

## USGA RULES AMPLIFICATION

### 21.2 Maximum Score

#### a. Overview of Maximum Score

*Maximum Score* is a form of *stroke play* where a player's or *side's* score for a hole is capped at a maximum number of strokes set by the *Committee*, such as two times par, a fixed number or net double bogey.

The Rules for *stroke play* in Rules 1-20 apply, as modified by these specific Rules. [Rule 21.2](#) is written for:

- Scratch competitions, but can be adapted for handicap competitions as well, and
- Individual play, but can be adapted for competitions involving *partners*, as modified by [Rules 22](#) (*Foursomes*) and [23](#) (*Four-Ball*), and for team competitions, as modified by [Rule 24](#).

#### b. Scoring in Maximum Score

(1) **Player's Score on Hole**. A player's score for a hole is based on the player's number of strokes (including *strokes* made and penalty strokes), **except** that the player will get only the maximum score even if the actual score exceeds the maximum.

A player who does not *hole out* under the Rules for any reason gets the maximum score for the hole.

To help pace of play, players are encouraged to stop playing a hole when their score has reached the maximum.

The hole is completed when the player *holes out*, chooses not to do so or when their score has reached the maximum.

(2) **Score Entered for Each Hole**. To meet the requirements in [Rule 3.3b](#) for entering hole scores on the *scorecard*:

- **If Hole Is Completed by Holing Out:**
  - **When Score Is Lower Than Maximum**. The *scorecard* must show the actual score.
  - **When Score Is Same as or Higher Than Maximum**. The *scorecard* must show either no score or any score at or above the maximum.
- **If Hole Is Completed Without Holing Out**. If the player does not *hole out* under the Rules, the *scorecard* must show either no score or any score at or above the maximum.

The *Committee* is responsible for adjusting the player's score to the maximum for any hole where the *scorecard* shows either no score or any score above the maximum and, in a handicap competition, for applying handicap strokes.

### c. Penalties in Maximum Score

All penalties that apply in *stroke play* apply in *Maximum Score*, **except** that a player who breaches any of these five Rules is not disqualified **but** gets the **maximum score** for the hole where the breach happened:

- Failure to *hole out* under [Rule 3.3c](#),
- Failure to correct mistake of playing from outside the *teeing area* in starting a hole (see [Rule 6.1b\(2\)](#)),
- Failure to correct mistake of playing a *wrong ball* (see [Rule 6.3c](#)),
- Failure to correct mistake of playing from a *wrong place* when there is a *serious breach* (see [Rule 14.7b](#)), or
- Failure to correct mistake of making a *stroke* in the wrong order (see [Rule 22.3](#)).

If the player breaches any other Rule with a penalty of disqualification, the player is **disqualified**.

After applying any penalty strokes, the player's score for a hole cannot exceed the maximum score set by the *Committee*.

### d. Exception to Rule 11.2 in Maximum Score

[Rule 11.2](#) does not apply in this situation:

If a player's ball in motion needs to be *holed* to score one lower than the maximum score on the hole and any person deliberately deflects or stops the ball at a time when there is no reasonable chance it can be *holed*, there is no penalty to that person and the player gets the maximum score on the hole.

### e. When Round Ends in Maximum Score

A player's *round* ends when the player:

- *Holes out* on their final hole (including correction of a mistake, such as under [Rule 6.1](#) or [14.7b](#)), or
- Chooses not to *hole out* on the final hole or already will get the maximum score on the hole.

### 3.3 Stroke Play

**Purpose of Rule:** Stroke play has specific Rules (particularly for scorecards and holing out) because:

- Each player competes against all the other players in the competition, and
- All players need to be treated equally under the Rules.

After the round, the player and the marker (who keeps the player's score) must certify that the player's score for each hole is right and the player must return the scorecard to the Committee.

#### b. Scoring in Stroke Play

The player's score is kept on their *scorecard* by the *marker*, who is either identified by the *Committee* or chosen by the player in a way approved by the *Committee*.

The player must have the same *marker* for the entire *round*, unless the *Committee* approves a change either before or after it happens.

(1) **Marker's Responsibility: Entering and Certifying Hole Scores on Scorecard.** After each hole during the *round*, the *marker* should confirm with the player the number of strokes on that hole (including *strokes* made and penalty strokes) and enter that gross score on the *scorecard*.

When the *round* has ended:

- The *marker* must certify the hole scores on the *scorecard*.
- If the player had more than one *marker*, each *marker* must certify the scores for those holes where they were the *marker*, but if one of the *markers* saw the player play all of the holes, that *marker* may certify the scores for all the holes.

A *marker* may refuse to certify a player's hole score that the *marker* believes is wrong. In such a case, the *Committee* will need to consider the available evidence and make a decision on the player's score on the hole. If the *marker* still refuses to certify the player's score, the *Committee* may certify the hole score or accept certification from someone else who saw the player's actions on the hole in question.

If a *marker*, who is a player, knowingly certifies a wrong score for a hole, the *marker* should be **disqualified** under [Rule 1.2a](#).

(2) **Player's Responsibility: Certifying Hole Scores and Returning Scorecard.** During the *round*, the player should keep track of their scores for each hole.

When the *round* has ended, the player:

- Should carefully check the hole scores entered by the *marker* and raise any issues with the *Committee*,
- Must make sure that the *marker* certifies the hole scores on the *scorecard*,
- Must not change a hole score entered by the *marker* **except** with the *marker's* agreement or the *Committee's* approval (but neither the player nor the *marker* is required to make any extra certification of the changed score), and
- Must certify the hole scores on the *scorecard* and promptly return it to the *Committee*, after which the player must not change the *scorecard*.

If the player breaches any of these requirements in [Rule 3.3b](#), the player is **disqualified**.

**Exception – No Penalty When Breach Due to Marker Failing to Carry Out Responsibilities:** There is no penalty if the *Committee* finds that the player's breach of [Rule 3.3b\(2\)](#) was caused by the *marker's* failure to carry out their responsibilities (such as the *marker* leaving with the player's *scorecard* or without certifying the *scorecard*), so long as this was beyond the player's control.

See [Committee Procedures, Section 5A\(5\)](#) (recommendations on how to define when a *scorecard* has been returned). See [Committee Procedures, Section 8; Model Local Rule L-1](#) (reducing penalty for returning a *scorecard* without hole scores being certified).

(3) **Wrong Score for a Hole.** If the player returns a *scorecard* with a wrong score for any hole:

- **Returned Score Higher Than Actual Score.** The higher returned score for the hole stands.
- **Returned Score Lower Than Actual Score or No Score Returned.** The player is **disqualified**.

**Exception – Failure to Include Unknown Penalty:** If one or more of the player's hole scores are lower than the actual scores because they excluded one or more penalty strokes that the player did not know about before returning the *scorecard*:

- The player is not disqualified.
- Instead, if the mistake is found before the close of the competition, the *Committee* will revise the player's score for that hole or holes by adding **the penalty stroke(s) that should have been included** in the score for that hole or holes under the Rules.

This exception does not apply:

- When the excluded penalty is disqualification, or
- When the player was told that a penalty might apply or was uncertain whether a penalty applied and did not raise this with the *Committee* before returning the *scorecard*.

(4) **Player Not Responsible for Showing Handicap on Scorecard or Adding Up Scores.** There is no requirement for a player's handicap to be shown on the *scorecard* or for players to add up their own scores. If the player returns a *scorecard* on which they have made a

mistake in showing or applying a handicap, or on which they have made a mistake in adding up the scores, there is no penalty.

Once the *Committee* receives the scorecard from the player at the end of their round, the Committee is responsible for:

- Adding up the player's scores