots

The most memorable golf shots go 'straight down the middle', or arrow-straight at the pin, combined with perfect judgment of the length of shot required. Equally memorable are those occasions when a 'draw' or 'fade' is employed to take advantage of wind conditions, or to get round an obstruction such as trees.

There are many types of golf shot – unfortunately, not all of them good! The following section shows examples of many of them

The **hook** shot starts straight or to the right of the target and swings away to the left.

The slice starts straight or to the left of the target and swings away to the right

The **push** starts to the right of the target and stays there

The **pull** starts to the left of the target and stays there

The **skied** shot goes up in the air and little forward distance

The duff/fat shot is often straight, but with no power

The **thin** shot does not climb into the air.

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The **topped** shot is an extreme version of this

The **shank** is where the ball is struck by the shaft (hosel) of the club and goes off hard right

A good shot is where the spin on the ball is used to bring it back to the target

A good shot is where the spin on the ball is used to bring it back to the target

Medium length shot into a green where the object is to get the ball high to stop quickly

Short length shot where the ball will roll once it lands

Shot from on or around the green where the object is to roll the ball to the hole

Game Formats

Strokeplay

Also known as Medal Play, Stroke play is the format of scoring where a golfer counts every shot over 18 holes. To win at stroke play you need to have the lowest score once your handicap has been deducted. (this known as your NET score). If 2 or more players finish with the same number, a method of 'countback' is used to determine the winner (best score on the back nine, then last 6, last 3 etc)

It is the format most used in club competitions, although it is quite possible that this is being overtaken by the Stableford system (see below). The reason for this is that Strokeplay is the least forgiving of all of the game formats, as one disastrous hole can ruin the complete card, whereas in other formats each hole is in effect a separate entity.

Handicap allowance – Singles full handicap

Foursomes $\frac{1}{2}$ of the total handicap of the partners.

Fourball $\frac{3}{4}$ of the full handicap for each partner.

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Stableford

Stableford is a points system which is becoming increasingly popular for club competitions, as it is a more forgiving form of scoring. Points are awarded after each hole depending on the net score, and the winner is the player with the most points after the agreed number of holes in the competition (normally 18). The points are awarded as follows;

5 points for a net albatross (3 under par)

4 points for a net eagle (2 under par)

3 points for a net birdie (1 under par)

2 points for a net par (level par)

1 point for a net bogey (1 over par)

0 points for anything worse (2 over par or more)

Handicap allowance - as above for Strokeplay

Bogey / Par

In this context, Bogey and Par have the same meaning (see the 'history' section for the difference between the two!). In effect, the player(s) is playing against the course, and the net score for each hole is compared with the par for that hole, and the player records a win (+), a half (0) or a loss (-). At the end, the holes are totaled to give an overall score in relation to the course par, normally expressed as '2 up' or '3 down'. Note that, unlike Matchplay, you do not 'lose' before the completion of the 18 holes!

Handicap allowance – as above for Strokeplay

Matchplay

Matchplay is where players compete against each other rather than against the course as in all of the above formats. Matches can take the form of singles, fourballs and foursomes. In this format, the par of the course is immaterial – it is a straightforward matter of the player or side who has the lowest net score on a hole. If a player/side wins a hole, they are said to be 'one up' etc. If the match reaches the point where a player/side is more holes up than there remain to be played, he/they have won (having probably been through the stage where they were 'dormie' [an equal number of holes up to those remaining]).

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Matchplay is frequently used in club knock-out competitions and requires a result to be achieved. If the match is unresolved after 18 holes (or whatever the match is being played over), then extra holes are played until one player/side emerges as the winner. In inter- and intra-club competitions, matches can be halved.

Be careful to establish whether a matchplay competition is regarded as 'qualifying' (for handicap purposes). Normally this is not the case quite simply because a match can actually finish as early as the 10th hole. Some clubs do require cards to be kept, and in some circumstances (eg medal matchplay) the cards are red.

Game Types

Singles

Singles is where a player competes purely on his/her own account, whatever the game format.

Handicap Allowance – Various bodies are now advocating the use of full handicap allowance in all game formats, including matchplay.

Some clubs have adopted this recommendation – others retain the $\frac{3}{4}$ handicap allowance in matchplay

Fourball

Fourball is where two players play as a team, whatever the game format. This is normally on the basis of 'betterball' (sometimes called bestball), where the lower net score of the pair is the one which counts.

Foursomes

Foursomes is probably the oldest game type of all. Some courses (especially in Britain) are still '2-ball' courses. In other words, singles and foursomes are the only allowed types – with foursomes preferred – mainly because a foursomes game, if played properly, is considerably faster than singles!

Traditional foursomes is where the partners, in advance of a round, agree which holes (on an alternating basis) each will tee off at, with one player driving at the odd-numbered holes (1,3,5 etc) and the other the evens. Thereafter, the ball in play is struck alternately by the players until holed out.

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There are a number of 'variants' on the foursomes theme (some purists would argue that these are separate game types in their own right, but for the sake of simplicity!

Greensomes (or Greensome Foursomes)

In this game type, both players drive at each hole, and select the most advantageous tee-shot. The partner then plays this ball, and the players then take alternate shots as in foursomes until the ball is holed.

Fensome or St Andrews Foursomes

Both players drive at each hole, but have pre-determined who will play the second shot (odds and evens, as above). It is rumored that this game type was invented by better golfers (possibly pros) on the basis that this gives them the chance to play their own tee-shot on at least half the holes!

If you want to lose some good friends, have a match of Bloodsomes!. Here the opponents choose which tee-shot has to be played!

In all of the above formats, great care needs to be exercised. Even experienced golfers frequently play out-of-turn and disqualify their team (if the mistake is not spotted immediately). It is also easy to forget the format when you have just missed a short putt, and tap it in! Be especially aware of the sequence when a tee-shot is lost or out of bounds, or a ball is dropped – either on a relief or penalty basis.

Handicap allowance – Foursomes. This is a bit of a grey area. Traditionally, a side was given 3/8ths of combined handicap in standard foursomes stroke- and matchplay. More recently 1/2 is used at many clubs. Always check the local committee ruling on stroke allowances before play, or at least before returning a signed card! Ignorance is not generally accepted as an excuse!

Other Golf games

Texas scramble

This game is played by a team of 2,3 or 4 players (sometimes even more!) all on the same side. The best shot of the side is selected, and all players then play from the (marked) position of this ball.

It is customary for a side to be required to take a fixed number of tee-shots from each player. This adds an additional dimension (and pressure!) to the game.

Handicap Allowance – again this varies by location – normally it is 1/10th of the combined handicaps – to the nearest decimal point. This is necessary, as it is common to find a number of teams finishing on the same score.

Skins

Normally played as a 3 or 4-ball (sometimes more!). A single player has to win a hole outright to win a 'skin'. Holes where there is no outright winner are normally accumulated until a hole is won. Often followed by hours of argument in the bar as to who owes how much to whom!

On the perch

A variant of the 'skins' theme for 3 or 4 players. A player can only win holes, once he/she is 'on the perch' – ie having already won a hole. That player stays on the perch until knocked off it by losing a hole to any of the other players.

