



Local Rules for Chinderah / Tweed Golfers

Revision History

Version	Date	Comment
0	16 Dec 2024	Issued for Review
1	12 Feb 2024	Section 2.0: Updated definition of Out of Bounds on 11 th hole.
2	9 July 2025	Section 3.2: Clarification on the locations of drains that have free relief (blue stakes).

1.0 Preamble

The Rules of Golf are extensive and players are responsible for understanding and applying the Rules to themselves. These Local Rules are not intended to cover the full scope of the Rules of Golf; rather they provide a summary of the most common situations encountered at Chinderah golf course, including modifications and additional Rules as required.

2.0 Course Marking and Boundaries

Blue Stakes are used to define abnormal course conditions and selected drains from which free relief can be taken. The relief options are described by R&A Rule 16.

Use common sense and fairness when assessing the edges of course markings such as blue stakes in garden beds or drains. Remember, the course is also played by large numbers of the general public, some of whom will occasionally move or knock-down marker stakes. If there is a stake known to be missing or it has been moved from position, take free relief if there is interference from the affected area and report it afterwards to the Proshop.

Red Stakes are used to mark red penalty areas such as dams, and incur one penalty stroke. Relief options are described by R&A Rule 17.

Stakes may sometimes be inadvertently moved from their intended locations for several reasons; either by the general public or for course maintenance. Whatever the case may be, an out-of-position or absent stake(s) is no excuse for taking free relief from known penalty areas such as dams. This action is clearly not in the spirit of the game.

Blue and White Stakes are used to show the position of drop zones.

Distance markers on selected Par 4 holes: red and blue means 100 m and 150 m to the green, respectively.

Fence lines are artificial boundary objects from which free relief is not allowed. Out of Bounds is typically delineated by these fence lines, as summarised below:

- 1st & 2nd Chain-link driving range fence; including the storage pond
- 3rd Cattle fence on right-hand side
- 12th Wire fence on left-hand side
- 13th Horse fence (timber and wire) on left-hand side
- 14th Cattle fence on left-hand side; including rear of the green
- 18th Wooden posts parallel the road; including carpark

There is not a physical fence on the left-hand side of the 11th to delineate Out of Bounds, however the boundary is defined by the round wooden posts which have been painted white.

3.0 Abnormal Course Conditions

3.1 Ground Under Repair

The following features are defined as ground under repair (whether marked or otherwise):

- Garden beds containing mulch and/or vegetation including hedges;
- Bare ground in fairways;
- Animal tracks in bunkers;
- Any ground disturbance caused by maintenance (except aeration holes in greens), and
- Fill containing shells.

Divots (whether repaired or otherwise) are **not** considered ground under repair, and the ball shall be played as it lies.

3.2 Free Relief from Marked Drains

The course is generally flat and low lying; hence a network of drainage channels exists throughout the course. Drains that have been marked with **blue stakes** are declared immovable obstructions in the general area rather than penalty areas (Section 8 B-4)¹.

A player may take free relief from drains that are marked with **blue stakes** under Rule 16.1b, including when the marked drainage channel impedes the player's stance or swing. The map included in **Attachment 1** provides the locations of the marked drains.

The drains that have been marked for free relief are **not** considered as part of the challenge of completing the course (their singular purpose is the removal of water), and have been found to meet the following criteria:

- Risk assessment shows that play from the uneven and steeply sloping ground increases the chance of slips, trips, falls and potential for golfing related injuries;
- Tree roots are present throughout sections of the drains and are likely to become more prominent with time; and
- Temporal variations affect the playing quality of the drains, including accumulation of water and mud, development of weeds and tall grass throughout the seasons and damage caused by equipment during soft ground conditions.

Not all drains on the course have been marked for free relief. In such cases, the ball shall be played as it lies if it comes to rest in any of these unmarked drains. Most notable unmarked drains include:

- The left-hand side of the 14th fairway: granting free relief would infringe on R&A Rule 2.3 relating to boundary objects.
- Between the 7th and 17th fairways: this shallow feature is gently sloping and is regularly maintained.

¹ Historical Context: Some drains were marked with red stakes to declare them as penalty areas. The red stakes were changed to blue stakes at the beginning of 2024 to provide free relief from selected drains.

