



in association with  
**USGA**®

# Golf Rules

Including the 2019 Revisions



Colorado



# Let's Get Started



in association with  
**USGA**<sup>®</sup>

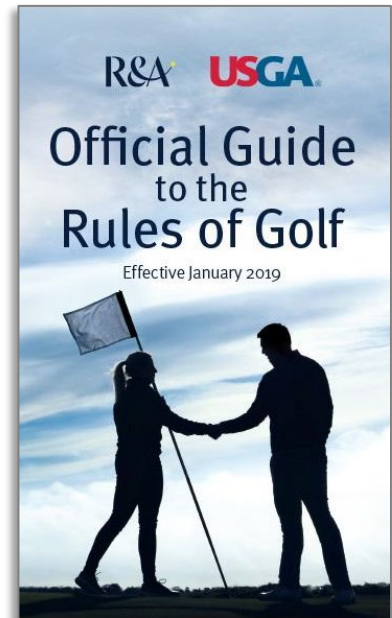
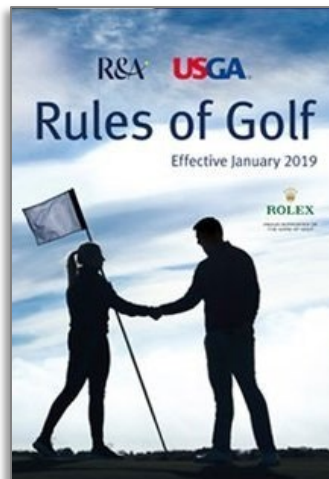
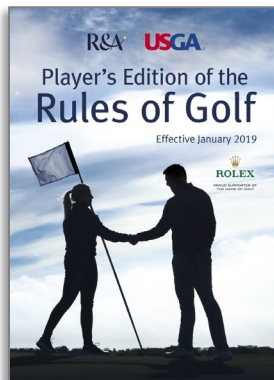
- Welcome
- Introduction
- Goals
- Questions
- Let's have a Conversation...



2 HOURS

- 2019 Rules of Golf Publications

- Player's Edition
- Full Rules
- Official Guide
  - Interpretations (Decisions)
  - Committee Procedures
  - Model Local Rules



- Download Available for iOS or Android



Carrier 12:00 PM


Rule 17.1 AA ROLEX

Q Search

**d. Relief for Your Ball in Penalty Area**

You have the relief options shown in Diagram #1 17.1d (relief for yellow *penalty area*) and Diagram #2 17.1d (relief for red *penalty area*), each for **one penalty stroke**.

**DIAGRAM #1 17.1d: RELIEF FOR BALL IN YELLOW PENALTY AREA**



1 Point that ball entered the penalty area  
 2 Reference points  
 3 Relief area

When it is known or virtually certain that a ball is in a yellow penalty area and the player wishes to take relief, the player has **two options**, each for one penalty stroke:

(1) The player may take stroke-and-distance relief by playing the original ball or another ball from a relief area based on where the previous stroke was made (see Rule 14.6 and Diagram 14.6).

Reference Point	Size of Relief Area	Limits on Relief Area
The spot where the player's previous stroke was made (which if not known must be estimated)	One club-length from the reference point	The relief area: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and</li> <li>• Must be in the same area of the course as the reference point</li> </ul>

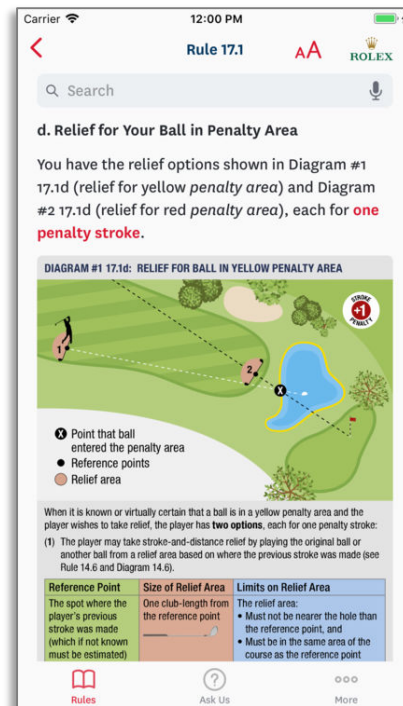
Rules Ask Us More

- Download Available for iOS or Android



- Full Suite of Rules Information

- Player's Edition
- Full Rules Book
- Official Guide
- Regular Updates
- Rules News, Videos, Links and more



- Download Available for iOS or Android

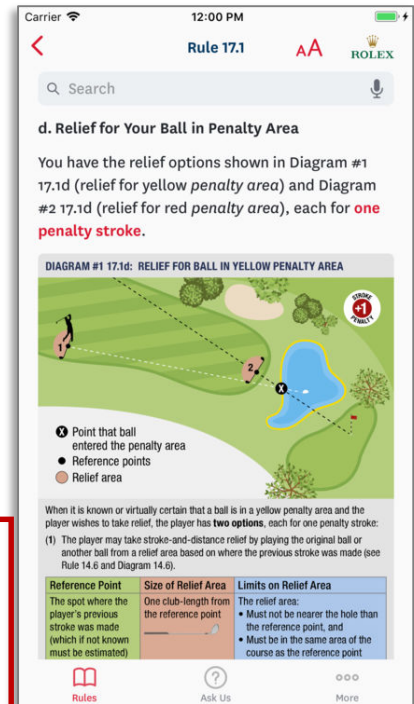


- Full Suite of Rules Information

- Player's Edition
- Full Rules Book
- Official Guide
- Regular Updates
- Rules News, Videos, Links and more

## • Setup

- Go to **More**
- Select **Settings**
- Change to **Expert Mode** to Access all Features



- Modernized
  - More Intuitive and Consistent
  - **The Rules are Mostly in the Rules**
  - Easier to Read
  - Now with Pictures
  - Purpose Statements
  - **Interpretations (including Definitions)**
- 24 Rules Grouped Logically (down from 34)
  - 1-20 - Playing the Game (generally Individual play)
  - 21-23 - Other Forms of Play (Foursomes, Fourball, etc.)
  - 24 - Team Competitions
- Written in “International English”
  - “Honour”
  - “Practising”
  - “Colour”

## New 2019 Terms

Abnormal Course Conditions  
General Area  
Penalty Area  
Teeing Area  
Boundary Object  
Integral Object  
Natural Forces  
No Play Zone  
Outside Influence  
Temporary Water

## Retired Terms

Abnormal Ground Conditions  
Through the Green  
Water/Lateral Water Hazard  
Teeing Ground  
- No Single Term Used  
Integral Part of the Course  
Wind and Water  
Environmentally Sensitive Area  
Outside Agency  
Casual Water

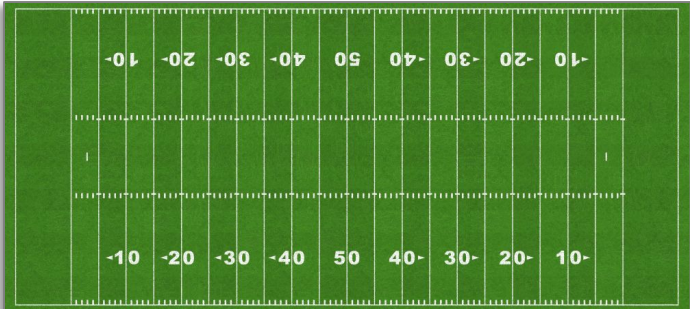


- Preparing to Play
  - Fundamentals of the Game
  - The Course, Competition and Equipment
  - Playing Rounds and Holes
  - Playing the Ball
  - Marking, Lifting, Replacing and Dropping
- Playing the Game / Taking Relief
  - Bunkers and Putting Greens
  - Free Relief
  - Penalty Relief
  - Player and Committee Procedures

# Golf is Different



in association with

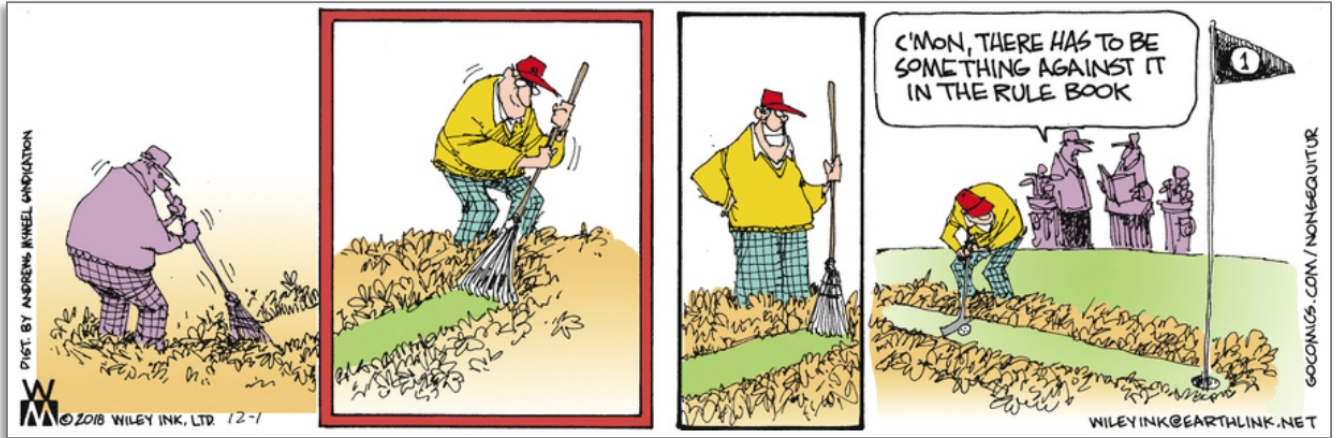


# Non Sequitur



COLORADO GOLF  
ASSOCIATION

in association with  
**USGA**®



# Preparing to Play

- Standards of Conduct contained in the Rules
- **Committees can Adopt a Code of Conduct**
- Players are Expected to
  - Act with Integrity (follow all rules and apply all penalties)
  - Show Consideration to Others (pace and safety)
  - Take Good Care of the Course (bunkers, divots and ball marks)
  - Play by the Rules

