



I know the rules

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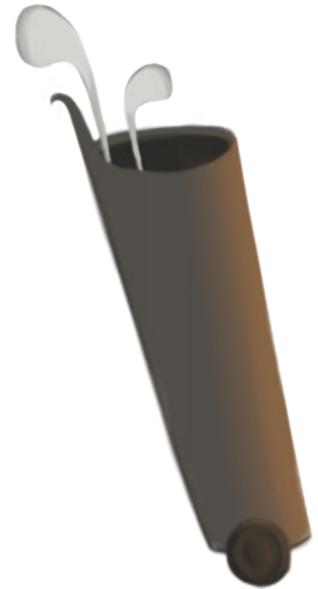


Behavior on the course

A true golfer has to play as the “spirit of the game” tells us.

- ⌚ **Following** the Rules, even if you have to apply a penalty.
- ⌚ **Respecting** other players, don’t do anything that might bother or distract them while they are playing and be careful not to cause harm to others when you have play the ball.
- ⌚ **Taking good care** of the course, for example, by replacing divots, raking bunkers, repairing pitch-marks on the putting green, and not causing unnecessary damage to the course.
- ⌚ Playing at a **prompt pace**, without delaying the play.
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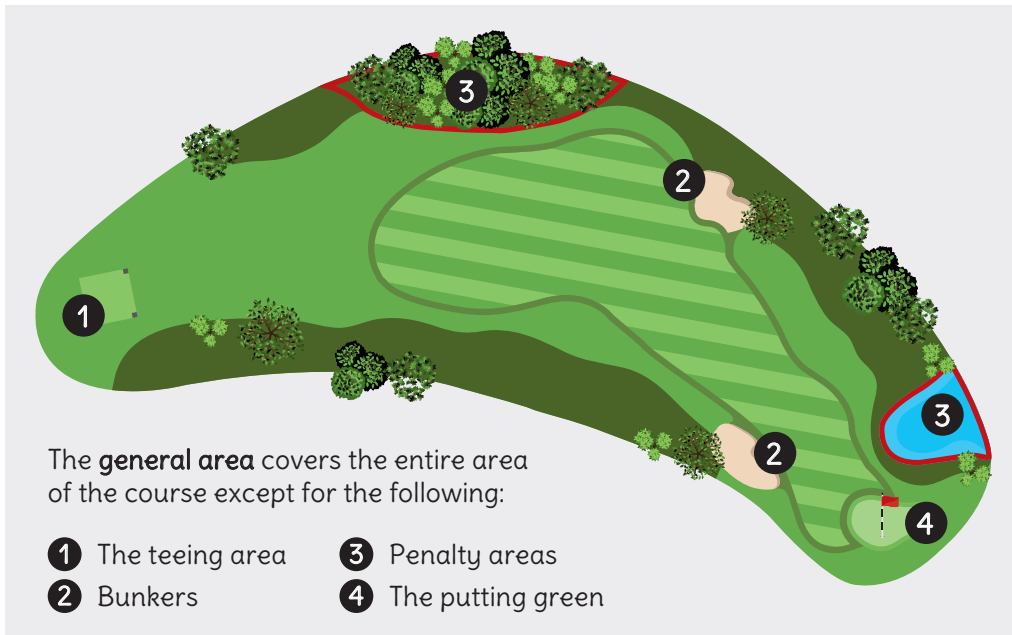
“Play the ball as it lies and the course as you find it. And if you can’t do that, do what’s fair. But to do what’s fair, you need to know the Rules of Golf”.





There are five defined areas of the course:

- ③ The **general area**: it covers most of the course and is where you will most often play the ball until your ball reaches the putting green.
- ③ The **teeing area**: It is a rectangle that in front has two tee-markers, and a maximum of two club-lengths deep.
- ③ **Bunkers**: these are special areas, prepared with sand.
- ③ **Penalty Areas**: these are water zones (ponds, lakes, streams, etc.) and other places marked by the Committee in red or yellow.
- ③ The **putting green**: Area specially prepared for putting.





Ready to play

Before you start, make sure you have everything ready to play.

- ⌚ Your **equipment**: the most important thing is that when you play golf you cannot carry or use more than fourteen clubs, including a putter.
- ⌚ Check the **starting time**: the penalty for arriving late is two strokes, if you are not more than 5 minutes late. If you arrive later, you will no longer be able to play, as you are disqualified.
- ⌚ J You should check if the course where you play has any special rules (**Local Rules** and **Code of Conduct**). If there are, you should take a look at them, as they are mandatory.
- ⌚ It is very convenient to put a mark to **distinguish your ball** from those of other players. You will save yourself a lot of trouble. Many players play balls of the same brand and model, and if you cannot distinguish your ball from another player's, it will be as if you were lost.
- ⌚ Sometimes you will have doubts during the game, but remember that you can't ask for more help than the rules allow. You can only ask for advice from your caddie or your partner (if you play as a side). You cannot ask or give advice to another player by asking which club to choose to play on. Phrases such as "with the iron five you will not make it", or "I would hit a wood" are **NOT** allowed and have a penalty.
- ⌚ However, you can ask for information about rules, distances, where a bunker or penalty area is, or the position of the flagstick, because that kind of information is not considered advice by the rules.



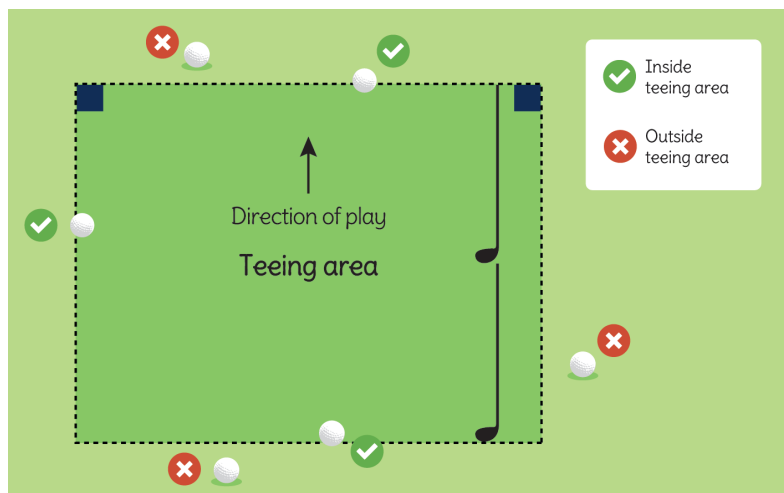




Starting the hole

Let's start!! But who plays first?

