

# Rules of Golf





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# ***Areas of the Course***

# The Five Areas of the Course

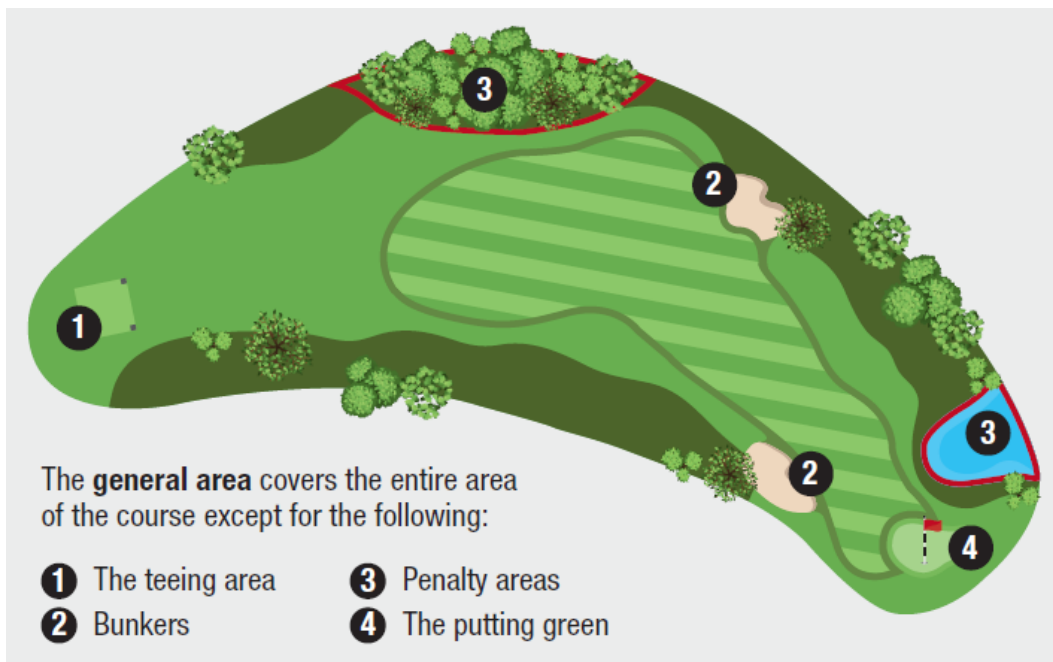


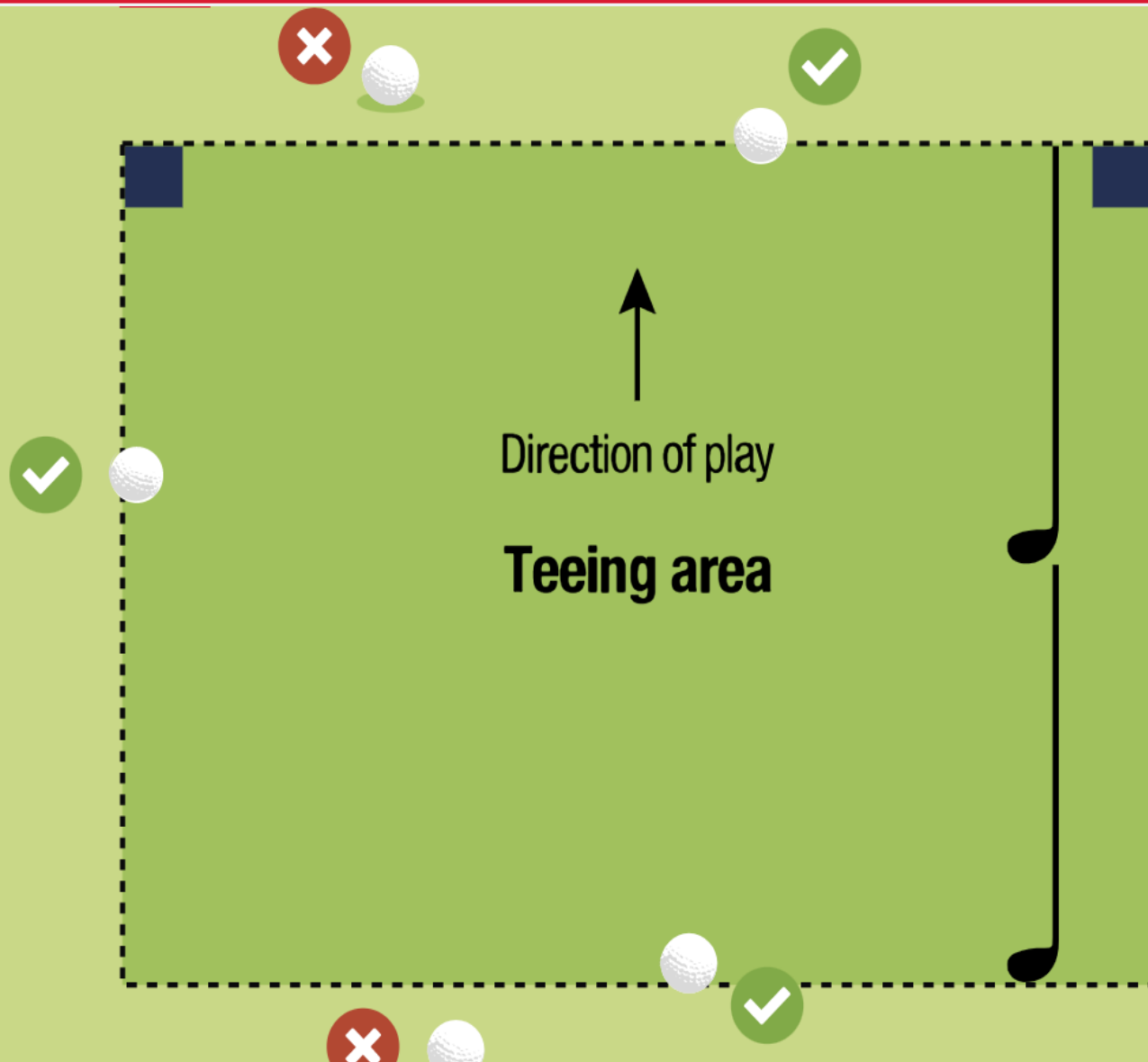
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The course is divided into **five defined areas**. Play of the game from each area has its own unique privileges and restrictions.

