

2022 Rules Corner

Index to monthly rule review:

Jan 2022 – Hitting The Wrong Ball (Rule 6.3)

Mar 2022 - Accidentally Hitting the Ball

Apr 2022 - Relief For Ball In A Yellow Penalty Area

Jul 2022 - Relief for Ball In A Red Penalty Area

Aug 2022 - Unusual Situations In A Penalty Area

[Link to USGA “Rules of Golf Explained” Videos](#)

JANUARY 2022

Hitting The Wrong Ball (Rule 6.3)

It has happened to all of us. You arrive at the green to find you have hit a stray ball found on the course rather than your own ball in play, or worse, you have hit your playing partner's or opponent's ball. What should you do?

In Stroke Play:

You must go back to the original spot/lie of your ball, estimated if not known exactly. Drop the original ball (or a substituted ball) and take the General Penalty (*two strokes*.) Complete the hole with this ball. Any strokes made with the wrong ball do not count. If two players hit each others' balls they must both go back and take the general penalty.

In Match Play:

If you played the wrong ball you take the general penalty which is *loss of hole* in Match Play. If two players hit each other's balls the first to make a stroke at the wrong ball gets the general penalty (loss of hole.) If it is not known which wrong ball was played first both players must go back and play out the hole with no penalty.

Exception to this rule: If hitting a ball out of moving water in a penalty area or in temporary water and it could not be identified before making the stroke, there is no penalty. The player must correct the mistake by playing her own ball from the original spot.

MARCH 2022

Accidentally Hitting the Ball

The USGA defines a “stroke” as the forward movement of the club with the intention to strike the ball. Therefore, if a player accidentally hits her ball when making a practice swing she has not made a stroke.

If this occurs on the tee area the ball is not yet in play and she merely retees with no penalty. (Rule 6.2b(5)&(6))

If this occurs on the putting green she must simply replace her ball to the original spot with no penalty. (Rule 13.1d(1))

If this occurs anywhere else, i.e. in a bunker, a penalty area, or in the general area the ball is already in play. This would not be considered a “stroke” because there was no intention to hit the ball, but because the ball was in play it incurs a penalty. In this case, she must replace her ball to the original spot and take a one stroke penalty. If she plays the ball without replacing it to the original spot it becomes a two stroke penalty (or loss of hole in match play.) (Rule 9.4)

APRIL 2022

Relief For Ball In A Yellow Penalty Area

In November we explored some new rules involving Penalty Areas. This month we will cover how to take relief from a Yellow Penalty Area. Rule 17.1d

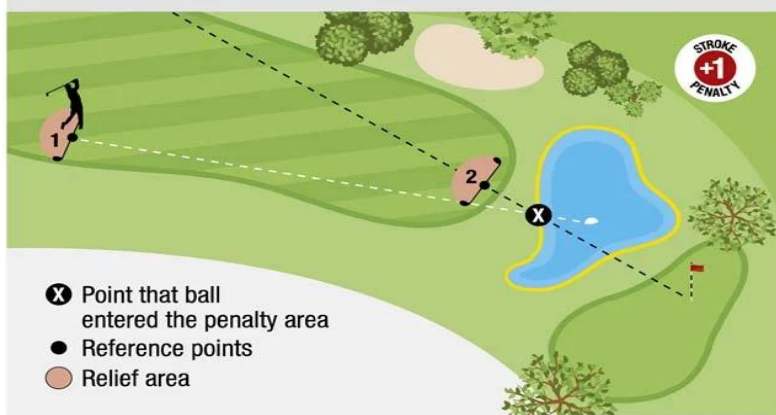
If a player’s ball is known or virtually certain to be in a Yellow Penalty Area these are the relief options, each for one penalty stroke:

- 1) Stroke-and-Distance Relief (a player may always play again from the original spot)
- 2) Back-on-the-Line-Relief

(See Explanatory Diagram on next page)

Note that the Relief Point and the Relief Area must NOT be in the Penalty Area and if more than one area of the course is located within one club-length of the Reference Point the ball must come to rest in the same area of the course the ball first touched when dropped in the relief area.

DIAGRAM #1 17.1d: RELIEF FOR BALL IN YELLOW PENALTY AREA



When it is known or virtually certain that a ball is in a yellow penalty area and the player wishes to take relief, the player has **two options**, each for one penalty stroke:

- (1) The player may take stroke-and-distance relief by playing the original ball or another ball from a relief area based on where the previous stroke was made (see Rule 14.6 and Diagram 14.6).

