

COMMENTARY ON THE CONSULTATION DRAFT

1. Introduction

The Draft 5th Edition of the WCF Rules of Golf Croquet has had four principal objectives, namely:

- 1.1 to make substantive changes to the Rules only when there was clear evidence of support from the GC playing community or if it was possible to simplify the Rules.
- 1.2 to incorporate the substance of the Official Rulings issued since the 4th Edition was published in 2013 and to fill other gaps identified through playing experience.
- 1.3 to make the Rules easier to use by adopting numeric sub-paragraphing, consistent language, a greater use of descriptive headings and a small amount of re-organisation.
- 1.4 to meet as far as possible the directions given in WCF Statute 133.7, namely: “where the Rules and the Laws cover similar subject matter which does not relate to the essential differences between the two games, the GCRC should co-operate with the ACLC to develop common wording.” In practice, this relates mainly to the court, equipment and faults.

The draft 5th Edition has sought to retain the compactness and general appearance of the 4th Edition.

2. Substantive changes

- 2.1 **Scoring clips**
Scoring clips are no longer outside agencies when attached to a hoop, even if belonging to another game. A ball that runs a hoop with a clip attached will score the point. See Rule 4.6.
- 2.2 **New definitions of turn and stroke**
The turn is now defined as a period of time and a stroke is defined as an action that is carried out in a turn. See Rules 6.1 and 6.2.
- 2.3 **Deeming**
A stroke may now be declared to have been played (“deemed” in common parlance) as is the case in AC. A declared stroke is deemed to be played with the striker’s ball. See Rule 6.2.1(c).
- 2.4 **Ball leaving the court**
A ball now leaves the court when its edge touches a plane raised vertically from the inside edge of the boundary. This is the same as in AC. See Rule 6.5.1.
- 2.5 **Offside balls**
If a player plays a stroke with a ball that is not offside before their opponent has given a direction about the player’s other ball that is offside, the stroke now stands and cannot be recalled. See Rule 8.4.1.

- 2.6 Jammed balls
If a player chooses not to replay a stroke with a ball that jammed, the ball is left where it stopped and is not placed half-way through the hoop. See Rule 9.4.2(b).
- 2.7 No condoning of own wrong ball
The wrong ball rule has been amended to prevent a side condoning its own wrong ball by immediately playing a second stroke. See Rule 10.3.
- 2.8 Penalty spot restart
The concept of a *penalty spot restart* already exists in Rule 1(f) of the 4th Edition as the means of restarting a game after it is discovered that one or more hoops have been run out of order. Its use has been extended in the 5th Edition to provide a simple remedy in three situations, namely:
- 2.8.1 when the striker plays the partner ball out of sequence – this is in addition to the existing “replace and replay” remedy and eliminates the “gift hoop” outcome. See Rule 10.4.
- 2.8.2 when the striker’s partner plays their own ball out of sequence in doubles – this is in addition to the existing “replace and replay” remedy and eliminates the “gift hoop” outcome. See Rule 10.5.
- 2.8.3 when one side is guilty of overlapping play, namely if they play a stroke before the all balls caused to move by the previous stroke have stopped or left the court, and the previous stroke involved an error. See Rule 12.1.4.
- 2.9 Forestalling play before a wrong ball is played
As a consequence of the introduction of the PSR, players (but not a referee) remain entitled to forestall play before the opponent plays out of sequence but are no longer obliged to do so. A referee may now only forestall play after a wrong ball has been played.
- 2.10 Faults
The fault rule (Rule 11) has been amended as explained in paragraph 3 below.
- 2.11 Non-striking faults changed to examples of interference
The concept of a non-striking fault has been removed from the GC Rules. Accidental contacts with balls are treated as unpenalized interferences (if not committed during the striking period by a player playing or intending to play a stroke). Non-striking faults are rare events and the current penalty in the 4th Edition is seen by many as unduly harsh. Their removal also greatly simplifies the treatment of multiple errors in the same turn.

