Rules of Golf Presentation

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Overview

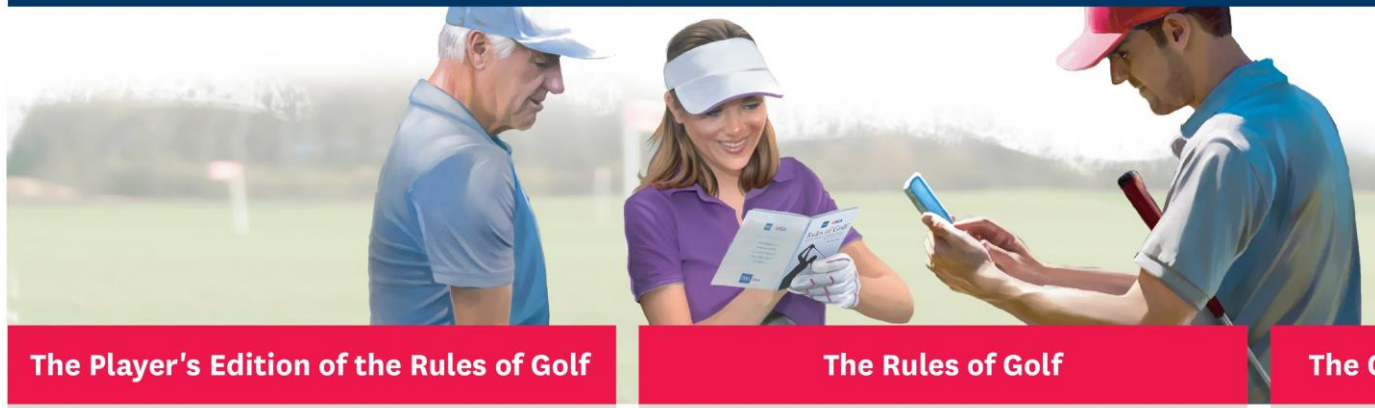
- Resources
- Rule 2 – The Course
- Rule 15 – Loose Impediments and Movable Obstructions
- Rule 14 – Ball Procedures (specifically dropping)
- Rule 16 – Abnormal Course Conditions
- Rule 17 – Penalty Areas
- Rule 19 – Unplayable Ball
- Rule 18 – Stroke and Distance, Lost Ball, Out of Bounds, Provisional
- Rule 12 – Bunkers
- Rule 13 – Putting Green
- Rule 3 – Match Play Rules
- Changes to WGAP TEAM MATCHES

Publications

GOLF'S NEW RULES: **AT YOUR FINGERTIPS**

The new Rules will be presented in a variety of digital and print formats.

The following three Rules publications will be made available in September 2018.



The Player's Edition of the Rules of Golf

Primary resource for players

- A shorter, more user-friendly version of the Rules of Golf, written for you, the player
- Includes explanatory images and diagrams
- Available digitally and as pocket-size print publication

The Rules of Golf

Primary resource for officials

- Full version covering all the playing Rules
- Includes explanatory images and diagrams
- Available digitally and as large-size print publication

