

2021 RULES CORNER

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

JANUARY 2021

STARTING A HOLE FROM THE WRONG PLACE

What should a player do if she hits a **tee shot** from the wrong place – either the wrong teeing area or the wrong place in the teeing area? This is covered in **Rule 6 - Playing a Hole**.

First it is important to know that the **Teeing Area** is defined as the rectangle that is formed by the space between the two tee markers extending back away from the hole two club lengths.

If a player fails to tee the ball on the correct teeing area (designated by the competition rules) or if she tees the ball outside of the above-mentioned rectangle of the correct teeing area:

- 1) In Match Play this is not a penalty **but** the opponent may cancel the stroke promptly before another player makes a stroke and the player must then play a ball from the designated teeing area. If the opponent does not cancel the stroke the original ball counts, is in play and must be played as it lies.
- 2) In Stroke Play the player gets the **general penalty (two strokes)** and must correct the mistake by playing a ball from the designated teeing area. The original ball played from outside the teeing area is not in play and any strokes made with it do not count. If the player does not correct the mistake before making a stroke to begin another hole or, for the final hole of the round, before retuning her scorecard, the player is **disqualified**.

FEBRUARY 2021

PLAYING A BALL FROM THE WRONG PLACE

Last month we explored what to do if one tees off from the wrong place. But what about playing a ball from the wrong place after starting the hole? This is covered in **Rule 7 - Playing from Wrong Place**.

Rule 14.7a states that a player must make each stroke from where her ball came to rest except when the rules require or allow it to be played from another place. Playing from the wrong place incurs the **general penalty (two strokes.)**

Rule 14.7b tells how to complete a hole after **playing from a wrong place** in stroke play.

1. Decide whether to play out the hole from the **wrong place** or **correct** the mistake by playing from the **right** place:
 - a. If **Not a Serious Breach** (ie. the player gained no significant advantage) play out the hole from the **wrong place** and incur the **general penalty**.
 - b. If a **Serious Breach** you must correct the mistake by playing out the hole with a ball played from the **right place** which also incurs the **general penalty**. If you do not correct the mistake before starting the next hole or, for the final hole, turning in your scorecard, you are **disqualified**.
 - c. If unable to decide whether the breach is serious, play out the hole with both a ball played from the **wrong place** and a ball played from the **right place**.
2. If you tried to correct the mistake you must report the facts to Committee before turning in your scorecard. If you do not report to the Committee you are **disqualified**.
3. After you correct the mistake and report to the Committee, the Committee will decide if playing from the original place was a serious breach.
 - a. If not, the score with the original ball counts. (This assumes you played out both balls.)
 - b. If it was a serious breach, (or if you did not play out two balls) the score with the second ball counts.
 - c. In both cases, you still receive the general penalty.

Interestingly, if the second ball was also played from a **wrong place** with no serious breach you incur another **general penalty**, ie. a total of four penalty strokes. If it was a serious breach you are **disqualified**.

MARCH 2021

BALL IN MOTION Rule 11.1

In the Rules Corner we will continue to explore the rule changes that occurred in 2019.

When not on the putting green, what should a player do if her ball in motion accidentally hits another person or outside influence? This could be herself, another person, her equipment or other equipment or an animal. There is no penalty, but the ball must be played where it comes to rest **as it lies**. The exception to this says that if the ball comes to rest **on** any person, animal or **moving** outside influence she must take relief by dropping the original ball or another ball where the ball **first** came to rest on the person, animal or moving outside influence. The ball is dropped in a **relief area** as in other circumstances, defined by a reference point where the ball first landed on the person, pace or moving outside influence and one club length, no closer to the hole. If the ball first lands on the person, etc. on the putting green it must be **placed** in the **spot** where it first landed on the person, etc.

When **on** the putting green if a player's ball in motion hits another ball **at rest** on the putting green and both balls were on the putting green before the stroke, the player gets the GENERAL PENALTY – 2 strokes, and the ball must be played from where it lies. (In this case, the other player's ball that was hit must be replaced in its original position – **Rule 13.1.d.**) However, when the player's ball played from the putting green **accidentally** hits any person, animal or movable obstruction (including another **ball in motion**) on the putting green, the stroke does **not** count, and the ball must be replaced in its original spot. If the ball first lands **on** a person, animal or moving outside influence on the putting green it must be **placed** in the **spot** where it first landed on the person, etc. As an aside, **Rule 13.2b(2)** states that if the ball **accidentally** hits a flagstick lying on the green, the stroke does not count but the ball must be played **as it lies**.

Additionally, Rule **10.1a** states that [anywhere on the course] there is no penalty if the ball is hit more than once during a stroke.