- The teeing area
- The general area
- Bunkers
- Penalty areas
- The putting green





Inside  
teeing area



Outside  
teeing area

# When an Area is Part of the General Area



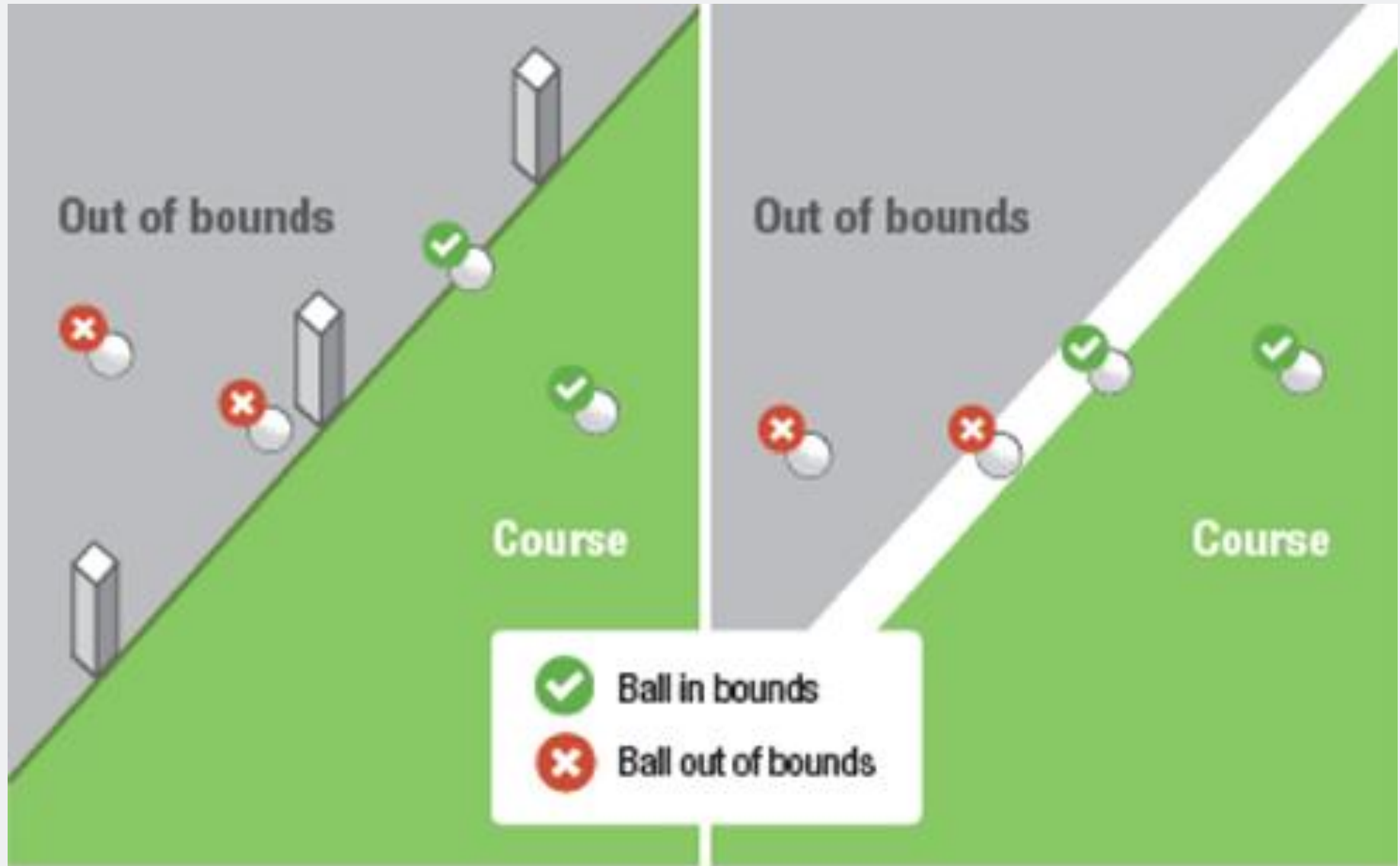
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The only places on the course that are **NOT** part of the **general area** are those defined as one of the other four areas.

- The **teeing area** of the hole you are playing,
- the **putting green** of the hole you are playing,
- all **bunkers**, and
- all **penalty areas**.









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# ***Taking Relief***

# Measuring Club-Lengths

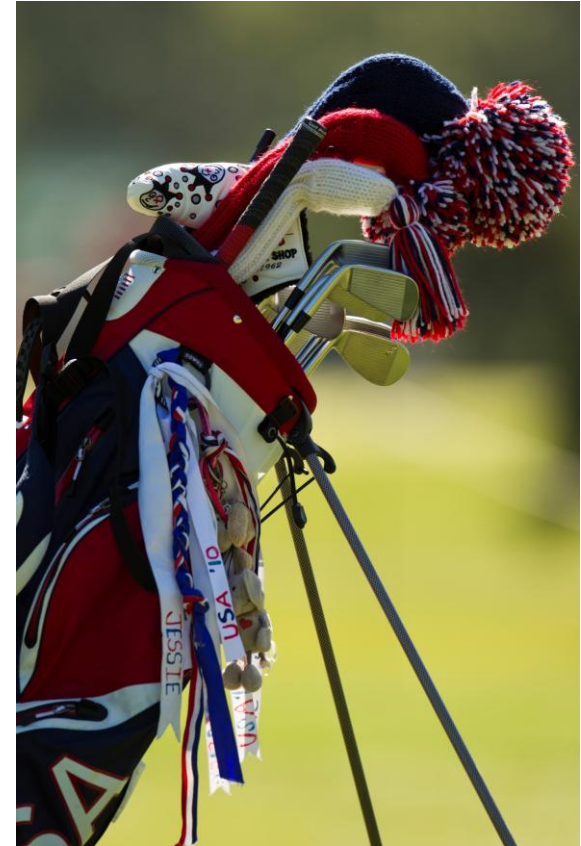


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## Which club do you use to measure?

Your longest club (excluding your putter) defines club-lengths when taking relief.

For most players, this will be your driver.



For this player, the driver is the club that defines club-lengths when taking relief.



# Dropping a Ball in the “Right Way”



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## How to Drop a Ball in the “Right Way”

The ball must be dropped...

- by the player,
- straight down,
- from knee height,
- in the relief area.

The ball must not...

- strike the player or equipment before it hits the ground,
- be thrown, spun, rolled or dropped in any other way to influence where the ball will come to rest.



This player has dropped the ball in the “right way.”

# Where Dropped Ball Must Come to Rest



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There are only two times your relief area will be 2 club lengths:

- Lateral option for unplayable AND Lateral option for penalty area



After dropping in the “right way,” this ball must come to rest in the **relief area**.

# Nearest Point of Complete Relief



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# Nearest Point of Complete Relief



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# When to Re-Drop a Ball



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## Re-Dropping

After dropping your ball in the “right way,” if it comes to rest outside the relief area, drop in the “right way” a second time.

If your second drop done the “right way” comes to rest in the relief area, play the ball as it lies.

## Placing Your Ball After Dropping in the “Right Way”



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After two drops made in the right way finish outside of the relief area:

- Place a ball
- Where your second drop hit the ground



This golfer has dropped her ball the “right way” twice, and both times her ball came to rest outside the relief area. She is now placing the ball on the spot where her ball hit the ground on her second drop.