American points

An excellent game for 3 players, avoiding the imbalance of 2 against 1! 6 points are played for at each hole, and shared out on the basis of 2:2:2 if all players halve the hole, 3:3 if 2 players halve through to 4:1:1 for an outright win with the other 2 halving, or 4:2:0 for an outright win and second place.

For ease of keeping the score, the lowest number is returned to zero after each hole (pro-rata for the other scores). The total points of the other 2 players should always be divisible by 3.

Flag

All players carry a marker, or Flag, with them, which is inserted in the ground at the point where the number of strokes allowed (course par + handicap allowance) expires. The furthest-placed flag (sometimes part-way round the 2nd 18 holes, depending on the format!) is the winner.

Yellow Ball

This is frequently introduced as an additional competition in open golf events and society days, in addition to the normal format/type of competition. Each player in the 3 or 4 takes strict turns to play a hole with the Yellow Ball, and a separate yellow-ball scorecard is kept. If the yellow ball is lost, the game is over at that point.

Variants of this theme include the yellow-ball player having to include his/her score as 1 of the 2 or 3 net scores counting on each hole

The Handicap System

How does it work?

The basics of what is a handicap have been explained in an earlier section.

The handicap basically allows people of very different golfing ability to compete with each other. Other sports do have a 'handicap' system, but nowhere does it work as effectively as in the game of golf.

Let's take an example of a **9** handicap player meeting a 16-handicapper in a Matchplay singles match. They would take the difference between their handicaps (7) and apply the $\frac{3}{4}$ of difference principle (if their club uses this rather than the full difference) = 5.25 – rounded to the nearest full number (=5). The 16 handicap player would get an extra stroke over his opponent at the first 5 stroke index numbered holes on the course.

Handicaps are administered by the **Golf Clubs** themselves, according to rules laid down by their responsible national union.

Officially, there is no other way, despite the claims of a number of bodies to being able to award '**official handicaps**' (except where low handicaps are administered by a regional body rather than a club)

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Most golf clubs have a committee (council) member responsible for this. A player's handicap can be varied upwards or downwards as a result of his/her performance in 'qualifying competitions'. The committee also has the right under the rules of golf (rule 19b) to make merit adjustments to a member's handicap.

Handicaps fall into 4 categories for men and 6 for ladies, as follows:

Category Handicap range

- 1** 0 – 5
- 2** 6 – 12
- 3** 13 – 20
- 4** 21 – 28
- 5** 29 – 40
- 6** 41 - 45

Clubs often have names rather than category numbers for the different levels, ranging from the Gold/silver etc to the **Tigers** and **Rabbits** and the like.

Stroke Index

All golf clubs are required to publish a HANDICAP STROKE TABLE, indicating the order of holes at which handicap strokes are to be given or received. This always appears on the course scorecard under the heading stroke index. This is a list of numbers from 1 to 18 where handicap strokes are taken. The lower numbers indicate a higher degree of difficulty, hence a person receiving, for example, 9 strokes, either in a handicap competition or from a playing opponent, would receive an extra stroke at each of the holes with a Stroke Index from 1 to 9 inclusive.

The 'degree of difficulty' is a relative term, as the Club Committee is requested to observe a number of recommendations when setting the stroke index – such as 'balancing' the numbers between the two 'nines' of an 18-hole course. This is especially noticeable if you visit a course which has 3 or more 'nines' which can be played in different combinations – allowance must be made for the balancing and other factors, when wondering why a hole played much easier (or harder!) than its stroke index would indicate. One thing you can guarantee – the stroke index 1 hole has been given that status for a very good reason!

Qualifying competitions

These are normally club competitions which 'qualify' for handicap adjustment purposes. This is a complex area and not for these pages! Purely as an example, a competition may be declared non-qualifying if it is played when many temporary greens are in use, affecting the overall length of the course.

Standard Scratch Score (SSS)

This is a fixed number agreed by the Club with the ruling bodies. This is the score it would be expected a scratch golfer would go round in. This can differ from the course par by anything up to +3 to -3 of the course par. It is this number which is used for handicap adjustment, rather than the par of the course.

Competition Scratch Score

This is arrived at as a result of calculations on the day of a competition, taking into account the degree of difficulty (climatic conditions) size of field and generally how the different handicap categories performed. If this is different to the SSS, it replaces it for that day

Qualifying score

Any score, including a 'no-return' returned in a qualifying competition

Net differential

Is the difference (+or-) between the net score returned by a player in a qualifying competition and the competition scratch score

Buffer Zone

Adjustments. Changes to handicaps are made in accordance with a set of rules administered by the national/regional authority. For simplicity's sake, a player's handicap may increase or decrease by a tenth of a point for every full shot that player is above or below the CSS x the number of their category. So a 10- handicap player (category 2) coming in 3 below the CSS would expect to see his handicap reduced by 3×0.2 shots = 0.6.

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There is a so-called 'buffer zone' which prevents handicaps increasing quite so directly. Again, the category number is used, but this time as a whole number, and this is applied before any adjustments are made. So a score of 3 over CSS for our 10-handicapper (category 2) would result in an increase in handicap of just 0.1.

Exact v Playing handicap

It will be immediately apparent that there is no point moving handicaps up and down by the odd decimal place if there is no record kept of other than round numbers. Every player has an exact handicap as well as a playing one. The playing one is simply the 'rounded' whole number of the exact one. Thus $8.4 = 8$, $8.5 = 9$

The Rules of Golf

Who administers them?

It is only comparatively recently in the history of the game that the rules have been 'standardized' across regional and national borders. These days, the official body responsible for the rules is one formed of representatives of the US Golf Association (USGA) and Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews in Scotland (R&A).

How are they administered?

A new set of rules of golf is issued every 4 years (subject to need), the next one falling due in 2004. In between, the rules committee may be called upon for a 'decision' affecting the rules, and the results of these decisions are published – see the websites at www.usga.com and www.randa.org for a list of current decisions. Every 4 years it is decided whether the rules themselves require to be update as a result of these decisions.

Introduction to The Rules of Golf

For a relatively uncomplicated game, where the principle is to knock a ball into a distant hole and repeat the exercise up to 18 times, golf does have a large and seemingly complex rulebook. In fact, the rules of golf are one of the most discussed subjects on the planet, and new situations always seem to arise which cause the ruling bodies to issue 'decisions' on the rules. These are eventually incorporated into the rules of the game.

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Golf prides itself on being an honorable game, and depends to a very large extent on the honesty and integrity of the players themselves. It is a frequent occurrence on the course to hear a player 'own up' to the fact that they hit the ball twice when playing out of a hazard, or disturbed the ball or the ground around it whilst playing a shot – and taking the necessary penalty. Sadly, this is not always the case, and the rules were largely put in place to prevent cheating and other unseemly behavior! On occasions, the rules may seem unnecessarily harsh – for example, a 2-stroke penalty (in medal play) for a ball striking the flagstick on the way into a hole - but it does not take too much imagination to understand why such rules were introduced in the first place!

Rules are rules, and there are even penalties for players agreeing to waive them. But remember, the most important element of all is the 'spirit' of the game and the way in which it is played.