3.3 Immoveable Obstructions

All roads and paths on the course are treated as immoveable obstructions from which free relief is allowed under R&A Rule 16.1b.

Protective fences exist at some places (e.g back of 2nd and 12th greens) to shield players on one hole from shots played at another hole. All such protective fences are immoveable obstructions from which free relief is allowed in accordance with R&A Rule 16.1b.

3.4 Temporary Water in General Area

During times of wet weather, any water that collects in any drainage channel shall be treated as temporary water. A player may take free relief under R&A Rule 16.1b.

Any accumulation of water on the surface of the ground (such as puddles from rain or irrigation) is temporary water. A player may take free relief under R&A Rule 16.1b.

It is not enough for the ground to be merely wet, muddy or soft or for the water to be momentarily visible as the player steps on the ground; an accumulation of water must remain present either before or after the stance is taken.

3.5 Temporary Water in Bunkers

If a bunker or multiple bunkers are filled with temporary water, R&A Rule 16.1c may not be sufficient to allow for fair play because it requires a penalty stroke to continue playing from outside the bunker. Therefore, the Proshop may declare the affected bunker(s) as ground under repair in the general area so that free relief is allowed outside the bunker under R&A Rule 16.1b. It would not be treated as a bunker during the round under this circumstance.

3.6 Preferred Lies and Tee up for Temporary Conditions

When temporary abnormal conditions are widespread, the Proshop can choose to adopt a Local Rule for "preferred lies" and/or "tee up" to allow fair play or help protect the course. These Local Rules are not intended to change the course rating, but will essentially serve to 'normalise' course difficulty (i.e. the impact is to cancel out the increase in difficulty caused by wet conditions).

When **preferred lies** are declared, the player may take free relief from affected areas by placing the ball (or another ball) down by hand within **one club-length** of the original spot, provided it is not be nearer the hole. The ball may also be marked, lifted and cleaned.

When **tee up** is declared, the player may place the ball on a tee within the general area.

3.7 Lost Ball in Abnormal Course Conditions

If a ball is known or virtually certain to have entered an abnormal course condition, but it cannot be found, the player may take free relief by estimating the point where the ball last crossed the edge of the abnormal course condition, and using this point as the spot of the ball for the purposes of finding the nearest point of complete relief per R&A Rule 16.1e.

3.8 Abnormal Course Condition in Bunkers

There may be dogs (and sometimes escaped cows, sheep or chickens) walking on the course. The footprints caused by these animals in bunker sand are treated as ground under repair from which relief is allowed under R&A Rule 16.1C, but only if the damage is affecting the ball's lie. Relief is not granted if the footprints are only interfering with the player's stance.

If another player has failed to rake a bunker, there is no free relief from the unprepared sand and the ball shall be played as it lies.

Following heavy rainfall or irrigation, areas in bunkers where sand has been removed by the movement of water resulting in erosion channels are ground under repair. A player may take relief under R&A Rule 16.1c.

4.0 Drop Zones for Relief from Abnormal Course Conditions

Certain abnormal course conditions (e.g. gardens, drains or immovable obstructions) that are located behind greens can present a challenge when identifying the nearest point of relief, since the ball cannot be moved nearer the hole under the normal relief options. Therefore, special drop zones have been provided at nominated locations to alleviate the practical problems associated with the normal relief options.

When taking relief in a dropping zone, the player must drop a ball in and have it come to rest within **two club-lengths** of the marker.

Note the drop zones do not provide free relief from the Out of Bounds areas.

5.0 Special Drop Zone for Relief from Penalty Area on 6th Tee

The tee shot on the 6th hole is over a red penalty area (water). If a player's ball enters the penalty area, the player has these relief options, each for **one stroke penalty**:

- Take Stroke-and-distance relief under R&A Rule 17.1. The ball may be teed.
- The Local Rule allows a player to move to the drop zone located at the ladies' tee in front of the penalty area (which does not hit over the water). This dropping zone is relief under R&A Rule 14.3. The ball may **not** be teed.

6.0 Lost Ball & Out of Bounds (Alternative to Stroke & Distance)

When a ball is lost in the general area or hit out of bounds, an extra relief option allows a player to continue on without returning to the location of the previous stroke, thus improving the pace of play. Simplified guidance on how this rule would typically be applied is provided below.

