

**RULES DURING STROKE PLAY**

1) **THE RULES** Players are responsible for knowing the Rules and playing by them. During their round they may not ignore a Rule or a penalty. Furthermore, they may not agree with another player to ignore a Rule or a penalty. (R1.3b)

If a player suspects that another player has broken a Rule and may not know it or is ignoring a Rule, they have an obligation to the other players in the competition to promptly tell that player or inform the Committee. (R20.1c2)

2) **PLAYING TWO BALLS** If a player is uncertain about a Rule or a procedure while playing a hole, before making another stroke, they should 1) announce their intention to play two balls and which ball they wish to count, 2) hole out both balls, and 3) inform the Committee. (R20.1c3)

**MOVABLE THINGS**

3) **LOOSE IMPEDIMENTS** Anywhere on or off the course, a player may carefully move a loose or unattached natural object (e.g., a leaf, a stone or an insect). However, if when moving a loose impediment their ball is moved, there is a **one-stroke penalty** and the ball must be replaced. Except on the green where there is no penalty, but the ball still must be replaced. (Loose Impediment & R15.1)

4) **MOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS** Anywhere on or off the course, a player may move an easily-moved artificial object (e.g., a gate, a bunker rake or a red penalty area stake, but never a white out of bounds stake). If when moving a movable obstruction their ball is moved, there is no penalty and the ball must be replaced. (Movable Obstruction & R15.2)

5) **BALL HELPING OR INTERFERING WITH PLAY** If a player believes that another ball might interfere with their own play, they may require that the ball be lifted. (R15.3)

**WRONG THINGS**

6) **WRONG BALL** If a player plays a "wrong ball" (e.g., a stray ball or another player's ball) from anywhere on or off the course they must correct their mistake before starting the next hole by going back and finding their "right ball" and continuing play of the hole with it. **Two-stroke penalty.** (R6.3c)

7) **WRONG PLACE** Examples of a "wrong place" are playing a ball without replacing it when required to do so or playing a ball after dropping it in a wrong relief area. If a player has played from a *slightly* wrong place, they should continue playing the hole with that ball. **Two-stroke penalty.** (Wrong Place & R14.7b)

However, if a player has played from a wrong place and *could have gained a significant advantage*, they must correct their mistake before starting the next hole by completing play of the hole with a ball from the "right place." **Two-stroke penalty.** They must inform the Committee. (Serious Breach & R14.7b)

8) **WRONG TEE** If a player plays from the wrong tee or from outside the teeing area, they must correct their mistake before starting the next hole by playing from within the correct teeing area. **Two-stroke penalty.** (R6.1b)

9) **WRONG GREEN** A player may not play from any practice green or any green on the course other than the one for the hole being played. They must take free relief for lie, stance and swing by dropping a ball into the one club-length relief area behind the nearest point of complete relief. (R13.1f)

10) **IDENTIFYING BALL** Anywhere on the course, if a ball cannot be identified as it lies, the player must first mark the spot of the ball and then they may pick up, move or rotate the ball to identify it. (R7.3)

**PLAYER'S BALL MOVED**

11) **BALL MOVED DURING SEARCH** If a player or anyone else accidentally moves their ball while looking for it, there is no penalty and the ball must be replaced. (R7.4)

12) **BALL MOVED ON ITS OWN** Usually if a player's ball is moved by natural forces (i.e., wind, water or gravity), there is no penalty and the ball is played from its new location. (R9.3)

However, on the green, if the ball moves on its own after having been marked, lifted and replaced, the player may not play the ball from the new location. There is no penalty and the ball must be replaced. (R9.3, Exception)

13) **BALL MOVED BY PLAYER** Except in the teeing area, during a search, or on the green, if a player picks up or deliberately touches their ball at rest when not allowed by a Rule, or accidentally or deliberately causes it to move, there is a **one-stroke penalty** and the ball must be replaced. (R9.4)

14) **BALL ON PUTTING GREEN MOVED BY PLAYER** On the green, if a player accidentally causes their ball or ball-marker to move, there is no penalty and the ball or ball-marker must be replaced. (R13.1d)