EUROPEAN TOUR

February 2, 2019



**Sergio Garcia disqualified from Saudi International for "serious misconduct" after being accused of purposely damaging greens**

- **Reasonable Judgment Standard**

- Reasonable Judgment Standard
- **Accidental versus Deliberate (Intentional) Acts**



- One-Stroke Penalty: Applies in both match play and stroke play
- General Penalty: Loss of hole in match play and a two-stroke penalty in stroke play
- Disqualification: Applies both in match play and stroke play



- Play the course as you find it
- Play the ball as it lies

*One of the great features of golf is that it tests the player's ability to execute a great assortment of strokes under a perplexing variety of conditions. Golf would cease to be a game of skill if the player were permitted to get the best of the conditions which confront him through their elimination rather than to overcome them by the expert execution of his stroke.*

*- Richard Tufts*

*President USGA 1956-57*

# Rule 1.1 The Game of Golf



in association with  
**USGA**®

Golf is played by striking your ball with a club, and each hole starts from the teeing area

and ends when your ball is holed on the putting green





The **general area** covers the entire area of the course except for the following:

- |                   |                     |
|-------------------|---------------------|
| ① The teeing area | ③ Penalty areas     |
| ② Bunkers         | ④ The putting green |

Any area not on the course is out of bounds

# Where is the Ball?

- A ball is always treated as lying in only one area of the course
- If a ball is touching the General Area and a Specific Area of the Course it is treated as lying in the Specific Area



# Where is the Ball?



COLORADO GOLF  
ASSOCIATION

in association with



If the ball is touching more than one Specific Area of the Course it is Treated as Lying in the Specific Area that is higher on this list:

1. Penalty Area
2. Bunker
3. Putting Green



- Two Primary Forms of Play
  - Both can be played Gross and/or Net Score Formats
  - Both can be played Individually or with a Partner as a Side
- Match Play
- Stroke Play

- Hole-by-Hole Competition
- Everyone Involved is Present
- Can Protect your own Interests
- Three ways to Win a Hole\*
- Halving a Hole
- Winning a Match
- **Tied Matches (if Extended Same Round)**
- Concessions (Stroke, Hole or Match)
  - Must be clearly communicated
  - May not be withdrawn
- Must give right number of strokes to opponent
- Must tell opponent of penalties when reasonably possible
- Must not agree with opponent to deliberately breach rules

- Hole-by-Hole Competition
- Everyone Involved is Present
- Can Protect your own Interests
- Three ways to Win a Hole (Strokes, Concession or LOH Penalty)
- Halving a Hole
- Winning a Match
- **Tied Matches (if Extended Same Round)**
- Concessions (Stroke, Hole or Match)
  - Must be clearly communicated
  - May not be withdrawn
- Must give right number of strokes to opponent
- Must tell opponent of penalties when reasonably possible
- Must not agree with opponent to deliberately breach rules



- Competition based on complete Round(s)
- Multiple Round Competitions
- Participants Broken into Groups
- All Players Treated Equally under the Rules
- Player and Marker must Certify each Hole Score
- Electronic Scorecards
- In Handicap Competition Player must ensure Correct Handicap is on Scorecard
- **Playoffs Start a New Round**

- Must use Conforming Clubs and Balls
- Maximum of 14 Clubs
- May Add Clubs if Round Started with Fewer than 14
- Normally May NOT Replace Damaged (or lost) Clubs\*
  - Applies During Play and Stoppage of Play
  - **May Continue to Use in Damaged State for Rest of Round (but NOT in any Playoffs when starting a NEW Round)**
  - May Repair Club (with limitations on new parts and time)
  - Any Damage that Existed before Round may not be Repaired
  - May ADD a Club if Player Started with Fewer than 14
  - **May Replace ONLY IF Damage caused by Outside Influence, Natural Forces or Other Person (other than the Player or their Caddie) – must not delay play, use another player's club or assemble parts carried by anyone for the player**



- A “round” is 18 or fewer holes played in the order set by the Committee
  - **Tied Match Extended One Hole at a Time** - This is the continuation of the same round, **NOT** a new round
  - **Play-off in Stroke Play** - This is a new round
  - 36 Hole Days = Two Rounds\*

# Marking the Ball

The player should put an identifying mark on the ball to be played



**Stroke** - The forward movement of your club made to strike the ball



Backswing

Stroke

- In making a stroke
  - You must fairly strike at the ball with the head of the club such that there is only momentary contact between the club and the ball and you must not push, scrape or scoop the ball
  - **If your club accidentally hits the ball more than once, there has been only one stroke and there is no penalty**
- In making a stroke, you must not anchor the club either directly or indirectly
- **The player must not make a stroke from a stance with a foot deliberately placed on each side of, or with either foot deliberately touching, the line of play or an extension of that line behind the ball\***
- A player must not make a stroke at a moving ball (Exception – Ball Moving in Water, etc.)

- **No Setting Down Object to Help in Taking Stance** - A player must not take a stance for the stroke using any object that was set down by or for the player to help in lining up his or her feet or body, such as a club set down on the ground to show the line of play
- If the player takes a stance in breach of this Rule, he or she cannot avoid penalty by backing away from the stance and removing the object



# Playing a Hole



in association with  
**USGA**®

- A player has started a hole when he or she makes a stroke
- A player must start each hole by playing a ball from anywhere inside the teeing area





# Playing Ball from Teeing Area



in association with  
**USGA**®

- The ball must be played from either
  - A tee placed in or on the ground, or
  - The ground itself
  - For purposes of this Rule, the “ground” includes sand or other natural materials put in place to set the tee or ball on



- **Certain Conditions in Teeing Area May Be Improved** Before making a *stroke*, the player may take these actions in the *teeing area* to *improve* the *conditions affecting the stroke*
  - Alter the surface of the ground in the *teeing area* (such as by making an indentation with a club or foot),
  - **Move, bend or break grass, weeds and other natural objects that are attached or growing in the ground in the *teeing area*,**
  - Remove or press down sand and soil in the *teeing area*
  - Remove dew, frost and water in the *teeing area*

- If the player's ball in play is in the teeing area after a stroke (such as a teed ball after a stroke that missed the ball) or after taking relief, the player may
  - Lift or move the ball without penalty
  - Play that ball or another ball from anywhere in the teeing area from a tee or the ground, including playing the ball as it lies

- Restriction on Caddie (or Partner or Coach/Advice Giver)  
Standing Behind Player - When a player begins taking a stance for the stroke and until the stroke is made
  - The player's caddie (or Partner or Coach/Advice Giver) must not deliberately stand in a location on or close to an extension of the line of play behind the ball **for any reason**
  - **Exception** – There is no penalty under this Rule if the player backs away from the stance and does not begin to take the stance again until after the caddie (or Partner or Coach/Advice Giver) has moved out of that location

# Standing Behind Player

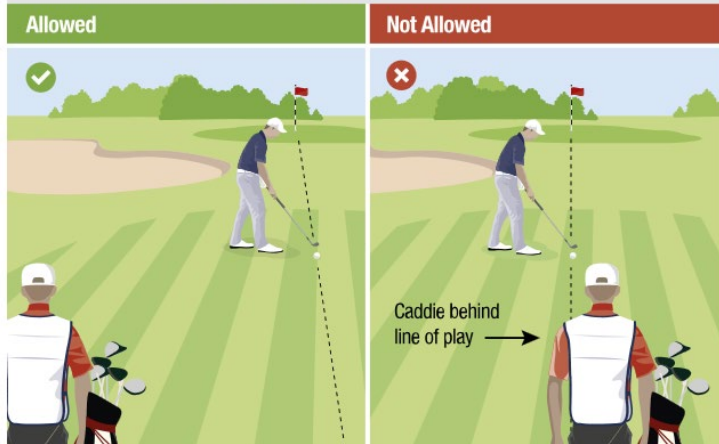


COLORADO GOLF  
ASSOCIATION

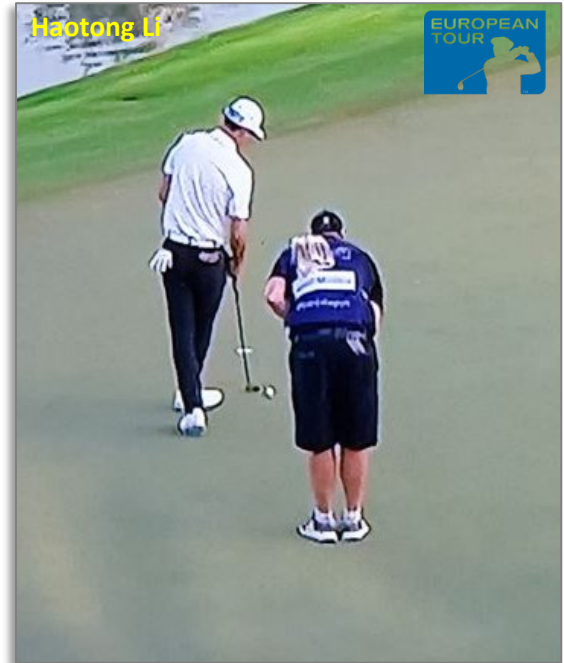
in association with



DIAGRAM 10.2b: CADDIE STANDING IN LOCATION ON OR CLOSE TO LINE OF PLAY BEHIND BALL



“When a player **begins taking a stance** for the stroke and until the stroke is made”



- **Advice** - Any verbal comment or action (such as showing what club was just used to make a stroke) that is intended to influence a player in
  - Choosing a club,
  - Making a stroke, or
  - Deciding how to play during a hole or round
- **But advice** does not include public information, such as
  - The location of things on the course such as the hole, the putting green, the fairway, penalty areas, bunkers, or another player's ball,
  - The distance from one point to another, or
  - The Rules

