

Purpose of Rule: Rule 25 provides modifications to certain Rules of Golf to allow players with specific disabilities to play fairly with players who have no disabilities, the same disability or a different type of disability.

25

Modifications for Players with Disabilities

25.1

Overview

Rule 25 applies to all competitions, including all forms of play. It is a player's category of disability and eligibility that determine whether they can use the specific modified Rules in Rule 25.

Rule 25 modifies certain Rules for players in the following categories of disability:

- Players who are blind (which includes certain levels of vision impairment),
- Players who are amputees (which means both those with limb deficiencies and those who have lost a limb),
- Players who use assistive mobility devices, and
- Players with intellectual disabilities.

It is recognized that there are many players with other types of disabilities (such as players with neurological conditions, players with orthopaedic conditions, players of short stature and players who are deaf). These additional categories of disability are not covered in Rule 25 as, to date, no requirement has been identified for modification of the Rules of Golf for these players.

The Equipment Rules apply without modification, except as provided in Section 7 of the Equipment Rules. For information on the use of equipment (other than a club or a ball) for medical reasons, see Rule 4.3b.

See Committee Procedures, Section 5D for guidance on player eligibility, and for additional guidance on Rule 25 and competitions involving players with disabilities.

25.2

Modifications for Players Who Are Blind

Purpose of Rule: Rule 25.2 allows a player who is blind (which includes certain levels of visual impairment) to be assisted by both an aide and a caddie at the same time, allows help with aiming, gives the player a limited exception to the prohibitions on touching sand in a bunker with a club and allows help with lifting, dropping, placing and replacing a ball.

25.2a

Help from an Aide

A player who is blind may get help from an aide:

- In taking a stance,
- With aiming before the stroke, and
- By asking for and getting advice.

An aide has the same status under the Rules as a caddie (see Rule 10.3), but with the exceptions described in Rule 25.2e.

For purposes of Rule 10.2a (Advice), a player may ask for and get advice from both an aide and a caddie at the same time.

25.2b

Player Allowed Only One Aide

A player who is blind may have only one aide at a time.

If the player has more than one aide at a time, the player gets the **general penalty** for each hole where that breach happened, in the same way as provided in Rule 10.3a(1) (Player Allowed Only One Caddie at a Time).

25.2c

Modification of Rule 10.2b(3) (No Setting Down Object to Help With Aiming, Taking Stance or Swinging)

Rule 10.2b(3) is modified so that there is no penalty if the player, caddie or aide sets an object down to help with aiming or to help in taking a stance for the stroke to be made (such as a club set down on the ground to show where the player should aim or position their feet). **But** the object must be removed before the stroke is made. If it is not, the player gets the **general penalty** for a breach of Rule 10.2b(3).

25.2d

Modification of Rule 10.2b(4) (Restricted Area for Caddie Before Player Makes Stroke)

Rule 10.2b(4) is modified so that there is no penalty if the aide or caddie is positioned on or close to an extension of the line of play behind the ball at any time before or during the player's stroke, so long as the aide or caddie does not help the player in making the stroke.

25.2e

Modification of Rule 10.3 (Caddies)

The aide of a player who is blind may also serve as the player's caddie, but is not required to do so.

The player may have both an aide and a caddie at the same time, in which case:

- That aide must not carry or handle the player's clubs except in guiding the player, helping the player in taking a stance or aiming before making the stroke, or in helping the player as a courtesy as provided in the definition of caddie.
- If that aide carries or handles the player's clubs in breach of this Rule, the player has two caddies at the same time and gets the **general penalty** for each hole where that breach happened (see Rule 10.3a(1)).

25.2f

Modification of Rule 12.2b(1) (When Touching Sand Results in Penalty)

Before making a stroke at their ball in a bunker, a player who is blind may, without penalty, touch sand in the bunker with a club:

- In the area right in front of or right behind the ball, and
- In making the backswing for a stroke.

But in doing so, the player must not improve the lie of the ball more than would result from lightly grounding the club.