However, if a player deliberately picks up, moves or rotates their ball on the green without first marking it, there is a **one-stroke penalty** and the ball must be replaced. (R14.1a)

15) **BALL MOVED BY OUTSIDE INFLUENCE** If a player knows or is virtually certain that their ball has been moved or taken by someone or something else, there is no penalty and the ball must be replaced. (Outside Influence & R9.6)

16) **BALL MOVED BY ANOTHER BALL** If a player's ball is accidentally moved by another ball or if their ball accidentally hits another ball the "moved" ball must be replaced. Normally there is no penalty (See 19, Note 1.) and the ball that did the "hitting" is played as it lies. (R9.6 & R11.1)

**PLAYER'S BALL HIT SOMETHING**

17) **DOUBLE HIT** If a player accidentally hits their ball more than once with a stroke, there is no penalty and the ball is played as it lies. (R10.1a)

18) **BALL HIT THE PLAYER or THEIR EQUIPMENT** If the player's ball accidentally hits them or their equipment, there is no penalty and the ball is played as it lies. (R11.1a)

19) **BALL HIT SOMEONE or SOMETHING** If a player's ball accidentally hits another player, their equipment, or anyone or anything else, normally there is no penalty to anyone and the ball is played as it lies. (See Notes.) (R11.1a)

*Note 1: If a player's ball played from on the green accidentally hits another ball at rest on the green, the moved ball must be replaced. Two-stroke penalty to the player and their ball is played as it lies.* (R11.1a, Exc)

*Note 2: If a player's ball played from on the green accidentally hits another person other than a person attending the flagstick, an animal other than an insect, or movable obstruction other than the player's club, a ball-marker or the flagstick, there is no penalty, but they must replay the stroke.* (MLR D-7 & R11.1b, Exc 2)

## FREE RELIEF SITUATIONS

20) **ABNORMAL COURSE CONDITIONS** (ACC) are animal holes, ground under repair, immovable obstructions and temporary water. Anywhere on the course, except in a penalty area, free relief for interference for lie, stance or swing is allowed from ACC. (See Definitions)

In the general area, if a player wishes to take free relief from an ACC, they must drop a ball into the one club-length relief area behind the nearest point of complete relief. After taking relief, their lie, stance and swing must be completely clear of the ACC. (R16.1)

☛ *There is no free relief for interference from ACC located out of bounds or from objects defining the course boundaries. Normally, except on the putting green, there is no free relief for line of play from an ACC.* (Boundary Object & R16.1a)

☛ *“Temporary Water” is a temporary accumulation of water on the ground anywhere on the course, except in a penalty area. It is not enough for the ground to be merely wet, muddy or soft or for water to be momentarily visible as the player steps on the ground; water must remain present around the ball or their shoes after they have taken a normal stance.* (Temporary Water)

▶ **ACC in Bunker** If a player’s ball lies in a bunker and there is interference by an ACC, they may take free relief inside the bunker by dropping a ball into the one club-length relief area behind the nearest point of complete relief. (R16.1c1)

Or, with a **one-stroke penalty**, a player may take relief outside the bunker by replay or by dropping a ball back-on-the-line. (R16.1c2)

▶ **ACC on Putting Green** If a player’s ball lies on the green and there is interference by an ACC, including on the line of play, they may take free relief by placing a ball on the spot of the nearest point of complete relief. (R16.1d)

▶ **Ball Not Found in ACC** If a player knows or is virtually certain that their ball is in an ACC but they cannot find it, they may take free relief. (Known or Virtually Certain)

The player must estimate the point where the ball last crossed the edge of the ACC to determine the nearest point of complete relief. They then must drop a ball into the one club-length relief area behind that nearest point of complete relief. (R16.1e)

21) **EMBEDDED BALL** Except in a penalty area or a bunker, a player may take free relief for a ball embedded in its own pitch-mark. (Embedded)

