

RULES QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE 2026

1* - BALL LOST OR OUT OF BOUNDS	A
2 - UNPLAYABLE BALL (not in Penalty Area)	A,G,H
3 - UNPLAYABLE BALL IN BUNKER	A,G,H,I,N
4 - PENALTY AREA - yellow stakes	A,D,P
5* - PENALTY AREA - red stakes	A,D,E,P
6 - MAKING A STROKE AT A WRONG BALL	C,I
7 - GIVE OR ASK FOR ADVICE (other than to/from partner/caddie)	C
8 - ABNORMAL COURSE CONDITION (not in Penalty Area) - Animal Hole/GUR/Immovable Obstruction/Temporary Water	D,F
9 - PLAYING BALL FROM OUTSIDE/WRONG TEE AREA	
- Stroke Play	I
- Match Play	M
10 - BALL AT REST MOVED BY	
- Outside Influence	J
- Player/Caddie (other than during search)	K
- Opponent/Caddie (other than during search)	L
- Natural Forces	B
11 - BALL IN MOTION ACCIDENTALLY HITS ANY PERSON/ OUTSIDE INFLUENCE (see Rule 11.1b(2) for ball in motion played from Putting Green)	D
12 - TOUCHING SAND IN BUNKER - making practice swing/testing conditions/during backswing	C
13 - BALL AT REST ON PUTTING GREEN	
- Accidentally moved	J
- Moved by Natural Forces	B
- Previously marked, replaced then moved by Natural Forces	J
* There may be an additional option under a local rule	
Compiled by Debbie Needham - R&A level 3 Referee 2026	

A - STROKE AND DISTANCE, DROP WITHIN ONE CLUB LENGTH RELIEF AREA NO NEARER THE HOLE - one penalty stroke (if the original stroke was from the Teeing Area player may re-tee anywhere within that area)
B - BALL MUST BE PLAYED FROM IT'S NEW SPOT - no penalty
Exception - if ball was at rest after drop/place/replace and then moves to another defined area before next stroke , ball MUST be replaced
C - GENERAL PENALTY - Stroke Play - two penalty strokes
Match Play - loss of hole
D - PLAY THE BALL AS IT LIES - no penalty
E - DROP IN LATERAL RELIEF AREA UP TO TWO CLUB LENGTHS FROM POINT WHERE BALL LAST CROSSED EDGE OF PA, NO NEARER THE HOLE - one penalty stroke
F - DROP WITHIN ONE CLUB LENGTH RELIEF AREA FROM NEAREST POINT OF COMPLETE RELIEF NO NEARER THE HOLE - no penalty (if in Bunker drop must be in Bunker)
G - BACK-ON-THE-LINE, DROP IN LINE WITH FLAGSTICK AND ORIGINAL POSITION OF BALL - one penalty stroke (if in Bunker drop must be in Bunker)
H - DROP WITHIN TWO CLUB LENGTH RELIEF AREA NO NEARER THE HOLE - one penalty stroke (if in Bunker drop must be in Bunker)
I - STROKE PLAY - in addition to General penalty player MUST correct mistake before beginning next hole otherwise they will be DQ
J - BALL MUST BE REPLACED - no penalty
K - BALL MUST BE REPLACED - one penalty stroke
L - BALL MUST BE REPLACED - one penalty stroke to Opponent
M - OPPONENT MAY CANCEL STROKE - no penalty
N - BACK-ON-THE-LINE RELIEF OUTSIDE OF BUNKER - DROP IN LINE WITH FLAGSTICK AND ORIGINAL BALL POSITION - two penalty strokes
P - BACK-ON-THE-LINE - DROP IN LINE WITH FLAGSTICK AND POINT WHERE BALL LAST CROSSED EDGE OF PENALTY AREA - one penalty stroke
NB - When dropping Back-on-the-line, the ball may roll up to one club length in any direction from the spot where it first touched the ground, but no nearer to the hole than where the original ball came to rest