The player remains subject to the prohibitions in Rule 12.2b(1) on deliberately touching the sand in the bunker to test the condition of the sand and touching the sand with a club in making a practice swing.

25.2g

Modification of Rule 14.1b (Who May Lift Ball)

When a player's ball lies on the putting green, Rule 14.1b is modified so that the player's aide, in addition to their caddie, may lift the ball without the player's authorization.

25.2h

Help with Dropping, Placing and Replacing Ball

For a player who is blind, all Rules that require the player to drop, place or replace a ball are modified so that the player is also allowed, without limitation, to give a general authorization to any other person to drop, place and replace their ball.

25.3

Modifications for Players Who Are Amputees

Purpose of Rule: Rule 25.3 allows a player who is an amputee (which means both those with limb deficiencies and those who have lost a limb) to use a prosthetic device and make a stroke while anchoring the club, and allows help with dropping, placing and replacing a ball.

25.3a

Status of Prosthetic Devices

Use of an artificial arm or leg is not a breach of Rule 4.3 provided the player has a medical reason to use it and the Committee decides that its use does not give the player any unfair advantage over other players (see Rule 4.3b). Players in doubt about the use of a device should raise the matter as soon as possible with the Committee.

A player using a prosthetic device is still subject to the prohibitions in Rule 4.3a against using equipment in an abnormal way.

25.3b

Modification of Rule 10.1b (Anchoring the Club)

If a player who is an amputee is unable to hold and swing the majority of their clubs without anchoring because of limb deficiencies or limb loss, the player may make a stroke while anchoring the club, without penalty under Rule 10.1b.

25.3c

Help with Dropping, Placing and Replacing Ball

For a player who is an amputee, all Rules that require the player to drop, place or replace a ball are modified so that the player is also allowed, without limitation, to give a general authorization to any other person to drop, place and replace their ball.

25.3d

Modification of Definition of “Replace”

For a player who is an amputee, the definition of replace (and Rule 14.2b(2)) is modified to allow the player to replace the ball either by hand or by using another piece of equipment (such as rolling the ball with a club).

25.4

Modifications for Players Who Use Assistive Mobility Devices

Purpose of Rule: Rule 25.4 allows a player who uses an assistive mobility device to be assisted by both an aide and a caddie at the same time, explains how a player may use an assistive mobility device (such as a wheelchair or other wheeled mobility device or a cane or a crutch) to help in taking a stance and making a stroke, and modifies certain relief procedures.

Rules 25.4a to 25.4l apply to all assistive mobility devices, including canes, crutches, wheelchairs and other wheeled mobility devices.

Rule 25.4m and 25.4n apply only to wheelchairs and other wheeled mobility devices.

25.4a

Help from an Aide or Any Other Person

A player who uses an assistive mobility device may get help from an aide or any other person, including another player, in these ways:

- Lifting Ball on Putting Green: When the player's ball lies on the putting green, Rule 14.1b is modified so that the player's aide, in addition to their caddie, may lift the ball without the player's authorization.
- Dropping, Placing and Replacing Ball: All Rules that require the player to drop, place or replace a ball are modified so that the player is also allowed, without limitation, to give a general authorization to any other person to drop, place and replace their ball.
- Positioning Player or Device: As allowed by Rule 10.2b(5), before making a stroke, the player may get physical help from any person to help position the player or position or remove the assistive mobility device.

25.4b

Advice from an Aide

A player who uses an assistive mobility device may ask for and get advice from their aide in the same way that a player asks for and gets advice from a caddie under Rule 10.2a (Advice).

An aide has the same status under the Rules as a caddie (see Rule 10.3), but with the exceptions described in Rule 25.4j.

For purposes of Rule 10.2a, a player may ask for and get advice from both an aide and a caddie at the same time.

25.4c

Player Allowed Only One Aide

A player who uses an assistive mobility device may have only one aide at a time.

If the player has more than one aide at a time, the player gets the **general penalty** for each hole where that breach happened, in the same way as provided in Rule 10.3a(1) (Player Allowed Only One Caddie at a Time).