2.12 Overlapping play
Rule 12 replaces 4th Edition Rules 6(e), 6(f) and 13(a)(14) with a simplified treatment. If both sides cause balls to be in motion simultaneously, the play of the striker's side is valid and the other side effectively loses its next stroke. In doubles, if both players of a side cause balls to be in motion simultaneously, the error suffers the same penalty as playing an opponent's ball.

2.13 Playing after play has been forestalled
This is now recognised an error in Rule 13 with the same consequences as in AC, namely the stroke and any points scored are cancelled, the issue that caused the forestalling is settled and the player entitled to play then plays. It should be noted that the forestalling must be justified. If a player runs a hoop just as their opponent forestalls because they think that the player is playing the partner ball, the point will stand if it turns out that the player was playing the striker's ball.

2.14 Behaviour
Partially in consequence of removing non-striking faults from the GC Rules, Rule 15 (Behaviour – formerly entitled Etiquette) now gives referees greater powers to deal with serious examples of misbehaviour.

3. Faults – Rule 11

3.1 Following the removal of non-striking faults from the Rules, the term “striking fault” is no longer used and striking faults are now simply “faults”.

3.2 Striking period – Rule 11.2

3.2.1 The start of the striking period has been made earlier in time than when the mallet hits the ball. It now occurs when the player takes a stance with apparent intent to play a stroke. This is the point at which intent to play a stroke has been demonstrated for the purposes of the Rules and any accidental contact between mallet and ball will constitute a stroke (if it involves the ball the player intended to strike) or a fault (if some other ball was contacted). Rule 11.2.2 describes how an intended stroke may be aborted by the player stepping clearly away from the stance.

3.2.2 The start of the GC striking period is earlier in time than the start of the AC striking period. The latter is designed to forgive accidental contact with the striker's ball until the start of the final backswing before the ball is struck. The general rule in still ball games (e.g. golf, snooker, billiards, pool) is that accidental contact with a ball counts as a stroke. AC represents a special case because (like snooker, billiards and pool) it is based on turns with many strokes but (unlike them) is played outdoors exposed to the elements and (unlike them) without a referee in charge. It has long been held that it would be undesirable if an AC break could be ended simply because the outplayer believed that the striker had accidentally grazed the striker's ball with the mallet before playing a stroke, notably when casting over the ball. The scope

for bitter argument and reputational damage would be great. Accordingly, it has been long accepted that AC needs an exception to the general rule. In contrast, a GC turn contains only one stroke and so does not need an exception to the general rule.

- 3.3 The rare mallet-handling faults listed in 4th Edition Rules 13(a)(1) to (3) have been removed from the list of faults. Unlike AC, where a faint contact can mean that a hampered roquet has been made and the turn can continue, a faint contact in GC almost never confers any advantage to the player.
- 3.4 4th Edition Rule 14(a)(14) (playing before the previous turn ends) has been deleted. The situation is now covered in Rule 12 (overlapping play).
- 3.5 The intent of 4th Edition GC Rules 13(a)(4) to (13) and (15) has been repeated in Rules 11.3.1 to 9:
- | Faults | 4 th Edition | 5 th Edition |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Kicking mallet | 13(a)(4) | 11.3.1 |
| Fails to use end-face | 13(a)(5) | 11.3.2 |
| Double tap | 13(a)(6) | 11.3.3 |
| Crush | 13(a)(7) | 11.3.5 |
| Double tap (contact) | 13(a)(8) | 11.3.5 |
| Fails to avoid crush | 13(a)(9) | 11.3.6 |
| Moves ball by hitting peg/hoop | 13(a)(10) | 11.3.8 |
| Pushes or pulls ball | 13(a)(11) | 11.3.4 |
| Touches non-SB with mallet | 13(a)(12) | 11.3.7 |
| Touches any ball with body etc | 13(a)(13) | 11.3.7 |
| Plays before the previous turn ends | 13(a)(14) | 12 |
| Damages court with mallet | 13(a)(15) | 11.3.9 |
- 3.6 Rule 11.4 is a new sub-rule dealing with the observation of faults and is designed to be common to GC and AC. It is intended to bring more clarity to what a referee must see before ruling that certain faults have occurred in two-ball strokes.
- 3.7 A side may not condone its own fault by playing another stroke unless it was entitled to replay the stroke. See 11.5.1.
- 3.8 If a player scores a point for the non-offending side when committing a fault, the point counts provided that the balls are left where they stopped. See Rule 11.5.4.

