

2022 Rules Corner

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Jan 2021 – Starting A Hole From The Wrong Place

[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.