Reference Point	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
The spot where the player's previous stroke was made (which if not known must be estimated)	One club-length from the reference point 	The relief area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and • Must be in the same area of the course as the reference point

- (2) The player may take back-on-the-line relief by dropping the original ball or another ball in a relief area based on a reference line going straight back from the hole through point X.

Reference Point	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
A point on the course chosen by the player that is on the reference line through point X (the point where the ball last crossed the edge of the yellow penalty area). There is no limit on how far back on the line the reference point may be	One club-length from the reference point 	The relief area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and • May be in any area of the course except the same penalty area

Player Notes:

In choosing this reference point, you should indicate the point by using an object (such as a tee).

JULY 2022

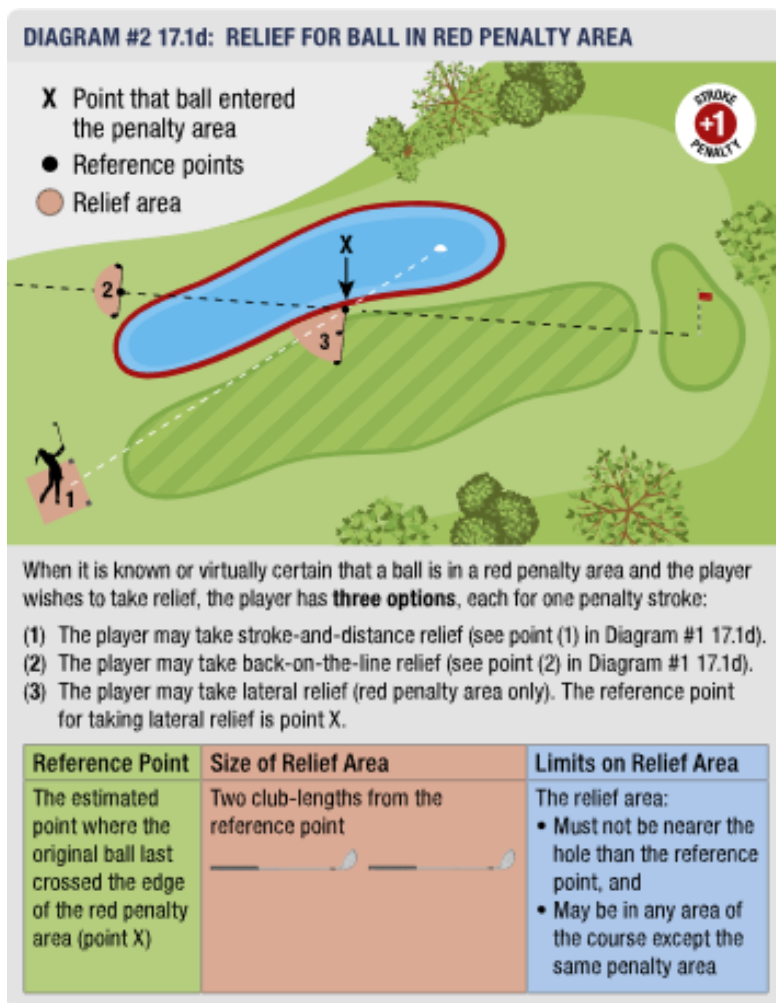
Relief For Ball In A **RED** Penalty Area

This month we will explore how to take relief from a **Red** Penalty Area.

If a player's ball is known or virtually certain to be in a Red Penalty Area the player again has the previously discussed (April 2022) options for relief:

- 1) Stroke-and-Distance Relief
- 2) Back-on-the-Line Relief
- 3) Lateral Relief

- a. The Reference Point is again the estimated point where the ball crossed the margin of the Penalty Area
- b. But the size of the Relief Point is now two club-lengths



AUGUST 2022

Unusual Situations In A Penalty Area

Recently we have covered how to take relief from **Yellow** and **Red** Penalty Areas. This month we explore some unusual situations encountered in Penalty Areas.

1. When a ball is in a No Play Zone in a Penalty Area the ball cannot be played as it lies and relief must be taken as discussed previously. This situation arises frequently at The Vineyard and other area courses where No Play Zones are Environmental Areas marked by **red** stakes with **green** tips.

2. A player does not get relief from an Immovable Object if the Object is in a Penalty Area.
 - a. An example of this might be a bridge crossing a stream that is a Penalty Area. If the player's ball lands on the bridge there is no free relief. The ball may be played as it lies or relief may be taken in the usual ways. This situation may arise at Rancho Bernardo Inn and other area courses.
3. When a Dangerous Animal condition interferes with the play of the ball in a Penalty Area the player may
 - a. Take Free Relief in the Penalty Area (no closer to the hole) or
 - b. Take Penalty Relief outside the Penalty Area for ONE penalty stroke