- During a round, a player must not
  - Give advice to anyone in the competition who is playing on the course,
  - Ask anyone for advice, other than the player's caddie
  - **Touch another player's equipment to learn information that would be advice if given by or asked of the other player (such as touching the other player's clubs or bag to see what club is being used)**

- The player may fairly search for the ball by taking reasonable actions to find and identify it, such as
  - Moving sand and water, and
  - Moving or bending grass, bushes, tree branches and other growing or attached natural objects, and also breaking such objects, **but** only if such breaking is a result of other reasonable actions taken to find or identify the ball
- If taking such reasonable actions as part of a fair search improves the conditions affecting the stroke
  - There is no penalty if the improvement results from a fair search
  - **But** if the improvement results from actions that exceeded what was reasonable for a fair search, the player gets the general penalty



Search time limit is now 3:00 minutes



- Lifting Ball to Identify It
  - The player may lift the ball to identify it (including by rotating it), **but**
  - **The spot of the ball must first be marked**, and the ball must not be cleaned more than needed to identify it (**except** on the putting green)
- If the lifted ball is the player's ball or another player's ball, it must be replaced on its original spot





- Ball in Motion Accidentally Hits Person or Outside Influence
  - **No Penalty**
  - This is true even if the ball hits the player, the opponent or any other player or any of their caddies or equipment
  - Ball Must be Played as it Lies

# Playing



- **Known or Virtually Certain** - The standard for deciding what happened to a player's ball – for example, whether the ball came to rest in a penalty area, whether it moved or what caused it to move
- Known or virtually certain means more than just possible or probable. It means that either
  - There is conclusive evidence that the event in question happened to the player's ball, such as when the player or other witnesses saw it happen, or
  - **Although there is a very small degree of doubt, all reasonably available information shows that it is at least 95% likely that the event in question happened**
- "All reasonably available information" includes all information the player knows and all other information he or she can get with reasonable effort and without unreasonable delay



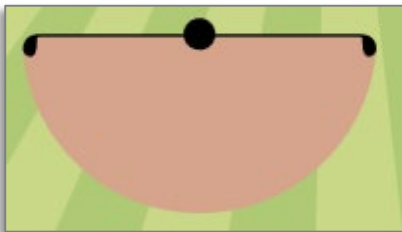
## Spot

- Replace or Place
- Original Ball Must be Used when Replacing\*
- Most Often Replacing on Putting Green
- If Spot not known, then Estimated



## Relief Area

- Always a Drop
- Substitution OK
- Defined by Reference Point
- One or Two Club Lengths\*
- Not always a full Half-Circle shape



## Teeing Area

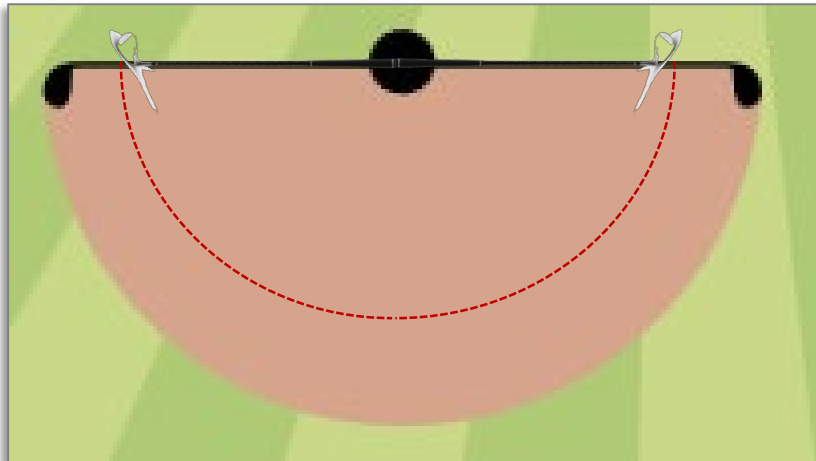
- Typically Stroke-and-Distance
- Teeing Area Rules Apply (including may Tee the Ball)
- Substitution OK
- Full Teeing Area May be Used



- **Club-Length** - The length of the longest club of the 14 (or fewer) clubs you have during the round, other than a putter. For example, if the longest club (other than a putter) you have during a round is a 43-inch driver, a club-length is 43 inches for you for that round



- **Club-Length** - The length of the longest club of the 14 (or fewer) clubs you have during the round, other than a putter. For example, if the longest club (other than a putter) you have during a round is a 43-inch driver, a club-length is 43 inches for you for that round





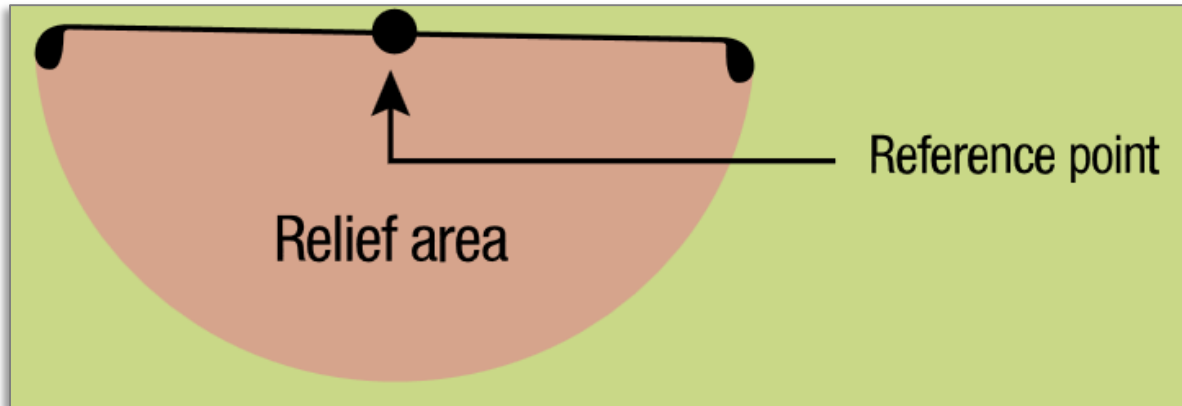
- **Drop** - To hold the ball and let go of it so that it falls through the air, with the intent for the ball to be *in play*. Each relief Rule identifies a specific *relief area* where your ball must be *dropped* and come to rest



- **Relief Area** - The area where you must drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule. Each relief Rule requires you to use a specific relief area whose size and location are based on these three factors



- **Relief Area** - The area where you must drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule. Each relief Rule requires you to use a specific relief area whose size and location are based on these three factors
  - **Reference Point**: The point from which the size of relief area is measured



- **Relief Area** – The area where you must drop a ball when taking relief
- **Special Area** – A place on the course where a player is allowed to take relief without penalty
- **Through the Green** – A ball that is in play and is on the green in play
- **Penalty Area** – A place on the course where a player is allowed to take relief with a penalty

## Reference Point Examples

- Spot where previous stroke was made
- Spot where ball last crossed the edge of:
  - Red Penalty Area
  - Abnormal Course Condition
  - Moveable Obstruction
- Spot chosen by player (or rule) back on-the-line
- Spot of maximum available relief
- Spot right behind where ball is embedded
- Nearest point where the dangerous animal condition does not exist
- and a few more....

- **Relief Area** - The area where you must drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule. Each relief Rule requires you to use a specific relief area whose size and location are based on these three factors
  - **Reference Point**: The point from which the size of relief area is measured
  - **Size of Relief Area Measured from Reference Point**: The relief area is either one or two\* club-lengths from the reference point, **but** with certain limits



- **Relief Area** - The area where you must drop a ball when taking

## Size of Relief Area

- Relief without Penalty
  - Always One Club-Length
- Relief with Penalty
  - Lateral (Red Penalty Area or Unplayable) – Two Club-Lengths
  - Back On-The-Line – One Club-Length

Relief  
but



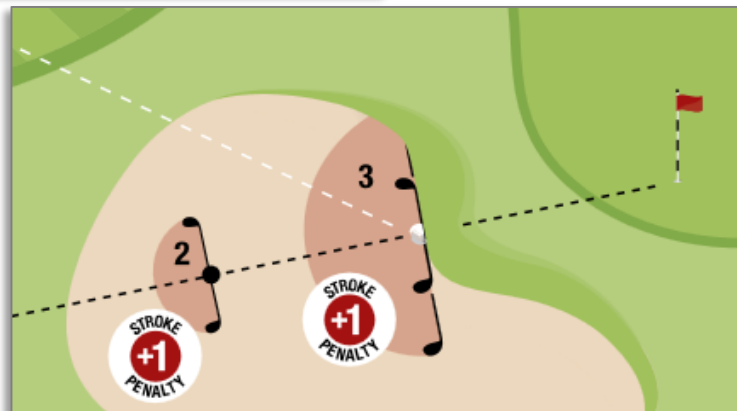
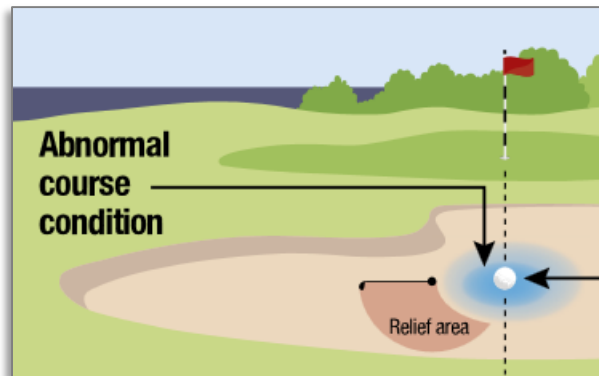
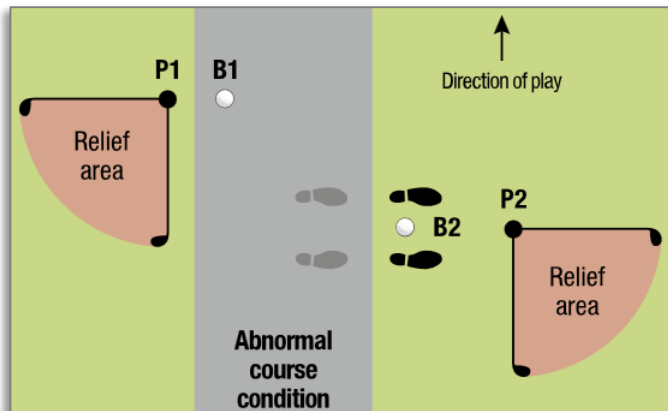
- **Relief Area** - The area where you must drop a ball when taking relief under a Rule. Each relief Rule requires you to use a specific relief area whose size and location are based on these three factors
  - **Reference Point**: The point from which the size of relief area is measured
  - **Size of Relief Area Measured from Reference Point**: The relief area is either one or two club-lengths from the reference point, **but** with certain limits
  - **Limits on Location of Relief Area**: The location of the relief area may be limited in one or more ways so that, for example
    - It is only in certain defined areas of the course, such as only in the general area, or not in a bunker or a penalty area,
    - It is not nearer the hole than your reference point or must be outside a penalty area or a bunker from which you are taking relief, or
    - It is where there is no interference (as defined in the particular Rule) from the condition from which you are taking relief