25.4d

Modification of Definition of “Stance”

A player's use of an assistive mobility device may affect their stance for the purposes of various Rules, such as in determining the area of intended stance under Rule 8.1a and deciding if there is interference by an abnormal course condition under Rule 16.1.

To address this, the definition of stance is modified to mean “the position of a player’s feet and body, and the position of an assistive mobility device if one is used, in preparing for or making a stroke”.

25.4e

Modification of Definition of “Replace”

For players who use an assistive mobility device, the definition of replace (and Rule 14.2b(2)) is expanded to allow the player to replace the ball either by hand or by using another piece of equipment (such as rolling the ball with a club).

25.4f

Application of Rule 4.3 (Use of Equipment)

Rule 4.3 applies to the use of assistive mobility devices:

- The player may use assistive mobility devices to help in their play if that is allowed under the standards in Rule 4.3b, and
- The player using an assistive mobility device is still subject to the prohibitions in Rule 4.3a against using equipment in an abnormal way.

25.4g

Modification of Rule 8.1b(5) to Allow Use of an Assistive Mobility Device in Taking a Stance

Under Rule 8.1b(5), there is no penalty if a player improves the conditions affecting the stroke by firmly placing the feet in taking a stance, “including a reasonable amount of digging in with the feet in sand”.

For a player who uses an assistive mobility device, Rule 8.1b(5) is modified so that a “reasonable amount of digging in with the feet” includes:

- A reasonable amount of digging in with an assistive mobility device, or
- Taking reasonable actions to position an assistive mobility device in taking a stance and to try to avoid slipping.

But this modification does not allow the player to go beyond that by building a stance so that the assistive mobility device will not slip during the swing, such as by creating a raised mound of soil or sand against which to brace the device.

If the player does so, they get the **general penalty** for altering the surface of the ground to build a stance in breach of Rule 8.1a(3).

25.4h

Modification of Rule 10.1b (Anchoring the Club)

If a player is unable to hold and swing the majority of their clubs without anchoring because of the use of an assistive mobility device, the player may make a stroke while anchoring the club, without penalty under Rule 10.1b.

25.4i

Modification of Rule 10.1c (Making Stroke while Standing Across or on Line of Play)

To take account of a player's use of an assistive mobility device, Rule 10.1c is modified such that the player must also not make a stroke with any part of their assistive mobility device deliberately placed on each side of or touching the line of play or an extension of that line behind the ball.

25.4j

Modification of Rule 10.3 (Caddies)

The aide of a player using an assistive mobility device may also serve as the player's caddie, but is not required to do so.

The player may have both an aide and a caddie at the same time, in which case:

- That aide must not carry or handle the player's clubs except in helping the player in taking a stance or lining up before making the stroke, or in helping the player as a courtesy as provided in the definition of caddie. But this does not modify Rule 10.2b(3) (No Setting Down Object to Help With Aiming, Taking Stance or Swinging).
- If that aide carries or handles the player's clubs in breach of this Rule, the player has two caddies at the same time and gets the **general penalty** for each hole where that breach happened (see Rule 10.3a(1)).

25.4k

Modification of Rule 11.1b(2)

For players who use an assistive mobility device, Rule 11.1b(2) is modified so that if a player's ball in motion played from a putting green accidentally hits the assistive mobility device, the ball must be played as it lies.

25.4l

Application of Rule 12.2b(1) in Using Assistive Mobility Device to Test Conditions of Sand in Bunker

Under Rule 12.2b(1), a player must not “deliberately touch the sand in the bunker with a hand, club, rake or other object to test the condition of the sand to learn information about the next stroke”.

This applies to using an assistive mobility device to deliberately test the condition of the sand.

But the player may touch the sand with their assistive mobility device for any other purpose, without penalty.