- ③ On the first hole the order to play is decided by the **order of the draw**. For the other holes, the player who made the best result on the previous hole plays first.
- ③ After all players have started the hole, the players furthest from the hole should play first. But save time, any player who is already to play can play (but always with care as to not distract or endanger the others. This is what is called "**Ready Golf**").
- ③ If you have to play a **provisional ball** from the teeing area, you must do so after the other players in your group have played.
- ③ Be sure to play your shot from inside the rectangle that is the **teeing area** (check that you are in the correct teeing area, and that you don't inadvertently place the ball furthest forward from the tee markers).
- ③ If you play outside the teeing area the stroke does not count and you will get the general penalty (two penalty strokes). In addition, you must play your tee shot from the correct place.







Playing the hole

Some things to remember:

- ⌚ You must **fairly strike the ball**. Remember that the ball cannot be pushed, scraped or spooned.
- ⌚ A **practice swing** is not a stroke; but when you miss the ball or take an air shot, if you did it with the intention of hitting the ball, it is a stroke that you have to count in your score.
- ⌚ **It is not allowed** to improve the spot where the ball lies, nor the place where we are going to place ourselves to play, for example stepping with the foot around, or crushing grass with the club behind the ball, that is to say, it is not allowed to remove, move or break anything that is fixed in the ground or growing.
- ⌚ You must not practice on the course before a round; you cannot play a **practice stroke** while playing a hole either.
- ⌚ A **practice swing** is not the same as a practice stroke (because you don't hit any ball), but don't do lots of practice swings, as well as boring your group mates you could get a penalty for delaying the game.
- ⌚ Sometimes players use a club to check if they are well lined for the stroke, but be careful! You should not set down a club or other object on the ground to help you check your line of play. It doesn't matter if, for example, you do it by supporting the club on your shoulders or legs, but you should never set it down on the ground. If you do, you will be penalized, even if you remove the club before hitting the ball.
- ⌚ You must hole out or finish the hole with the same ball played from the teeing area, unless one rule allows you to substitute it for another.





- Ⓢ If ever you play by mistake a **wrong ball**, that is to say a ball that is not yours. You must realize and rectify before you make your tee shot on the next hole, going back to the place where you played the wrong ball and play yours (and you must incur two penalty strokes on the result of that hole). If you don't correct the mistake in this way and continue playing, you will be disqualified.





The ball has moved

If your ball has moved, you need to know why it has moved, because that depends on what you have to do.

- ⚠ If **you have not moved the ball**, and it has been for example a player from another group or an animal (e.g. a bird), you have no penalty, but you must replace the ball where it was before it was moved.
- ⚠ If **you caused the ball** to move, you will get one penalty stroke on your score and replace the ball where it was. But have in mind that sometimes even if you moved the ball, you will **NOT** get a penalty. These are the ones:
 - ⚠ When you **accidentally** (i.e. unintentionally) move it while you were searching for it.
 - ⚠ When the ball is **on the green** and accidentally causes it to move (e.g. you drop the marker on top of the ball and move it).
 - ⚠ When the ball is not on the putting green, but you are doing things like marking the ball, removing a moving obstruction, measuring with a club, or applying a rule.
- ⚠ If your ball is moved by **natural forces** (such as wind, water, gravity, etc.) there is no penalty and you must play the ball from its new position. But beware! if this happens when the ball is on the putting green is different and we explain later.
- ⚠ If your ball when it was at rest somewhere is hit and moved by **another ball**, your ball has to be replaced where it was and the other ball is played as it lies.





- ④ If your moving ball **bounces** off you or any “outside influence” such as a golf cart, a dog, another player or a golf bag, you must play it from wherever it lies, with no penalty for anyone.
- ④ Be careful because when you are on the putting **green** it is something different, because if your ball played from the putting green hits the ball of any other player who was also on the green you will get a two penalty strokes.





Lifting, dropping and replacing the ball

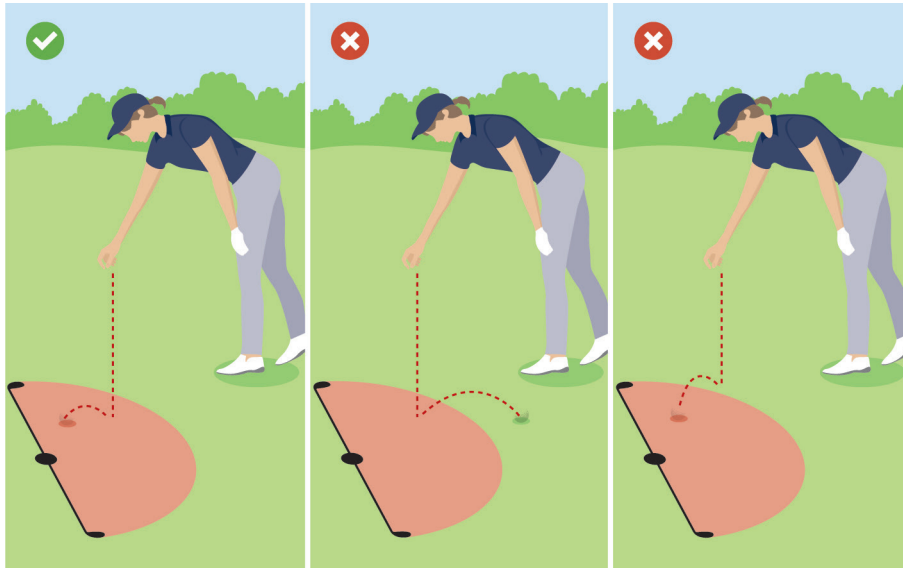
When you have to lift the ball or drop it, remember it can't be done any way. We go over what the rules say:

- ⌚ Before **lifting** a ball that has to be replaced in the same spot, e.g. on the putting green, you have to **mark** the position of the ball.
- ⌚ When you lift a ball to drop, or to place it somewhere else to apply a rule, it is not mandatory to mark it, but it is very convenient to do so.
- ⌚ Rotating the ball or moving it in a similar way is the same as “lifting the ball”, so you must mark it to do so.
- ⌚ To **replace** is to place the same ball or another ball, if authorized by the Rules, in the same spot where it was.
- ⌚ To **DROP**: the ball must be dropped from knee height, without touching you or your equipment before reaching the ground. The ball must fall straight down when you drop it, and it is not allowed to throw it or make it spin or roll.
- ⌚ If the form of dropping is incorrect, you must drop it again. This happens, for example, with those who drop the ball from the waist or throw it into the air. If you drop incorrectly and instead of repeating, you play the ball you will be penalized.
- ⌚ The ball must be dropped into the appropriate **relief area** (one or two club-lengths) and must also come to rest in the relief area.





- ③ If you dropped in the right way and the ball comes to rest in the relief area you must play it as it lies. If the ball is out of the relief area you must drop it again, and if it comes to rest outside the relief area for the second time, you must place a ball on the spot where the ball dropped the second time first touched the ground.



- ③ To **measure**, we always use one or two club-lengths (e.g. to measure the area you can use in the teeing area, to see where you have to drop, etc.). The “**club-length**” is the length of the longest club in your bag other than a putter.



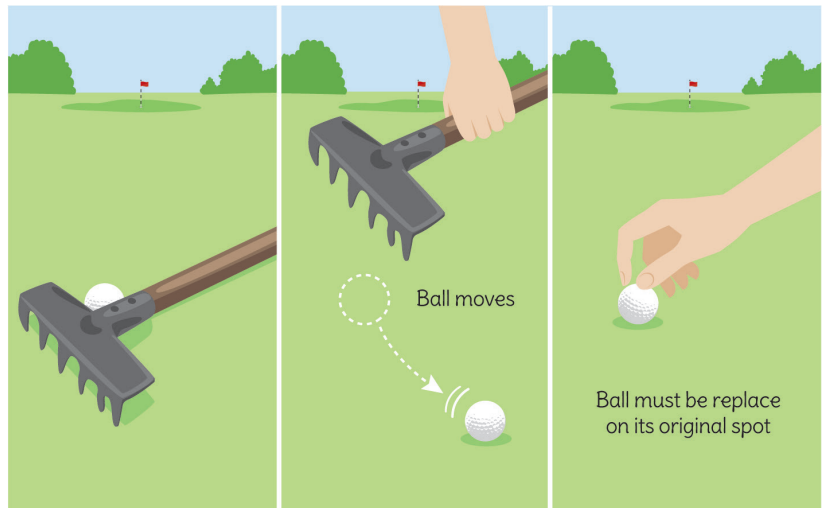


Objects and things on the golf course

The amount of stuff we find on the golf course. But we must learn what to do in order to play by the rules...

- ⑤ A **loose impediment** is any loose natural object such as stones, loose grass, leaves, branches, sticks, and clumps of compacted soil. Also, impediments are worms, insects and similar animals that can be easily removed and the mounds and webs they build.
- ⑤ You can **remove** a loose impediment without penalty anywhere on the course and you can do it with your hand, foot, club or other equipment, but you must be careful that your ball does not move, because except on the putting green or in the teeing area, if the ball moves you will have to replace it where it was and get one penalty stroke. You must remember that sand and loose soil are not loose impediments, and can only be removed or set aside on the putting green and in the teeing area.

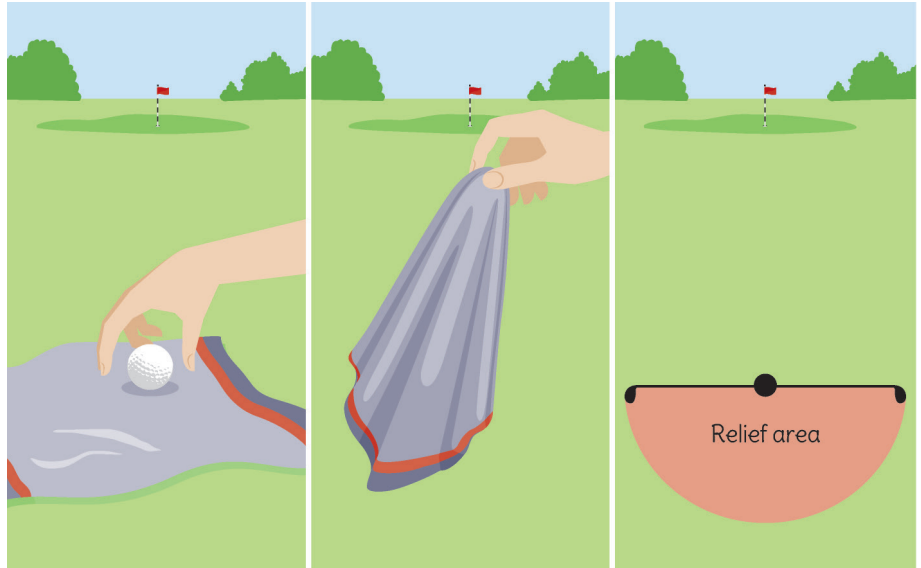
- ⑤ **Movable obstructions** are anything artificial on the course that can be moved without unreasonable effort (e.g., rakes, bottles, bins or stakes that can be moved, etc.). However, tee-markers should not be moved when playing from the teeing area.