The Official Guide to the Rules of Golf

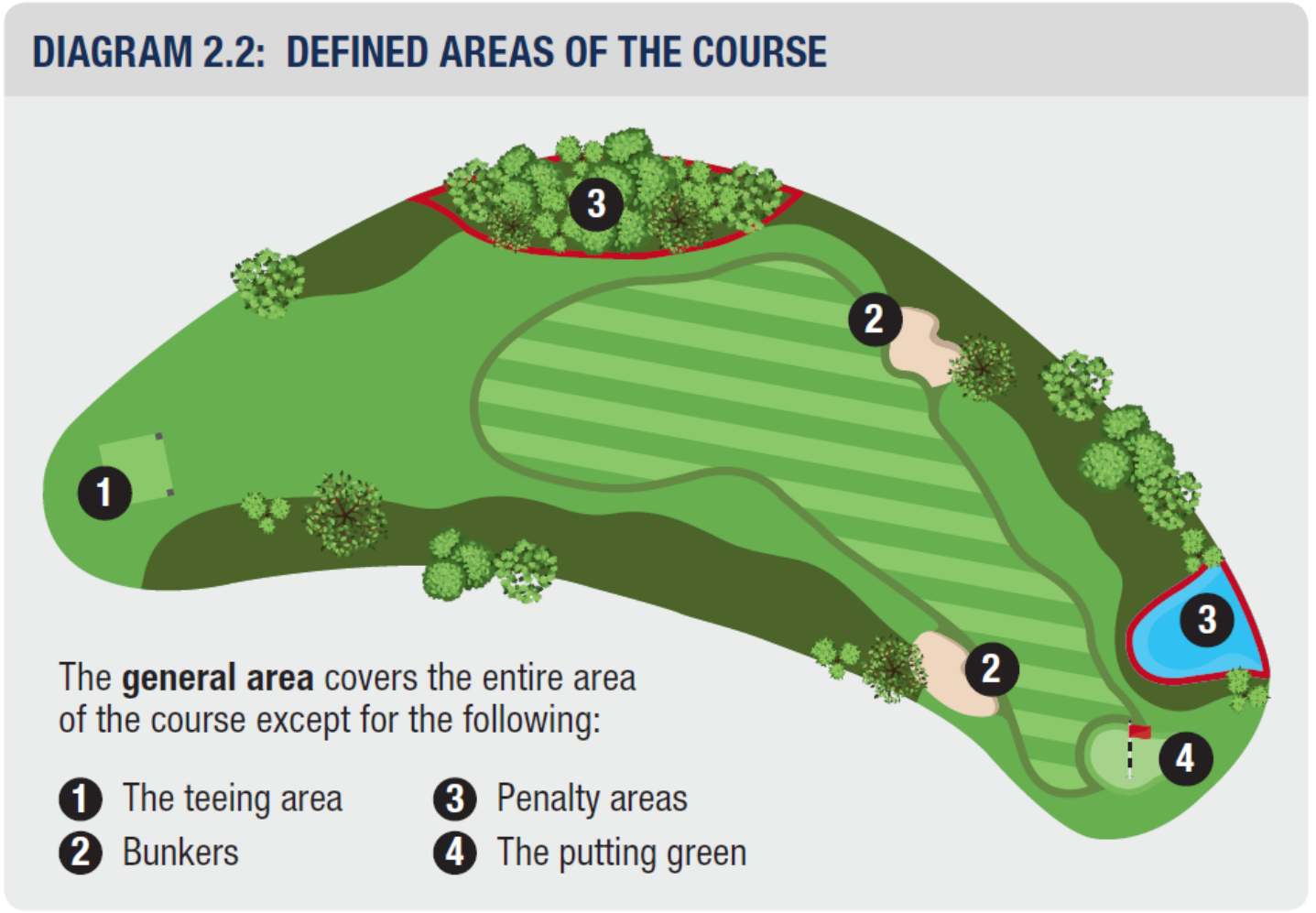
Supplementary resource for officials

- Replaces Decisions book and provides long-form guidance to assist with officiating and administration
- Includes the Rules of Golf, Interpretations, Committee Procedures, and Modified Rules of Golf for Players with Disabilities
- Available digitally and as large-size print publication

R&A USGA

Rule 2 – The Course

- Important to know the area of the course where your ball lies to determine your options.
- 5 Areas of the Course are:
  - General Area
  - Teeing Area
  - Penalty Areas
  - Bunkers
  - Putting Green