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# ***Abnormal Course Conditions***

# Recognizing Abnormal Course Conditions



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Abnormal course conditions are **any** of these things:

- animal holes,
- ground under repair,
- immovable obstruction, or
- temporary water



A ball rests on an  
immovable obstruction



Temporary water  
accumulates on a hole



Ground under repair

# Abnormal Course Condition Relief



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Relief from an abnormal course condition is **NOT** allowed when:

- Your ball is in a penalty area.
- The abnormal course condition is out of bounds.
- It is clearly unreasonable to play the ball:
  - Because of something other than an abnormal course condition.
  - Because you chose a club, type of stance or swing or direction of play that is clearly unreasonable.



**Ball in penalty area not entitled to relief**



Reasonable stroke = entitled to relief

Unreasonable = not entitled to relief

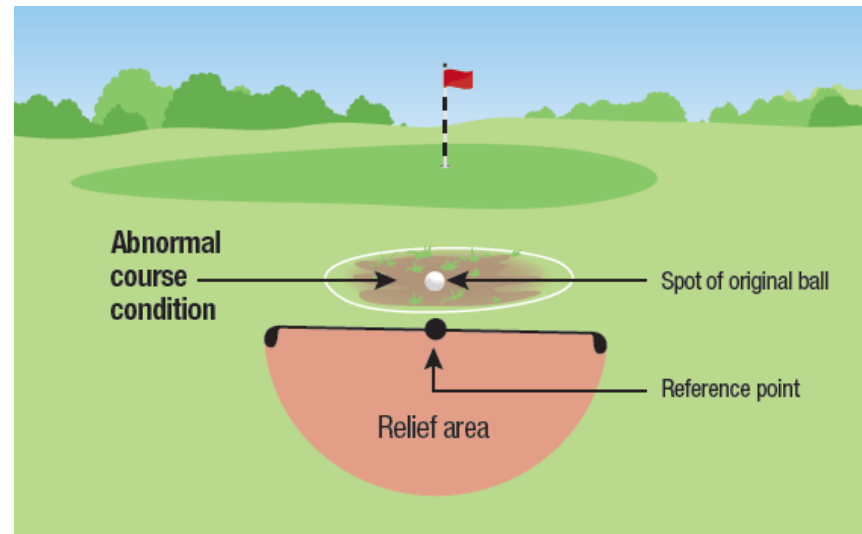
# Abnormal Course Condition Relief in the General Area



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When taking relief from an abnormal course condition in the general area, you must follow these steps:

1. Identify a reference point which is the nearest point of complete relief in the General Area.
2. Measure **one club-length** from the reference point (which must be in the general area)
3. Drop in the relief area





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# ***Movable Obstructions***

# Movable Obstructions



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An artificial object that can be moved

- With reasonable effort, and
- Without damaging the course or an obstruction



This irrigation flag is a movable obstruction.



This rake is a movable obstruction.



This sign is a movable obstruction.



# Removing a Movable Obstruction



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Movable obstructions  
can be moved  
anywhere

- On, or
- Off  
the course.



Bunker



Penalty Area



Out of Bounds

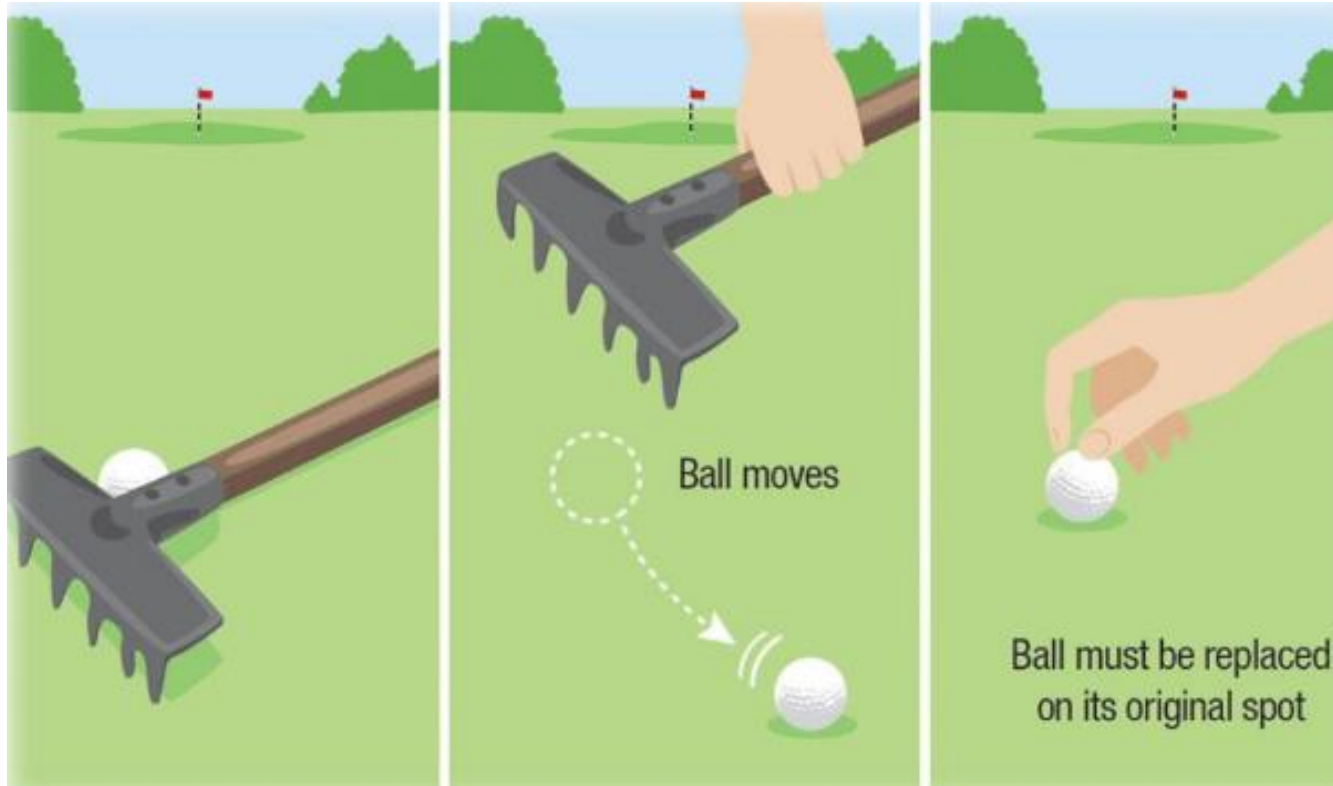


General Area

# Ball Moved While Removing a Movable Obstruction



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If your ball moved while you remove a movable obstruction,

- There is no penalty, and
- You should replace the ball.



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# ***Loose Impediments***

# Loose Impediments Defined



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Loose Impediments are **natural objects**, that are:

- not attached to anything including the ball,
- no longer part of something growing,
- not solidly embedded in the ground, and  
(that cannot be easily picked out of the ground)



Without penalty, you are allowed to move them out of your way no matter where they are, on or off the course, but must not move the ball except on the putting green. Sand and loose soil are not loose impediments. If you brush the ground and move sand or soil, you have a two-stroke penalty.

