

WG009 - Basic Rules

Playing the Ball

- Play the ball as it lies. Don't improve your lie, the area of your intended stance or swing or line of play by moving, bending or breaking anything fixed or growing, except if fairly taking your stance or making a swing. Don't press down anything down or build a stance.

Ball lost or out of bounds

- If your ball is lost outside a water hazard or out of bounds you must play another ball from where the last shot was played under a penalty of one stroke. (Stroke & Distance)
- If you play a shot and you think your ball may be outside a water hazard or out of bounds you should play a provisional ball. If it transpires the original ball is lost or out of bounds then you must continue with the provisional ball, under a penalty of one stroke.
- If you decide not to go back and play and lost or out of bounds ball from its original place, then you may play a ball from where you think your ball ended up, under a two shot penalty.

Ball Unplayable

- If you believe your ball is unplayable and it lies outside a hazard, you may under a penalty of one stroke either drop a ball from where the last shot was played, or drop a ball any distance behind the point where the ball lay keeping a straight line between the hole, the point where the ball lay and the spot on which the ball is dropped, or drop the ball within two club-lengths of where the ball lies not nearer the hole.

Abnormal Ground Conditions

- Free relief if your ball is in a position where you have interference from an abnormal ground condition such as casual water, ground under repair, a hole made by a burrowing animal etc. You may drop within 1 club length not closer the hole.

Rule 12 -- Finding Ball in Hazard -- Identifying Ball

- A hazard is any bunker (area of sand) or water hazard (lake, pond, creek, etc).
- In a bunker or water hazard, if sand or leaves cover your ball, you may remove enough of the sand or leaves to be able to see a part of the ball.
- You may lift your ball to identify it anywhere except in a hazard. You must tell your opponent or fellow competitor before you lift your ball to identify it.

Rule 13 -- Playing the Ball as it Lies on the Course

- You must play the ball as it lies. You may not move it to a better spot.
- You may not improve your lie by pressing down behind the ball. The club may be grounded only lightly behind the ball.
- You may not improve the area of your intended swing or line of play by bending or breaking anything growing, such as tree limbs or weeds.
- In a hazard, you may not touch the sand, ground or water with the club before or during your back swing.
- In a hazard, you may not remove loose impediments (natural things such as leaves or twigs) but you may remove obstructions (artificial objects such as bottles or rakes.)

Rule 23 -- Loose Impediments

- Loose impediments are natural objects that are not growing or fixed -- such as leaves, twigs, branches, worms and insects. You may remove a loose impediment except when your ball and the loose impediment lie in a bunker or water hazard. (Exception see Rule 12)

Rule 24 -- Obstructions

- Obstructions are artificial or man-made objects. Bottles, tin cans, rakes, etc., are movable obstructions. Sprinkler heads, shelter houses, cart paths, etc., are Immovable obstructions.
- Movable obstructions anywhere on the course may be removed. If the ball moves when moving an obstruction, it must be replaced without penalty.
- You may drop your ball away from an immovable obstruction if it interferes with your swing or stance. Find the nearest point not nearer the hole where you can play without interference with your swing or stance. Drop the ball within one club-length of that point. (You may move your ball away from an immovable obstruction if it interferes with your swing or stance.)
Note: You should not pick up the ball from an obstruction until you have established the nearest point of relief.

Rule 27 -- Ball Lost or Out of Bounds

- A ball is lost if it is not found within five minutes after you first begin to search.
- A ball is out of bounds when all of it lies beyond the inside line of objects such as white stakes, or a fence or wall that marks the playing area.
- If your ball is lost or out of bounds, you must add a penalty stroke to your score and play another ball from where you played your last shot.
- If you think your ball may be lost or out of bounds, you may play another ball (provisional ball) from the place where your first ball was played. You must tell your opponent or fellow-competitor that you are playing a provisional ball and play it before you look for the first ball. If you cannot find your first ball or if it is out of bounds, you must count the strokes with the first and provisional balls, add a penalty stroke and play out the hole with the provisional ball. If you find your first ball in bounds, continue play with it and pick up the provisional ball.

Rule 28 -- Ball Unplayable

- If your ball is under a tree or in some other bad situation and you decide you cannot play it, add a penalty stroke and do one of the following:
 1. Go back to where you played the last shot and play a ball from there
 2. Measure two club-lengths from the unplayable lie, drop a ball and play from there
 3. Keep the unplayable lie between where you drop the ball and the hole, go back as far as you wish on a straight line and drop and play the ball.