For **two penalty strokes**, the player may drop another ball in the relief area defined by the following method: 1) Estimate where the ball has been lost or crossed the course boundary; 2) Move to the nearest edge of fairway on the hole being played, without coming closer to the hole, and 3) play within two-club lengths of that spot (again, not nearer the hole). The player will typically select to hit from the fairway.

The earnest players may also refer to R&A Section 8 E5 to study a more involved construction of the relief area, including diagrams which define the full extents of the relief area.

7.0 On Finding the Nearest Point of Complete Relief

The nearest point of complete relief must be strictly interpreted. It is the *shortest* distance from where the ball rests to the point where the abnormal condition no longer interferes with the club, stance or swing, while also being not nearer the hole. A player is not allowed to choose on which side of the affected area the ball will be dropped, unless there are two equidistant nearest points of complete relief. Remember, it's not the nicest spot. It's the nearest spot.

In determining the nearest point of complete relief, the player is not guaranteed a good or playable lie. Even if one side of the abnormal condition is fairway and the other is bushes, if the nearest point of complete relief is in the bushes, then that is the player's nearest point of complete relief.

Take **Figure 1** below as an example, which depicts the drain running parallel between the 14th and 15th fairways. The diagram assumes the player is right-handed and the direction of play is towards the 14th green. The player has interference from the drain and free relief is allowed. When the ball lies at point B1, the nearest point of complete relief is at point P1 even though this is near a tree where the ball may not be playable. This is because the point P2 is further away from B1.

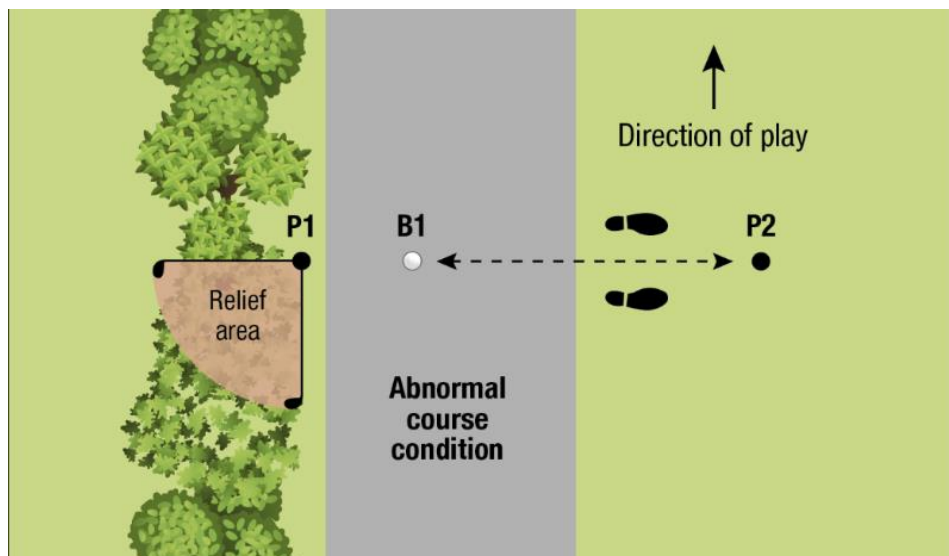


Figure 1. Example of Finding Nearest Point of Relief (credit: R&A)

8.0 Ready Golf

Chinderah / Tweed Golfers are encouraged to play Ready Golf in a safe and responsible way. This is a style of play aimed at improving the pace of play. A round of golf is meant to be played at a prompt pace.

Some tips for playing Ready Golf are listed below:

- Play out of turn when safe to do so (no honour system)
- Place clubs between green and next tee
- Continue putting until holed out
- Move off the green before marking scores
- Limit search for lost balls to 3 mins
- The average round time is 3 hours 20 mins
- Keep up with the group in front

9.0 General Course Care

Some tips for taking care of the course are listed below:

- Players shall carry a bucket of sand to repair their divots
- Players may consider carrying a pitch repair tool, and repair pitch marks on greens
- Remember to rake bunkers
- Keep to the provided paths and avoid wet areas
- Electric carts shall not be driven on tees and kept at least 10 m from the edges of greens

10.0 References

R&A The Rules of Golf cited by Golf Australia. www.randa.org

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Attachment 1 –

Map indicating the locations of drains marked with blue stakes (i.e. drains with free relief option).