## One-club Relief Area





# Relief Area Limits



- **Drop** - To hold the ball and let go of it so that it falls through the air, with the intent for the ball to be *in play*. Each relief Rule identifies a specific *relief area* where your ball must be *dropped* and come to rest



- **Drop** - To hold the ball and let go of it so that it falls through the air, with the intent for the ball to be in play. Each relief Rule identifies a specific relief area where your ball must be dropped and come to rest
  - There are five requirements to Dropping in the “Right Way” – if any of the five are not done correctly, the drop does not count
    - The **PLAYER\*** must drop the ball
    - From **KNEE HEIGHT** while in a standing position
    - By **LETTING IT GO**
    - It must first **LAND IN THE RELIEF AREA** without touching the player or their equipment before it strikes the ground
    - It must **COME TO REST IN THE RELIEF AREA**
  - If any of the five requirements are not met, the ball must be dropped again
    - First four - unlimited re-drops
    - Final one - drop, drop, place...

# Dropping a Ball



in association with



# Dropping a Ball



in association with  
**USGA**®

- Knee Height is Knee Height
  - Individual Variance
  - Knee about 5" from top to bottom
  - About 7" area to start drop



# Dropping a Ball

**DIAGRAM 14.3b: DROPPING FROM KNEE HEIGHT**

Allowed	Not Allowed
 <p>Knee height</p>	 <p>Knee height</p>
 <p>Knee height</p>	 <p>Knee height</p>

A ball must be dropped straight down from knee height. "Knee height" means the height of a player's knee when in a standing position. But the player does not have to be in a standing position when the ball is dropped.

# Dropping a Ball



in association with  
**USGA**



# Dropping a Ball



in association with





- **Mark** - To show the spot where a ball is at rest by either placing a ball-marker right behind or right next to the ball, or holding a club on the ground right behind or right next to the ball
  - Before lifting a ball under a Rule requiring the ball to be replaced on its original spot, the player must mark the spot
  - If the spot is marked with a ball-marker, after replacing the ball the player must remove the ball-marker before making a stroke



- **Replace** - To place a ball by setting it down and letting it go, with the intent for it to be *in play*



- The ball must be replaced on its original spot (which if not known must be estimated), **except** when the ball must be replaced on a different spot
- If the ball was at rest on, under or against any immovable obstruction, integral object, boundary object or growing or attached natural object
  - The “spot” of the ball includes its vertical location relative to the ground
  - This means that the ball must be replaced on its original spot on, under or against such object

- Most Often Used under Stroke-and-Distance Relief
- The original ball or another ball must be played from anywhere inside the teeing area (and may be teed)
- All Teeing Area Rules Apply



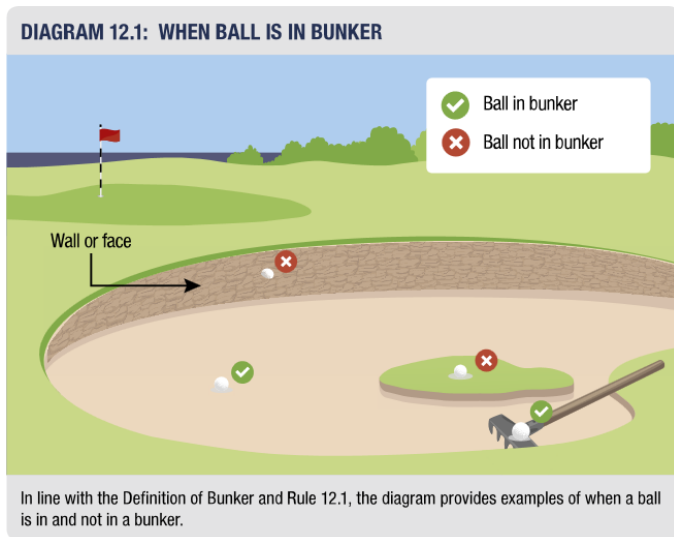
- A ball lifted from the putting green may always be cleaned
- A ball lifted from anywhere else may always be cleaned **except** when it is lifted
  - **To See If It Is Cut or Cracked** - Cleaning is not allowed
  - **Because It Interferes with Play** - Cleaning is not allowed
  - **To Identify It** - Cleaning is allowed only as needed to identify it
  - **To See If It Lies in Condition Where Relief Is Allowed** - Cleaning is not allowed, unless the player then takes relief under a Rule





- **Player May Lift Ball to Correct Mistake Before Ball Is Played**
  - When a player has proceeded incorrectly in
    - substituted when not allowed
    - player's ball was replaced or placed
      - in a wrong place
      - came to rest in a wrong place
      - in a wrong way
      - by using a procedure that did not apply
  - The player may lift the ball without penalty and correct the mistake, **but** this is allowed only before the ball is played

- A ball is in a *bunker* when any part of the ball
  - Touches sand on the ground inside the edge of the *bunker*, or
  - Is inside the edge of the *bunker* and rests
    - On ground where sand normally would be (such as where sand was blown or washed away by wind or water), or
- In or on a *loose impediment*, *movable obstruction*, *abnormal course condition* or *integral object* that touches sand in the *bunker* or is on ground where sand normally would be



- **Playing Ball in Bunker**

- **Removing Loose Impediments and Movable Obstructions**
  - **Before playing a ball in a bunker, a player may remove loose impediments and movable obstructions**
  - This includes any reasonable touching or movement of the sand in the bunker that happens while doing so
- This Rule applies both during a round and while play is stopped







## • Restrictions on Touching Sand in Bunker

- **When Touching Sand Results in Penalty** - Before making a stroke at a ball in a bunker, a player must not
  - Deliberately touch sand in the bunker with a hand, club, rake or other object to test the condition of the sand to learn information for the next stroke, or
  - Touch sand in the bunker with a club
    - In the area right in front of or right behind the ball (**except** as allowed in fairly searching for a ball or in removing a loose impediment or movable obstruction),
    - In making a practice swing, or
    - In making the backswing for a stroke

- **When Touching Sand Does Not Result in Penalty** - This Rule does not prohibit the player from touching sand in the bunker in any other way, including
  - Digging in with the feet to take a stance for a practice swing or the stroke,
  - Smoothing the bunker to care for the course,
  - Placing clubs, equipment or other objects in the bunker (whether by throwing or setting them down),
  - Measuring, marking, lifting, replacing or taking other actions under a Rule,
  - Leaning on a club to rest, stay balanced or prevent a fall, or
  - **Striking the sand in frustration or anger**
- **But** the player gets the general penalty if his or her actions in touching the sand improve the conditions affecting the stroke in breach of



## • Improvements Allowed on Putting Green

- During a round and while play is stopped, a player may take these two actions on the putting green, no matter whether the ball is on or off the putting green
    - **Removal of Sand and Loose Soil** - Sand and loose soil on the putting green (but not anywhere else on the course\*) may be removed without penalty
    - **Repair of Damage** - A player may repair damage on the putting green without penalty by taking reasonable actions to restore the putting green as nearly as possible to its original condition, **but only**
      - **By using his or her hand, foot or other part of the body or a normal ball-mark repair tool, tee, club or similar item of normal equipment, and**
      - **Without unreasonably delaying play**
- (more...)

(continued)

- “Damage on the putting green” means any damage caused by a person or outside influence, such as
  - **Ball marks, shoe damage (such as spike marks) and scrapes or indentations caused by equipment or a flagstick,**
  - Old hole plugs, turf plugs, seams of cut turf and scrapes or indentations from maintenance tools or vehicles,
  - Animal tracks or hoof indentations, and
  - **Embedded objects (such as a stone, acorn or tee)**

(more...)



