

Golf Goons

THE MAJOR RULEBOOK

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GOLF GOONS MAJOR RULEBOOK

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Preamble

This is the Major Rulebook of the Golf Goons: how a Major is played, from the format the host picks to the last putt on the 18th. Everything around the Major is in the Golf Goons Rulebook: who is a member, how many Majors a season has, who may play and when a Major counts, who hosts, the +1, the trophy and how rules change. Words such as member, +1, host and Major Champion mean what they mean there.

Rules in this book are numbered with an M. Article M1 covers the formats and how they are scored; Article M2 covers the rules of play on the course. A rule number without an M, such as Rule 3.3, is in the Golf Goons Rulebook, which says that every Major is played under this book (Rule 3.9).

This book changes the same way as the Golf Goons Rulebook (its Article 7) and keeps its own version number and Amendment Log (Rule 7.8). Every rule is one of two types:

- **Founding Law (FL):** changing one needs three quarters of all votes.
- **House Rule (HR):** changing one needs a majority of all votes.

ARTICLE M1

Formats and Scoring

Every Major is played in one of the formats below, and the host picks which one when the date is fixed. Whatever the format, everyone plays all 18 holes of the Major (Rule 3.1). Format A crowns a Net and a Gross Champion; Format B crowns one champion (Rule 3.2). The General Rules always apply; after that, read only the block for your Major's format.

- **Format A: Stroke Play & Stableford**
  - Game: stroke play and Stableford, tracked together
  - Holes: 18, one leaderboard per title
  - Net title: Stableford over 18 holes
  - Gross title: stroke play over 18 holes
  - Field: any size
  - Scoring: General Rules, Rule M1.6
  - Play: Article M2, including Rules M2.13–M2.14
- **Format B: Match Play**
  - Game: a seeding round, then match play in seeded groups
  - Holes: 1–9 stroke play, 10–18 match play, all net
  - Title: one, won in match play by the best player in group 1
  - Field: 4 players, one group over 18 holes; 5 or more, groups of 2 to 4
  - Scoring: General Rules, Rules M1.7–M1.12
  - Play: Article M2, including Rules M2.15–M2.16

ALL FORMATS

General Rules

M1.1 HR Every Major is played in Format A (Rule M1.6) or Format B (Rules M1.7 to M1.12); more formats may be added later. In both, every player plays the same holes on one scorecard and competes for every title. Net means with 100% course handicap, gross with no handicap; Appendix A shows how the handicap strokes fall. When the date is fixed (Rule 3.4), the host announces the format. If the host announces none, it is Format A.

M1.2 HR Every player needs an official handicap to play. On the day of the Major, each player's official handicap is turned into a course handicap for the course and tees being played, and that course

handicap is used for the whole round. The only exception is a +1 without an official handicap: they may use their handicap in the shared app instead (Rules 2.2 and 5.4).

M1.3 HR Ties for a title are broken, each title separately, by an extra hole: a replay of the final hole or, where possible, a pitch and putt on the practice green to a flag chosen by the winner of a tee flip. This repeats until there is a winner.

M1.4 HR Every scorecard is kept by a marker who is a fellow player, and signed by both before results are announced.

M1.5 HR The official Rules of Golf apply, except where this rulebook says otherwise.

FORMAT A

Stroke Play & Stableford

The classic Major: one round of 18 holes and one leaderboard for each title.

M1.6 HR Everyone plays all 18 holes, and every scorecard tracks both strokes and Stableford points. Fewest strokes wins the gross title; most Stableford points wins the net title. One player may win both. Appendix A shows how points are scored, with a worked scorecard.

FORMAT B

Match Play

The front 9 seeds the field, the back 9 settles it, and there is only one winner. Everyone plays holes 1–9 as net stroke play; the result splits the field into groups, and on holes 10–18 each group plays net match play, everyone against everyone. The top seeds form group 1, which plays for the title. Appendix B shows the whole day, the group table and worked examples.

M1.7 HR One title. A match play Major has one champion, who is its Net Champion; there is no gross title and no Stableford (Rule 3.2). Everything is played net: a player's score on a hole is their strokes minus the handicap strokes they get there, given out from their full course handicap by the hole's stroke index.

M1.8 HR Seeding round (holes 1 to 9). Everyone plays the front 9 as net stroke play, against the whole field, in the flights posted under Rule 3.6. At the turn, everyone waits until the last flight is in. The field is then seeded by net strokes on holes 1 to 9, fewest first; a tie goes to a tee flip.