4. New material (Appendices 1 to 3)

4.1 Appendix 1

This sets out the current WCF Official Rulings and explains how they are incorporated into the 5th edition or, where relevant, modified or revoked.

- 4.2 Appendix 2
This sets out standard practices in modern GC which are not explicitly permitted or prohibited by the 4th Edition and explains where they appear in the 5th Edition.
- 4.3 Appendix 3
This sets out new provisions that deal with situations that have no standard practice.
5. **Language, headings and re-organisation**
- 5.1 Language
Care has been taken to use precisely the same language when the same concepts are being addressed or described in different parts of the Rules.
- 5.2 Headings
The practice in the AC Laws of giving each sub-rule a descriptive heading has been adopted. This should make it easier for readers to find the relevant part of a rule.
- 5.3 Organisation
- 5.3.1 Unlike the AC Laws, the 4th Edition of the GC Rules contains 16 rules which are presented without any division into different parts or sections. The 5th Edition has 18 rules divided into four Parts preceded by a short Definitions section. The extra two rules in the 5th Edition deal with playing after play has been forestalled (which is new) and double-banked play (which was formerly located in Rule 1).
- 5.3.2 Part 1 is entitled Introduction and contains Rules 1 to 4 which have the same titles and purposes as in the 4th Edition.
- 5.3.3 Part 2 is entitled General Rules of Play and contains Rules 5 to 8. Rules 5 to 7 have almost the same titles but the same purposes as in the 4th Edition (the start, the turn and stroke and scoring a point). Rule 8 deals with offside balls (Rule 10 in the 4th Edition).
- 5.3.4 Part 3 is entitled Irregularities and contains Rules 9 to 13 (interference, playing a wrong ball, faults, overlapping play and playing after play has been forestalled).
- 5.3.5 Part 4 is entitled Other Matters and contains Rules 14 to 18 (information and advice, behaviour, refereeing, handicap play and double-banked play).
- 5.3.6 An Index similar in detail to that in the AC Laws will be added to the Final Draft of the Rules to be approved by the WCF Council.

Appendix 1

Official Rulings (current from 1 January 2016)

The Official Rulings are printed in full below followed by the location of their incorporation in the 5th Edition. Some Official Rulings have been modified or revoked and this is explained below.

OR 1.1 When applying Rule 1(f) in a handicap game, any extra turns used during play for, and which includes, the running of hoops out of order shall be restored. Time, in a time limited game, will not be restored in such circumstances.

[See 5th Edition Rules 7.5.4 and 7.5.5.](#)

OR 5.1 If, in all of the first four turns of a game, the balls are played in the sequence given by Rule 1(e), but by the opponent(s) of the balls' owner(s), then the first four turns stand and, for the remainder of the match, the ownership of the balls is as played in those first four turns.

[See 5th Edition Rule 10.7.](#)

OR 5.2 Unless OR 5.1 applies, if the fourth ball played is a wrong ball and play is stopped immediately then Rule 5(f) is applied. Any wrong ball play discovered from the fifth turn onwards is dealt with using Rule 11.

[See 5th Edition Rule 10.8.](#)

OR 7.1 When applying Rule 7(f), if a ball jams in a hoop above another ball already in the hoop, replaying the turn is the only option available once the equipment has been checked and reset or replaced.

[See 5th Edition Rule 9.4.4.](#)

OR 7.2 If a ball is resting in a hoop before it becomes the hoop in order, when applying Rules 7(a) and 7(c), the hoop only needs to be the correct hoop in order immediately before a ball completes the running of it.

[See 5th Edition Rule 7.2.1.](#)

OR 8.1 Players are not permitted to refer to printed, handwritten or other prepared material during a match, except for the purpose of clarifying the rules that apply to a circumstance that has arisen.

[See 5th Edition Rule 14.2.](#)

OR 8.2 The words 'off the court' in Rule 8(e) should be interpreted as "outside the game".