The following section covers the main areas of etiquette on the golf course, definitions, and the rules themselves. These are extracted from the rules of golf, as defined by the US Golf Association in conjunction with the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews in Scotland. It is for guidance only. If you require a full definition of the rules, for example, to settle a dispute over a situation arising in a game you were involved in, you must refer to the full 'rules of golf'. These can be found on the USGA website, or alternatively the R&A website at www.randa.net. A click on this link will take you to that site.

The Rules of Golf consist of the following:

- 1 – Etiquette
- 2 – Definitions
- 3 - The Rules of Play

In addition, there is provision for 'Local Rules' These are set by the Committee of a Club and are intended to cover specific local situations such as roads crossing the course. They will normally be found on the scorecard of the course in question.

1 – Etiquette

Courtesy on the Course

Safety

Prior to playing a stroke or making a practice swing, the player should ensure that no-one is standing close by, or in a position to be hit by the club, the ball, or by any stones, pebbles, twigs or the like which may be moved by the stroke or swing.

Consideration for other players

The player who has the honor should be allowed to play before his opponent or fellow-competitor tees his ball.

No one should move, talk or stand close to or directly behind the ball or the hole when a player is addressing a ball or making a stroke.

No player should play until the players in front are out of range.

Pace of Play

In the interests of all, players should play without delay. Players searching for a ball should signal the players behind them to pass as soon as it becomes apparent that the ball will not easily be found. They should not search for five minutes before doing so. They should not continue play until the players following them have passed and are out of range.

When the play of a hole has been completed, players should immediately leave the putting green.

If a match fails to keep its place on the course and loses more than one complete hole on the players in front, it should invite the match following to pass.

Priority on the Course

In the absence of special rules, two-ball matches should have precedence over and be entitled to pass any three- or four-ball match, which should invite them through.

A single player has no standing and should give way to a match of any kind.

Any match playing a whole round is entitled to pass a match playing a shorter round.

CARE OF THE COURSE

Holes in Bunkers

Before leaving a bunker, a player should carefully fill up and smooth over all holes and footprints made by him.

Replace Divots; Repair Ball-Marks and Damage by Spiles

Through the green, a player should ensure that any turf cut or displaced by him is replaced at once and pressed down and that any damage to the putting green made by a ball is carefully repaired. On completion of the hole by all players in the group, damage to the putting green caused by golf shoe spikes should be repaired.

Damage to Greens – Flagsticks, Bags etc.

Players should ensure that, when putting down bags or the flagstick, no damage is done to the putting green and that neither they nor their caddies damage the hole by standing close to it, in handling the flagstick or removing the ball from the hole. The flagstick should be properly replaced in the hole before the players leave the putting green. Players should not damage the green by leaning on their putters, particularly when removing the ball from the hole.

Golf Carts

Local notices regulating the movement of golf carts should be strictly observed.

Damage Through Practice Swings

In taking practice swings, players should avoid causing damage to the course, particularly the tees, by removing divots.

2 - Definitions

Addressing the Ball

A player has “addressed the ball” when he has taken his stance and has also grounded his club, except that in a hazard a player has addressed the ball when he has taken his stance.

Advice

“Advice” is any counsel or suggestion which could influence a player in determining his play, the choice of a club or the method of making a stroke. Information on the Rules or on matters of public information, such as the position of hazards or the flagstick on the putting green, is not advice.

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Ball in Play

A ball is "in play" as soon as the player has made a stroke on the teeing ground. It remains in play until holed out, except when it is lost, out of bounds or lifted, or another ball has been substituted whether or not such substitution is permitted; a ball so substituted becomes the ball in play.

Bunker

A "bunker" is a hazard consisting of a prepared area of ground, often a hollow, from which turf or soil has been removed and replaced with sand or the like. Grass-covered ground bordering or within a bunker is not part of the bunker. The margin of a bunker extends vertically downwards, but not upwards. A ball is in a bunker when it lies in or any part of it touches the bunker.

Caddie

A "caddie" is one who carries or handles a player's clubs during play and otherwise assists him in accordance with the Rules. When one caddie is employed by more than one player, he is always deemed to be the caddie of the player whose ball is involved, and equipment carried by him is deemed to be that player's equipment, except when the caddie acts upon specific directions of another player, in which case he is considered to be that other player's caddie.

Casual Water

"Casual water" is any temporary accumulation of water on the course which is visible before or after the player takes his stance and is not in a water hazard. Snow and natural ice, other than frost, are either casual water or loose impediments, at the option of the player. Manufactured ice is an obstruction. Dew and frost are not casual water. A ball is in casual water when it lies in or any part of it touches the casual water.

Committee

The "Committee" is the committee in charge of the competition or, if the matter does not arise in a competition, the committee in charge of the course.

Competitor

A "competitor" is a player in a stroke competition. A "fellow-competitor" is any person with whom the competitor plays. Neither is partner of the other. In stroke play foursome and four-ball competitions, where the context so admits, the word "competitor" or "fellow-competitor" includes his partner.

Course

The "course" is the whole area within which play is permitted

Equipment

"Equipment" is anything used, worn or carried by or for the player except any ball he has played at the hole being played and any small object, such as a coin or a tee, when used to mark the position of a ball or the extent of an area in which a ball is to be dropped. Equipment includes a golf cart, whether or not motorized. If such a cart is shared by two or more players, the cart and everything in it are deemed to be the equipment of the player whose ball is involved except that, when the cart is being moved by one of the players sharing it, the cart and everything in it are deemed to be that player's equipment.

Note: A ball played at the hole being played is equipment when it has been lifted and not put back into play.

Flagstick

The "flagstick" is a movable straight indicator, with or without bunting or other material attached, centered in the hole to show its position. It shall be circular in cross-section.

Ground Under Repair

"Ground under repair" is any part of the course so marked by order of the Committee or so declared by its authorized representative. It includes material piled for removal and a hole made by a greenkeeper, even if not so marked.

All ground and any grass, bush, tree or other growing thing within the ground under repair is part of the ground under repair. The margin of ground under repair extends vertically downwards, but not upwards. Stakes and lines defining ground under repair are in such ground such stakes are obstructions. A ball is in ground under repair when it lies in or any part of it touches the ground under repair.

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Note 1: Grass cuttings and other material left on the course which have been abandoned and are not intended to be removed are not ground under repair unless so marked.

Note 2: The Committee may make a Local Rule prohibiting play from ground under repair or an environmentally-sensitive area which has been defined as ground under repair.

Hazards

A "hazard" is any bunker or water hazard.

Hole

The "hole" shall be 4¼ inches (108mm) in diameter and at least 4 inches (100mm) deep. If a lining is used, it shall be sunk at least 1 inch (25mm) below the putting green surface unless the nature of the soil makes it impracticable to do so; its outer diameter shall not exceed 4¼ inches (108mm).

Holed

A ball is "holed" when it is at rest within the circumference of the hole and all of it is below the level of the lip of the hole.

Honor

The player who is to play first from the teeing ground is said to have the "honor."

Lateral Water Hazard

A "lateral water hazard" is a water hazard or that part of a water hazard so situated that it is not possible or is deemed by the Committee to be impracticable to drop a ball behind the water hazard in accordance with That part of a water hazard to be played as a lateral water hazard should be distinctively marked. A ball is in a lateral water hazard when it lies in or any part of it touches the lateral water hazard.