M1.9 HR Groups. The groups fill from the bottom: the lowest seeds form groups of 4, and the top seeds form group 1 from whoever is left. If only 1 is left, the group below gives up its best seed, making a group 1 of 2. Appendix B shows how the groups form, up to 16 players. Each group plays the back 9 as one flight, group 1 first.

M1.10 HR Matches (holes 10 to 18). Every player plays a 9-hole match against every other player in their group. Each hole goes to the fewest net strokes (Rule M1.7); equal net strokes halve it. Whoever wins more holes wins the match; level is a halved match. A win scores 1 match point, a halved match ½, a loss 0.

M1.11 HR Result. The player in group 1 with the most match points is the Major's only champion; a tie for the title goes to an extra hole (Rule M1.3). Everyone else ranks by group, then by match points within their group. Other ties are shared.

M1.12 HR Four players. With exactly 4 players there is no seeding round. All four form one group and play their matches (Rule M1.10) over all 18 holes.

ARTICLE M2

Rules of Play

How a Major is played from tee to hole: how to drop, what each mishap costs and how a hole ends. Where these rules differ from the official Rules of Golf, these rules win; for everything else, the official rules apply (Rule M1.5). The first four blocks apply in every format; after that, read only the block for your Major's format (Rule M1.1).

Appendix C puts every penalty, drop and pickup from this Article in tables, with worked examples.

BASICS

Dropping and Lifting

M2.1 HR Dropping. A "club-length" is the length of the longest club in the player's bag other than the putter. "Not nearer the hole" means no closer to the hole than the point the drop is measured from. The player drops the ball from knee height and may clean it or use a different ball. If it comes to rest outside the area allowed or nearer the hole, they drop again. If the second drop also rolls out, they place the ball where it first hit the ground on that second drop.

M2.2 HR Lifting your ball. On the green, a player may mark, lift and clean their ball at any time. Anywhere else they must mark it first and may only lift it to identify it, to take relief under this Article, or because it is in another player's way. Lifting a ball without marking it, or when this rule does not allow it, costs 1 penalty stroke and the ball goes back where it was.

PENALTIES

Lost, Out of Bounds, Water and Unplayable

M2.3 HR Provisional ball. A player who thinks their ball may be lost or out of bounds may play a provisional ball from the same spot before going to look for it. If the original is found in bounds, they play it and pick up the provisional. If not, they either carry on with the provisional, adding 1 penalty stroke, or take relief under Rule M2.4 or M2.5.

M2.4 HR Lost ball. A ball that is not found is lost. The player adds 2 penalty strokes and drops on the fairway, within 2 club-lengths of the point on the fairway closest to where the ball entered the area it was lost in (the trees, the bushes, the long rough), not nearer the hole. If there is no fairway near that point, such as on a par 3, they drop within 2 club-lengths of where the ball entered that area, on the side it came from, not nearer the hole and not in a bunker or water. They never go back to where they played from, unless they played a provisional ball (Rule M2.3).

M2.5 HR Out of bounds. A ball beyond the white stakes or the course boundary is out of bounds. The player adds 1 penalty stroke and places a ball within 1 club-length of the point where it crossed the boundary, inside the course and not nearer the hole.

M2.6 HR Water. A ball in water or a penalty area (yellow or red stakes or lines) may be played as it lies without penalty. Otherwise the player adds 1 penalty stroke and drops within 2 club-lengths of the point where the ball last crossed into the water, not nearer the hole and outside the water. A ball that is not found but all but certainly went into the water falls under this rule, not the lost ball rule.

M2.7 HR Unplayable. Only the player decides their ball is unplayable, and they may do so anywhere except in water. For 1 penalty stroke they either (a) drop within 2 club-lengths of the ball, not nearer the hole; (b) drop any distance straight back on the line from the hole through the ball; or (c) play again from where they last played. In a bunker, a drop under (a) or (b) must stay in the bunker; for 2 penalty strokes in total the player may instead drop under (b) outside the bunker.

FREE RELIEF

Repairs, Obstructions and Plugged Balls

M2.8 HR Under repair or construction. There is free relief from: areas the course marks as under repair (blue stakes, white lines or signs); anything under construction, such as fresh turf, digging or machinery tracks; puddles; animal holes; and fixed man-made objects such as cart paths, sprinkler heads and buildings. This applies when the ball lies in or on one, or when one is in the way of the player's stance or swing. The player finds the nearest point where it is no longer in the way, not nearer the hole, and drops within 1 club-length of it. A ball in water never gets free relief (Rule M2.6).