# Loose Impediments Defined



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## Common examples of loose impediments:

- stones,
- loose grass,
- leaves,
- branches and sticks, and
- pine needles and pine cones.

## Other items that are also loose impediments include:

- worms, insects and spiders (living or dead) and the mounds and webs made by them,
- clumps of soil (but not **loose** soil or sand), and
- animal waste and dead animals.



# Touching or Moving Loose Impediments



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Loose impediments may be touched or removed without penalty.

- Including when your ball and the loose impediment are in a penalty area.
- If you move a loose impediment and cause your ball to move:
  - ✓ you get a penalty of one stroke and
  - ✓ must replace the ball.





# Loose Impediments in Bunkers



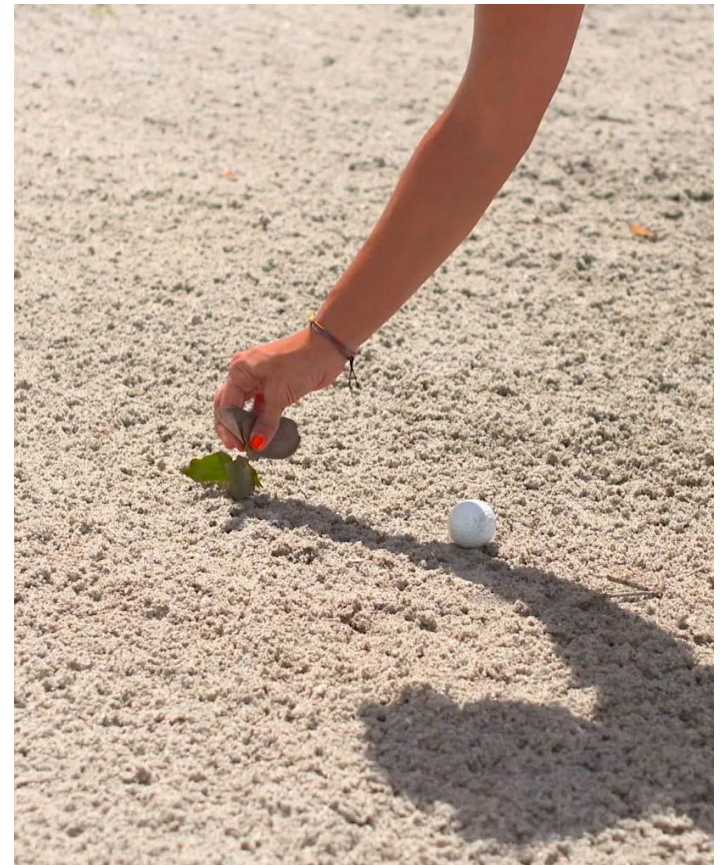
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Loose impediments anywhere on (or off) the course, may be **touched** or **removed without penalty**.

Including when your ball and the loose impediment are in the same bunker.

If you move a loose impediment in a bunker and cause your ball to move:

- you get a penalty of one stroke and
- must replace the ball.





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# ***Unplayable Ball***

# Unplayable Ball Relief



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You **can** use the unplayable ball relief options if your ball lies:

1. In the general area,
2. In a bunker,
3. In the teeing area, or
4. On the putting green.

This is **NOT** an option when your ball is in a penalty area (formerly “hazards”).





# Relief Options for Ball Unplayable in the General Area



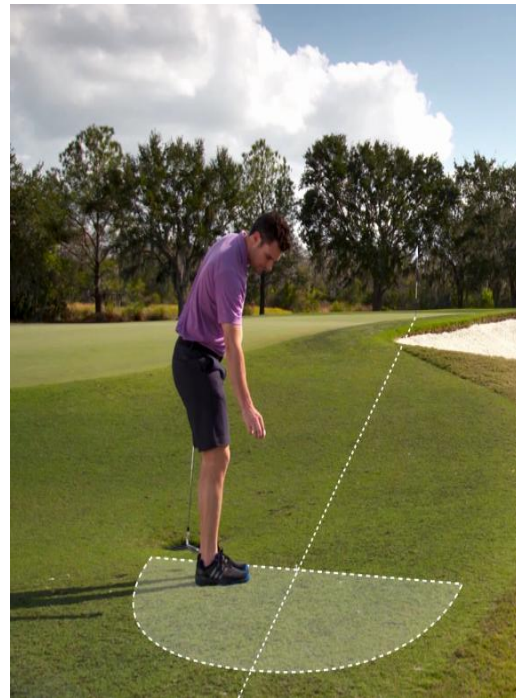
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## 1. Stroke and Distance Relief



Drop within one club-length of where your previous stroke was made.

## 2. Back-on-the-Line Relief



Drop on the line keeping the point where the ball lies between you and the flagstick.

