

LOCAL BUSINESS



#RULESTOTHEMAX



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As the months roll on and the new Rules of Golf get tested more and more, the USGA and R&A continue to address some unforeseen issues with the new Rules, issuing some changes on the fly. Their most recent amendment to the Rules concerns the replacement of broken clubs. This is particularly relevant to NEPGA tournament players because we've added a new Local Rule to our Hard Card in response to this change. It's important to keep in mind that as the USGA and R&A make changes to the overall Rules of Golf, we at the NEPGA will need to be diligent in keeping our tournament Rules and

Conditions up to date with these changes. As such, **the Hard Card could change over the course of the season**, so it would be wise to peruse the Hard Card before playing in any competition. The updated Hard Card can be found [HERE](#).

If you happen to flip through Rule 4 (The Player's Equipment) in the rule book, you'll encounter Rule 4.1b(3): "No Replacing Lost or Damaged Clubs." The Rule states that when a player has 14 clubs selected for their round, they are not allowed to replace a club that is broken (by the player), even if the damage was caused in the normal course of play. Their only option would be to continue playing with the damaged club, or attempt to repair the club (while still using the original grip, shaft, and clubhead). This is a significant change in the new Rules.

Prior to this winter, players were allowed to replace a club that had become unfit for play through the normal course of play. When re-writing the Rules, the USGA and R&A

decided to completely disallow any replacement when a player damages their club under any circumstances. The limited exception to this Rule is that a player is allowed to replace a club that is broken by an outside influence or natural forces, or by any person other than the player or his or her caddie.

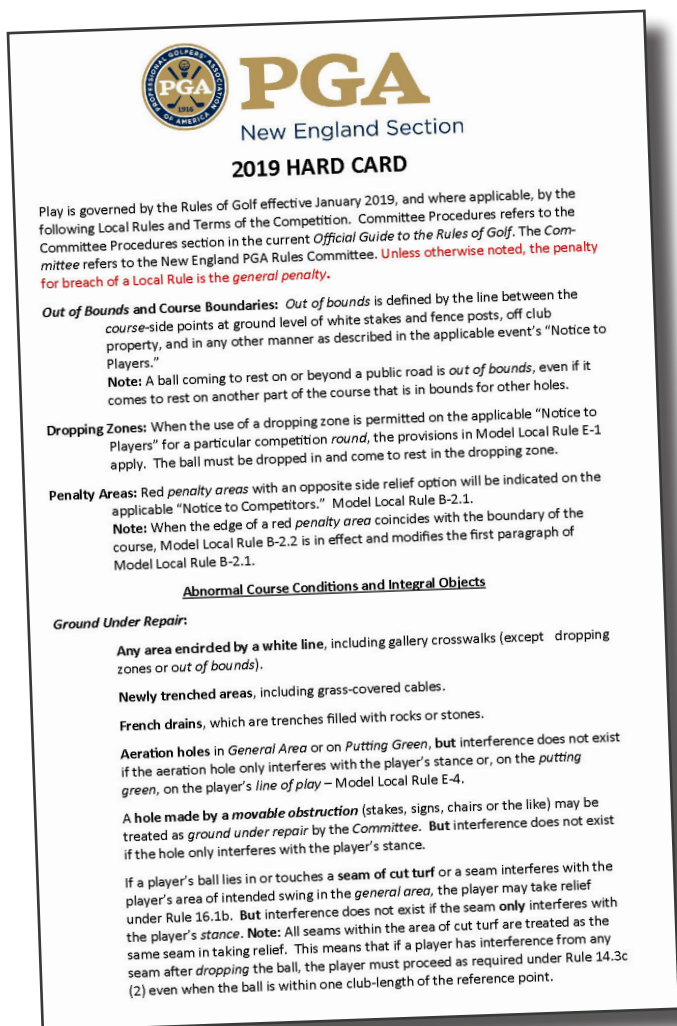
This change caused a bit of an uproar when it was first published, so the USGA offered the following reasoning in its defense: "Although there will be times when a damaged club is unusable and cannot be readily repaired on the course (such as when a driver head comes off), the practical ability to get a replacement club is seldom present other than at some elite levels of golf." In other words, they want the Rules to apply in the

same way for PGA Tour players as they do for the recreational players at the local Muni. They go on to state that "this change is consistent with the overall philosophy that a player normally should play the entire round with only the clubs that he or she started with or added during the round to get to the 14-club limit." An effort to simplify the Rule, it seems.

While this reasoning seems perfectly

reasonable, the governing bodies got a great deal of feedback from Tour players and weekend warriors alike that the prohibition was excessively strict. In reaction to this, they have conceded that it would be fair to allow players to replace clubs that were damaged in the normal course of play, so they subsequently authorized a new Local Rule. This Local Rule has been added to the NEPGA Hard Card, so it will be in effect at all NEPGA competitions. The Rule reads:

"Rule 4.1b(3) is modified in this way: if a player's club is "broken or significantly damaged" during the round by the player or caddie, except in cases of abuse, the player may replace the club with any club under Rule 4.1b(4). When replacing a club, the player must immediately take the broken or significantly damaged club out of play, using the procedure in Rule 4.1c(1)."



So if you accidentally break your club during an NEPGA tournament round, you're welcome to replace it with any club you like. Just don't forget that this is an optional Local Rule, and just because it is in effect at our Section Tournaments, that doesn't mean it's in effect elsewhere. So be sure to double check the Local Rules of any competition you're in before replacing your broken club!

<<<<< Be sure to peruse the Hard Card before playing in any NEPGA competitions! Click the image to view the card online!