- ④ You can remove a movable obstruction without penalty from any part of the course or outside it. If the ball moves when removed there is no penalty and you must replace it where it was.

- ④ If your ball is **on** a movable obstruction (e.g. a towel) anywhere other than the putting green, you may without penalty lift the ball, remove the movable obstruction and drop the original ball or another ball in the distance of one club-length from where the ball was.



- ④ If this happens to you on the **putting green** you must remove the ball, remove the obstruction and **place** the original ball or another ball directly (on the putting green it does not drop) just under where the ball was at rest on the movable obstruction.

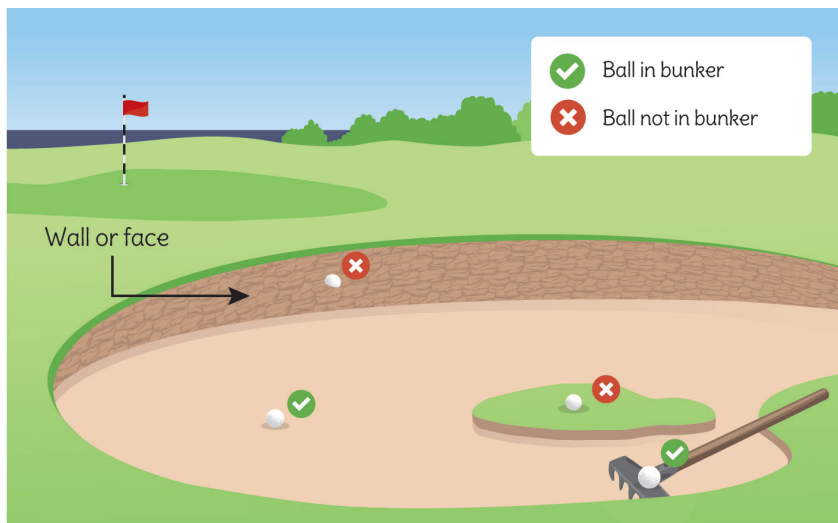




My ball is in the bunker

Surely your ball will fall into some bunker, which is an area specially prepared with sand and has special rules that you should know if you do not want to get any penalty.

- ☹ Neither the lip, wall or face of the bunker when it is made of soil or covered with grass, nor areas sown within the bunker or any growing object within the bunker (e.g. grass, bushes or trees) are part of the bunker.



Let's see what you **are allowed** to do in a bunker:

- ☹ Remove loose impediments and movable obstructions (remember to be careful when removing loose impediments, because, as you know, if you move the ball when removing the loose impediment, you will get one penalty stroke, and you will have to replace the ball where it was).
- ☹ You can touch the sand by digging your feet to make a practice swing or stroke





- ③ You can place the clubs or other equipment in the bunker, you can lean on the club to rest or avoid falling, or even if you hit the sand out of anger (although you should not do so, of course) there is no penalty.

What is **NOT allowed** to do in a bunker:

- ③ You must not intentionally touch the sand with your hand, a club or anything else to test the condition of the sand.
- ③ You can't ground your club just in front of or behind your ball, or touch the sand with the club when doing a practice swing, or when carrying the backswing to make the stroke.
- ③ If you do any of these actions you will get the general penalty, you know: two strokes.

And remember some things you **have to do after** playing in the bunker:

- ③ You must **rake** well all the footprints made, even those that you have not made. Not smoothing the footprints of the bunker is typical of the selfish player who thinks that the one who comes after him gets screwed (it is important to remember the spirit of the game of golf: respect other players and take care of the course).

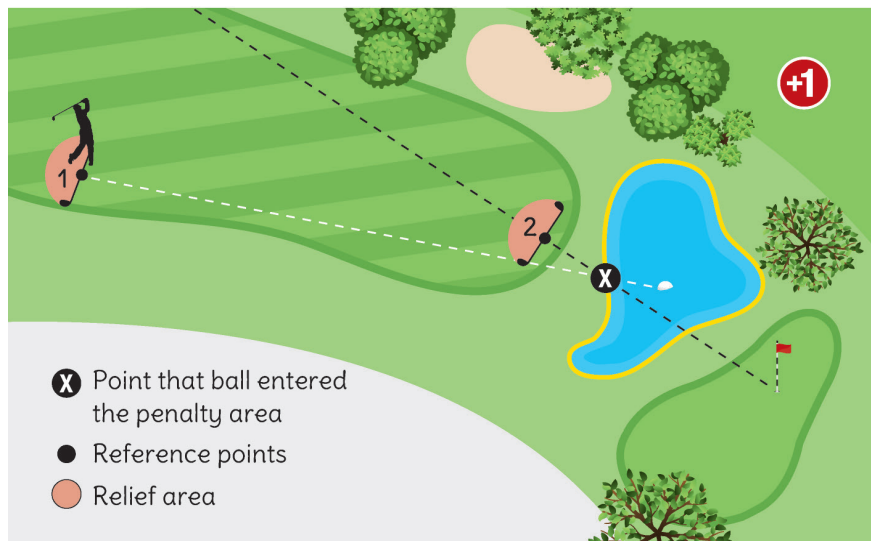




Penalty areas

It is very likely that your ball will come to rest (even several times) into some **penalty area**, which are bodies of water (streams, lakes, etc.) or other areas marked by the Committee and where it is easy to lose or where it may be impossible for you to play. There are two types of penalty areas (yellow and red) and the color indicates the relief options available to you.