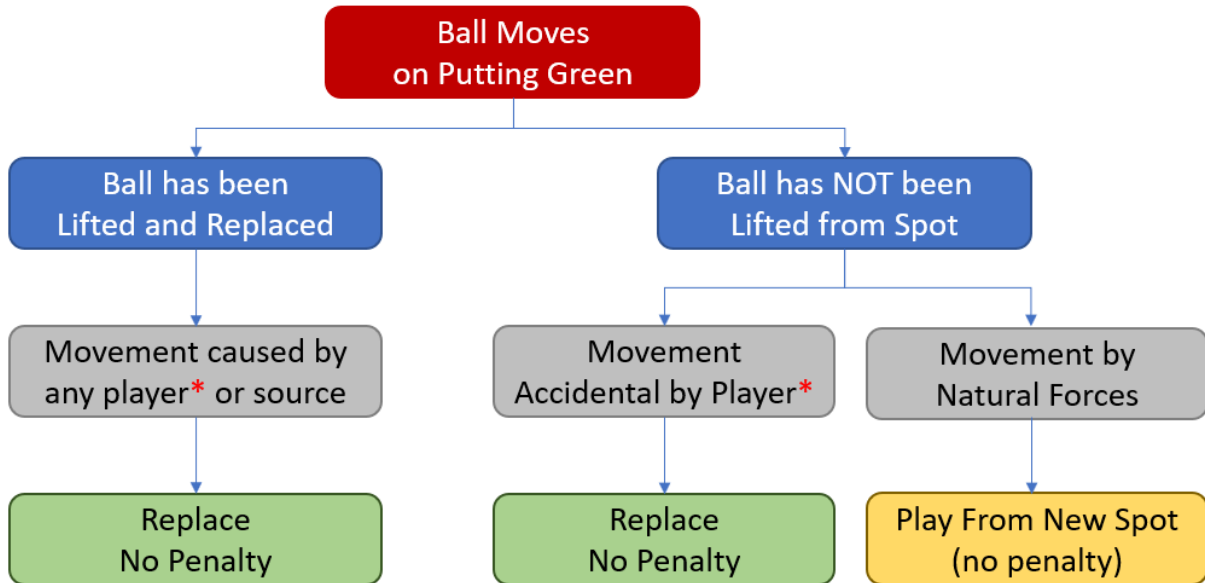
(continued)

- **But** “damage on the putting green” does not include any damage or conditions that result from
  - **Normal practices for maintaining the overall condition of the putting green (such as aeration holes and grooves from vertical mowing),**
  - Irrigation or rain or other natural forces,
  - **Natural surface imperfections (such as weeds or areas of bare, diseased or uneven growth), or**
  - Natural wear of the hole
- If the player improves the putting green by taking actions that exceed what is reasonable to restore the putting green to its original condition (such as by creating a pathway to the hole or by using an object that is not allowed), the player gets the general penalty

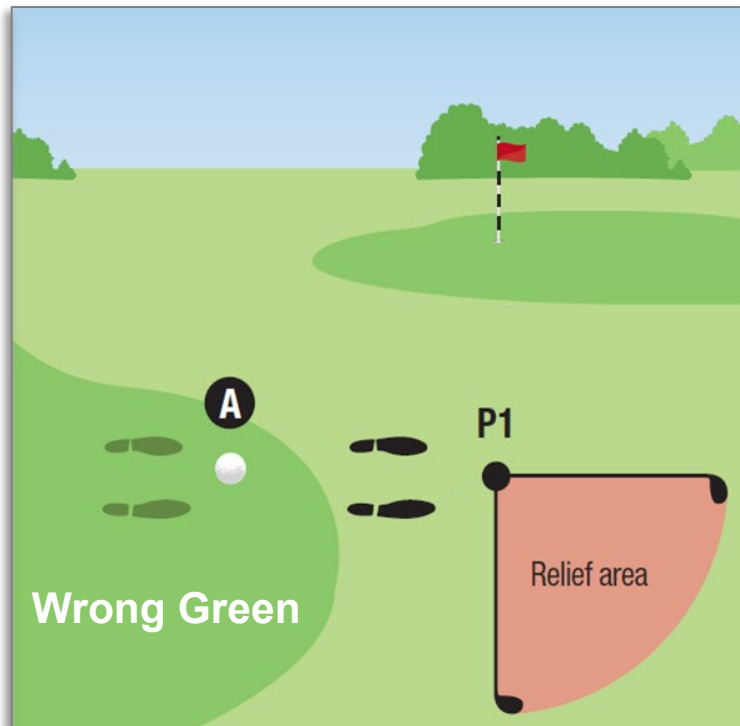
- **No Penalty for Accidentally Causing Ball to Move** - There is no penalty if the player, opponent or another player in stroke play accidentally moves the player's ball or ball-marker on the putting green



## Decision Matrix



- When there is interference by a wrong green, a player must not play the ball as it lies





# PGA Tournament of Champions



in association with  
**USGA**®



- **Player May Leave Flagstick in Hole** - The player may make a stroke with the flagstick left in the hole played, so that it is possible for the ball in motion to hit the flagstick
  - **The player must decide this before making the stroke, by either**
    - Leaving the flagstick where it is in the hole or moving it so that it is centred in the hole and leaving it there, or
    - Having a removed flagstick put back in the hole
  - If the player makes a stroke with the flagstick left in the hole and the ball in motion then hits the flagstick
    - There is no penalty, and
    - The ball must be played as it lies

# Ball Resting Against Flagstick



in association with  
**USGA**<sup>®</sup>

- If a player's ball comes to rest against the flagstick left in the hole
  - If any part of the ball is in the hole below the surface of the putting green, the ball is treated as holed even if the entire ball is not below the surface
- **Holed/1 – All of the Ball Must Be Below the Surface to Be Holed When Embedded in Side of Hole** - When a ball is embedded in the side of the hole, and all of the ball is not below the surface of the putting green, the ball is not holed. This is the case even if the ball touches the flagstick (Interpretation)



- **Rule 15** – Relief from Loose Impediments and Movable Obstructions (including Ball or Ball Marker Helping or Interfering with Play)
- **Rule 16** – Relief from Abnormal Course Conditions (including Immovable Obstructions), Dangerous Animal Condition, Embedded Ball

- **Rule 15** – Relief from Loose Impediments and Movable Obstructions (including Ball or Ball Marker Helping or Interfering with Play) **Ball is NOT Moved – Interference is Removed**
- **Rule 16** – Relief from Abnormal Course Conditions (including Immovable Obstructions), Dangerous Animal Condition, Embedded Ball – **Ball IS Moved away from Interference**

- **Removal of Loose Impediment** - Without penalty, a player may remove a loose anywhere on or off the course, and may do so in any way (such as by using a hand or foot or a club or other equipment)
  - **But** there are two **exceptions**
    - **Exception 1 – Removing Loose Impediment Where Ball Must Be Replaced** Before replacing a ball that was lifted or moved from anywhere except the putting green
      - A player must not deliberately remove a loose impediment that, if moved when the ball was at rest, would have been likely to have caused the ball to move
      - If the player does so, he or she gets **one penalty stroke**, **but** the removed loose impediment does not need to be replaced
    - **Exception 2 – Restrictions on Deliberately Removing Loose Impediments to Affect Ball in Motion**

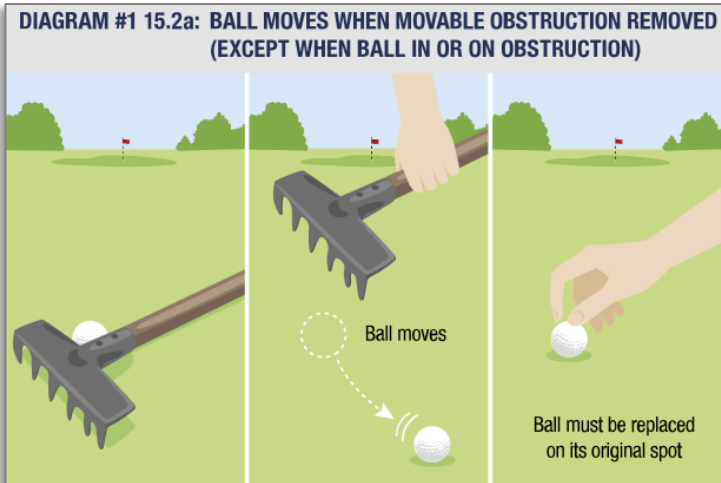
- **Ball Moved When Removing Loose Impediment** - If a player's removal of a loose impediment causes his or her ball to move
  - The ball must be replaced on its original spot (which if not known must be estimated)
  - If the moved ball had been at rest anywhere except on the putting green or in the teeing area, the player gets **one penalty stroke**, **except** when Rule 7.4 applies (no penalty for ball moved during search) or when another exception applies



- **Removal of Movable Obstruction** - Without penalty, a player may remove a movable obstruction anywhere on or off the course and may do so in any way
  - **But** there are two **exceptions**
    - **Exception 1 – Tee Markers Must Not be Moved When Ball Will Be Played from Teeing Area**
    - **Exception 2 – Restrictions on Deliberately Removing Movable Obstruction to Affect a Ball in Motion**
  - If a player's ball moves while he or she is removing a movable obstruction
    - There is no penalty, and
    - The ball must be replaced on its original spot (which if not known must be estimated)



## Suggestion - Mark Position of Ball before Removing Obstruction



- **Ball Anywhere on Course Interfering with Play**

- **Meaning of Interference by Another Player's Ball** Interference under this Rule exists when another player's ball at rest
  - Might interfere with the player's area of intended stance or area of intended swing,
  - Is on or close to the player's line of play such that, given the intended stroke, there is a reasonable chance the player's ball in motion could hit that ball, or
  - **Is close enough to distract the player in making the stroke**

- **When Relief Is Allowed from Interfering Ball** - If a player reasonably believes that another player's ball anywhere on the course might interfere with the player's own play
  - The player may require the other player to mark the spot and lift the ball, and the ball must not be cleaned (**except** when lifted from the putting green) and must be replaced on its original spot
  - In stroke play only, a player required to lift his or her ball under this Rule may play first instead
- **A player is not allowed to lift his or her ball under this Rule based only on the player's own belief that the ball might interfere with another player's play**