[See 5th Edition Rule 14.1](#)

OR 9.1 Rule 9(h) should be interpreted as if it read: "If any ball makes contact with a scoring clip attached to a hoop, Rules 9(i) and 9(k) do not apply and all balls are left where they come to rest. No hoop point may be scored for the striker's side in such a stroke."

This has been revoked. A scoring clip attached to a hoop is now treated as part of the hoop and not as an outside agency. See 5th Edition Rule 4.6.

OR 9.2 For the purposes of Rule 9(b), an immovable outside agency on the court (e.g. a sprinkler head) is to be treated as damage that cannot be repaired.

See 5th Edition Rule 9.2.1(a).

OR 10.1 If a player with an offside ball plays before a direction under Rule 10(c)(1) is given, that player is not entitled to subsequently rule on an opponent's offside ball. (see 1st and 3rd sentences of Rule 10(c)(2).)

See 5th Edition Rule 8.4.6. Note that this principle has been retained in respect of a player who plays an offside ball before a direction has been given in relation to that ball. However, the Rule has been modified so that a player who owns an offside ball is allowed to play their inside partner ball before a direction is given in relation to their offside ball.

OR 12.1 Rule 12(c)(4) is to be interpreted as if the following sentence were appended to the end of the Rule: "When a side loses its next turn, it is deemed to have been played with the ball of the side which would have followed the ball played immediately before the turn to be lost. If the side would have been entitled to play either ball of the side under Rule 11, it must nominate which ball is deemed to have been played.

This has been revoked because non-striking faults have been removed from the GC Rules. The situation therefore cannot arise.

OR14.1 Deliberately committing a striking or non-striking fault is an example of unacceptable behaviour under Rule 14(a).

See 5th Edition Rule 15.2.7 in relation to the deliberate committing of a fault.

OR 14.2 The underlying principle of Rule 14(a)(7) extends to the deliberate or repeated playing of an opponent's ball, or to playing two or more turns in succession, or pretending to play a stroke so as to induce the opponent(s) to play two or more turns in succession.

See 5th Edition Rule 15.2.7.

OR 14.3 Rule 14(a)(8) is to be interpreted as though the words "or other justifiable delay applies." is added to the last sentence.

See 5th Edition Rule 15.3.2.

OR 15.1 If a situation does not appear to be adequately covered in the rules, or their interpretation appears to be uncertain, the issue shall be decided by the referee or, in the absence of a referee, by the players in a manner which best meets the justice of the case.

See 5th Edition Rule 16.3.

OR 15.2 Where a stroke that may produce a fault is to be played the striker should first request a referee or the opponent to watch the stroke. If the striker does not make the request, the opponent may forestall play and ask for the stroke to be watched.

See 5th Edition Rule 16.1.3

Appendix 2

Coverage of standard practice

The 5th edition covers various standard practices that are not dealt with clearly or at all in the 4th Edition of the GC Rules.

1. Rule 3.2.2 – use of AC hoop layout

A game of GC is valid if the hoops are laid out for AC (i.e. hoop 5 has the red top instead of hoop 13).

2. Rule 5.1 – deciding order of play

The order of play may be determined by means other than tossing a coin.

3. Rule 5.2.2 – alternative starting area

The use of an alternative starting area is now recognised.

4. Rule 5.5.1 – doubles players to retain same ball

It is now stated that, in doubles, each player must retain the same ball throughout a match of more than one game.

5. Rule 7.3.2 – scoring more than one point in a stroke

A ball may score more than one point in a stroke.

6. Rule 7.4 – means of recording the score during a game

The score may be recorded by means other than calling it out after each hoop, e.g. scoring clips or a scoreboard.

7. Rule 8.2.2 – offside status of balls off court

The offside status of a ball off the court when a hoop is run is to be judged by where it left the court.

8. Rule 10.11 – wrong ball and fault in same stroke

8.1 If a player plays a wrong ball to which the full penalty applies (i.e. a wrong ball to which Rules 10.3, 10.4.2, 10.5.2 or 10.6 apply), then any fault committed in the same stroke is ignored.