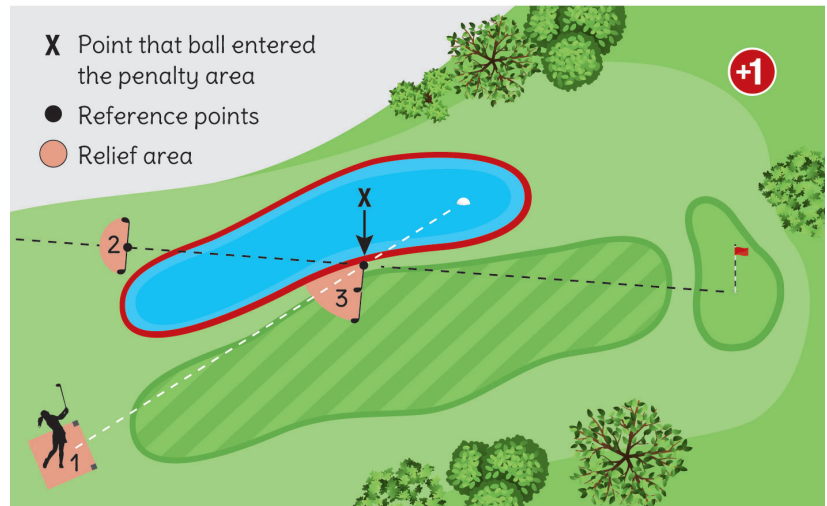
- ⌚ You can always try to play the ball as it lies within the penalty area. In such a case, remember that in a penalty area you can remove loose impediments, ground the club, touch the water, perform a practice swing by touching the ground or grass, etc.
- ⌚ You can also play **out** of the penalty area with one penalty stroke, but it is different when you are in a yellow or red penalty area.
- ⌚ **Yellow penalty area:** When you decide it's better not to play your ball which is in a yellow penalty area, or you haven't found it but you know it's there, you have **two options**, each with a penalty stroke.





1. **Stroke and Distance Relief:** is playing back a ball from where you played the previous stroke (within one club-length area).
2. **Back-on-the-line relief:** is playing a ball anywhere on a reference line that goes straight back from the hole through the estimated point where the original ball crossed the edge of the penalty area (with no limit on how far back on the line) and at that point chosen, within one club-length area).

③ **Red penalty area:** When you decide it is better not to play your ball which lies in a red penalty area, or you have not found it but you know it is there, you have **three options**, each with a penalty stroke. The two we have already seen for the yellow penalty area (1. stroke and distance and 2. Back-on the line relief), and a third that is lateral relief.



3. **Lateral Relief:**
The reference point for lateral relief where your ball last crossed the edge of the red penalty area. For this lateral relief, you have an area of two club-lengths.

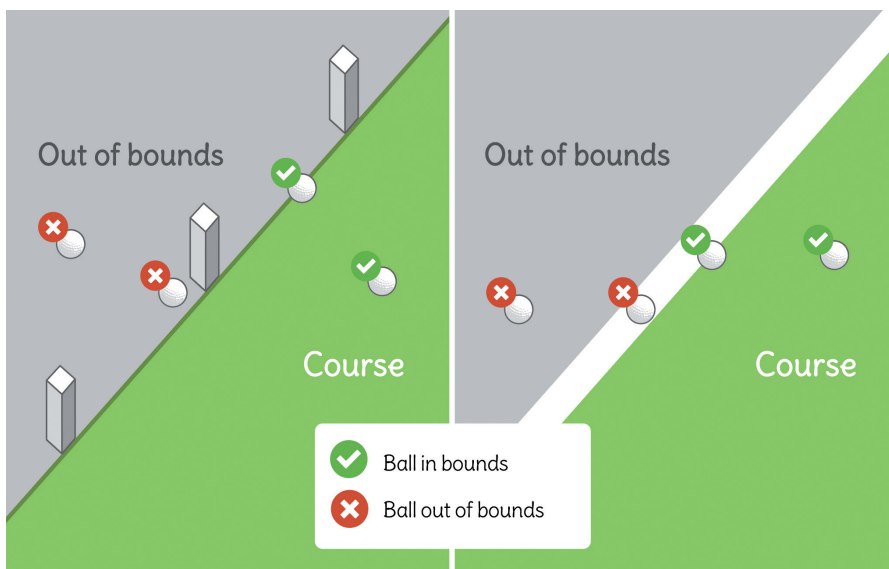




The ball is lost or I cannot play it

Whether you have lost your ball, or it is not possible to play it where it is, the rules give you a solution...

- ☹️ A ball is **lost** when you can't find it within **three minutes** of searching for it. If you don't find it, you have to play from where you played the previous stroke and add one stroke penalty, which we already know as "stroke and distance".
- ☹️ Remember that when a ball is **out of bounds** (i.e. all of it lies out of bounds), it is not allowed to play it and the "**stroke and distance**" rule applies.
- ☹️ If you think your ball is lost or out of bounds, in order to save time, you can play a **provisional ball** (but remember that you cannot play a **provisional ball**, if you think your ball will be in a penalty area: in that case you must apply the rule for that area).



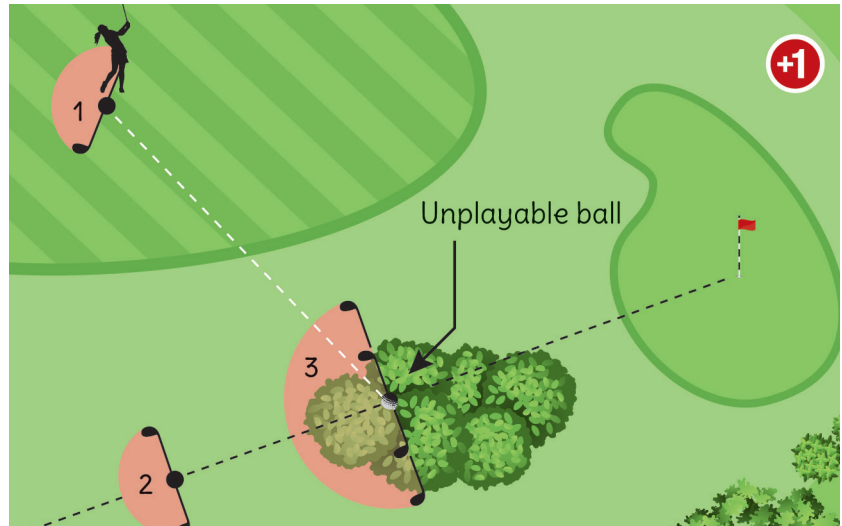


- ③ If you do not declare the ball as provisional, it automatically becomes a ball in play and the original ball is not in play anymore. You must say the words “provisional ball” or otherwise indicate that you intend to play a provisional ball.
- ③ If after playing the provisional ball you find the first ball, even if it is in a very bad position and you are not out of bounds, you cannot play longer the provisional ball.
- ③ You can consider your **ball unplayable** anywhere on the course, except in a penalty area. It’s up to you, and you can do it whenever you want. Once you consider your ball unplayable, you have **three options**, all with one penalty stroke:

1. Return to play from where you played the last stroke (what we already know as **stroke and distance**).

2. **Back-on-the-line relief:** by dropping and playing a ball anywhere on a

reference line that goes straight back from the hole through the point where the original ball lies (with no limit on how far back on the line) and at that point chosen, within one club-length area).

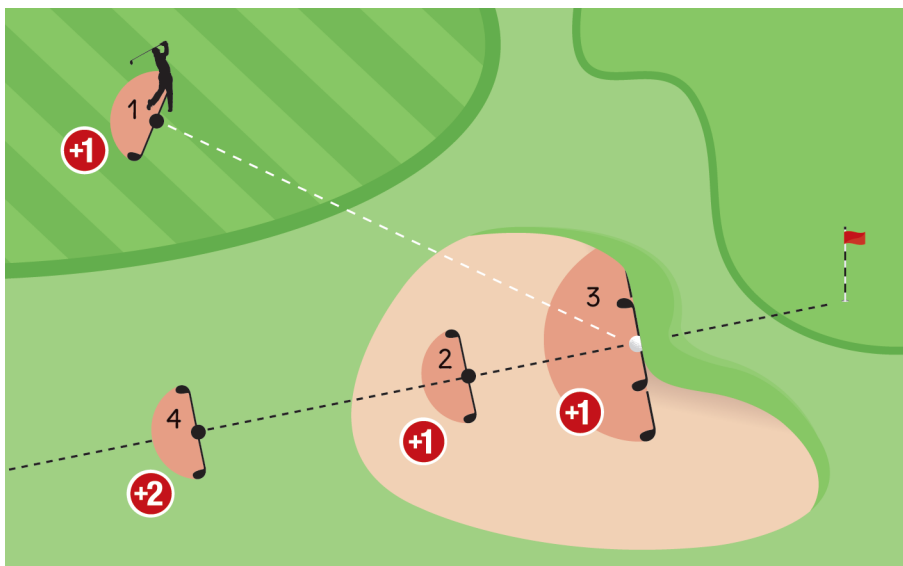




3. **Lateral Relief:** by dropping a ball into an area of two club-lengths that you have to measure from where the ball is. It is very important to remember that we measure from where the ball rests, not from a position that is already “playable”, since sometimes those two club-lengths to drop are not enough to leave you in a good position. This must be taken into account when you decide for this relief, to be sure that you solve the problem.

- ⌚ If you consider your ball as unplayable **in a bunker**, with one penalty stroke you can (1) repeat the stroke from the previous place, (2) take back-on-the-line relief, and (3) take lateral relief **inside the bunker** (two club-lengths), but these last two

options must be inside the bunker. And with two **penalty strokes**, you can (4) take back-on-the-line relief **out of the bunker**.







Relief in other playing situations

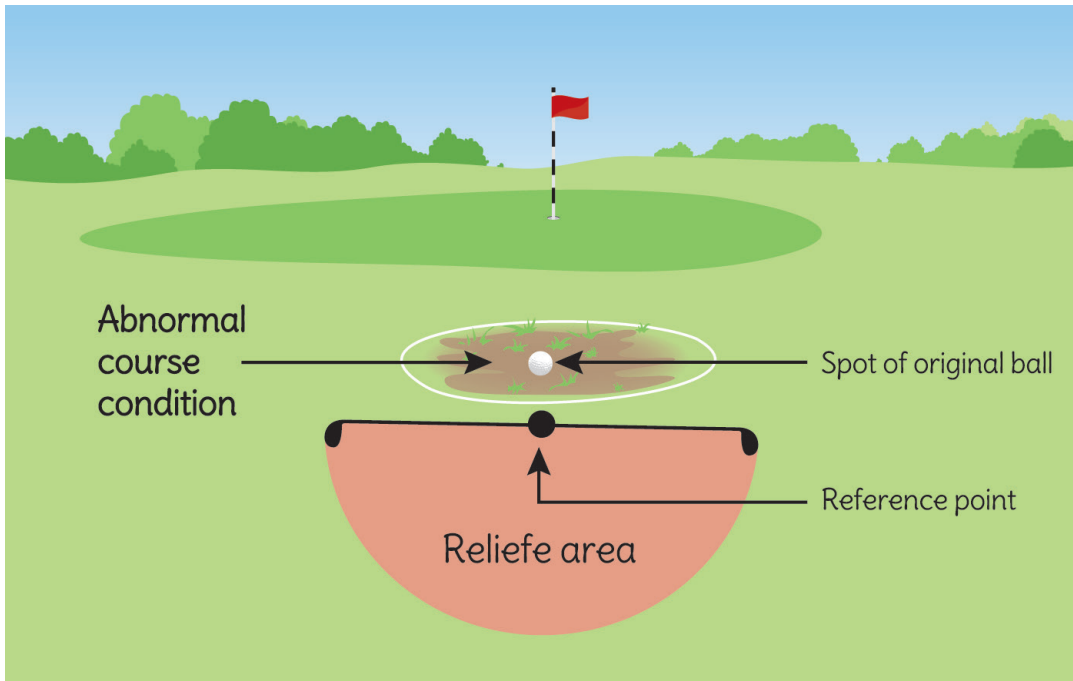
Sometimes we have trouble playing the ball, due to the named “**abnormal course conditions**”. The good thing is that the rules give us solutions that allow us to continue playing: they are the relief **without penalty** when we have interference by IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS, TEMPORARY WATER, GROUND UNDER REPAIR or ANIMAL HOLES.