Note 1: Lateral water hazards should be defined by red stakes or lines.

Note 2: The Committee may make a Local Rule prohibiting play from an environmentally-sensitive area which has been defined as a lateral water hazard.

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Line of Play

The "line of play" is the direction which the player wishes his ball to take after a stroke, plus a reasonable distance on either side of the intended direction. The line of play extends vertically upwards from the ground, but does not extend beyond the hole.

Line of Putt

The "line of putt" is the line which the player wishes his ball to take after a stroke on the putting green. Except with respect to Rule 16-1e, the line of putt includes a reasonable distance on either side of the intended line. The line of putt does not extend beyond the hole.

Loose Impediments

"Loose impediments" are natural objects such as stones, leaves, twigs, branches and the like, dung, worms and insects and casts or heaps made by them, provided they are not fixed or growing, are not solidly embedded and do not adhere to the ball.

Sand and loose soil are loose impediments on the putting green, but not elsewhere.

Snow and natural ice, other than frost, are either casual water or loose impediments, at the option of the player. Manufactured ice is an obstruction. Dew and frost are not loose impediments.

Lost Ball

A ball is "lost" if:

it is not found or identified as his by the player within five minutes after the player's side or his or their caddies have begun to search for it; or

the player has put another ball into play under the Rules, even though he may not have searched for the original ball; or

The player has played any stroke with a provisional ball from the place where the original ball is likely to be or from a point nearer the hole than that place, whereupon the provisional ball becomes the ball in play.

Time spent in playing a wrong ball is not counted in the five-minute period allowed for search.

Marker

A "marker" is one who is appointed by the Committee to record a competitor's score in stroke play. He may be a fellow-competitor. He is not a referee.

Matchplay

In "matchplay" the game is played by holes. A hole is won by the side which holes its balls in the fewer strokes. The reckoning of the holes is kept by the terms: so many "holes up" or "all square", and so many "to play". A match is won by the side which is leading by a number of holes greater than the number of holes remaining to be played.

Move or Moved

A ball is deemed to have "moved" if it leaves its position and comes to rest in any other place.

Observer

An "observer" is one who is appointed by the Committee to assist a referee to decide questions of fact and to report to him any breach of a Rule. An observer should not attend the flagstick, stand at or mark the position of the hole, or lift the ball or mark its position.

Obstructions

An "obstruction" is anything artificial, including the artificial surfaces and sides of roads and paths and manufactured ice, except:

- a) Objects defining out of bounds, such as walls, fences, stakes and railings;
- b) Any part of an immovable artificial object which is out of bounds; and
- c) Any construction declared by the Committee to be an integral part of the course.

An obstruction is a movable obstruction if it may be moved without unreasonable effort, without unduly delaying play and without causing damage. Otherwise it is an immovable obstruction.

Note: The Committee may make a Local Rule declaring a movable obstruction to be an immovable obstruction.

Out of Bounds

"Out of bounds" is beyond the boundaries of the course or any part of the course so marked by the Committee.

When out of bounds is defined by reference to stakes or a fence or as being beyond stakes or a fence, the out of bounds line is determined by the nearest inside points of the stakes or fence posts at ground level excluding angled supports.

Objects defining out of bounds such as walls, fences, stakes and railings, are not obstructions and are deemed to be fixed.

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When out of bounds is defined by a line on the ground, the line itself is out of bounds.

The out of bounds line extends vertically upwards and downwards.

A ball is out of bounds when all of it lies out of bounds.

A player may stand out of bounds to play a ball lying within bounds.

Outside Agency

An "outside agency" is any agency not part of the match or, in stroke play, not part of the competitor's side, and includes a referee, a marker, an observer and a forecaddie. Neither wind nor water is an outside agency.

Partner

A "partner" is a player associated with another player on the same side.

In a threesome, foursome, best-ball or four-ball match, where the context so admits, the word "player" includes his partner or partners.

Penalty Stroke

A "penalty stroke" is one added to the score of a player or side under certain Rules. In a threesome or foursome, penalty strokes do not affect the order of play.

Provisional Ball

A "provisional ball" is a ball played under Rule 27-2 for a ball which may be lost outside a water hazard or may be out of bounds.

Putting Green

The "putting green" is all ground of the hole being played which is specially prepared for putting or otherwise defined as such by the Committee. A ball is on the putting green when any part of it touches the putting green.

Referee

A "referee" is one who is appointed by the Committee to accompany players to decide questions of fact and apply the Rules. He shall act on any breach of a Rule which he observes or is reported to him.

A referee should not attend the flagstick, stand at or mark the position of the hole, or lift the ball or mark its position.

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Rub of the Green

A "rub of the green" occurs when a ball in motion is accidentally deflected or stopped by any outside agency (see Rule 19-1).

Rule

The term "Rules" include:

The Rules of Golf;

Any Local Rules made by the Committee under Rule 33-8a and Appendix I; and

The specifications on clubs and the ball in Appendices II and III.

Sides and Matches

Side: A player, or two or more players who are partners.

Single: A match in which one plays against another.

Threesome: A match in which one plays against two, and each side plays one ball.

Foursome: A match in which two play against two, and each side plays one ball.

Three-Ball: A match play competition in which three play against one another, each playing his own ball.

Each player is playing two distinct matches.

Best-Ball: A match in which one plays against the better ball of two or the best ball of three players.

Four-Ball: A match in which two play their better ball against the better ball of two other players.

Stableford Points

This is a Competition where points are awarded at each hole as follows:

Net bogey – one over par 1 point

Net par 2 points

Net birdie 3 points

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Net eagle 4 points

Net albatross 5 points

The winner is the competitor who scores the highest number of points

Stance

Taking the "stance" consists in a player placing his feet in position for and preparatory to making a stroke.

Stipulated Round

The "stipulated round" consists of playing the holes of the course in their correct sequence unless otherwise authorized by the Committee. The number of holes in a stipulated round is 18 unless a smaller number is authorized by the Committee. As to extension of stipulated round in match play, see Rule 2-3.

Stroke

A "stroke" is the forward movement of the club made with the intention of fairly striking at and moving the ball, but if a player checks his downswing voluntarily before the clubhead reaches the ball he is deemed not to have made a stroke.

Stroke Index

Each hole on a golf course is rated, using several variables and is given a stroke index between 1 and 18. If a player has a handicap of 18, he/she receives one shot per hole. If the handicap is 9, the player receives a shot on holes with a stroke index of 1 – 9.

Stroke Play

The competitor who plays the stipulated round or rounds in the fewest strokes is the winner. If a competitor fails to hole out and does not correct the mistake before a stroke is played from the next teeing ground, or in the case of the last hole, before leaving the putting green, the penalty is disqualification.

Teeing Ground

The "teeing ground" is the starting place for the hole to be played. It is a rectangular area two club-lengths in depth, the front and the sides of which are defined by the outside limits of two tee-markers. A ball is outside the teeing ground when all of it lies outside the teeing ground.

Through the Green

“Through the green” is the whole area of the course except:
The teeing ground and putting green of the hole being played; and
All hazards on the course.

Water Hazard

A “water hazard” is any sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, surface drainage ditch or other open water course (whether or not containing water) and anything of a similar nature.

