

2024 Rules Corner Library

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

JANUARY 2024 – Local Rule E-3, Preferred Lie

Now that winter is upon us the question of “winter rules” came up recently at one of our local clubs. We now refer to Winter Rules as “Preferred Lies.”

When conditions such as extreme dampness, muddiness, etc. are widespread The Committee (ie the person or persons in charge of setting the competition and conditions of play - may be the person in charge of the sweeps for the day or the committee putting on a tournament, often with consultation with the head pro and/or rules chair) can choose to adopt **Local Rule E-3** for "**preferred lies.**"

It can be applied only to the fairway "general area cut to fairway height or less" or to the "general area" which would include fairway and rough but not bunkers, teeing grounds, putting greens or penalty areas.

It is recommended that you choose the fairway only unless the rough is so muddy that balls would pick up too much mud.

The relief area must not be nearer the hole and must be in the general area.

You must specify the size of the relief area eg. one club length or 6 inches, etc.

Remember we no longer use "fairway" and "rough" but rather the "general area cut to fairway height" or the "general area."

Example #1: Preferred Lies are in effect: A ball lying in the general area may, without penalty, be lifted, cleaned and **placed** within one club length of where it originally lay, but **not** nearer the hole than the reference point and **in** the general area (not on a putting green or tee box or in a bunker or penalty area.)

Example #2: Preferred Lies are in effect: A ball lying in the general area **cut to fairway height of less** area may, without penalty, be lifted, cleaned and **placed** within six inches of where it originally lay, but not nearer the hole than the reference point and **in the general area**.

Information about Preferred Lies can be found in the back of the Official Guide to the Rules of Golf in the Model Local rules section. Local Rules which apply in all SDCWGA events can be found on our website.

MARCH 2024 – USGA Rule 6.3c(1), Wrong Ball

Test Your Knowledge

This month we have a quiz for you, based upon a scenario submitted from a recent event at a member's golf club:

- In a stroke play competition Player #1 chips onto the green, landing about a foot from the hole.
- Before she can get to the green to mark her ball, Player #2 chips onto the green and hits Player #1's ball. Both balls scatter on the green.
- Player #1 goes to the green and places a marker at the spot where her ball was located before being hit by Player #2's ball. All players agree on the mark.
- Player #1 picks up one of the deflected balls from the green (that she thought was hers).
- Player #2 goes to another deflected ball on the green (assuming it's hers) and putts it out.
- Player #1 goes to place the ball at her marker and notices it's not her ball.
- Turns out Player #1 picked up Player #2's ball by mistake and Player #2 realized she had already putted out with Player #1's ball.
- Player #1 retrieved her ball and placed it at her marker & putted out.
- Player #2 replaced her ball to its estimated original location (where Player #1 had picked it up) and putted out.

What is the ruling? (Select one or more options)

- A. Player #1 gets the general penalty (2 strokes).
- B. Player #2 gets the general penalty (2 strokes).
- C. Player #1 gets a one stroke penalty for picking up the wrong ball.
- D. Both players get the general penalty.
- E. Player #2 is disqualified.

Answer:

B. Player #2 gets the general penalty (2 strokes). Rule 6.3c(1) Wrong Ball, applies only to Player #2 who putted the “wrong ball”.

Rule 13.1d “There is no penalty if you, your opponent or another player in stroke play accidentally move your ball or ball marker on the putting green”, applies to Player #1 who picked up Player #2’s ball but did not putt it.

Moral of this story: Always check that you are hitting your own ball, even on the putting green!

Note:

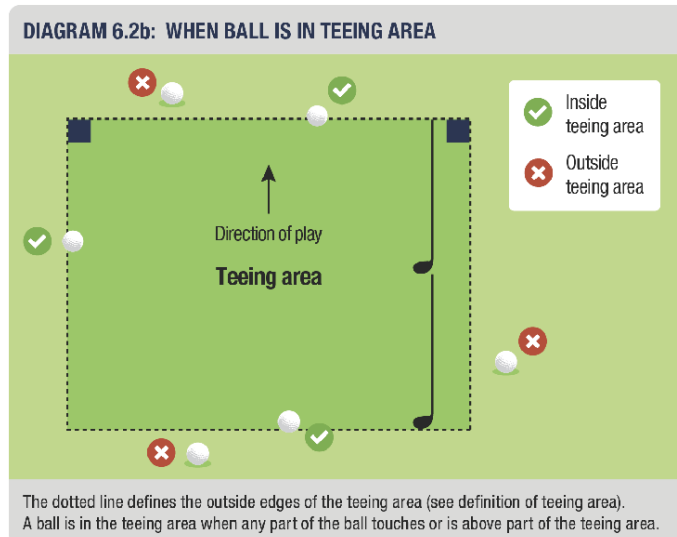
Player #2’s putts with the wrong ball do not count; her putts from the correct location do count, in addition to the 2 stroke penalty. However, if she had not corrected her mistake, she would have been disqualified.

MAY 2024 – USGA Rule 6 [PLAYING A HOLE](#)

Rule 6.1b Ball Must Be Played From Inside Teeing Area

Rule 6.2b Teeing Area Rules

Recently some issues arose about the teeing area. Rule 6 tells us that the ball must be played from the TEEING AREA when starting a hole and the Definition tells us what the teeing area is. It is a rectangle that is 2 club-lengths deep where the front edge is defined by the forward-most point of the tee-markers and the sides are defined by the lines back from the outside points of the tee-makers, as illustrated below.



In scenario 1 in a **stroke play** competition the player hit her ball from the teeing area and it stayed on the tee box, but was in front of the tee-markers. In this case the first stroke counts and the player must play from the new location. However, she CANNOT tee the ball as she is outside the TEEING AREA.

In scenario 2 in a **match play** competition the player teed her ball up slightly ahead of the tee-markers. In this case there is NO penalty, but the opponent may cancel the stroke. In that situation the player simply moves her ball back to the TEEING AREA and she may tee it up. If the opponent does not cancel the stroke (as she sees this gave the player no real advantage) the player simply plays her ball from the new location. **Note:** In **stroke play**, this scenario would be a 2-stroke penalty and the player would need to re-hit from in the teeing area.

A possible 3rd scenario is if the player hit her ball from the teeing area but ended up back behind the tee-markers (hit something & bounces back, or duffed the shot & it fell back off the tee). In this case, the first stroke counts and the player must play from the new location. If it is behind the tee-markers within 2 club lengths, it is still within the teeing area and the player may tee it up.

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