- ④ **Immovable obstructions:** Obstructions are artificial objects that are constructed or placed, and which are immovable because they cannot be moved. For example, roads, constructed roads, sprinkler heads, bridges, etc.
- ④ **Temporary water:** This is usually puddles from rain or irrigation, or when a stream or lake overflows, as long as it is not in a penalty area. For it to be temporary water you must be able to see it, before or after you takes a stance on the ball to play. Remember that mud or soft ground is not temporary water.
- ④ **Ground under repair:** Any part of the course so marked by the Committee, usually marked with blue stakes or white lines.
- ④ **Animal hole:** Any hole in the ground made by an animal, except those made by worms, insects or the like. It also includes all the loose material the animal takes out of the hole (e.g. moles), and all the area raised or damaged to dig the hole.
- ④ You can get relief **without penalty** when your ball touches or is in or on the abnormal condition, or it interferes in your intended stance or area of intended swing. If your ball is on the putting green, you can also get relief if the abnormal course condition is in your line of play.





- ③ In order to get relief from an abnormal course condition you have to drop the ball within **one club-length** from the point nearest to the ball's original spot ("nearest point of complete relief") that is no nearer to the hole, and where the abnormal condition does not interfere your intended stance or area of intended swing.

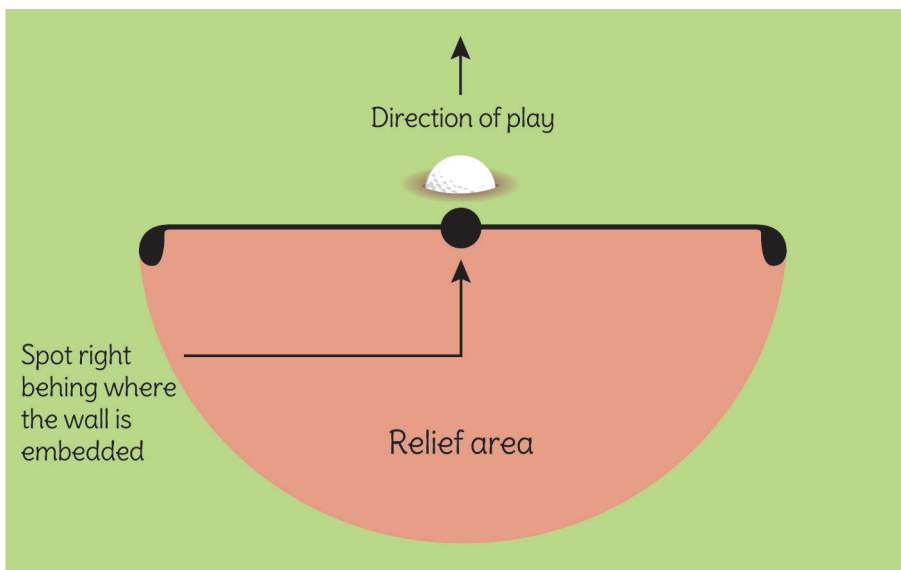


- ③ If your ball is in a penalty area, you will **NOT** get free relief of these abnormal course conditions, because you know that these areas have their own rule (with penalty).