May 2021

When and How To Take A Provisional Shot Rule 18.3

Recently we have explored the recent Rules changes of 2019. However, one issue comes up so often that I think it is worth taking a detour for this. The issue involves when and how to take a **provisional shot**.

Rule 18.3 states that if a ball might be **lost outside a penalty area** or might be out of bounds a provisional ball may be played under penalty of stroke and distance by playing a second ball from the original spot and taking one penalty stroke. This applies even if the ball might be lost in a penalty area but also might be lost somewhere else on the course. If the original ball is found within 3 minutes and is in bounds it is still the ball in play. However, if not found or found out of bounds the provisional ball becomes the ball in play.

Here is the kicker: But if the player is aware that the only possible place the original ball could be lost is in a penalty area, **a provisional ball is not allowed** and if one plays a ball from where the previous stroke was made that ball then becomes **the ball in play** under penalty of stroke and distance. Even if the original ball is found and is playable, it is no longer the ball in play.

The Club can make an exception to this and allow a provisional in a certain situation (often where it is difficult to see whether or not a ball might be in a penalty area) but this must be a specific **local rule**. (**Model Local Rule B-3.**)

July 2021

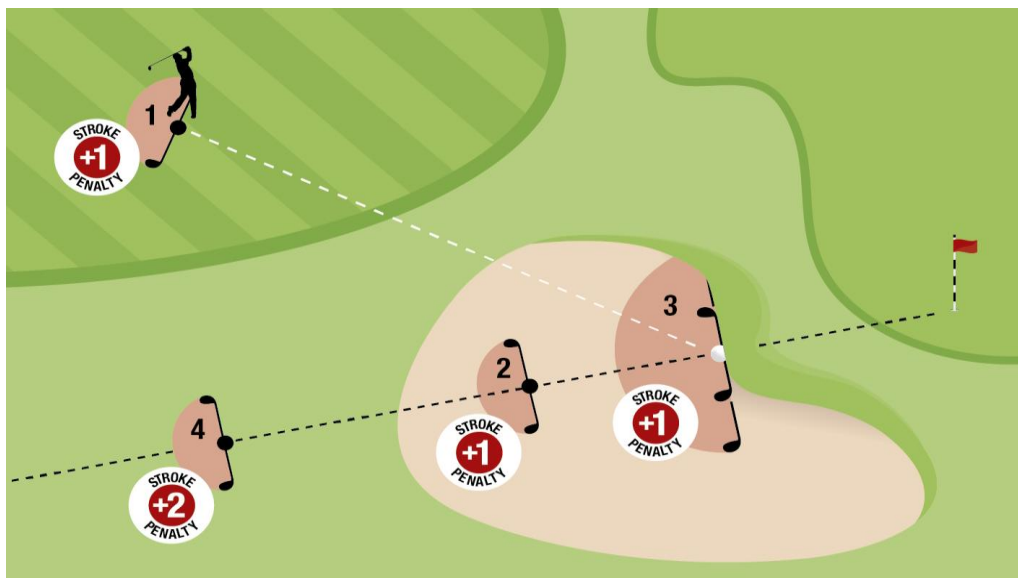
New rule for **BUNKER** play:

1. If you decide a ball in a bunker is unplayable you now have the option to take BACK-ON-THE LINE relief by coming BEHIND the bunker, no closer to the hole, dropping a ball on a reference line going straight back from the hole through the original spot of the ball and taking TWO penalty strokes. (Rule 19.3 See Diagram below for all bunker relief options)
2. Walls and lips consisting of soil, grass, or artificial material are NOT part of the bunker. (Rule 12.1)
3. There are relaxed restrictions (no penalty) on touching the sand when ball is in a bunker when: (Rule 12.2)
 - a) leaning on a club to rest, balance or prevent a fall
 - b) smoothing a bunker to care for the course
 - c) placing clubs or equipment in the bunker
4. Loose impediments and movable obstructions may be removed WITHOUT penalty. (Rule 12.2)

DIAGRAM 19.3: RELIEF OPTIONS FOR BALL UNPLAYABLE IN BUNKER

A player decides that his or her ball in a bunker is unplayable. The player has four options:

- (1) For **ONE** penalty stroke, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief
- (2) For **ONE** penalty stroke, the player may take back-on-the-line relief in the bunker
- (3) For **ONE** penalty stroke, the player may take lateral relief in the bunker
- (4) For a total of **TWO** penalty strokes, the player may take back-on-the-line relief outside the bunker based on a reference line going straight back from the hole through the spot of the original ball



Check out the Bunker Rules Video [here](#)