25.4m

For Player Using Wheeled Mobility Device: Modification of Lateral Relief Option for Ball in Red Penalty Area and for Unplayable Ball

When a player with a wheeled mobility device takes lateral relief for a ball in a red penalty area or for an unplayable ball, Rules 17.1d(3) and 19.2c are modified to expand the size of the allowed relief area from using two club-lengths for measurement to using four club-lengths for measurement.

25.4n

For Player Using Wheeled Mobility Device: Modification of Penalty Under Rule 19.3b (Unplayable Ball Relief in Bunker)

When a player with a wheeled mobility device takes relief for an unplayable ball in a bunker, Rule 19.3b is modified so that the player may take back-on-the-line relief outside that bunker for one penalty stroke.

25.5

Modifications for Players with Intellectual Disabilities

Purpose of Rule: Rule 25.5 allows a player with an intellectual disability to be assisted by both an aide and a caddie at the same time, and clarifies the role of a supervisor, who is not assigned to a specific player and is not allowed to give advice.

25.5a

Help from an Aide or Supervisor

The extent of help that players with intellectual disabilities may need will be specific to each individual.

The Committee may provide or allow for an aide or supervisor to help players with intellectual disabilities:

- An aide helps an individual player with their play and in applying the Rules:
 - An aide has the same status under the Rules as a caddie (see Rule 10.3), but with the restrictions described in Rule 25.5c.
 - For purposes of Rule 10.2a (Advice), a player may ask for and get advice from both an aide and a caddie at the same time.
- A supervisor is someone designated by the Committee to help players with intellectual disabilities during the competition:
 - The supervisor is not assigned to a specific player, and their role is to help any player with an intellectual disability as needed.
 - A supervisor is an outside influence for purposes of the Rules.
 - A player may not ask for or get advice from a supervisor.

25.5b

Player Allowed Only One Aide

A player with an intellectual disability may have only one aide at a time.

If a player has more than one aide at a time, the player gets the **general penalty** for each hole where that breach happened, in the same way as provided in Rule 10.3a(1) (Player Allowed Only One Caddie at a Time).

25.5c

Modification of Rule 10.3 (Caddie)

The aide for a player with an intellectual disability may also serve as the player's caddie, but is not required to do so.

The player may have both an aide and a caddie at the same time, in which case:

- That aide must not carry or handle the player's clubs except in helping the player in taking a stance or lining up before making the stroke (if authorized by the Committee), or in helping the player as a courtesy as provided in the definition of caddie. But this does not modify Rule 10.2b(3) (No Setting Down Object to Help With Aiming, Taking Stance or Swinging).
- If that aide carries or handles the player's clubs in breach of this Rule, the player has two caddies at the same time and gets the **general penalty** for each hole where that breach happened (see Rule 10.3a(1)).

25.5d

Modification of Rule 14.1b (Who May Lift Ball)

When a player's ball lies on the putting green, Rule 14.1b is modified so that the player's aide, in addition to their caddie, may lift the ball without the player's authorization.

25.5e

Players with Both Intellectual and Physical Disabilities

For players with both intellectual and physical disabilities, it is recommended that the Committee use a combination of the Rules in Rule 25 so that both types of disabilities are addressed.

25.6

General Provisions for All Categories of Disability

25.6a

Unreasonable Delay

In applying Rule 5.6a's prohibition on unreasonable delay to players with disabilities:

- Each Committee should use its discretion and set its own reasonable standards taking into account the difficulty of the course, the weather conditions (in view of the impact they could have on the use

of assistive mobility devices), the nature of the competition and the extent of the disabilities of the players competing.

- Taking these factors into account, it may be appropriate for Committees to use a more relaxed interpretation of what constitutes unreasonable delay.

25.6b

Dropping

In applying Rule 14.3b (Ball Must Be Dropped in Right Way), because physical limitations may make it difficult or impossible for players with certain disabilities to know whether they have dropped the ball from knee height, the Committee should accept the player's reasonable judgment that they have done so. Also, the Committee should accept all reasonable efforts to drop the ball from knee height, taking into account the player's physical limitations.

See Committee Procedures, Section 5D (providing additional guidance on Rule 25 and competitions involving players with disabilities).