- **Meaning of Interference by Abnormal Course Condition.**

Interference exists when any one of these is true

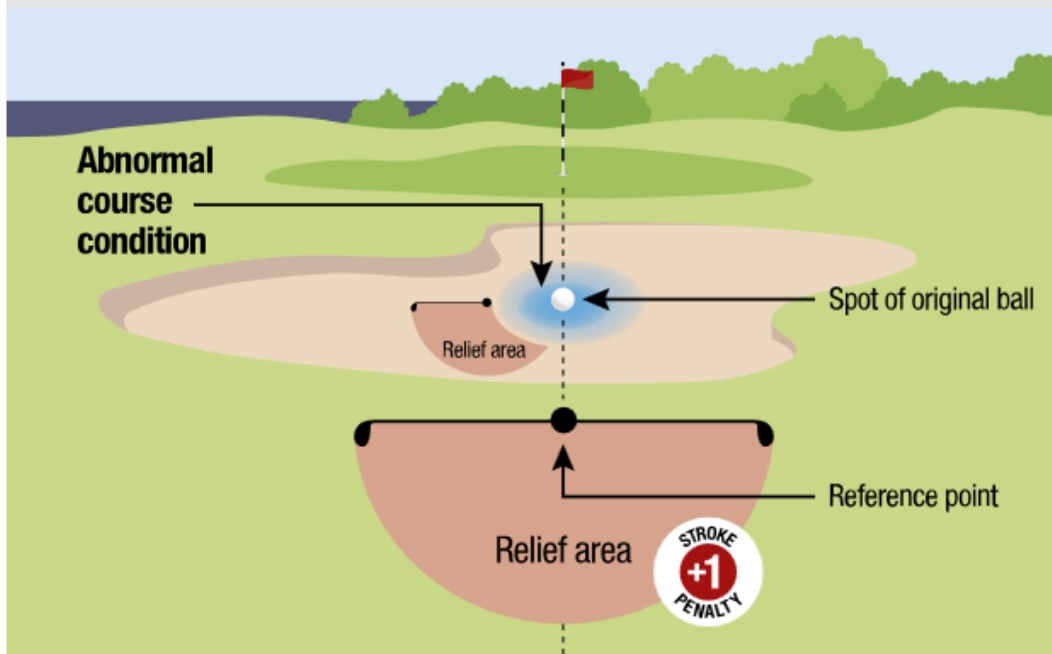
- The player's ball touches or is in or on an *abnormal course condition*,
  - An *abnormal course condition* physically interferes with the player's area of intended *stance* or area of intended swing, or
  - Only when the ball is on the *putting green*, an *abnormal course condition* on or off the *putting green* intervenes on the *line of play*
- 
- **If the *abnormal course condition* is close enough to distract the player but does not meet any of these requirements, there is no interference under this Rule**

- **Relief Allowed Anywhere on Course Except When Ball Is in Penalty Area.** Relief from interference by an abnormal course condition is allowed only when both
  - The abnormal course condition is on the course (not out of bounds), and
  - The ball is anywhere on the course, **except** in a penalty area (where the player may take relief for the Penalty Area)
  
- **No Relief When Clearly Unreasonable to Play Ball**

- **Free Relief - Playing from Bunker.** The player may take free relief, **except** that
  - The nearest point of complete relief and the relief area must be in the bunker
  - If there is no such nearest point of complete relief in the bunker, the player may still take this relief by using the point of maximum available relief in the bunker as the reference point



**DIAGRAM 16.1c: RELIEF FROM ABNORMAL COURSE CONDITION  
IN BUNKER**





- **Relief for Ball on Putting Green**

- If a player's ball is on the putting green and there is interference by an abnormal course condition on the course, the player may take free relief by placing the original ball or another ball on the spot of the nearest point of complete relief, using the procedures for replacing a ball
  - The nearest point of complete relief must be either on the putting green or in the general area
  - If there is no such nearest point of complete relief, the player may still take this free relief by using the point of maximum available relief as the reference point, which must be either on the putting green or in the general area



# Abnormal Course Conditions



COLORADO GOLF  
ASSOCIATION

in association with



- **No Play Zone** - A part of the course where the Committee has prohibited play. A no play zone must be defined as part of either an abnormal course condition or a penalty area
  - The Committee for any reason, such as
    - Protecting wildlife, animal habitats, and environmentally sensitive areas,
    - **Preventing damage to young trees, flower beds, turf nurseries, re-turfed areas or other planted areas,**
    - Protecting players from danger, and
    - Preserving sites of historical or cultural interest.
  - The Committee should define the edge of a no play zone with a line or stakes, and the line or stakes (or the tops of those stakes) should identify the no play zone as different than a regular abnormal course condition or penalty area that does not contain a no play zone

- **Relief Must Be Taken from Interference by No Play Zone in Abnormal Course Condition**
  - **When Ball Is in No Play Zone.** If the player's ball is in a *no play zone* in or on an *abnormal course condition* in the *general area*, in a *bunker* or on the *putting green* the player must take relief
- **When No Play Zone Interferes with Stance or Swing for Ball Anywhere on Course Except Penalty Area.** If a player's ball is outside a *no play zone* and is in the *general area*, in a *bunker* or on the *putting green*, and a *no play zone* (whether in an *abnormal course condition* or in a *penalty area*) interferes with the player's area of intended *stance* or area of intended swing, the player must either
  - Take relief if allowed, depending on whether the ball is in the *general area*, in a *bunker* or on the *putting green*, or
  - Take unplayable ball relief

**Embedded** - When a player's ball is in its own pitch-mark made as a result of the player's previous [stroke](#) and where part of the ball is below the level of the ground.

A ball does not necessarily have to touch soil to be [embedded](#) (for example, grass and [loose impediments](#) may be between the ball and the soil).



## DIAGRAM 16.3a: WHEN A BALL IS EMBEDDED



### **Ball is embedded**

Part of the ball (embedded in its own pitch-mark) is below the level of the ground.

← **Level of Ground**



### **Ball is embedded**

Despite the fact that the ball is not touching the soil, part of the ball (embedded in its own pitch-mark) is below the level of the ground.



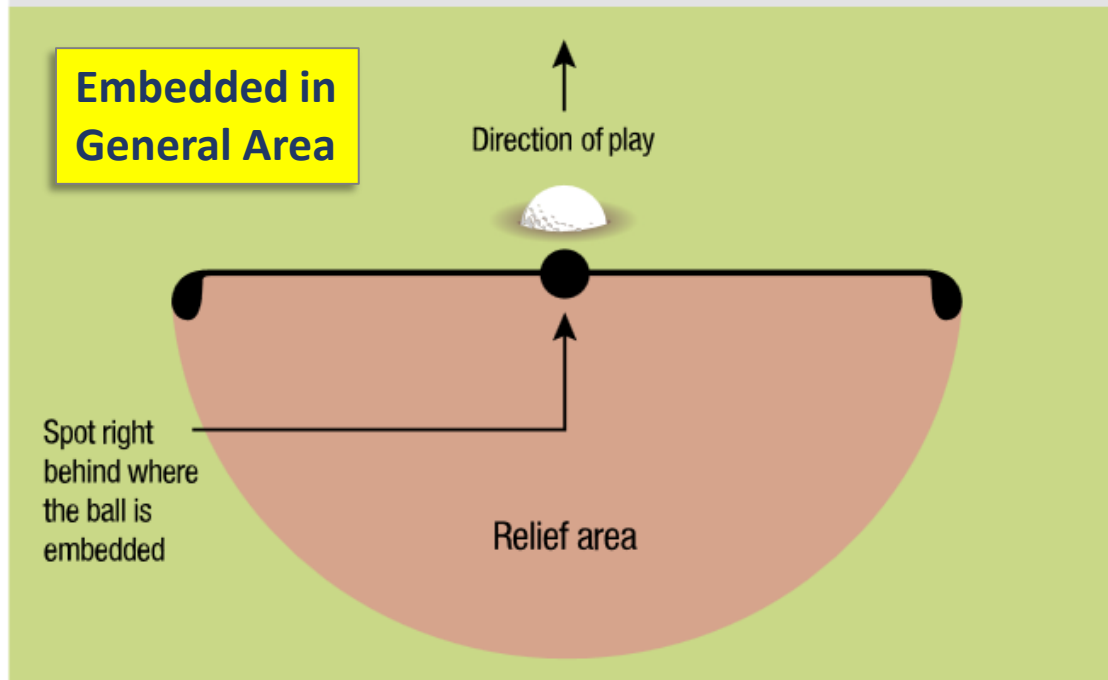
### **Ball is NOT embedded**

Even though the ball is sitting down in the grass, relief is not available because no part of the ball is below the level of the ground.

- **Ball Must Be Embedded in General Area** - Relief is allowed only when a player's ball is embedded in the general area
  - There is no relief under this Rule if the ball is embedded anywhere except in the general area
  - **But** if the ball is embedded on the putting green, the player may mark the spot of the ball and lift and clean the ball, repair the damage caused by the ball's impact, and replace the ball on its original spot



## DIAGRAM 16.3b: FREE RELIEF FOR EMBEDDED BALL



- If a player reasonably believes that his or her ball lies in a condition where free relief is allowed, but cannot decide that without lifting the ball
  - The player may lift the ball to see if relief is allowed, **but**
  - The spot of the ball must first be marked, and the lifted ball must not be cleaned (**except** on the putting green) unless the player is allowed to take relief from the condition and does so





- Rule 17 – Penalty Areas
- Rule 18 – Stroke and Distance (OB and Lost Ball)
- Rule 19 – Unplayable

