

Winter rules in the summer? On the PGA Tour?

Earlier this month, at The 2015 Honda Classic, the PGA initiated the Preferred Lies rule. Most golfers know this term as winter rules or more simply as lift, clean, and place.

Touching the ball while in the fairway you say? Blasphemous? No. This decision is allowed by the USGA and is done to limit excessive damage to the course from strokes made given poor turf conditions while also promoting fair play. And it's not the first time the PGA has used this rare option.

So when are you allowed to give yourself a better lie and stay within the rules? This option is only available under local rules when specific approval is given by the Committee of that course, under USGA Rules of Golf appendix I-4.b, and is a temporary ruling that may apply only to specific holes.

How do you exercise this rule? When the course you're playing has given specific authority to do so, and your ball is in the fairway (known in the rule book as any closely mown area through the green), simply announce to your competitor your intention to enact the ruling, mark your ball, lift it, clean off any debris if you desire, and set it on the ground as close as possible to the original location but no closer to the green. Sorry, you aren't able to better your lie when you're in the rough or a hazard under this option. An example of this is further explained in my book, *The Golf Rules*, where a group comes upon a hole that flooded due to an overnight storm.

This and many other rules can increase the enjoyment of a round and help lower your scores. Unfortunately, many golfers are not educated on their options. To help with this problem, I published a funny yet educational series of books on stroke play, match play, and golf etiquette. If interested in a good golf read, and potentially learn more about golf, then check out TheGolfRules.com. Maybe buy it for 'your friend'.

Richard E Todd, author of *The Golf Rules*, an educational and entertaining series of books on stroke play, match play, and golf etiquette, and *Short Stories from the Long Links*, has been heard on the PGA Tour radio station and seen in *On The Green* magazine. Contact him at Richard@TheGolfRules.com and follow him on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [WordPress](#), and at www.TheGolfRules.com.