M2.9 HR Plugged ball. A ball stuck in its own pitch mark anywhere except a bunker or water gets free relief: the player lifts and cleans it and drops within 1 club-length of the spot right behind it, not nearer the hole. A plugged ball in a bunker is played as it lies or declared unplayable (Rule M2.7).

FINISHING

Gimmes, Picking Up and Disputes

M2.10 HR Gimmes. Once another player in the flight gives it, a ball on the green may be picked up as holed with one more stroke. A gimme is usually given within a putter length of the hole (measured from the edge of the hole, along the player's own putter), but may be given from further away. A ball that is not given is played until it is in the hole, or the player picks up under Rule M2.11.

M2.11 HR Picking up. A player may pick up and stop playing a hole at any time. To keep the pace, they must pick up once they have taken 10 strokes on it, penalty strokes included, without holing out. In every format, a picked-up hole counts as 10 strokes for stroke play and 0 points for Stableford.

M2.12 HR Disputes on the course. If players cannot agree how a rule applies, they first pick a third person they both accept, who decides on the spot. That decision is final. If they cannot agree on a third person, the player finishes the hole with two balls, one for each reading, and the marker writes down both scores. After the round, before results are announced, the members present decide which score counts by a show of hands. If the hands are tied, the higher score counts. Appendix C shows the steps.

FORMAT A

Stroke Play & Stableford Rules

Extra rules for stroke play and Stableford Majors (Rule M1.6).

M2.13 HR Picking up. Both titles come from one scorecard, so a picked-up hole counts for both: 10 strokes and 0 points (Rule M2.11). A player still in the running for the gross title should hole out.

M2.14 HR No conceding. Nobody concedes a hole to another player. Every hole ends with the ball holed, given as a gimme (Rule M2.10) or picked up (Rule M2.11).

FORMAT B

Match Play Rules

Extra rules for match play Majors (Rules M1.7 to M1.12).

M2.15 HR Seeding round: hole out. In the seeding round (Rule M1.8) nobody picks up early. Every hole ends with the ball holed, given as a gimme (Rule M2.10), or picked up at 10 strokes, which counts as 10 (Rule M2.11).

M2.16 HR Matches: picking up loses the hole. In the matches (Rule M1.10) a player may pick up at any time. They lose that hole in every match they are playing; if both players in a match pick up, it is halved. Nobody concedes a match: a decided match is still played to the last hole, because the same scorecard counts for the other matches.

APPENDIX A

Scoring

Worked examples for Article M1: how handicap strokes fall, and how one Format A scorecard gives both titles. Match play has its own appendix (Appendix B).

Handicap strokes

Net scores use the full course handicap (Rule M1.1), spread over the 18 holes by stroke index, hardest hole (index 1) first:

COURSE HANDICAP	ONE EXTRA STROKE ON	TWO EXTRA STROKES ON
6	index 1–6	none
18	every hole	none
24	every hole	index 1–6

A player who takes 5 on a hole where they get one stroke scores a net 4. In match play the seeding round uses only the strokes that fall on holes 1–9 (Rule M1.8).

Stableford points

The net title in Format A goes to the most Stableford points (Rule M1.6). Each hole scores points for the player's net strokes against par:

NET SCORE	2+ OVER	1 OVER	PAR	1 UNDER	2 UNDER	3 UNDER
Points	0	1	2	3	4	5

Example: one Format A scorecard

Strokes count for the gross title and Stableford points for the net title, both from the same card (Rule M1.6). This player has a course handicap of 20: one extra stroke on every hole, and a second on index 1 and 2.

HOLE	PAR	INDEX	STROKES	EXTRA STROKES	NET	POINTS
1	4	7	5	1	4 (par)	2
2	5	1	7	2	5 (par)	2
3	3	15	10	1	–	0
4	4	11	4	1	3 (birdie)	3

The player picked up on hole 3, so it counts as 10 strokes and 0 points (Rules M2.11 and M2.13). After 4 holes: 26 strokes toward the gross title and 7 points toward the net title.

EXAMPLE · A TIE FOR A TITLE

Two players finish on 36 points. They play an extra hole for the net title (Rule M1.3). If one of them also has the fewest strokes, the gross title is theirs outright: each title is settled on its own.

APPENDIX B

Match Play

Worked examples for a Format B Major (Rules M1.7 to M1.12 and M2.15 to M2.16). Everything here follows from those rules; if the two ever disagree, the rules win. Handicap strokes fall as in any net round (Appendix A).

The day at a glance

Holes 1–9: seeding round. Everyone plays net stroke play against the whole field, in the posted flights. Every hole is played out (Rule M2.15).