8.2 If a player plays a wrong ball to which replace-and-replay or a penalty spot restart applies (i.e. a wrong ball to which Rules 10.4.1 or 10.5.1 apply), then the wrong ball is ignored and the fault is penalised. Play then continues by the non-offending side playing the ball next in sequence after the ball that the previous player should have played. This is the principle indicated in 4th Edition Rules 11(b)(1) and (c)(1) by the references to Rule 13.

9. Rule 17.3 – time-limited double-banked games

The organising body is authorised to permit the suspension of time in a time-limited game when one game holds up another.

Appendix 3

Treatment of situations where no standard practice exists

The 5th edition deals with the following issues that are not dealt with in the 4th Edition of the GC Rules.

1. Rule 3.2.3 – hoop adjustment and checking

Only the player about to play a stroke may ask for a misaligned hoop to be straightened. A player is now entitled to have a hoop checked before a game and the sides may jointly asked for a hoop to be checked during a game.

2. Rule 3.4.1 – alternative methods of attaching shaft to head

In addition to the standard arrangements, alternative but equivalent methods of attaching a shaft to a mallet head are now permitted. New inventions will need to be scrutinised by the WCF Equipment Officer to check that a new method is genuinely equivalent.

3. Rule 3.4.6 – exchange of mallet

A mallet may now be exchanged if it exhibits a mechanical or structural defect as well as when it suffers accidental damage.

4. Rule 8.4.2 – right to ask for a direction

The owner of an offside ball is entitled to ask the opponent to give a direction and the opponent is to reply promptly. Once an opponent has either given a direction or stated that no direction will be given, they may not change their mind.

5. Rule 8.4.3 – ball not directed to a penalty spot becoming offside again

An offside ball that is not directed to a penalty spot may become offside again if another hoop is scored before it is next played. For example, Bab runs hoop 1 with B when Y is in Corner 3. Bab decides not to direct Y to a penalty spot. However, Ray now runs hoop 2 with R. Bab may now direct Y to be played from a penalty spot.

6. Rule 10.10 – limit on change of decision – wrong ball

If a wrong ball is played, the non-offending side has the right to choose whether the balls are left where they stopped or are replaced. If they choose to have the balls replaced, they may not then change their decision. However, if they choose that the balls are left where they stopped, they may change their decision until they play a stroke. The rationale is that replacing the balls will generally be less tactically sensitive than leaving them where they stopped. Hence, slight inaccuracy in replacing them will be unlikely to matter. However, if the balls are replaced and the non-offending side then wants to change its decision, it may be difficult to know where exactly the balls stopped. It is recognised that the balls could be marked but not everyone will remember to do so and it is desirable to avoid arguments about ball positions.

7. Rule 11.5.3 – limit on change of decision - fault

If a fault is committed, the non-offending side has the right to choose whether the balls are left where they stopped or replaced. The same restriction on changing a decision applies as described above in relation to a wrong ball.

8. Rule 11.6 – no extra penalty for more than one fault

Occasionally, a player will commit two faults in the same stroke. There is no additional penalty.

9. Rule 14.4 – information that should be given to an opponent

This has been extended to include the colour of any ball on the court, the time remaining in a time-limited game and the number of extra strokes remaining in a handicap game.

10. Rule 15.2.3 – misbehaviour

Deliberate or repeated damage to the court surface is now added to abuse of the mallet or equipment as a form of misbehaviour. A very serious example could lead to the offender losing the game under Rule 15.4 or 15.5.

11. Rule 17 – double-banked play

Rule 17.2 provides guidance about avoiding interference and which game has priority. Rule 17.3 provides for the organising body permitting the stopping of a timer in one game when held up by the other game.

12. Rule 18 – handicap play

Rule 18 sets out the system established in New Zealand and now adopted in Australia and the UK. “Extra turns” are now referred to as “extra strokes” in keeping with the definitions of turn and stroke in Rule 6.

13. Rule 18.6 – communication with opponent

13.1 Rule 18.6.2 entitles the opposing side to ask the receiver of an extra stroke if they are going to play an extra stroke at the end of a turn and obliges the receiver to reply promptly.

13.2 Rule 18.6.3 – if an extra stroke receiver states that they will not play an extra stroke, they may not then change their mind.