All ground or water within the margin of a water hazard is part of the water hazard. The margin of a water hazard extends vertically upwards and downwards. Stakes and lines defining the margins of water hazards are in the hazards. Such stakes are obstructions. A ball is in a water hazard when it lies in or any part of it touches the water hazard.

Note 1: Water hazards (other than lateral water hazards) should be defined by yellow stakes or lines.

Note 2: The Committee may make a Local Rule prohibiting play from an environmentally-sensitive area which has been defined as a water hazard.

Wrong Ball

A “wrong ball” is any ball other than the player’s:

- a) Ball in play,
- b) Provisional ball, or
- c) Second ball played under Rule 3-3 or Rule 20-7b in stroke play.

Note: Ball in play includes a ball substituted for the ball in play whether or not such substitution is permitted.

Wrong Putting Green

A “wrong putting green” is any putting green other than that of the hole being played. Unless otherwise prescribed by the Committee, this term includes a practice putting green or pitching green on the **course**.

3 - The Rules of Play

General Points

Before commencing your round:

- (1) Read the Local Rules on the scorecard.
- (2) Put an identification mark on your ball. Many golfers play the same brand of ball and if you can't identify your ball, it's lost.
- (3) Count your clubs. You are allowed a maximum of 14 clubs.

During the round, don't ask for "advice" from anyone except your partner or caddie. Don't give advice to anyone except your partner.

During a hole you may not play a practice stroke.

Teeing off

Tee off between and not in front of the tee-markers. You may tee off up to two club-lengths behind the front line of the tee-markers.

Teeing off outside this area - in match play there is no penalty but your opponent may ask you to replay your stroke; in stroke play you incur a two-stroke penalty and must then play from within the proper area.

Playing the Ball

Play the ball as it lies. Don't improve your lie, the area of your intended swing or your line of play by moving, bending or breaking anything fixed or growing except in fairly taking your stance or making your swing. Don't press anything down or build a stance.

If your ball lies in a bunker or a water hazard don't touch the ground in the bunker, or the ground or water in the water hazard, before your downswing.

The ball must be fairly struck, not pushed or spooned.

Playing a wrong ball (except in a hazard) - in match play you lose the hole; in stroke play you incur a two-stroke penalty and you must then play the correct ball.

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On the putting Green

You may repair ball marks and old hole plugs on the line of your putt but not any other damage, including spike marks.

You may mark, lift and clean your ball on the putting green. Always replace it on the exact spot.

Don't test the putting surface by scraping it or rolling a ball over it.

Ball played from putting green strikes flagstick - in match play you lose the hole; in stroke play you incur a two-stroke penalty.

Ball at rest moved

If your ball is at rest and it is moved by you, your partner or your caddie, except as permitted by the Rules, or if it moves after you have addressed it, add a penalty stroke and replace your ball.

If your ball is at rest and is moved by someone else or another ball, replace it without penalty to you.

Ball in motion deflected or stopped

Ball struck by you is deflected or stopped by you, your partner or your caddie - in match play you lose the hole; in stroke play you incur a two-stroke penalty and the ball is played as it lies.

Ball struck by you is deflected or stopped by someone else - play your ball as it lies without penalty, except (a) in match play, if an opponent or his caddie deflects the ball you have an option to replay the stroke or (b) in stroke play, if the ball is deflected after a stroke from on the putting green, you must replay it.

Ball struck by you is deflected or stopped by another ball at rest- in matchplay, no penalty and the ball is played as it lies except. In stroke play you incur a two-stroke penalty if your ball and the other ball were on the putting green before you played.

Lifting, dropping and placing the Ball

If a lifted ball is to be replaced, its position must be marked. If a ball is to be dropped or placed in any other position (e.g. taking relief from GUR, etc.) it is recommended that the ball's original position be marked.

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When dropping, stand erect, hold the ball at shoulder height and arm's length and drop it. If a dropped ball strikes you or your partner, caddie or equipment it must be re-dropped without penalty.

There are eight instances where a dropped ball rolls to such a position that it must be re-dropped - see Rules of Golf Rule 20 - 2c

Ball interfering with or assisting play

You may lift your ball if it might assist any other player.

You may have any ball lifted if it might interfere with your play or assist any other player.

Loose Impediments

You may move a loose impediment unless it and your ball are in a hazard. However, if you have touched a loose impediment within one club-length of your ball and your ball moves, the ball must be replaced and (unless your ball was on the putting green) you incur a penalty stroke.

Obstructions

Check the Local Rules on the scorecard for guidance on immovable obstructions (e.g. surfaced roads and paths etc).

Movable obstructions (e.g. rakes, tin cans etc.) anywhere on the course may be moved. If the ball moves it must be replaced without penalty.

If an immovable obstruction (e.g. a water fountain) interferes with your stance or swing, you may drop the ball within one club-length of the nearest point of relief not nearer the hole. There is no relief for intervention on your line of play unless your ball and the obstruction are on the putting green.

Casual water, ground under repair etc.

If your ball is in casual water, ground under repair or a hole or cast made by a burrowing animal e.g. a rabbit, you may drop without penalty within one club-length of the nearest point of relief not nearer the hole.

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Water hazards

Check the Local Rules on the scorecard to establish whether the sea, lake, river etc. is a 'water hazard' or a 'lateral water hazard'.

Ball in watery hazard - play the ball as it lies or, under penalty of one stroke, (a) drop any distance behind the water hazard keeping a straight line between the hole, the point where the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard and spot on which the ball is dropped, or (b) play again from where you hit the ball into the hazard.

Ball in lateral water hazard - in addition to the options for a ball in a water hazard (see above), under penalty of one stroke, you may drop within two club-lengths of (a) the point where the ball crossed the margin of the hazard or (b) a point on the opposite side of the hazard equidistant from the hole.

Ball lost or out of bounds

Check the Local Rules on the scorecard to identify the boundaries of the course. If your ball is lost outside a water hazard or out of bounds you must play another ball from the spot where the last shot was played under penalty of one stroke i.e. stroke and distance. You are allowed 5 minutes to search for a ball, after which if it is not found or identified it is lost. If, after playing a shot, you think your ball may be lost outside a water hazard or out of bounds you may play a 'provisional ball'. You must state that it is a provisional ball and play it before you go forward to search for the original ball. If the original ball is lost or out of bounds you must continue with the provisional ball under penalty of one stroke. If the original ball is not lost or out of bounds, you must continue play of the hole with it and the provisional ball must be abandoned.

Ball unplayable

If you believe your ball is unplayable outside a water hazard (and you are the sole judge), you may under penalty of one stroke, (a) drop within two club-lengths of where the ball lies not nearer the hole, (b) drop any distance behind the point where the ball lay keeping a straight line between the hole, the point where the ball lay and the spot on which the ball is dropped, or (c) replay the shot. If your ball is in a bunker you may proceed under (a), (b) and (c). However, if you elect to proceed under (a) or (b) you must drop in the bunker.

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Conclusion

A good score may be spoiled, or a match lost, due to a penalty incurred through ignorance or confusion concerning the Rules. A sound knowledge of the above summary should aid the golfer in tackling a "Rules problem". Nevertheless, the complete Rules of Golf as approved by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews and the United States Golf Association, should be consulted where any doubt arises.

