

The Golf Rules Review

An Intermittent Communique by the 2020 WWGA Golf Rules Maven

Issue VII

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Please Relief Me Let Me Play

Your ball is out of bounds, in a penalty hazard, lost or unplayable. How to put your ball back in play, i.e. take relief so you can continue playing, is the topic of this issue. Other than Free Relief (covered in Issue IV), a penalty stroke(s) is always incurred when taking relief.

This issue covers the 'How To's'. Let's start with what to do before taking relief. Then if you decide to take relief, how to drop your ball. Then move onto some definitions as to the different types of relief to put your ball back in play and when they can be used. We will finish with "where to" diagrams for dropping your ball in different situations.

Before You Decide to Take Relief

Make sure you can't hit your ball if it is unplayable or in a Penalty Area. If you are in a Penalty Area, check to see if there is a drop area. Even though you still have to take penalty, the drop area may offer you a better place to hit from when taking relief.

How to Drop Your Ball

How a ball may be dropped is simplified under the new 2019 golf rules. The only requirement is that the ball 1) be let go from knee height so that it falls through the air and 2) does not touch any part of the player's body or equipment before it hits the ground.

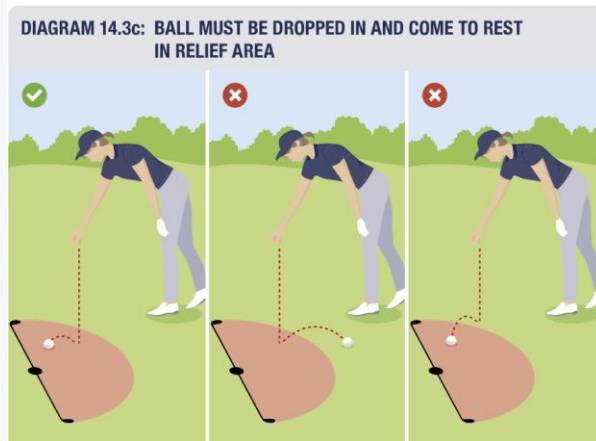
- Re-drop if the ball doesn't land or stay within the drop relief area. If it still does not stay in the drop relief area, then place the ball where it hit the ground on the second drop.
- If the ball hits you or your equipment on the way down, the re-drop.
- If it hits the ground first and then hits you or your equipment, don't re-drop.
- If you make an incorrect drop and then hit your ball, take a 1 stroke penalty.



Why the Drop Rules were Revised

Under the old rule, standing erect, extending your arm at shoulder height and dropping within a designated area, the ball could still move a considerable distance when dropped, resulting in the need to re-drop. Also a ball could roll up to 2 club lengths outside the relief area.

The revised 2019 rule to drop from knee height was put in place to speed up play by minimizing the need to re-drop the ball and to keep the ball within a defined area. It avoids giving some players more relief than necessary just because their ball rolled outside the relief area.



Types of Relief when Dropping your Ball

There are 4 different types of relief to put your ball back in play. Which one to use depends on where your ball lies. Fortunately you always have at least two options to pick from. In all cases, you must make sure you are not dropping nearer to the hole.

Stroke and Distance relief is a do-over with penalty. You return to the spot you hit your last ball from and drop your ball within 1 club length no closer to the hole. Note: it's not a mulligan, so count your original shot.

Lateral Relief is dropping within 2 club lengths from your ball your ball, no closer to the hole. This is the only type of relief you use 2 club lengths. All others use 1 club length.

Back on the Line Relief starts with creating a straight a reference line from the hole through your ball's location with no limit how far back it goes.

- You drop within 1 club length of this reference line as far back in the line as you want behind your ball.
- If you ball is in a penalty area, the reference point for your ball is where it last crossed the penalty line.

Often inexperienced players get confused and want to drop their ball along the ball's original ball flight line when taking Back on the Line Relief. The original ball flight is only used to determine where a ball went out of bounds or is lost. It is never used for determining Back on the Line Relief.

Drop Area a local rule which designates an area, usually a white painted circle, you may drop your ball when your ball is in a penalty area (1 stroke penalty) or an abnormal condition (no penalty).

Relief Available for Different Situations with a 1 Stroke Penalty Unless Noted Otherwise

TYPE OF RELIEF AVAILABLE IF BALL IS	STROKE & DISTANCE	LATERAL RELIEF	BACK THE LINE RELIEF	DROP AREA
IN A YELLOW STAKE PENALTY AREA	YES	<td>YES</td> <td>MAYBE</td>	YES	MAYBE
IN A RED STAKE PENALTY AREA	YES	YES	YES	MAYBE
OUT OF BOUNDS	YES	YES	LOCAL RULE 2 STROKE PENALTY	
LOST	YES	YES	LOCAL RULE 2 STROKE PENALTY	
UNPLAYABLE	YES	YES	YES	
UNPLAYABLE IN BUNKER & DROP IN BUNKER	<td>YES</td> <td>YES</td> <td> </td>	YES	YES	
UNPLAYABLE IN BUNKER & DROP OUTSIDE BUNKER	YES	<td>YES 2 STROKE PENALTY</td> <td> </td>	YES 2 STROKE PENALTY	

Where to Take Relief

The Diagrams on the next 2 pages cover the "Where To's" for Yellow Penalty and Red Penalty Areas, Out of Bounds and Lost Balls. *Note: Diagrams for Unplayable Lies is covered in Issue VI "Unplayable Lies and Times You Think You Should Get Free Relief but don't"*

Q&A

I once saw Dan Rowland hit a beautiful shot on Mt. View Hole 3 over the water and onto the green where the ball spun back and went into the water. Why did he have to take relief on the tee side of the hole and not the green side where his ball went it?