## 3. Lateral Relief

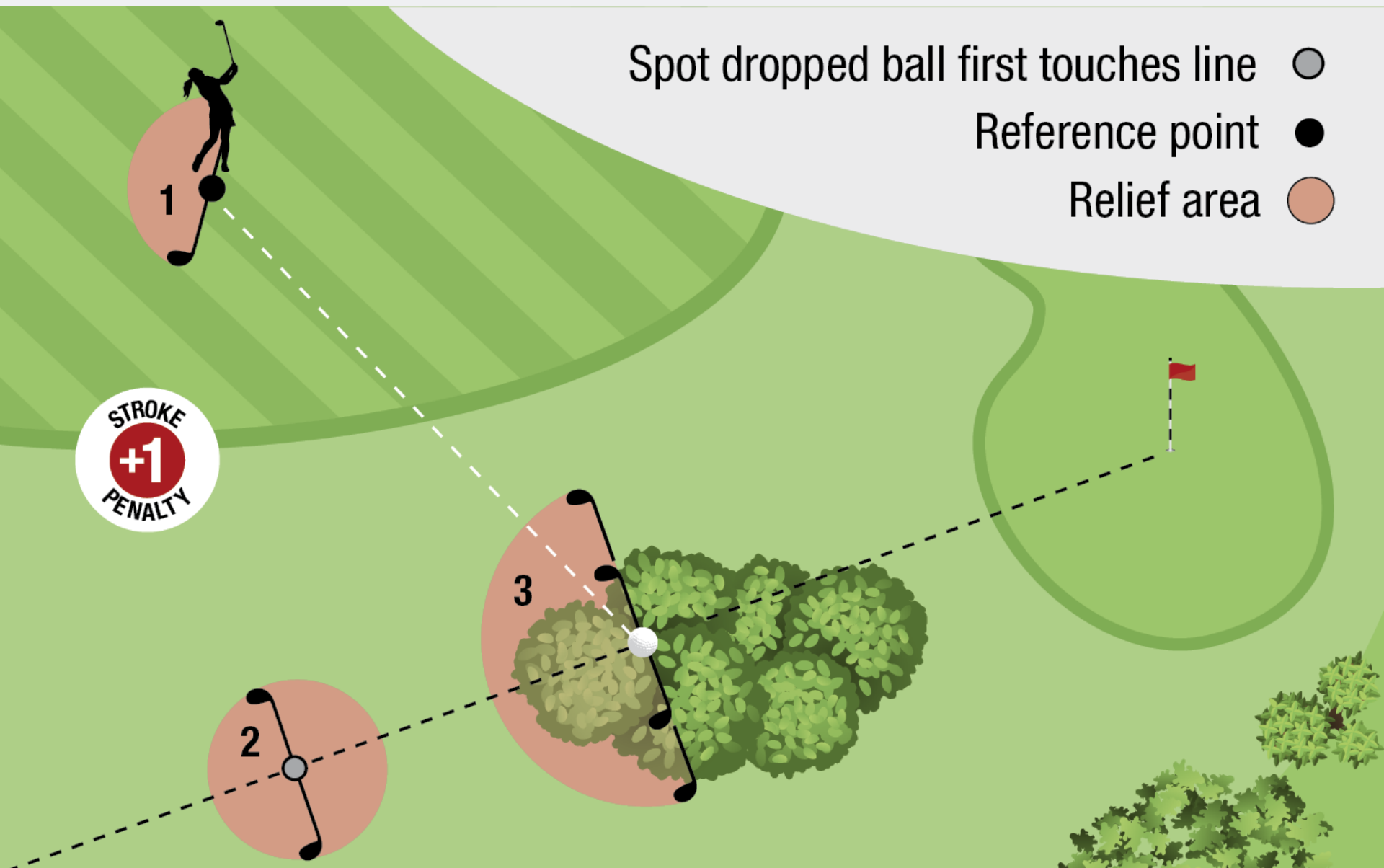


Drop within two club-lengths of where your ball lies.

Spot dropped ball first touches line ○

Reference point ●

Relief area ○



# Taking an Unplayable in Bunker



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There are now four options instead of three for an unplayable lie in a bunker:

1. Stroke and Distance
2. Back on line relief
3. Lateral relief ( 2 clubs lengths from the ball )
4. Players may take relief outside the bunker back on the line from hole through where the ball was at rest, with a two stroke penalty.

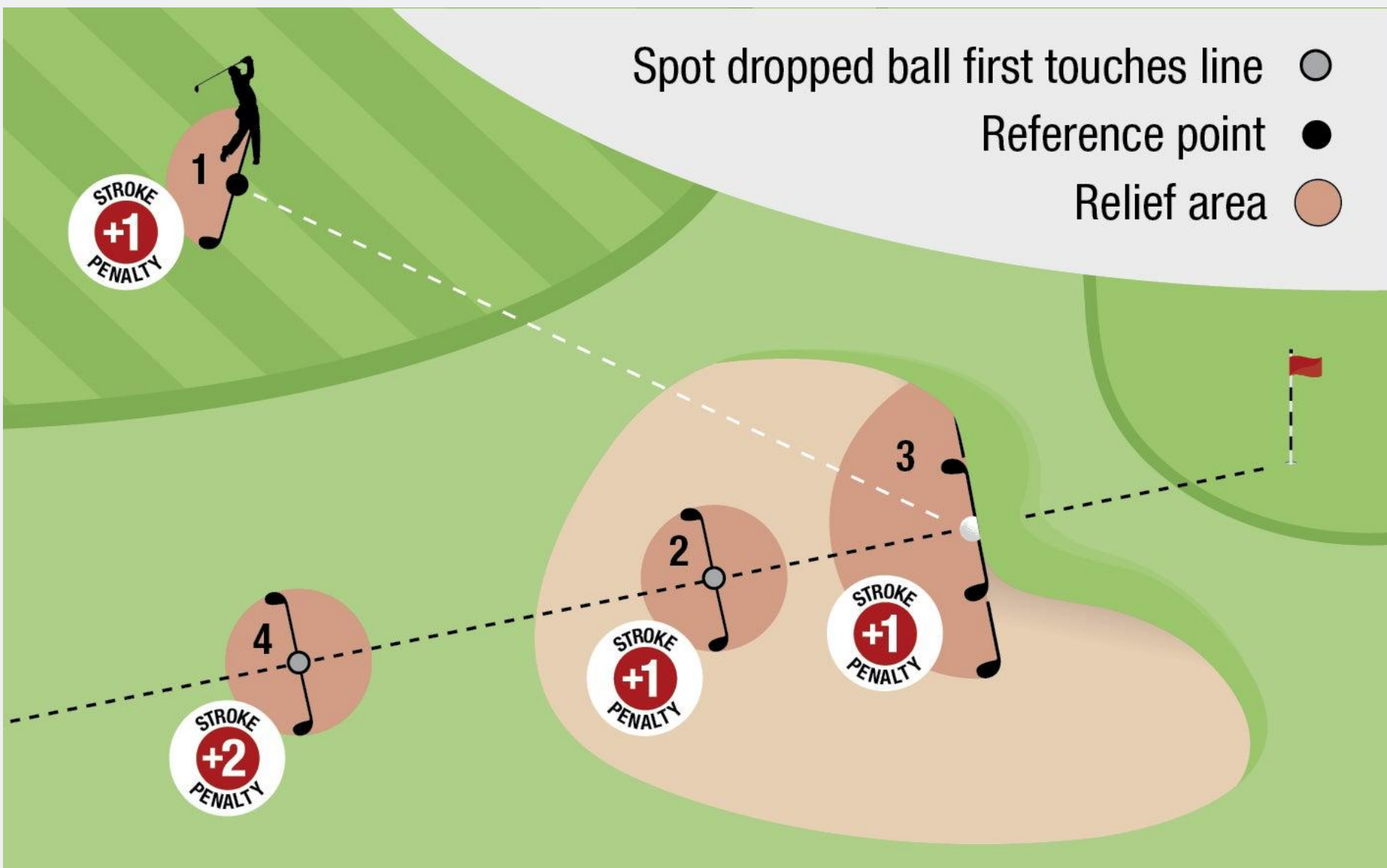




Spot dropped ball first touches line ○

Reference point ●

Relief area ○





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# ***Penalty Areas***

# Penalty Areas



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- **Any other area** on the course marked or defined by the Committee as a penalty area, including:
  - deserts
  - densely wooded or over-grown areas
  - jungles
  - lava rock fields
  - areas of tall unmaintained grasses