↓

The turn. Wait for the last flight. Seed the field by net strokes, fewest first; a tie goes to a tee flip (Rule M1.8).

↓

Holes 10–18: matches. Split into groups using the table below. Each group plays as one flight, group 1 first, everyone against everyone. Picking up loses the hole (Rule M2.16).

↓

The champion. Most match points in group 1 wins the Major, the only title on the day. A tie goes to an extra hole (Rule M1.3).

With exactly 4 players there is no seeding round: all four play their matches over all 18 holes (Rule M1.12).

Groups by seed

Count off groups of 4 from the bottom seed up; whoever is left is group 1. If only one player is left, the group below gives up its best seed, so group 1 never has fewer than 2 (Rule M1.9). Each cell is the seeds in that group. The table shows where each number of groups starts and where it is full; the field sizes in between follow the same count.

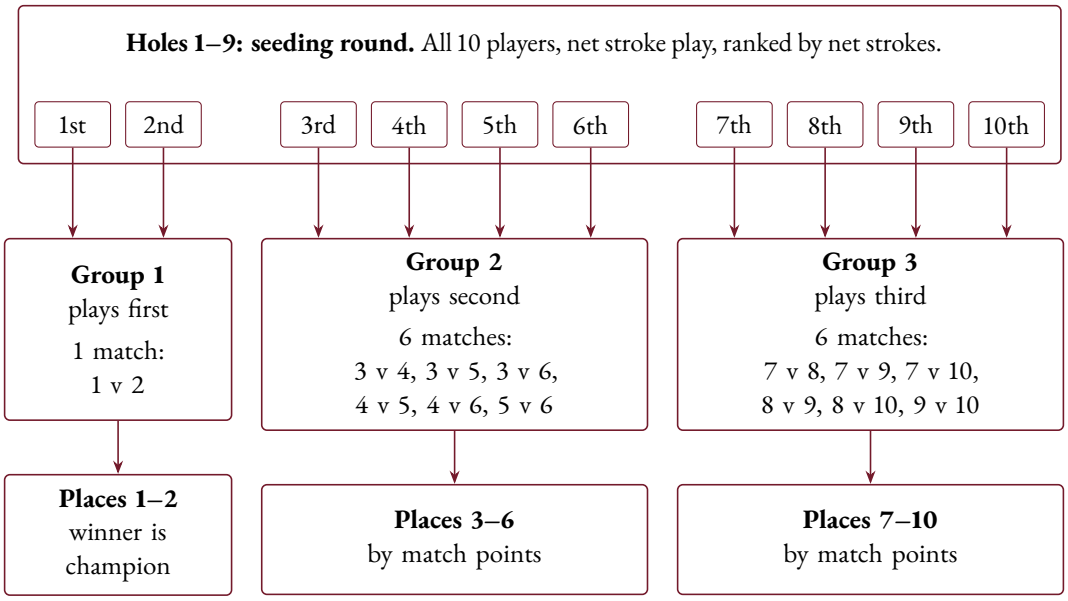
PLAYERS	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4
5	1–2	3–5		
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
8	1–4	5–8		
9	1–2	3–5	6–9	
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
12	1–4	5–8	9–12	
13	1–2	3–5	6–9	10–13
⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮	⋮
16	1–4	5–8	9–12	13–16

EXAMPLE · 14 PLAYERS

Seeds 11–14 and 7–10 are groups of 4, leaving seeds 1–6. Another 4 (3–6) leaves 1–2 as group 1.

Example: a field of 10

All 10 play the front 9 together. At the turn they line up by net strokes, and each seed drops into its group for the back 9.



Even a seed-3 player who wins all three of their matches finishes no higher than 3rd: the title is only ever decided in group 1 (Rule M1.11). Handicaps already count in the seeding, so everyone has a fair shot at group 1.

What a group plays

GROUP SIZE	MATCHES EACH	MATCHES IN GROUP	MOST POINTS POSSIBLE
2	1	1	1
3	2	3	2
4	3	6	3

Worked example: a group of 3

One scorecard counts in every match at once. On a single hole, A scores a net 4, B a net 5 and C a net 4: A beats B, A and C halve, C beats B. After 9 holes:

MATCH	HOLES WON	RESULT	MATCH POINTS
A v B	A 4, B 2, 3 halved	A wins	A 1, B 0
A v C	A 3, C 3, 3 halved	halved	A ½, C ½
B v C	B 2, C 5, 2 halved	C wins	B 0, C 1

Totals: A 1½, C 1½, B 0. In group 1, A and C play an extra hole for the title (Rule M1.3). In any other group they share the place (Rule M1.11).