- **Penalty Areas – Two Types**

- Red (default)
- Yellow

- **If a Penalty Area is not Marked – it is treated as Red**

- **Penalty Areas are defined by**

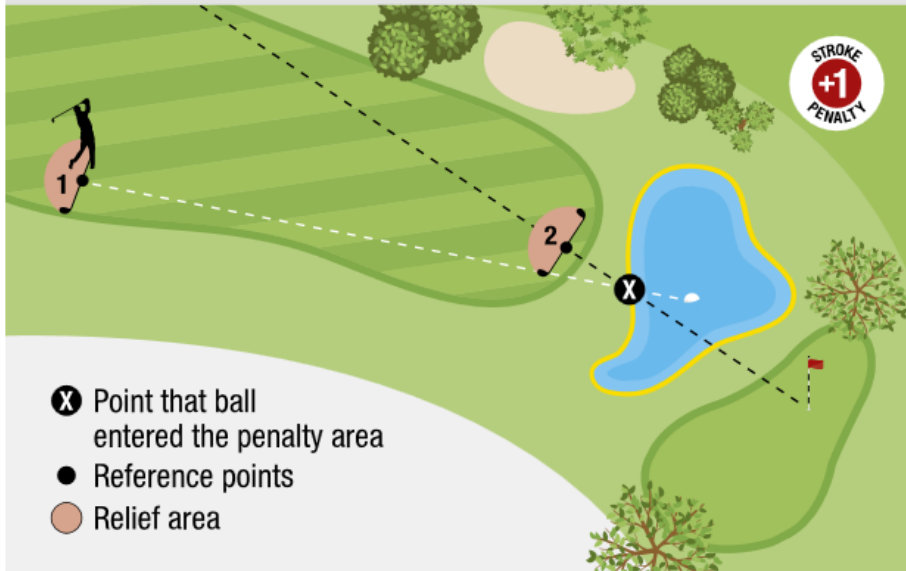
- Lines
- Stakes
- Natural Features



- Relief Options

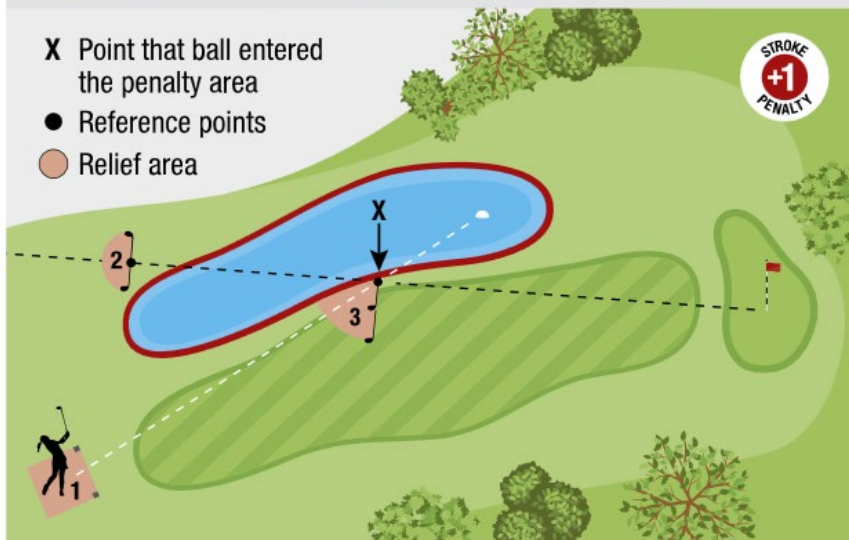
- Stroke-and-Distance (1)
- Back-on-the-Line (2)

DIAGRAM #1 17.1d: RELIEF FOR BALL IN YELLOW PENALTY AREA

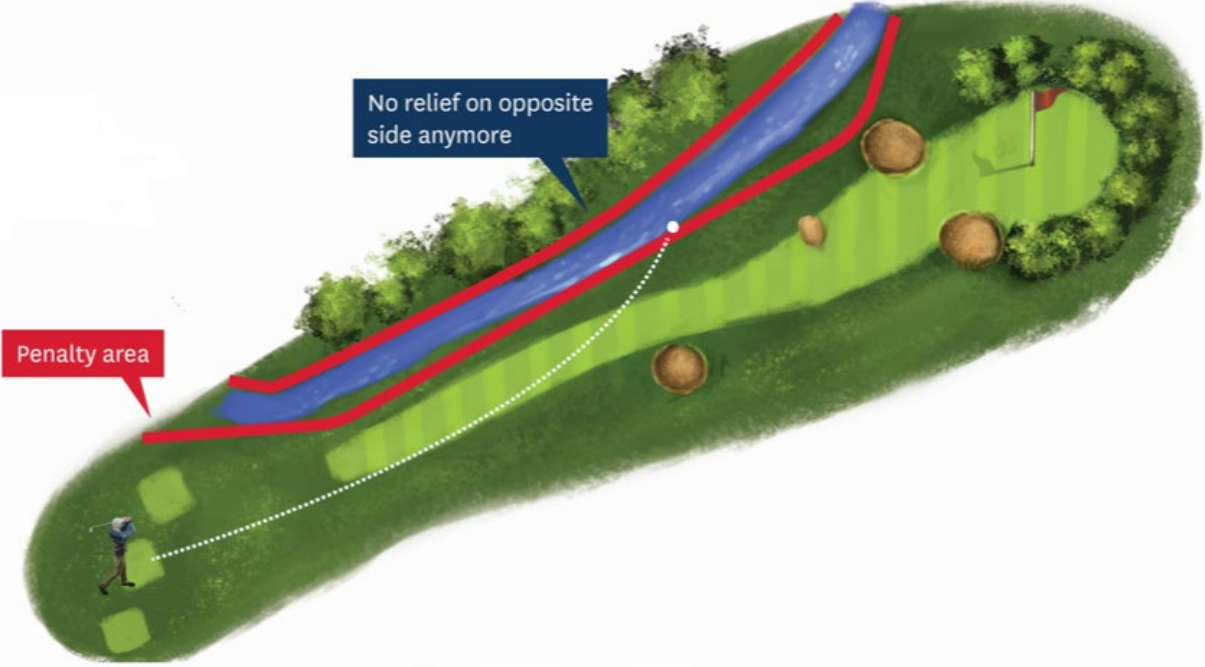


- Relief Options
  - Stroke-and-Distance (1)
  - Back-on-the-Line (2)
  - Lateral (3)

DIAGRAM #2 17.1d: RELIEF FOR BALL IN RED PENALTY AREA



# Penalty Area No Opposite Edge



- When a player's ball is in a penalty area, there is no relief for
  - Interference by an abnormal course condition,
  - An embedded ball, or
  - An unplayable ball
  
- **The player's only relief option is to take Penalty Area relief**

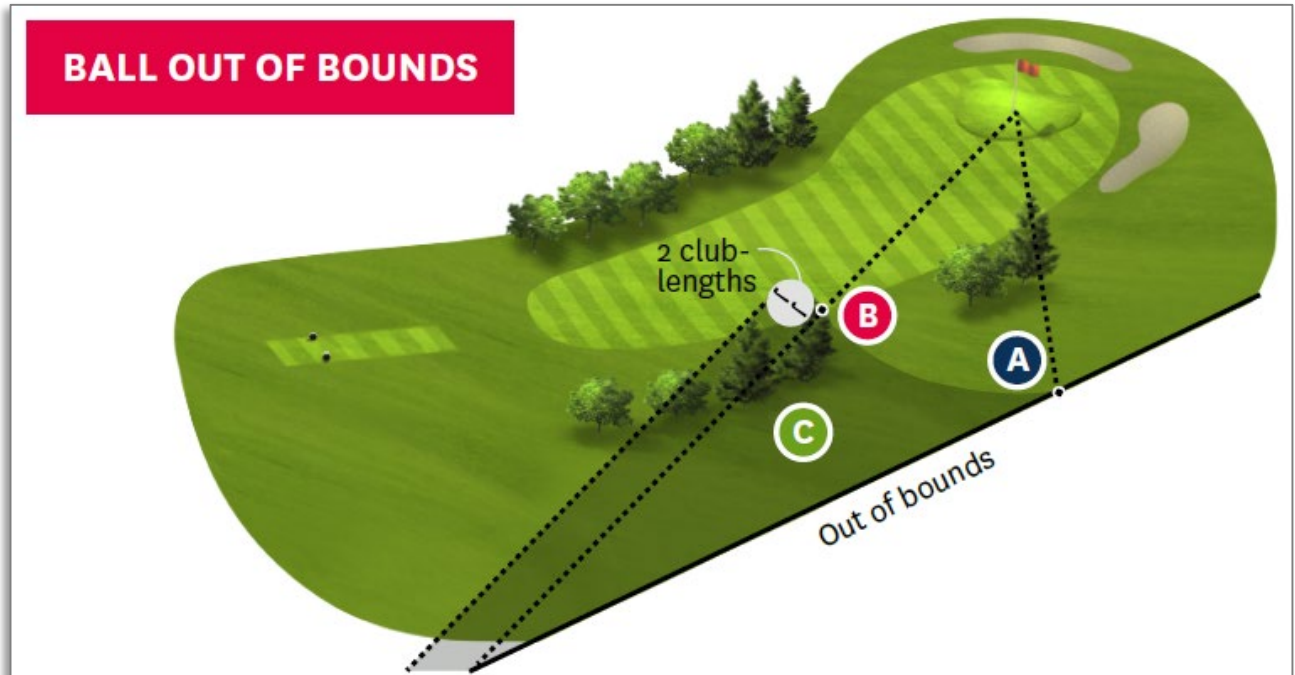
- At any time, a player **may** take stroke-and-distance relief by adding **one penalty stroke** and playing the original ball or another ball from where the previous stroke was made
- If a ball is lost or out of bounds, the player **must** take stroke-and-distance relief by adding **one penalty stroke** and playing the original ball or another ball from where the previous stroke was made