We could just say those are the rules. But it was the Course Architect's intention for this yellow stake hole to challenge the golfer. The challenge is to hit over the water and have the ball stay on the other side. Until the golfer does that, they haven't "made" it over. This is true for all yellow staked areas everywhere. It is also why the greenside "drop" areas on Mt. View holes #3 and #9 available for casual play are not allowed in Tournaments.

What if my ball is embedded?

A ball stuck in soft or wet ground in its own pitch mark is not considered part of the normal challenge of playing a course. If your embedded ball is on the fairway or in the rough, you get relief, without penalty, of 1 club length no near to the hole. You do not get relief if your embedded ball is in a bunker or a penalty area.

How Do You Spell Relief when...

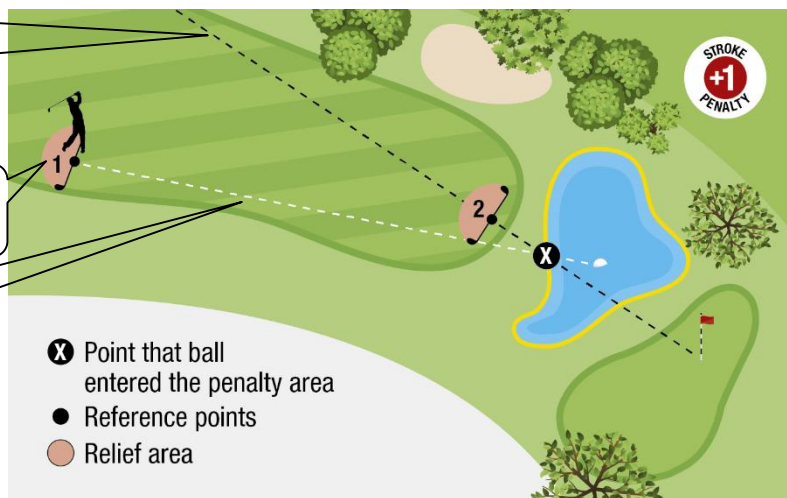
Ball goes into a **Yellow Staked** Penalty Area – 2 Options each with a 1 Stroke Penalty

1. Stroke & Distance Relief - Hit a second ball within 1 club length from where you hit your original shot.
2. Back on the Line Relief – drop your second ball within 1 club length anywhere along the line behind the point your ball last entered the Penalty Area and the flagstick. If your ball landed on the other side and then rolled into the water, the spot where it rolled into the water is the reference point with the flagstick, but you still must hit over the water.

2. Back on the Line Relief – drop a second ball within 1 club length of this line anywhere behind the ball

1. Stroke & Distance Relief – 1 club length of the original shot

You should not be dropping along this line.



Balls goes into a **Red Staked** Penalty Area – 3 Options each with a 1 Stroke Penalty

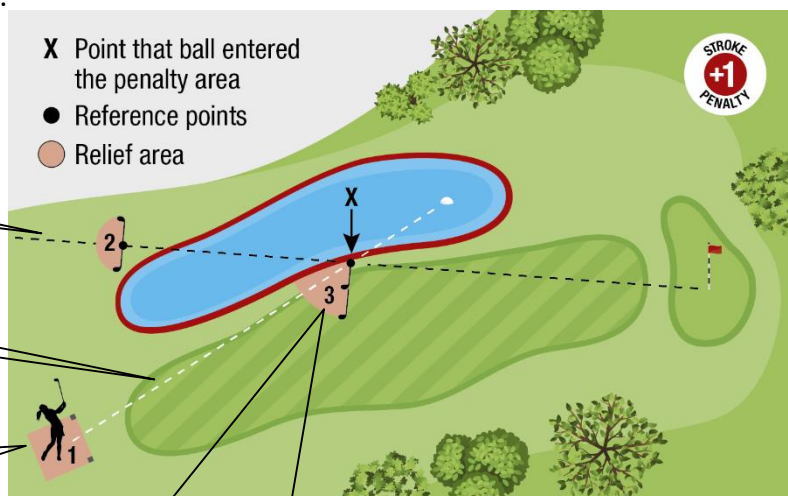
1. Stroke & Distance Relief - Hit a second ball within 1 club length from where you hit your original shot.
2. Back on the Line Relief – drop your second ball within 1 club length anywhere along the line behind the point your ball entered the Penalty Area and the flagstick.
3. Lateral Relief – drop a second ball within 2 club lengths of where your ball last crossed the Penalty Area, no closer to the hole.