Glossary

ace: The ultimate achievement. This is when a player's tee shot goes straight into the hole.

address: The starting position of the body (also set-up)

air-shot: A swing which completely misses the ball - the score however still counts.

albatross: Three under par on one hole.

alignment: Term used to describe the aiming of the body or club.

angle of attack: The angle at which the clubhead approaches the ball.

approach: A shot played into the green made from anywhere except the tee.

apron: The cut grass around the edge of a green, cut longer than the grass on the green.

attend: To hold and remove the flagstick as someone putts, athis is a commomn courtesy performed by all golfers, also shortened to "tend"

away: Term used to describe the ball farthest from the hole so the next to be played.

back door: Used when the ball falls in from the rear of the hole.

back nine: The second half (9 holes) of a round of golf.

backspin: Every amateurs dream; this is when the ball lands and spins backwards.

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backswing: The term used to describe the backward movement of the golf club.

back tee: The starting position which will make the hole play the longest distance.

bail out: Hit shot in direction away from trouble.

balata: Sap from a tropical tree, used in the production of covers for balls, favoured by professionals.

ball at rest: Stationary ball.

ball marker: Small (round) object placed on the green behind the ball to indicate the balls position when moved.

ball position: Position of the ball relative to the feet/body.

ball retriever: Stick with a scoop on the end used to collect balls from water hazards.

ball washer: A device found on course for cleaning balls.

banana ball: Shot with extreme curve from left to right (slices)

bandit: Player with an unrealistically high handicap,

baseball grip: A grip in which all ten fingers touching the golf club.

bay: A part of the driving range. Individual area for hitting balls.

better ball: A game format for teams of two. The lowest score counts as the team score on each hole.

birdie: One under par on a hole.

bite: Slang word for "backspin" the ball lands and spins backwards.

blade: A traditional clubhead, favoured by pros. Also the term used to depict the leading edge of the club.

blast: Powerful shot from a bunker that displaces a lot of sand.

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blind shot: A shot where the target area can't be seen.

block: Shot that flies in a straight line, but to the right of the target (push).

body-line: The alignment of the body in relation to the target.

bogey: (modern meaning) One stroke over par on a hole. (earlier meaning – the number of strokes taken for a hole by an 'average' golfer. A separate 'bogey' score still appears on the scorecard of many more traditional golf clubs, but this has largely been replaced now by the 'Par' score)

borrow: The amount of curve that must be allowed for on a putt on a sloping green.

boundary: The edge of a golf course - usually depicted by white stakes

brassie: Traditional name for a 2-wood.

break: Another term for borrow.

British Open: National championship open to all professionals and eligible amateurs - known in Britain as 'The Open'.

broom handle: A type of putter, with an extremely long shaft.

bulge: The curve across the face of a wooden club.

butt: The end of the club(grip end).

buttoned: The term used to describe a sweetly struck shot.

bunker: A hazard filled with sand.

buried ball/lie: When part of the ball is below the surface of the sand/ground - also plugged ball/lie

cack handed: Any grip, for a right handed player, when the left hand is below the right.

caddie: A person who carries the clubs for the player.

carry: The distance the ball is actually airborne.

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card: abr. for scorecard, card in which a player keeps note of score.

cart: Electric buggy golfers use to drive around golf course.

casual water: Natural water other than a marked water hazard on the course from which you can lift the ball without penalty.

centre-shafted: A putter in which the shaft is joined to the centre of the head.

chip (chip and run): Low-flying shot to the green.

chip-in: A holed chip.

choke: To crack under pressure. Also term used to grip down on a club (making it shorter)

closed face: Clubface pointed to the left of the target at address or impact. Also used to describe the clubface position pointing upwards at the top of the backswing.

closed stance: A set up where the body-line/alignment points to the right of the target

closed clubface: As closed face, clubface pointing to the left of target.

clubface: The front side of the club.

clubhouse: Main building at a golf club.

club length: The full length of the club, used to measure distances in practice.

compression: The term used to describe the squeezing of a ball when hit by a club.

concede: To allow a player the win of a hole or to give a player a putt.

core: The middle of a golf ball.

cross-handed: A grip where the left hand is below the right, for right handed players.

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cross line: Term used to describe the position of the club at the top of the backswing; club points to right of target.

cross-wind: Breeze blowing across the hole.

cup: Container in the hole that holds the flagstick in place and supports the edges of the hole.

cut: Shot that curves from the left to right. Also term used to describe the necessary score for progression to the next round of a competition.

dimple: A depression on the cover of the ball, enabling the ball to be affected by the air.

divot: Turf cut out by the clubhead as a result of correct ball to turf contact.

dog-leg: A hole on which the fairway curves excessively.

dormie: A situation in the format matchplay when cannot lose and the opponent must win all the remaining holes to draw the match.

double bogie: Score of two over par on a hole.

down: Losing in the game format matchplay.

downhill lie: A sloping lie where the right foot is higher than the left when the ball is addressed. Look at quick advice.

downswing: The downward movement of the club from backswing to impact.

DQ'd: abr. for being Disqualified.

drain: To hole a putt.

draw: A controlled shot that starts right of target and curves back to the target line (opposite for left handed players).

drive: A shot hit from the teeing ground, usually with a wood.

driver: A no. 1 wood

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driving range: A place where a golfer goes to practice hitting golf shots.

drop: The procedure by which a ball is put back into play after it's been lifted.

duck hook: A shot that starts right of target and excessively curves left and left of target.

duff: Term used to describe the action of hitting the ground, before making contact with the ball.

duffer: An inexperienced golfer (slang)

dying putt: A putt that barely reaches the hole.

eagle: Two under par for a hole.

etiquette: The code of conduct for golfers.(see etiquette section)

extra holes: Term used in matchplay; if play is tied after 18 holes then play must continue "to extra holes"

face: As clubface, the front side of the clubhead.

fade: A controlled shot that starts left of target and curves back to the target line (opposite for left handed players).

fairway: The short cut grass in between tee and green.

fairway wood: Any club termed as a wood which could be used off the fairway, excluding the driver.

fat: As duff, term used to describe the action of hitting the ground before making contact with the ball.

feather: Term used to describe a soft landing lob shot.

first cut : As semi rough, strip of rough at the edge of a fairway - cut longer than fairway but shorter than rough itself.

flag: As pin - term used to describe the flagstick and flag together.

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flange: Bottom rounded part of sandwedge offering extra weight.

flat: Term used to describe a position less upright than standard E.g. flat arm plane, swing plane.

flex: The potential bend in the club shaft.

flier: A shot hit from rough that travels too far, because of the grass stopping the action of the grooves.

fluff: As duff Term used to describe the action of hitting the ground, before making contact with the ball.

follow-through: The upward movement of the swing, after the downswing and through to the finish.

fore!: A warning shouted by a player to warn other golfers a ball is heading their way.

forged irons: Clubs made out malleable metal.

forward press: A slight push of the hands towards the target to smoothly start the swing.

foursome: A match format where player in teams of two play alternative shots to produce one score.

free drop: A drop incurring no penalty.

fried egg: Plugged ball in sand, leaving image of an egg.

fringe: As apron. The cut grass around the edge of a green, cut longer than the grass on the green.

front nine: The first half of a round of golf

full swing: A full length and full powered golf swing.

gallery: The spectators at a golf tournament.

gimme: A very short putt that an opponent concedes assuming it can't possibly be missed, never to be taken in strokeplay.