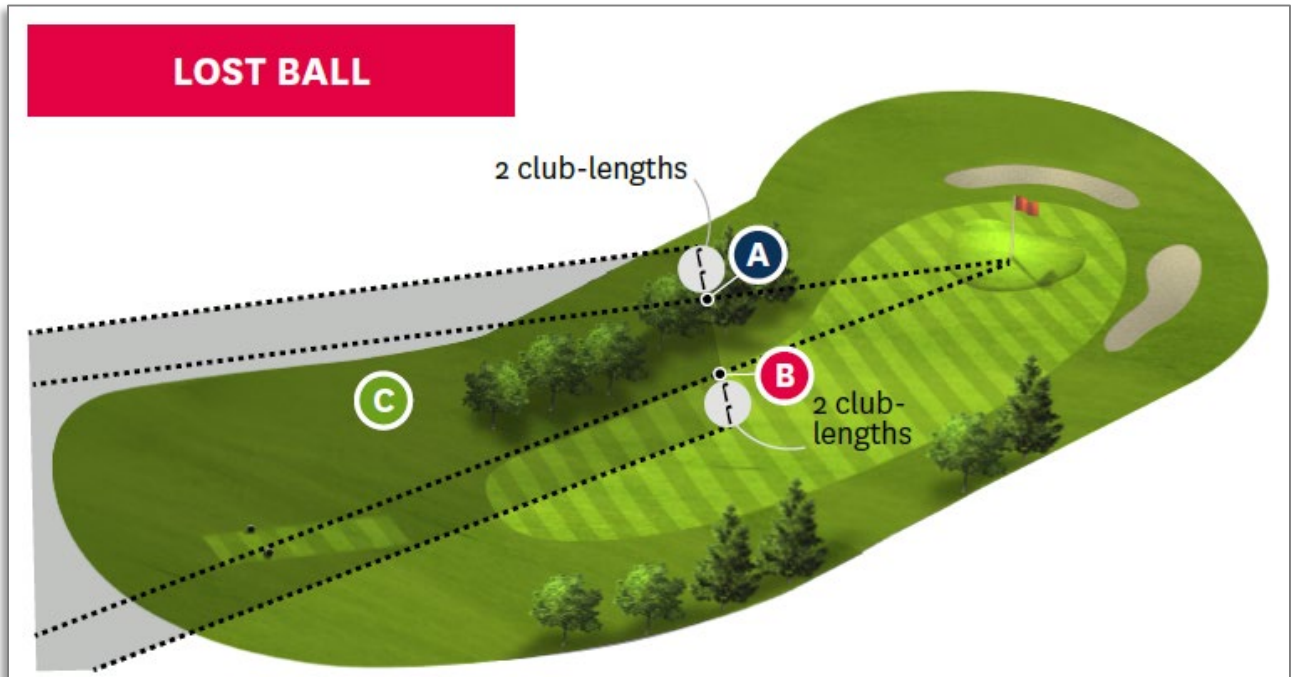
- Before the stroke is made, the player must announce that he or she is going to play a provisional ball
  - It is not enough for the player only to say that he or she is playing another ball or is playing again
  - The player must use the word “provisional” or otherwise clearly indicate that he or she is playing the ball provisionally
- **If the player does not announce this (even if he or she intended to play a provisional ball and plays a ball from where the previous stroke was made, that ball is the player’s ball in play under penalty of stroke and distance**



- Out-of-Bounds Ball Local Rule
- 2-Stroke Penalty



- Lost Ball Local Rule
- 2-Stroke Penalty



- A player is the only person who may decide to treat his or her ball as unplayable by taking penalty relief
  - Unplayable ball relief is allowed anywhere on the course, **except** in a penalty area
  - If a ball is unplayable in a penalty area, the player's only relief option is to take Penalty Area relief



- A player may take unplayable ball relief using one of the three options in [Rule 19.2a](#), [b](#) or [c](#), in each case adding **one penalty stroke**
  - The player may take [stroke-and-distance](#) relief under [Rule 19.2a](#) even if the original ball has not been found and identified
  - **But** to take back-on-the-line relief under [Rule 19.2b](#) or lateral relief under [Rule 19.2c](#), the player must know the spot of the original ball

## DIAGRAM 19.2: RELIEF OPTIONS FOR BALL UNPLAYABLE IN GENERAL AREA

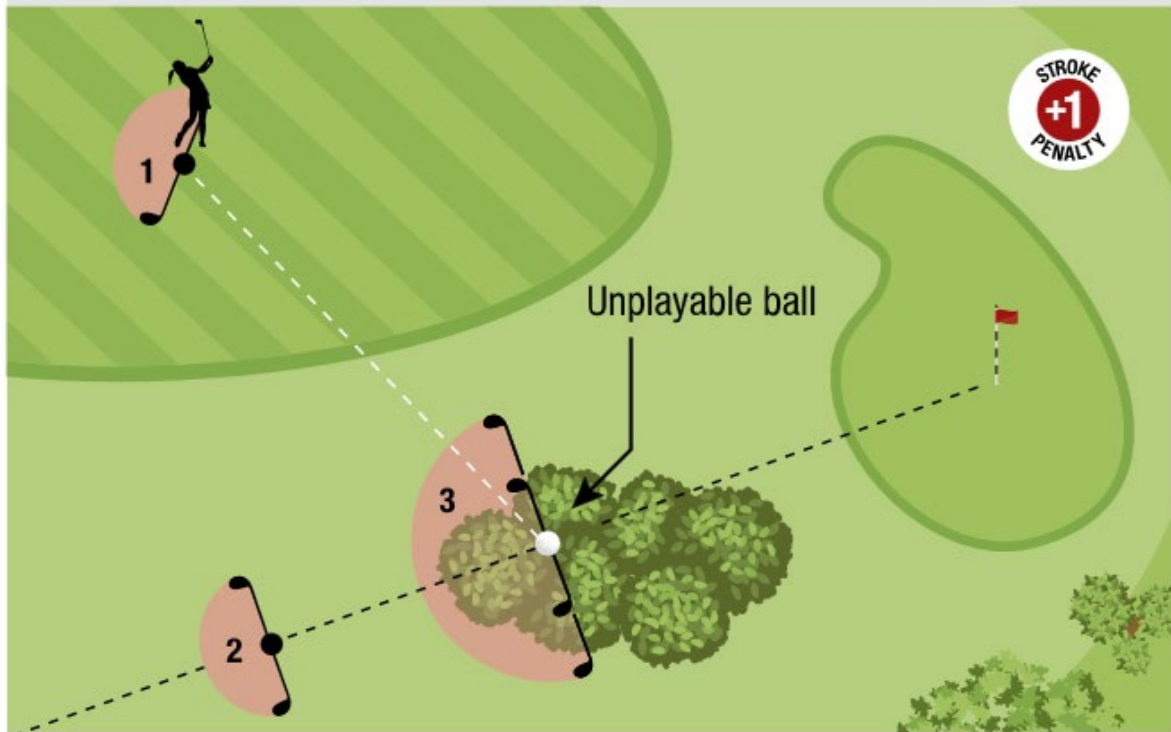
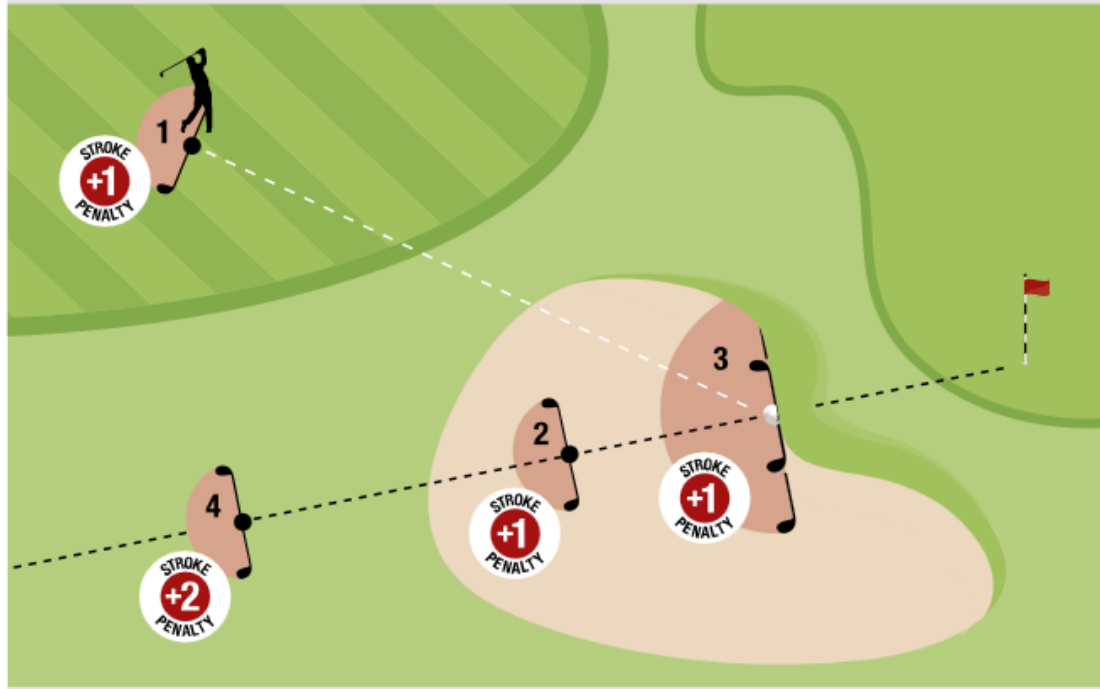


DIAGRAM 19.3: RELIEF OPTIONS FOR BALL UNPLAYABLE IN BUNKER



- In Stroke Play, a player Must Correct these breaches by playing a ball correctly into the hole
  - Failure to Hole Out (Rule 3.3c)
  - Ball Played from Outside the Teeing Area When Starting Play of a Hole (Rule 6.1b(2))
  - Stroke at Wrong Ball (Rule 6.3c(1))
  - Playing from a Wrong Place – Serious Breach Only (Rule 14.7b(1))
  - Stroke in Wrong Order (Foursomes and Threesomes) (Rule 22.3)
- Failure to Correct results in **Disqualification**

- **Playing Two Balls When Uncertain What to Do** - A player who is uncertain about the right procedure while playing a hole may complete the hole with two balls without penalty
  - The player must decide to play two balls after the uncertain situation arises and before making a stroke
  - The player should choose which ball will count if the Rules allow the procedure used for that ball, by announcing that choice to his or her marker or to another player before making a stroke
  - If the player does not choose in time, the ball played first is treated as the ball chosen by default
  - The player must report the facts of the situation to the Committee before returning the scorecard, even if the player scores the same with both balls. The player is **disqualified** if he or she fails to do so
- If the player made a stroke before deciding to play a second ball
  - **This Rule does not apply at all and the score that counts is the score with the ball played before the player decided to play the second ball**
  - **But** the player gets no penalty for playing the second ball



# Questions



in association with  
**USGA**®