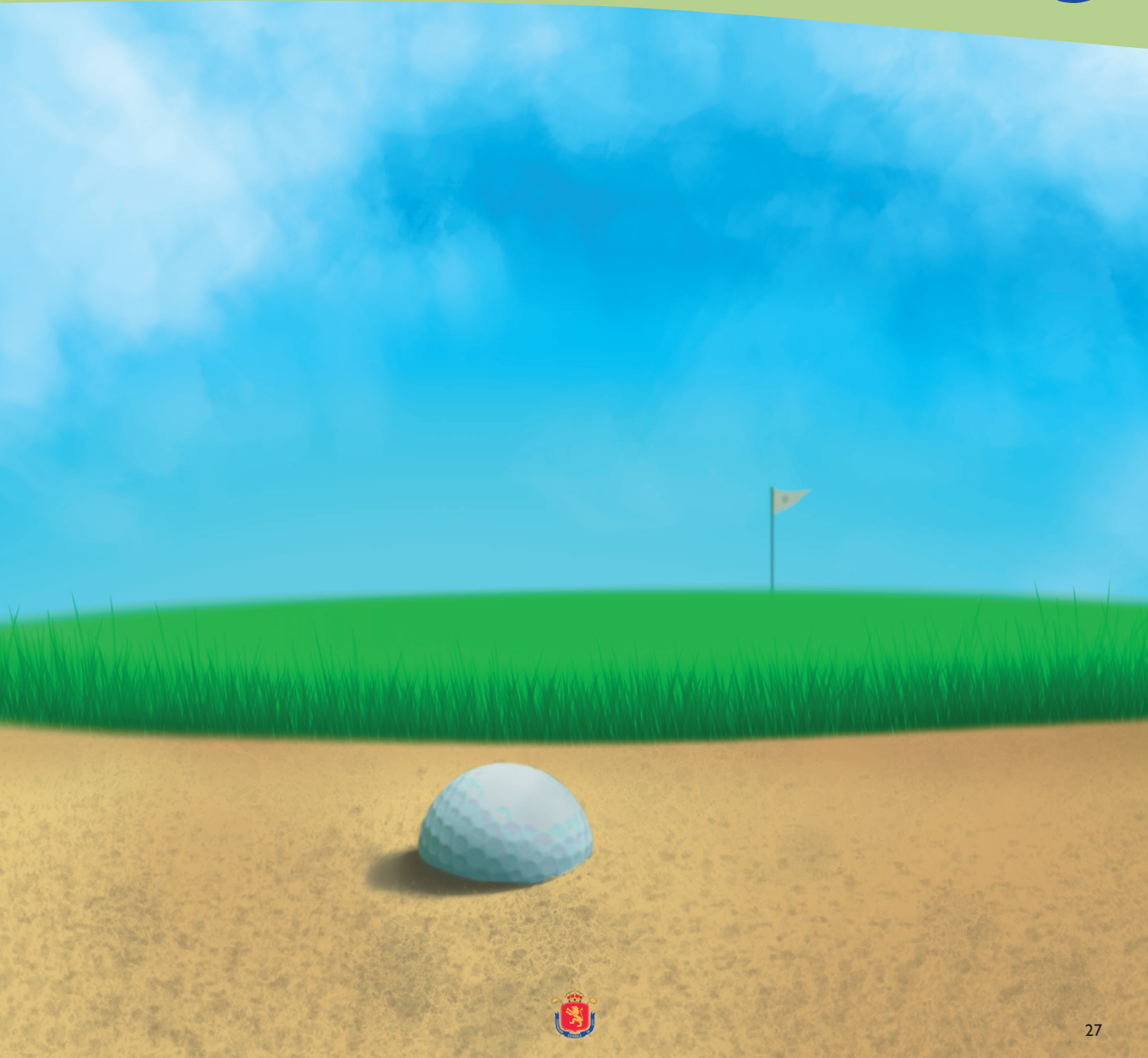


- ④ If your ball is **EMBEDDED** in the general area (Be aware! this rule does not work when your ball is embedded in a bunker or in a penalty area), but be calm as the rules also give you a solution so you can continue playing, but **with penalty**.
- ④ Remember that for a ball to be considered embedded it must have entered the ground as a result of the player's previous stroke. In other words, if you hit the ball directly against the ground and the ball is driven straight into the ground without becoming airborne, it is **NOT** an embedded ball.



- ④ The relief procedure for an embedded ball is very easy, as you must measure an area of one club-length **just behind** where your ball is embedded.







We reach the putting green

We have finally reached the putting **green**...

- ⌚ On the putting green you can **mark, lift** and **clean** your ball, and you must always replace it exactly where it was lifted. To mark the ball, you must use an artificial object (tee, ball marker, coin, etc.). It is important that during the play of the hole you do not test the surface of any putting green by rubbing or rolling a ball, as the penalty is two strokes.

What you **CAN** do on the putting green:

- ⌚ You can remove **sand** and **loose soil** (remember you can't do this anywhere else on the course - except in the teeing area).
- ⌚ You can repair **damages**, without unreasonably delaying play. You can repair ball marks, shoe damage, old hole plugs, scratches made by maintenance machines, animal tracks and embedded objects such as stones or acorns.
- ⌚ But you can **NOT** repair natural surface imperfections such as weeds, fungus, natural wear of the hole, or aeration holes and grooves from vertical mowing.
- ⌚ If you move the ball **accidentally** on the putting green there is **NO penalty** (the same happens if you accidentally move the ball marker), but before playing your ball **you must replace** the ball or ball marker where they were.
- ⌚ If your ball after being at rest on the putting green is moved by wind, water, gravity, etc. before you have marked it, you must play it from its new position.





But if that happens after you have marked, lifted and replaced your ball, you will have to replace it where it was.

- ③ If your ball hits the **flagstick left** on the hole there is **no penalty**. Before playing the ball, you should decide how you want to putt, leaving the flagstick in the hole, with the flagstick removed from the hole, or authorizing someone to attend the flagstick (i.e., someone first holding the flagstick in the hole and then removing the flagstick when you make the stroke.
- ③ If your ball comes to **rest** against the flagstick, and any part of the ball is in the hole, below the surface of the putting green, the ball is treated as holed and you can lift it: you have completed the hole.
- ③ **RESPECT**: so that everyone can enjoy the play, it is very important to respect the putting greens, especially shoe damage (such as spike marks). The balls that fly into the putting green produce a **ball mark**, search for it and repair it, and if you see another, even if it is not yours, do the same. And don't hesitate to call attention to anyone who doesn't repair the ball mark, and let them know they is obliged to do so.





We finish the play: player obligations

- ③ The player has the obligation to respect his opponents and group mates. The player must also **respect the course and the Rules**.
- ③ **Education** and **respect** are more important in golf than playing well or having a good score.
- ③ You should always play without delay the play and at a prompt **pace of play**. Slow pace of play is against the rules and is penalized. One stroke the first breach, two strokes the second and if your behavior is not corrected, and your pace of play game is still slow, you will be disqualified.
- ③ Finally, you are **responsible** for entering the score of the player whose scorecard you have been given to act as a marker; you must confirm this with him after each hole to ensure that the number of strokes you score on each hole is correct. At the end of the round you sign that scorecard and hand it to the competitor.

Name: **John Smith** Handicap: **5** Date: **09/07/19**

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out
Par	5	4	4	4	4	5	3	4	4	37
Score	5	5	5	4	3	5	4	3	4	38

Hole	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Par	3	4	5	3	4	5	3	4	4	35	72
Score	3	4	4	4	5	5	4	3	4	36	74

NET: **69**

Marker's Signature:

Player's Signature:

Responsibilities

- Committee
- Player
- Player and marker

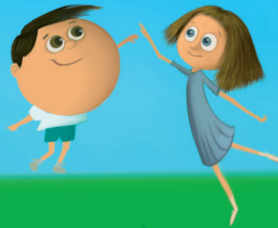




When your marker gives yours you **must sign** it, and remember that you are solely responsible for **checking that the score of each hole is correct** and that the marker has signed. If you have any doubt you should clarify it with the referees or the Committee.

And remember...

Apply the rules, and you'll enjoy golf.





NOTES