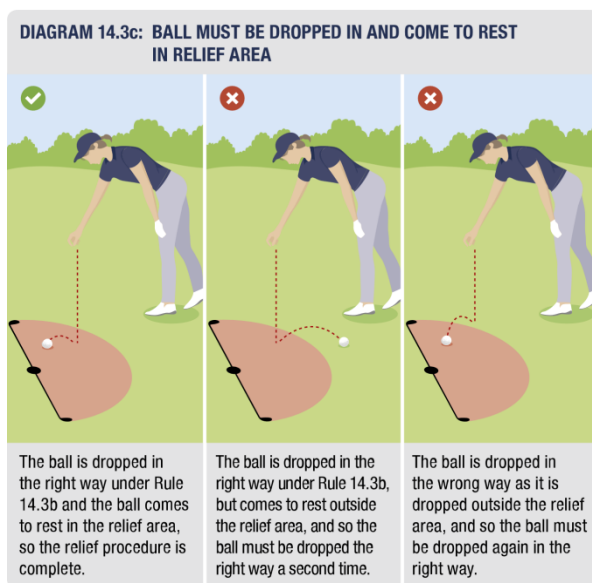
SEPTEMBER 2021

This month we will look at some new rules pertaining to taking relief.

New Rule: Players continue to drop a ball when taking relief, but the dropping procedure is changed in several ways as detailed in Rule 14.3:

- The focus of the dropping procedure is on a specific “relief area” set by the Rule under which relief is being taken and is either one or two club-lengths from a reference point (and may have certain other limitations).
- The relief area is a fixed size for each player and is determined by the longest club in her bag excluding the putter.
- The ball must be dropped by the player from knee height and must land in the relief area without touching the player or equipment before hitting the ground.

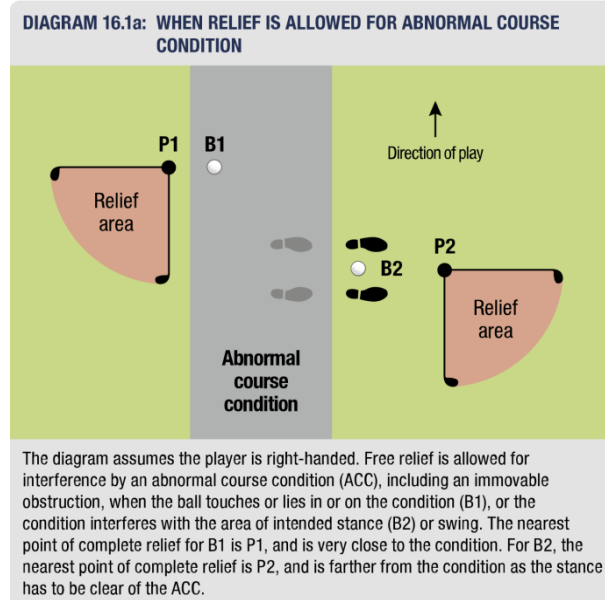
Diagram 14.3c: BALL MUST BE DROPPED IN AND COME TO REST IN RELIEF AREA.



16.1a: WHEN RELIEF IS ALLOWED FOR ABNORMAL COURSE CONDITION

An example of how this Relief Procedure is executed for a specific Rule is illustrated by the following diagram showing how to determine the Relief Area for an Abnormal Course Condition. Players often ask which side of a cart path or other immovable obstruction should be used for taking relief. This diagram helps to clarify how that decision is made.

In this diagram B1 and B2 refer to where the ball originally lies and P1 and P2 refer to point of nearest relief for the ball



November 2021

New Rules involving Penalty Areas

Rule 17 is a specific Rule for Penalty Areas, which are bodies of water or other areas defined by the Committee where a ball is often lost or unable to be played. (These areas were previously referred to as hazards or water hazards.)

Your ball is in a Penalty Area when any part of it lies on or touches the ground or anything else inside the edge (formerly referred to as margins) of the Penalty Area. (Rule 17.1a)

Rule 2.2c tells us that if your ball is partly in a Penalty Area and partly in any other area (General Area, Bunker or Putting Green) it is considered to be in the Penalty Area.

Under Rule 17.1b you may play the ball as it lies without penalty.

Also under Rule 17:

- There are no longer any special restrictions when a ball is in a “penalty area”
- A player is allowed to touch or move loose impediments and touch the ground with hand or club (such as grounding the club right behind the ball) for any reason.

*Please remember that Rule 8.1a prevents you from moving, bending or breaking any growing or attached natural object or immovable obstruction, integral object, boundary object or tee marker; moving a loose impediment into position to build a better stance; or altering the surface of the ground.

This Rules change was made because previously the penalty seemed overly harsh if touching the ground was inconsequential and provided no advantage or when touching the ground could only be detected by later video review. The change is consistent with the notion that the Penalty Area is not meant to make the challenge even more difficult than it already is by virtue of being in the Penalty Area.