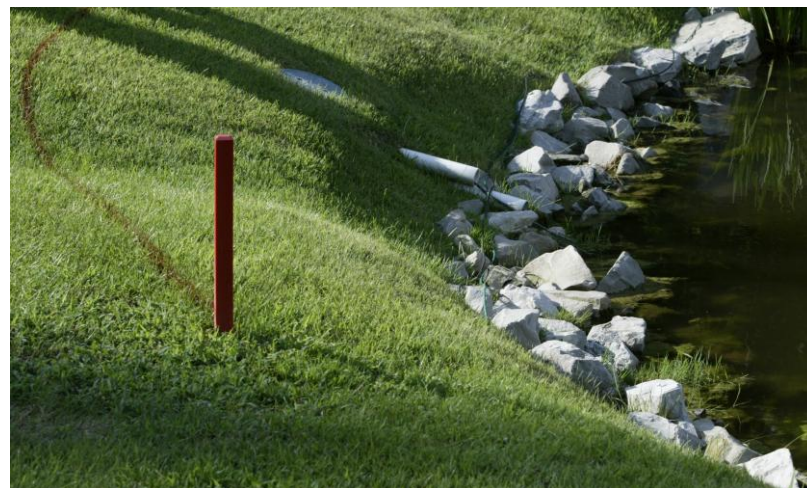
# Types of Penalty Areas



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- **TWO** types of penalty areas:
  - **yellow** – **2** relief options
  - **red** – **3** relief options
- If the color has **not** been marked or indicated, it is treated as **red**.
- The opposite side relief option for a Red Penalty area has been eliminated.





# Red Penalty Area Relief Options



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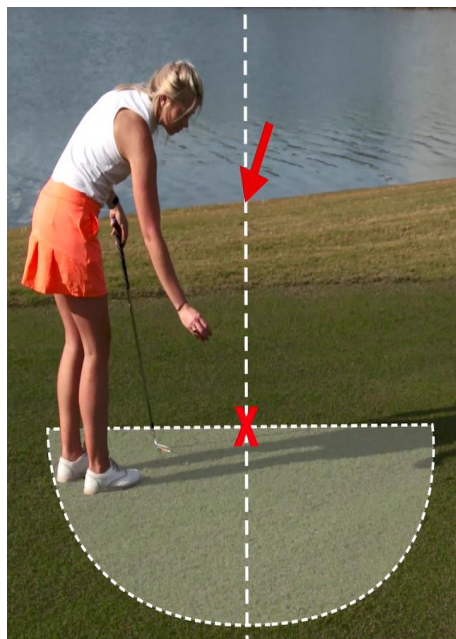


## Stroke and Distance Relief



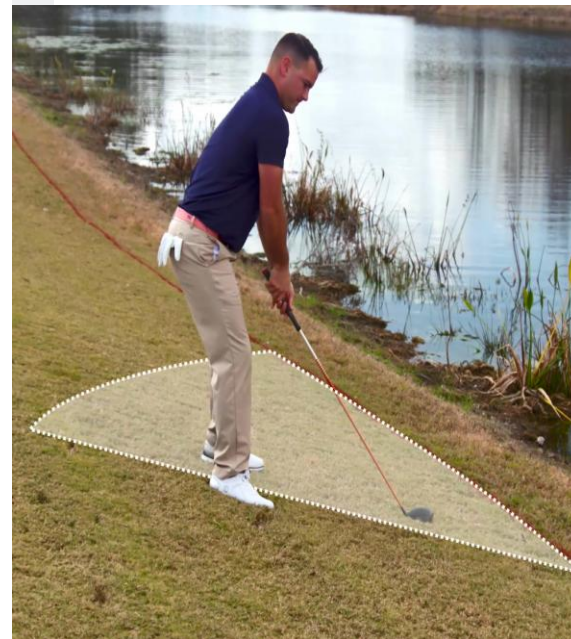
Dropping within one club-length of where the previous stroke was made.

## Back-on-the-Line Relief



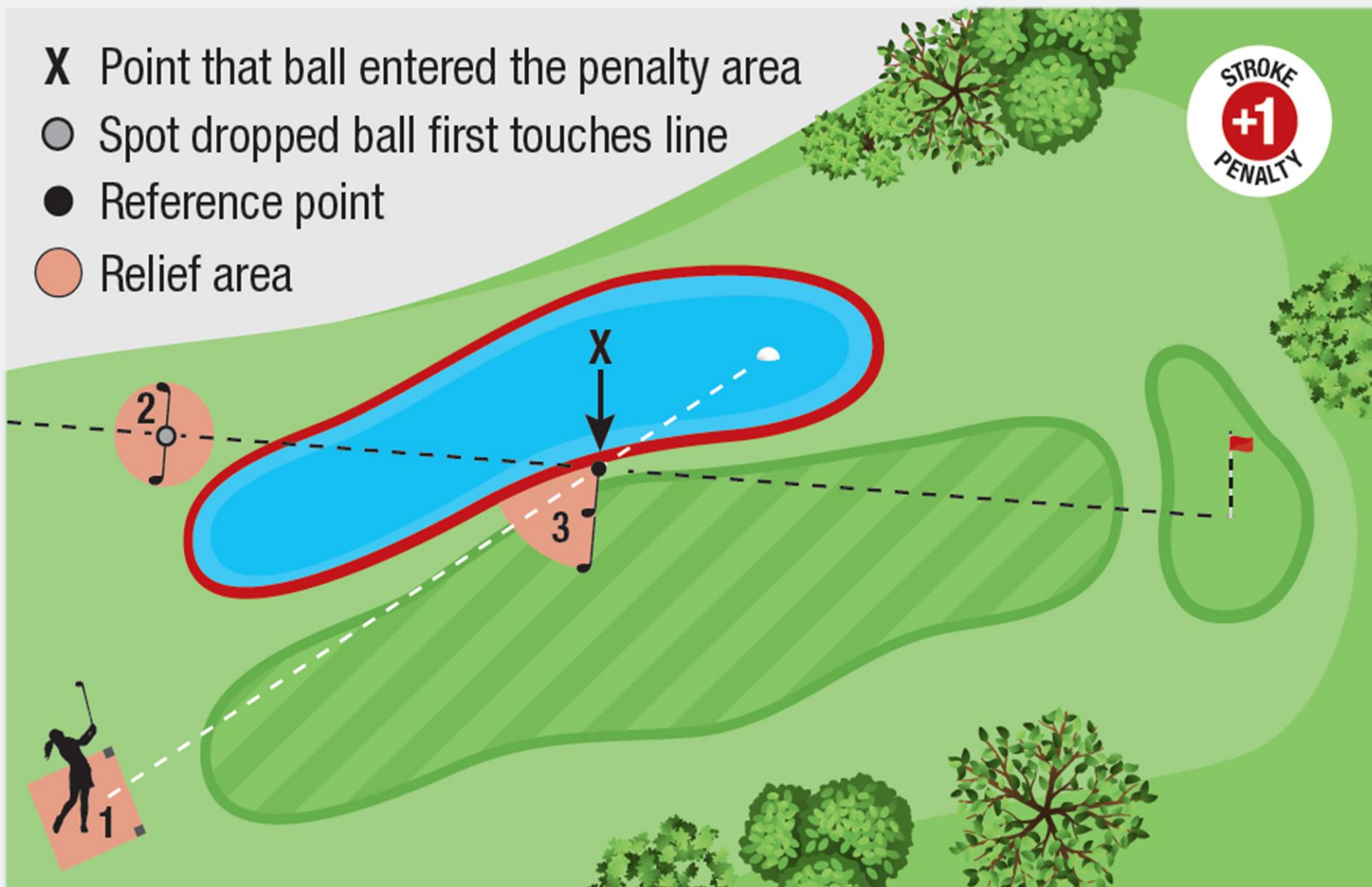
Dropping on the line between where the ball last entered the penalty area and the flagstick behind the penalty area.

