

HOW TO EASILY FIND A RULE IN THE RULE BOOK  
[Best read with a Rule Book in Hand]

**First of all, look at the Table of Contents.** While everything in the Rule Book is important, **only Rules 8 through 28 generally matter during our play days.** Thus, if you have a question, look first at the table of contents and try to decide which Section mostly likely deals with the situation at hand. Then look at the Rules listed under that Section. Note that both the page number and the rule number are given, and generally it is faster to go to the page number and then read through the rule for the particular part of the rule you need.

Most people start by looking at the Index at the end of the Rule Book. This works, especially if you have a well defined situation. (For example, an Embedded Ball is listed that way in the Index, and also under Ball.) But I find it slower to go through the many pages of the Index than the couple of pages in the Table of Contents.

Since of the 20 Rules most commonly encountered are covered by only 7 Sections, you usually can narrow the question down by looking first at the Table of Contents and starting with Rule 8, run through the titles of the Sections until you find one that covers the situation at hand. (Sections are not numbered.)

Be aware that not all the Rules are enforced during our play days – Rule 10, Order of Play, while important in MAJOR tournaments is against all the advice we get to speed up play by playing out of turn (Ready Golf) when it is the better thing to do. And many of the rules are written so that they cover every possible condition and as a result are wordy and hard to understand. But a careful reading usually makes things clear.

Also take a few minutes to go over the Definitions shortly after the Table of Contents. You probably know all of them, but it is a good exercise anyway. Also, be aware that “THE” BALL is the ball in play, while “A” BALL is any ball. “SHALL” is mandatory, while “SHOULD” means strongly recommended and “MAY” is strictly optional. “DEEMED” means to be ‘judged to be’ or ‘treated as’.

There are many differences between Stroke Play (often called Medal Play) and Match Play. So much so that the USGA states that no tournament may have both types of play at the same time. (One example: if your putted balls strikes another ball on the putting green it is a 2 stroke penalty in Stroke Play, but no penalty in Match Play. However, in Match Play either side may require any ball on the green to be marked and picked up.)