

USGA 2019 Rules of Golf

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 normal 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 his or her 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 to the score entered for each hole.

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 four 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](#)), or
- Failure to correct mistake of playing from a wrong place when there is a serious breach (see [Rule 14.7b](#)).

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 his or her 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.