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golf widow(er): The marriage partner omitted from the golf action.

go to school: To study as a player putts, hoping to learn about the line and pace to aid your own putting aim.

grain: The angle the grass grows.

Grand Slam: The four major championships: Masters, US Open, British Open and PGA Championship.

graphite: A lightweight material used in the production of shafts and sometimes clubheads.

green: The area of very short grass which is the end of the golf hole where the actual hole is located.

green jacket: Prize awarded to the winner of the Masters. One of the major golf tournaments.

green fee: The cost for playing one round of golf.

greenkeepers: The workforce in charge of the maintenance of the golf course.

greenside: Around the green.

greensome: Game format in which both players on a team drive off, choose the best placed ball and play foursomes from there.

grip: The rubber/leather on the handle end of a club. Or the actual position of the hands formed to hold the club.

groove: A thin cut on the clubface grooved in to impart spin on the golf ball when struck.

gross score: The actual amount of shots taken for one round of golf.

ground the club: To touch the ground with the clubhead.

ground under repair: Any area on the course which is being improved by greenkeepers. Usually depicted by white stakes.

hacker: An inexperienced player.

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half: A tied hole.

half shot: A less than full powered/ length swing.

halve: To tie a hole.

handicap: The number of shots that is deducted from a player's score to allow him/her to compete with golfers of differing levels.

hanging lie: A sloped lie.

hazard: An area posed to penalise a player e.g. water or sand.

head cover: Protection for a clubhead, usually used on woods.

heel: The end of the clubhead closest to the shaft, next to the hosel.

hickory: A type of wood used to produce club shafts traditionally.

high side: Also pro-side; the area above the hole for a curving putt.

hole: The area from the tee to the flagstick, also the the small cylinder (4 1/4 inches) housed in the green in which you putt the ball into.

hole high: Also pin high; term used when ball is level with the hole.

hole-in-one: As ace; The ultimate achievement. This is when a players tee shot goes straight into the hole.

hole out: To complete play on a given hole.

home green: The last green on the course.

honour: The privilege of teeing off first, earned by winning the previous hole, Lowest handicapper takes the honour on the first tee.

hood: Term used to describe the act of de-lofting the club by leaning the hands towards the target.

hook: An uncontrolled shot that starts right of target and moves to the left of target.

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hosel: Rounded part of the clubhead which houses the shaft.

impact: The exact position in which the ball is struck by the clubhead.

impediment: Any loose natural debris around the clubhead.

in play: Term used to describe the balls situation once struck from the first tee, also within the boundaries of the course.

in-to-out: A term used to describe the path of the clubhead through impact, in this case the club would approach from close to the body and move out away from the body.

insert: A strip of material embedded into the clubhead to aid the impaction of the ball off the clubface.

inside: A term used to describe the event of getting closer to the hole than your opponents already played ball.

interlocking: A type of hold where the little finger of the right hand is interlocked with the index finger of the left.

jungle: Term used to describe area of thick rough or area where ball is irretrievable.

jigger: Slang word for a chipper.

kick: Term used to describe the bounce of the ball upon landing; good kick or bad kick.

layout: Refers to the design of the course.

ladies day: A time period for which the course is reserved exclusively for ladies.

lag: A long putt hit with the intent of leaving the ball close to the hole.

laid off: Term used to describe the position of the club at the top of the backswing; club points to the left of target.

lateral hazard: A water hazard marked by red stakes running along the side of a golf hole.

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lay-up: To play a shot conservatively in avoidance of potential hazards.

leader board: A list of lowest scoring players in a tournament.

leak: Term used to describe the situation when the balls fade off to the right of target.

leaping frog: The term used to describe the 3 wood when used to chip the ball out of rough grass.

lie: The position/situation of the ball on the ground. Also term used to describe the angle which the shaft lies from the clubhead.

lift: To pick up the ball before a drop.

line: The path or direction e.g. swing line, ball to target line.

line up: To look from behind to aid the alignment.

links: A seaside course traditionally a loop of two 9 holes.

lip: The edge of a cup or bunker.

lip-out: When the ball rolls and touches the hole, but does not fall in.

local knowledge: Members knowledge gained from continuous play on the same course.

local rules: A set of specific rules relevant to the golf club in question in order to cope with particular problems on the course.

loft: The angle of the clubface.

long game: That part of a players game which involves hitting full shots.

low-handicapper: A player with a low approx.scr-12 handicap.

low side: The area below the hole for a curving putt.

LPGA: Ladies Professional Golf Association.

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make: Term used to describe the act of holing a shot, usually refers to putting.

makeable: A shot with a good chance of being holed.

mallet: A type putter with a wide head.

mark: Term used to describe the act placing a small object behind the ball to indicate the balls position when moved.

marker: Small (round) object placed on the green behind the ball to indicate the balls position when moved. Also player keeping score.

marshal: A person controlling the crowd at a tournament.

Masters: The first major tournament of each year. Always played on the Augusta national golf course in Georgia,U.S.A.

matchplay: Game format where players compete head to head hole for hole.

matched set: clubs of the same make and type.

medal play: As strokeplay; Players keep score for every stroke taken, lowest score wins.

metal wood: A club with a head made of metal which resembles the old wooden clubs..

mid-iron: Modern term for a 6,7 or 8 iron.

misclub: To hit the correct strike, however choose the wrong club for the distance required.

misread: To choose the wrong line of putt.

miss the cut: Term used to describe the act of taking too many strokes for the first halve of a tournament and so be eliminated.

municipal course: A golf course open to the general public.

nassau: A type of bet; The round is divided into three bets front 9, back 9 and for the full 18 holes.

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net score: The score after handicap has been deducted.

nineteenth hole: The clubhouse bar.

O.B (or OOB):abr. Out-of-bounds - The area outside the outline of the golf course usually depicted by white stakes.

offset: A type of club (to aid slicers)where the clubhead sits further behind the shaft than normal which allows the club more time to return to square.

one-putt: To take only a single putt on a green.

one up: Being one hole ahead in matchplay.

open face: Clubface pointing to the right of target.

open stance: A set up where the body line/alignment points to the left of the target

open up the hole: When a tee shot leaves the best possible angle for the next shot to the green.

out-of-bounds: The area outside the outline of the golf course usually depicted by white stakes.

out-to-in: A term used to describe the path of the clubhead through impact, in this case the club would approach from away from the body and move in towards the body.

overclub: To hit the correct strike, however choose the wrong club for the distance required; in this case, to choose a club that will send a ball too far.

overlapping: A type of hold where the little finger of the right hand lies over the index finger of the left hand.

pairings: Two players playing together.

par: The set score for each whole which denotes the amount of shots a professional/scratch player would take to get the ball in to the hole.

persimmon: A type of wood used to make wooden clubs.