## Lateral Relief



Dropping within two club-lengths of where the ball last entered the penalty area.

- X** Point that ball entered the penalty area
- Spot dropped ball first touches line
- Reference point
- Relief area



# Yellow Penalty Area Relief Options



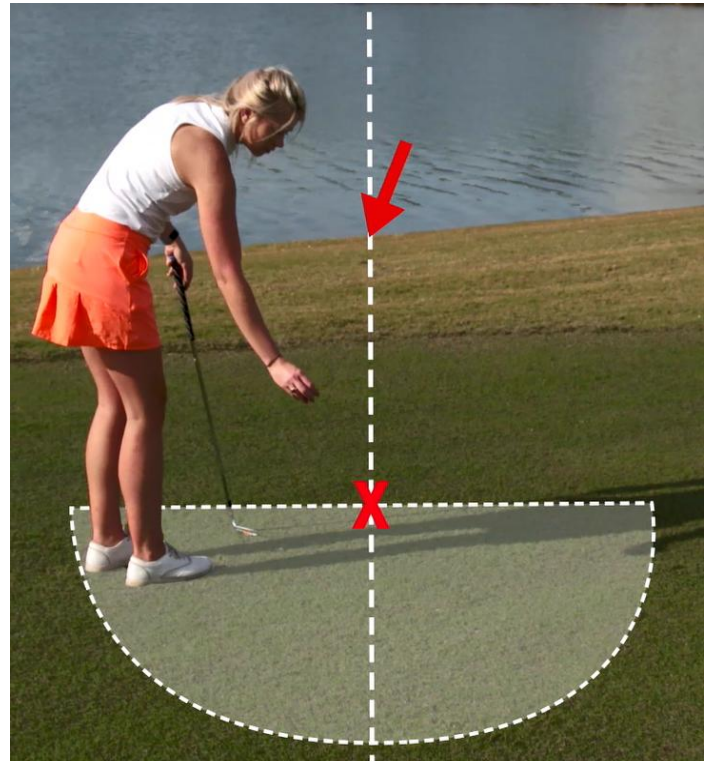
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## Stroke and Distance Relief



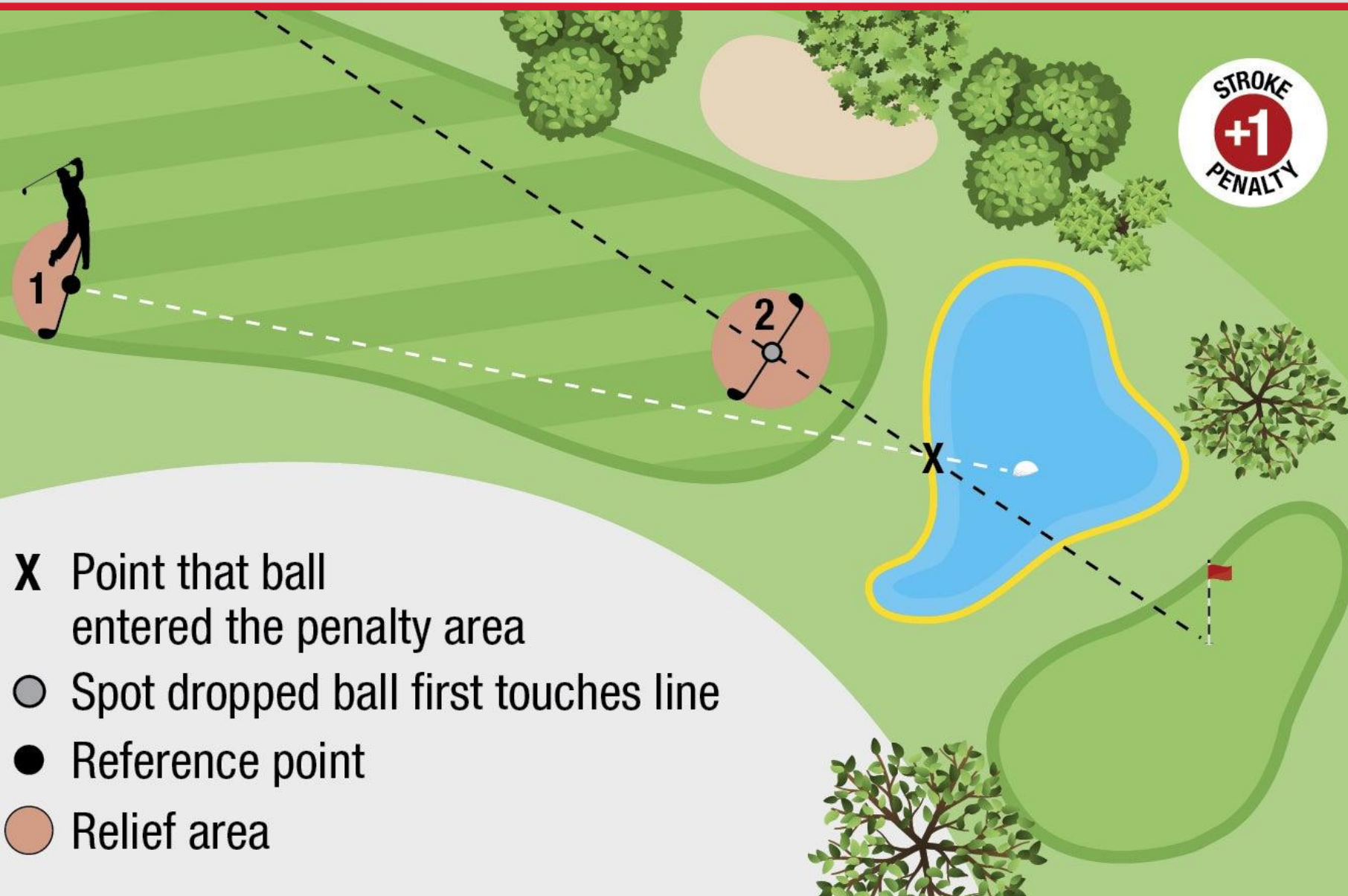
Dropping within one club-length of where the previous stroke was made.

## Back-on-the-Line Relief



Dropping on the line between where the ball last entered the penalty area and the flagstick behind the penalty area.