2. Back on the Line Relief – drop a second ball within 1 club length of this line anywhere behind the ball

You should not be dropping along this line.

1. Stroke & Distance Relief

3. Lateral Relief – 2 clubs lengths from where your ball last cross the Penalty Area

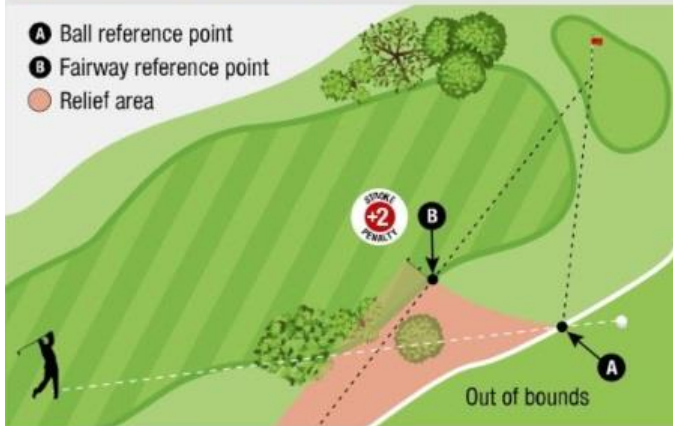


How Do You Spell Relief for...

Out of Bounds Ball Relief – Local Rule (Instead Stroke and Distance Relief) 2 Options each with 2 Stroke Penalty

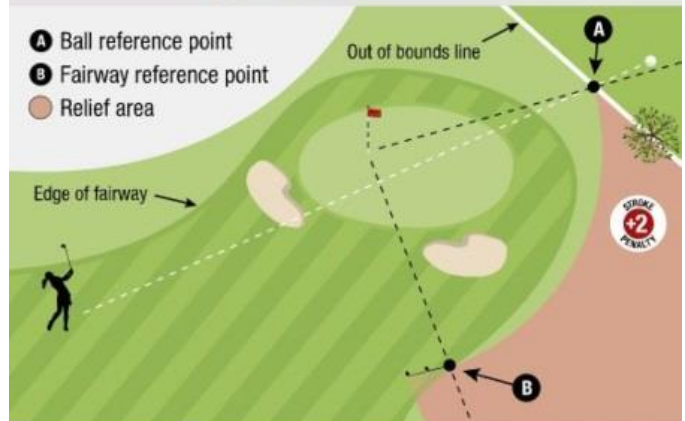
1. Estimate where your ball went OB, then drop within 2 clubs lengths of the nearest edge of the fairway, no closer to the hole.
2. Drop in an estimated relief area as shown in the diagrams below.

MLR E-5 DIAGRAM 2: BALL OUT OF BOUNDS



When a player's ball is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes:

MLR E-5 DIAGRAM 3: BALL NOT FOUND OR OUT OF BOUNDS CLOSE TO GREEN

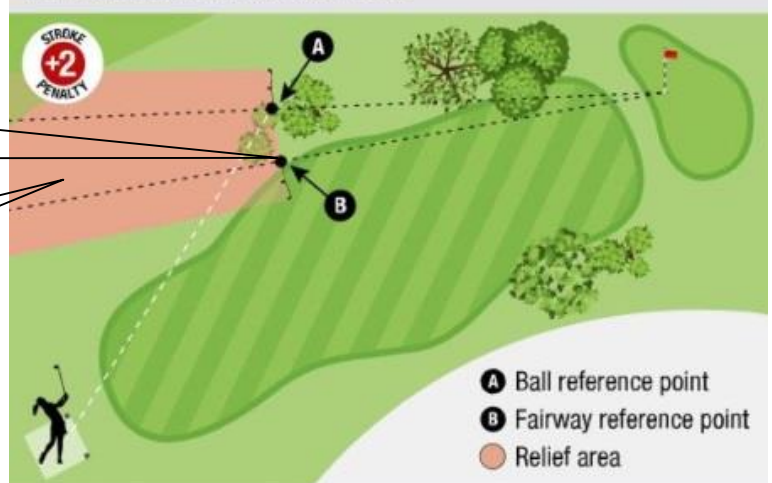


When a player's ball has not been found or is known or virtually certain to be out of bounds, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes:

Lost Ball Relief – Local Rule (Instead Stroke and Distance Relief) 2 Options each with 2 Stroke Penalty

1. Estimate where your ball was lost then drop within 2 clubs lengths of the nearest edge of the fairway, no closer to the hole.
2. Back on the Line Relief area - Using the flag as a reference point, and your lost ball (A) as a second reference point, create a reference line. Create second reference line using the flag and nearest edge of the fairway (B). Drop in the estimated relief area behind the ball.

MLR E-5 DIAGRAM 1: BALL NOT FOUND



1. Find the closest fairway edge to where your ball is lost, no near the holes and drop within 2 club lengths

2. Drop in the estimated relief area behind the ball

When a player's ball has not been found, the player may take stroke-and-distance relief, or when Model Local Rule E-5 is introduced, the player has the additional option to drop a ball in and play from the relief area described below for two penalty strokes: