

# 2023 Rules Corner Library

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

### **JANUARY 2023 – Ball Moved By Natural Forces**

The SDCWGA Board would like to invite you, the members, to submit questions about rules to the Rules Corner. The Rules Committee (Ellen Koury, Cheryl Wohlgemuth, and myself) will answer your questions with appropriate rule references.

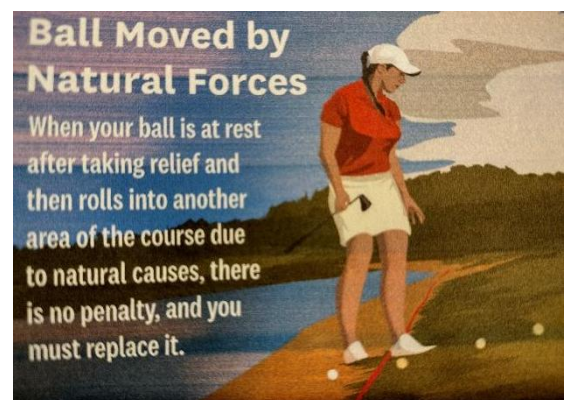
To start this off we have a question that arose from a board member about Rule #9. At the end of last year we reviewed some of the major Rule Changes for 2023. This included the following:

Previously a **ball moved by natural forces**, such as wind, was played from the new spot (except on the putting green when it is replaced on the original spot.) But starting in 2023, a ball moved by natural forces that comes to rest in **another part of the course** must be returned to its original spot with no penalty.

The question was asked about whether this applied to balls “dropped” when taking relief that were at rest after being dropped and then rolled into another area.

The answer is “**yes**,” it does apply. The ball must be replaced (not dropped) in its original spot in the “relief area” for no penalty.

**In the future send any rules questions to:**  
[sandra.watkins48@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.watkins48@gmail.com)



## **MARCH 2023 – Rule 3.2, Match Play**

Team play has started and a Match Play issue arose prompting a question to the Rules Committee. A player mistakenly gave wrong information about her number of strokes upon arriving at the green. Based on that information both opponents putted out. Afterward, the first player shared that she had been mistaken and she actually lay one more stroke than she had said. What is the ruling?

The answer can be found in Rule 3 – The Competition. Rule 3.2d states that in Match Play at any time during play of a hole (or after the hole is completed) an opponent may ask any player for the number of strokes (including strokes made and penalty strokes) the player has taken so far on the hole. This is to allow the opponent to decide how to play the next strokes (or to confirm the result on a completed hole.) The player **MUST** respond and give the **CORRECT** number of strokes taken. If the player gives the **WRONG** number of strokes she gets the General Penalty (loss of hole) **UNLESS** she corrects the mistake before the opponent makes another stroke or takes a similar action such as conceding the hole. If the hole is completed she must correct the mistake before any player begins the next hole, or on the final hole, before the results are final. A final exception states that there is no penalty if the wrong information is given after the hole is completed and it does not affect the understanding of the result of the hole.

A further clarification of this is the fact that in our Team Matches loss of the hole applies to the **SIDE**, not just the player who gave the wrong information. This is covered in The Fourball Rule - Rule 23.8a(2) states that the penalty also applies to the partner in Match Play when the player's breach hurts the opponents' play.

If this should happen the side given wrong information must file a claim and report this to their Captain at completion of play. The Captain must contact the Team Director and Rules Committee. She must **NOT** sign the Results Sheet until the Rules Committee has given a ruling after hearing all the facts of the case.

As a side note in Stroke Play there is no requirement to provide number of strokes taken **EXCEPT** to provide your gross score on every hole before signing your score card.

## MAY 2023 – Rule 6 – Playing a Hole

**It is interesting how often we are asked the same rules questions. So we thought we would look back at previous entries and see if the issue has come up since publishing. Sure enough, here is one from January 2021 that came up at a recent event and the player did not know the rule. Perhaps repetition is called for to help us remember. So for your review:**

### **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 returning her scorecard, the player is **disqualified**.

## **JULY 2023 – Advice and Help (Rule 10)**

**A question recently came up during Team Match play. A player was giving advice to an opponent about her swing. We were asked if this is allowed.**

**Rule 10** relates to **Preparing for and Making a Stroke; Advice and Help; Caddies**

**Rule 10.2** specifically addresses Advice and Other Help. A fundamental challenge for a player is deciding the strategy and tactics for her play. So there are limits to the advice and other help the player may get during a round.

**Rule 10.2a** states that during a round a player must not give advice to anyone in the competition and may not ask for advice from another player other than her caddie or her partner in a partnership game (or her partner's caddie.) She also must not touch another player's equipment to learn information that would be considered advice if asked for or given (such as looking in the other player's bag to see what club she was using.)

The penalty for breach of Rules 10.2 is the **General Penalty** – 2 strokes in stroke play and loss of hole in match play for the player.

## **SEPT 2023 – Ball Not Found in Penalty Areas (Rule 17)**

**A question recently came up during regular sweeps play at a local club. A player hit her ball into a penalty area and could not find it. She dropped a new ball, took one stroke penalty, hit it onto the green and putted out. She then found her original ball outside the penalty area. Can she play it?**

**Rule 17** addresses **Penalty Areas**. Rule 17.1c specifically addresses Relief for Ball Not Found in Penalty Area. The player may take penalty relief under Rule 17.1d . Once the player puts a new ball in play the original ball is no longer in play and must NOT be played. This is true even if it is found on the course before the end of the three-minute search time.

## DEC 2023 – Accidental Movement of Ball

There are several rules covering what to do if your ball is accidentally moved. It can be confusing about whether or not there is a penalty and whether the ball should be replaced or not. Let's review these rules here:

1. Searching for your ball – if you or anyone helping look for your ball accidentally moves it there is no penalty. Replace it as closely as possible to the spot where you thought it originally lay.
2. Accidentally moving the ball when applying a rule – for instance in identifying your ball you are allowed to lift it and merely replace it if it accidentally moved – or if you are marking it off the green so another player can take a shot and it accidentally moves, just replace it – no penalty.
3. Ball moved by an outside influence such as another player or an animal – just replace it for no penalty.
4. Ball moved by natural forces (such as wind) anywhere but on the putting green – play it from its new position – no penalty. However, if it is moved by natural forces to a **different** part of the course, it must be returned to its original spot.
5. Accidental movement of the ball on the **putting green**, even if you hit it in your practice swing, kick it, drop a club on it, etc. you simply put it back in its original spot – no penalty. This also applies to your marker on the putting green. However, unlike #4 above, if you have already marked your ball and replaced it on the putting green and a natural force moves it, you put it back to the original spot – no penalty.
6. In all other cases, if you accidentally hit your ball in your back swing or your practice swing, or it moves as you are removing a loose impediment, etc. the ball must be replaced in its original spot – **one stroke penalty**.