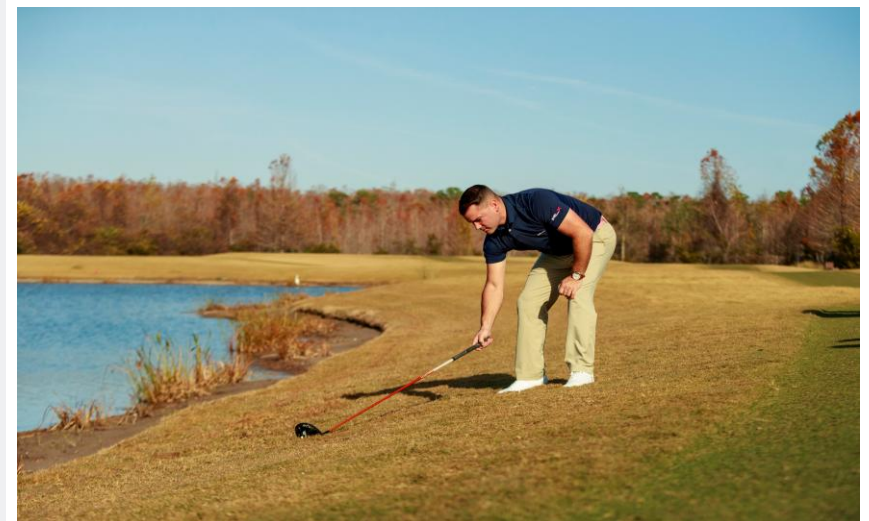
# When Are You Allowed to Take Penalty Area Relief



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You **may** take penalty area relief when:

1. Your ball **lies in** a penalty area, or
2. You have **knowledge or virtual certainty** that your ball is in a penalty area (even if you can't find it).



# When Are You Allowed to Take Penalty Area Relief



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Having knowledge or **virtual certainty** means:

- There is **conclusive evidence** that your ball is in the penalty area, or
- It is **95% or more likely** that your ball is in the penalty area (even if there is a small degree of doubt).



# Touching the Ground in a Penalty Area



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You can touch the ground in a penalty area at any time.

Including when:

- Making practice swings
- Grounding club in front of or behind ball

But, you cannot improve:

- The lie of the ball,
- The area of your stance, or
- The area of your swing.



- He may touch the ground in the penalty area at any time.



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# ***Bunkers***



# Restrictions on Touching Sand In Bunkers



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When your ball is in a bunker, you get a penalty if you:

- **Test the condition of the sand** to learn information for your next stroke with:
  - your hand
  - a club
  - a rake or
  - any other object
- **Touch the sand with a club:**
  - right behind (or in front of) your ball
  - as you make a practice swing or
  - as you make your backswing for a stroke



# Restrictions on Touching Sand In Bunkers



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It is **not a penalty** to touch the sand in a bunker when you:

- **dig in with your feet** to take a stance for a practice swing or your next stroke
- **lean on a club** to rest, stay balanced or prevent a fall
- **place (or toss)** your club(s), equipment (including your golf bag), a rake, or other objects in the bunker
- **take actions permitted by Rules** such as measuring, marking, lifting, replacing, etc.
- **smooth** the bunker to care for the course
- **strike the sand** in frustration or anger (even though this is considered poor etiquette)



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# ***Putting Green/ Flagstick***

# Repair Damage to the Putting Green



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- Without penalty, **you may repair damage** to the putting green caused by:
  - people
  - animals
  - artificial objects
  - natural objects.
- **Natural imperfections** on the putting green must **NOT** be repaired
- Repair must be done promptly.





# Repair Damage to the Putting Green



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Examples of **damage** to the putting green you **may repair** are:

- Ball marks
- Shoe damage (such as scrapes, indentations and spike marks)
- Scrapes and indentations caused by the flagstick or players' equipment
- Old hole plugs, turf plugs and sod seams
- Maintenance vehicle and maintenance tool damage
- Animal tracks and hoof indentations
- Indentations caused by embedded objects (such as acorns, stones, tees)



# Repair Damage to the Putting Green



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Examples of natural imperfections on the putting green you are NOT allowed to repair are:

- Grass growth issues, such as bare, uneven or diseased areas
- Occasional maintenance imperfections like aeration holes and grooves made from vertical mowing
- Natural wear to the hole
- Imperfections caused by rainfall or irrigation
- Surface imperfections caused by weeds, other plants and natural objects



## No penalty for accidentally moving your ball or ball-marker on the putting green.

Examples include accidentally:

- Bumping the ball with your club (1)
- Dropping the ball on the ball-marker (2)
- Moving the ball while picking up your ball-marker (3)
- Kicking the ball while repairing damage on the putting green (4)





# Accidental Movement on the Putting Green



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If you accidentally cause your ball to move on the putting green, replace the ball on its original spot (estimate the spot if unknown).



The player accidentally bumped the ball.



The player replaced the ball on the estimated original spot.



# Ball on Putting Green Moved by Wind or No Apparent Cause



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If your ball on the putting green is moved by

- wind, or
- no apparent cause (gravity)

And, you've marked, lifted and replaced the ball, **you 'own' that location:**

- replace the ball on its original spot,
- with no penalty

If you have NOT marked, lifted and replaced the ball:

- play from the new position,
- with no penalty



The player must replace her ball without penalty because it was moved by wind after she marked, lifted and replaced it.

# Pointing Out a Line on the Putting Green



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**Before you putt**, you or your caddie may:

- **Touch** the putting green to point out:
  - Where you should aim, or
  - How your putt will break
- Do so **using**:
  - A hand,
  - A foot, or
  - Anything you are holding

-Just move it before the stroke!
- However, you or your caddie may **NOT** set down any object on or off the putting green to show your aim or break, even if it is removed before you putt.



# Pointing Out a Line on the Putting Green



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## When you putt:

- Your caddie **must not** deliberately stand in a location on or close to your line of play:
  - To help you, or
  - To do anything else to point out
    - Where you should aim, or
    - How your putt will break
- However, your caddie may **attend the flagstick** for you.
- The Caddie may now mark the player's ball on the putting green without authorization



# When Your Ball is Considered Holed



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Your ball is holed when it is at rest

- In the hole, and
- The entire ball is below the surface of the putting green.



The entire ball is at rest below the surface of the putting green and is in the hole, so it is considered holed.



# When Your Ball is Considered Holed



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For the special case of your ball resting against the flagstick in the hole, your ball is treated as holed if

- Any part of the ball is below the surface of the putting green.



- Part of the ball is below the surface of the putting green, so the ball is treated as holed.

# Ball Hits the Flagstick in the Hole



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You can decide whether to **leave the flagstick in the hole** when making a stroke.

- Such a stroke may be made from:



the putting  
green



or another part of the  
course

# Ball Hits the Flagstick in the Hole



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- There is **no penalty** if your ball hits the flagstick in the hole.
- If your ball is deflected by the flagstick and not holed, **play you the ball as it lies**.
- If your ball accidentally hits your caddie, partner or anyone else attending the flagstick, there is no penalty.