APPENDIX C

Penalties, Pickups and Disputes

Article M2 in tables and examples. Every drop is from knee height and never nearer the hole (Rule M2.1).

Penalties and relief

SITUATION	COST	PLAY ON FROM	RULE
Provisional ball	1, if used	Played from the same spot before searching. Original found in bounds: play that and pick up the provisional.	M2.3
Lost ball	2	The fairway, within 2 club-lengths of the point nearest to where it went into the rough or trees. No fairway near: within 2 club-lengths of where it went in, on the side it came from.	M2.4
Out of bounds	1	Placed within 1 club-length of where it crossed the boundary, inside the course.	M2.5
Water	1	Within 2 club-lengths of where it last crossed into the water. Or play it as it lies, free.	M2.6
Unplayable	1	(a) within 2 club-lengths of the ball; (b) any distance straight back on the line from the hole; (c) where you last played. In a bunker, (a) and (b) stay in the bunker; (b) outside it costs 2.	M2.7
Lifted when not allowed	1	The ball goes back where it was.	M2.2
Under repair, building work, cart path, puddle, animal hole	free	Within 1 club-length of the nearest point where it is no longer in the way. Never in water.	M2.8
Plugged ball	free	Within 1 club-length of the spot right behind it. Not in a bunker or water.	M2.9

EXAMPLE · COUNTING THE STROKES

A tee shot is lost in the trees: add 2, drop on the fairway, and the next shot is the player's 4th (Rule M2.4). Had it gone out of bounds, the next shot would be their 3rd (Rule M2.5). From a fairway bunker, an unplayable ball dropped back outside the bunker costs 2, the same as a lost ball (Rule M2.7).

Ending a hole

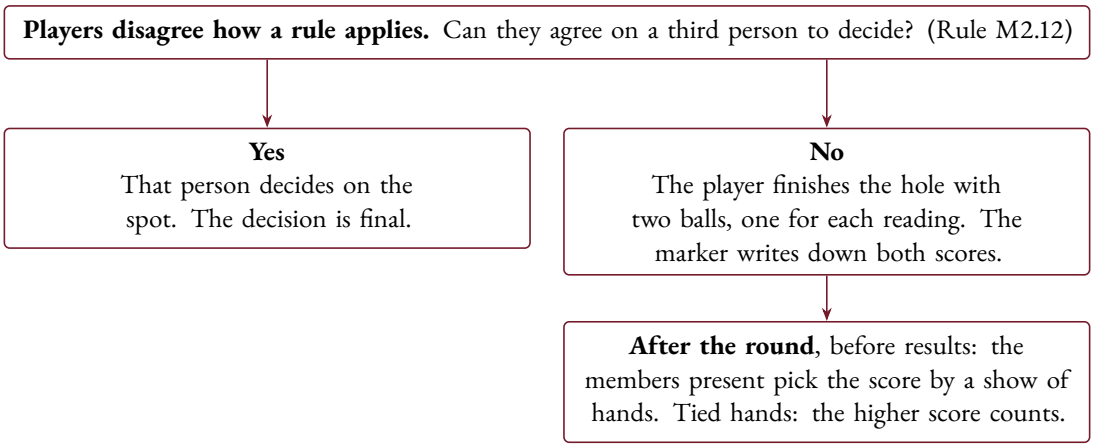
A gimme ends any hole: pick up and add one stroke (Rule M2.10). Everything else depends on the game being played.

GAME	PICK UP EARLY?	A PICKED-UP HOLE	RULE
Gross, Format A (stroke play)	Yes, and you must at 10 strokes	Counts as 10 strokes	M2.11, M2.13
Net, Format A (Stableford)	Yes	Scores 0 points	M2.11
Format B seeding round	No, only at 10 strokes	Counts as 10 strokes	M2.15
Format B matches	Yes	Loses the hole in every match; halved if both players pick up	M2.16

EXAMPLE · PICKING UP IN THE MATCHES

In a group of 3, B picks up on hole 14. B loses that hole against A and against C. If A also picks up there, A and B halve their match on that hole, and C wins it against both (Rule M2.16).

Settling a dispute on the course



APPENDIX D

Amendment Log

Every change to the Major Rulebook gets one row here, newest first. Changes are proposed and voted on under Article 7 of the Golf Goons Rulebook (Rule 7.8).

VERSION	DATE	RULE	CHANGE	VOTE
1.0	2026-11-25	All	First draft of the Major Rulebook	Awaiting approval by all five founders