In the general area, the player must drop a ball into the one club-length relief area behind the spot where the ball was embedded. On the green, the player must mark the ball, lift it, repair the damage and then replace the ball. (R16.3)

## RELIEF CONCEPTS

▶ **Nearest Point of Complete Relief** The reference point used to establish the relief area for taking free relief from an abnormal course condition, a dangerous animal, a wrong green or a no play zone. It will be as near as possible to the original lie and to the spot where there is no interference with the player’s lie, stance and swing. The player is not guaranteed a good or playable lie. (NPCR/4)

▶ **Relief Area** Where a player drops a ball when taking free relief or penalty relief. A relief area always starts from a reference point and normally has a radius of one club-length. (☛ *When taking lateral relief from the edge of a red penalty area or from the spot of an unplayable ball, the radius is two club-lengths.*) The player may use their original ball or another ball. They must drop a ball into the relief area and have it come to rest within the relief area. (R14.3)

▶ **Drop Zone** The player must drop a ball into the drop zone and have it come to rest within the drop zone. (MLR E-1)

## PENALTY RELIEF SITUATIONS

22) **BALL IN PENALTY AREA** A penalty area is any body of water or any other part of the course the Committee marks as a penalty area. Penalty areas are marked as either yellow or red penalty areas. (Penalty Area)

☛ *When a player’s ball lies in a penalty area, there is no relief under any other Rule from abnormal course conditions, for an embedded ball or for an unplayable ball.* (R17.3)

▶ **Yellow Penalty Area** If a player knows or is virtually certain that their ball is in a yellow penalty area, with a **one-stroke penalty**, they may take relief outside that penalty area in one of two ways: replay or back-on-the-line. (R17.1d)

▶ **Red Penalty Area** If a player knows or is virtually certain that their ball is in a red penalty area, with a **one-stroke penalty**, they may take relief outside that penalty area in one of three ways: replay or back-on-the-line or lateral. (R17.1d)

☛ *If a ball played from a penalty area comes to rest in the same penalty area or another penalty area, or becomes lost, out of bounds or unplayable outside the penalty area, see Rule 17.2.*

23) **UNPLAYABLE BALL** Except in a penalty area, if a player cannot or does not wish to play their ball as it lies, with a **one-stroke penalty**, they may take relief in one of three ways: replay or back-on-the-line or lateral. (R19)

▶ **Unplayable Ball in Bunker** With a **one-stroke penalty**, a player may replay, or if they choose back-on-the-line or lateral, they must drop a ball inside the bunker. (R19.3a)

Or, with a **two-stroke penalty**, they may take relief outside the bunker by dropping a ball back-on-the-line. (R19.3b)

24) **BALL LOST or OUT OF BOUNDS** If a player does not find their ball within three minutes or if their ball is out of bounds, they must either continue with their provisional ball or go back and replay from where their previous stroke was made with a **one-stroke penalty**. (R18.2)

## PENALTY RELIEF PROCEDURES

▶ **Replay** (aka stroke-and-distance) is the first of the three penalty relief options:

- 1) From the tee, a player may re-tee and replay from anywhere in the teeing area.
- 2) In the general area or a bunker or a penalty area, drop a ball into the one club-length relief area right behind the spot from where the previous stroke was made.
- 3) On the green, place a ball on the spot from where the previous stroke was made. (R14.6)

☛ *At any time and from anywhere and for any reason, with a one-stroke penalty, a player always has this replay option.* (R18.1)

▶ **Back-On-the-Line** is the second of the three penalty relief options and involves going back on an extension of the line from the flagstick through either:

- 1) the crossing point at the edge of a penalty area, or
- 2) the player’s ball in an unplayable lie.

The player may go back on that line as far as they wish, mark a reference point on the line and drop a ball into the one club-length relief area behind their marked reference point. (R17.1d2)

▶ **Lateral** is the third of the three penalty relief options and lets a player drop a ball into a relief area of two club-lengths to the side of and behind the reference point of either:

- 1) the crossing point at the edge of a red penalty area, or
- 2) the player’s ball in an unplayable lie. (R17.1d3)