A Guide to Golf

PGA: Professional Golfers' Association

pin: The flag stick.

pin-high: As hole high; term used when ball is level with the hole.

pitch: A short, high approach shot.

pitch and putt: A short course, mainly of par3 holes.

pivot: The winding action of the body.

plane: A term used to describe the angle/line of a movement e.g. swing plane.

playoff: Two or more players play extra holes, in the event of a tied score.

play through: Term used to describe the act of overtaking a group by invite, usually to avoid slow play.

plugged lie: A ball half-buried in a bunker .

plumb-bob: Term used to describe the act of ascertaining the correct lie of the land, using ones putter.

posture: The body shape.

pot bunker: A small, steeply faced bunker.

practice green: An area to practice putting.

preferred lies: A winter or temporary rule that allows for the ball to be moved to a more favorable place to protect the course.

private club: A members club.

Pro-Am: A competition in which each team consists of one professional and usually three amateurs.

professional: A person who makes a living directly out of the game of golf.

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pro shop: The shop of the golf course, traditionally run by professional.

provisional ball: An extra ball played in the event of potential loss of the first ball.

public course: A golf course open to the general public.

pull: A straight shot that flies to the left of the target.

punch: A shot hit lower with the ball back in the stance and a shorter than normal follow through.

push: A straight shot that flies to the right of the target.

putter: A straight-faced club generally used on the greens.

qualifying school: A yearly competition for entry to the main golf tour. This a grueling 6 round elimination process.

quitting: Decelerating the club through the impact area

range: As driving range; a place where a golfer goes to practice hitting golf shots.

range ball: A practice ball found at a range.

rap: To hit a putt firmly.

read the green: To assess the path on which the ball must travel to the hole.

regulation: Disregarding handicap the suggested number of shots necessary to reach the green. e.g. par 4 hole regulation 2 shots.

relief: This is taken when a free lift and drop is allowed.

return putt: The second putt returning back from the other side of the hole.

reverse overlap: A putting grip.

rhythm: The coordination of timing of a golf swing.

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rip: To hit an extremely long drive

roof: To hit underneath the ball, usually with a wood and so propel it upwards rather than forwards.

rough: The uncut long grass surrounding the fairways and greens of golf courses.

round: Eighteen holes of golf.

Royal & Ancient Golf Club (of St Andrews, Scotland): The original governing body for amateur golfers and originator of the rules of golf (now done in conjunction with the USGA in the United States)

rub of the green: Luck on the putting green.

run up: A low running approach shot.

sand trap: As bunker; A hazard filled with sand.

scorecard: Card in which a player keeps note of score.

scratch: A zero handicap.

scratch player: A player with a zero handicap.

second cut: Second level of rough, higher than first cut.

setup: As address; The starting position of the body

shaft: The long part of the club that joins the grip to the head.

shank: A shot hit by the very edge (hosel) of the club, This sends it at an extreme angle to the right

short game: That part of the game which involves shots played on and around the green.

shoulder line: The alignment of the shoulders.

shut club face: As closed; clubface pointing to the left of target.

sink: To hole a putt.

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skins: Betting game where the lowest score on a hole wins the collection. This could be money or points.

sky: As roof; to hit underneath the ball, usually with a wood and so propel it upwards rather than forwards.

slice: A shot that starts left of target and curves to the right of target.

smother: To hit down on ball with an extremely closed club face, resulting in a low shot curving excessively left.

snap hook: As duck hook; a shot that starts right of target and excessively curves left and left of target.

sole: The bottom part of the clubhead.

sole plate: A strip of metal protecting the sole of a wooden club.

spike mark: A mark on the green, caused by a stud from a golf shoe.

square: At 90 degrees (or parallel to) often refers to the clubface and stance being aligned parallel to the target line.

square face: The club being at 90 degrees to the ball to target line.

stableford: A method of scoring by using points rather than strokes.

stance: The relationship of the body to the ball at address.

standard scratch: The official par for a course. This does change according to outside influences i.e. weather.

starter: An official in of charge the correct order and time is kept on the first tee.

stimp meter: A device used to measure the speed of greens.

strike: The contact between clubface and ball.

stroke: The swing.

stroke hole: A hole where players benefit from their handicap.

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stroke index: a listing (1-18) on a scorecard, which indicates the 'degree of difficulty' of a hole, where the lowest numbers are generally the hardest. This is used for handicap purposes when giving or receiving strokes

strokeplay: As medal play; players keep score for every stroke taken, lowest score wins.

strong clubface: As closed; clubface pointed to the left of the target at address or impact. Also used to describe the clubface position pointing upwards at the top of the backswing.

sudden-death: A form of playoff whereby the first player to win a hole wins the match.

surlyn: The material from which most balls are made.

swale: A hollow on the golf course.

sway: Excessive lateral movement in the golf swing.

sweet spot: Small area on clubface which will produce optimum power.

swing plane: A term used to describe the angle/line of the movement of the golf club in relation to the body.

swing weight: The ratio of a club's weight to its length.

takeaway: The initial movement of the club.

tap-in: Very short putt.

target-line: The aiming line which passes through both the ball and the target.

tee: A wooden or plastic peg on which the ball is set for the first shot on a hole. Also term used to describe the short cut area from which the first shot on every hole is played.

teeing ground: The short cut area from which the first shot on every hole is played.

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tempo: The rhythm of your swing.

temporary green: A provisional green used in winter to save the permanent green.

Texas wedge: Term used to describe the putter when used from off the green.

thin: To hit the top of the ball.

through the green: To hit the ball in the direction of, but past the green.

tight: The term used to describe narrow fairways.

tight lie: The ball on bare ground or very short grass.

tiger line : Most direct line from tee to green

tiger tee: slang for back tee.

titanium: A very lightweight metal used in the production of golf equipment.

toe-line: The alignment of the toes in relation to the target.

top: A less extreme thin. To hit the top of the ball.

torque: The coil effect of the body also the term used to describe the twisting action of the shaft during the swing.

tour: A Series of tournaments.

trajectory: Term used to describe the angle of ascent of the golf ball.

transition: The point at which the backswing ends and the downswing begins.

trap: As bunker; A hazard filled with sand.

turn: The wind of the body. Also the term used to describe the return on the golf course i.e. starting the back nine, as in '1 down at the turn'

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uncock: The release of the wrist load in the swing.

underclub: To hit the correct strike, however choose the wrong club for the distance required. In this case, to choose a club that will send a ball too short a distance.

unplayable lie: The ball being in a position which is agreed it would be impossible to play the next shot from.

up: Ahead in the match. Also the term used to describe the person next to play their shot.

up and down: To get the ball into the hole in two strokes from anywhere off the green.

upright: Term used to describe a position at a higher angle than standard E.g. upright arm plane, swing plane.

USGA: United States Golf Association. The ruling body for golf in the United States.

Vardon grip: Another term for the overlapping grip, popularised by Harry Vardon.

waggle: A simple club movement before executing the swing in order to rehearse the action and drain pressure out of the body.

water hazard: A area of water marked by stakes.

wedge: A short and lofted golf club.

winter rules: Temporary rules set to cater for winter conditions.

wood: A long club with a bulbous head, traditionally made of wood.

wooden spoon: A competition prize awarded to, politely put, the golfer most in need of improvement

yips: A nervous disposition in which a player jerks at short putts and so misses