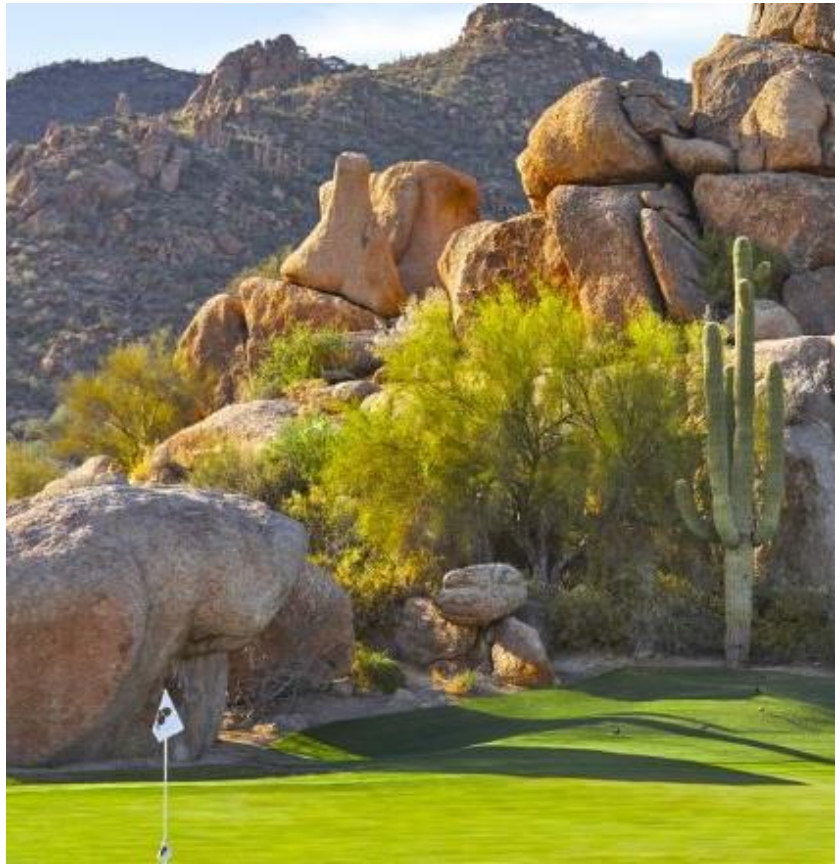
1. AREA WHERE
BALL LIES

Rule 15 – Loose Impediments – Naturally Occur on the Golf Course

- Loose Impediment:
  - Any unattached natural object such as:
    - Stones, loose grass, leaves, branches, sticks
    - Dead animals and animal waste
    - Worms, insects, and similar animals that can be easily removed, and the mounds/webs they build
    - Clumps of compacted soil (including aeration plugs)

Rule 15 – Loose Impediments

- Such natural objects are NOT loose if they are:
  - Attached or growing
  - Solidly embedded in the ground (can't be picked out easily)
  - Sticking to the ball
- Special cases:
  - Sand and loose soil – NOT loose impediments
  - Dew, frost, and water – NOT loose impediments
  - Snow and natural ice – either loose impediments or (when on ground) temporary water – player's choice
  - Spider webs – are loose impediments even though they are attached to another object



Rights – Loose Impediments

- A player may remove loose impediments that interfere with play.
- EXCEPTIONS:
  - Loose Impediments:
    - Removing loose impediments where a ball must be replaced (doesn't apply when taking a drop)
    - Deliberately removing loose impediments to affect a ball in motion

Restrictions – Loose Impediments

- Loose Impediments: RISK WITH REMOVING
  - If a player's removal of loose impediments causes her ball to move:
    - Ball must be replaced on original spot
    - If moved ball was anywhere except putting green or teeing area, player gets a 1 STROKE PENALTY.
  - EXCEPTION:
    - If player causes ball to move during a reasonable search, no penalty.

Rule 15 – Movable Obstructions (NOT Naturally Occurring on Golf Course

- Obstruction:
  - Any artificial object EXCEPT for integral objects and boundary objects.
  - Examples:
    - Artificially surfaced roads/paths
    - Buildings and rain shelters
    - Sprinkler heads, drains, irrigation/control boxes
    - Stakes, walls, railings, fences (but not when they are boundary objects)
    - Golf carts, mowers, cars, other vehicles
    - Waste containers, signposts, benches
    - Player's equipment, flagsticks, rakes
  - Some are movable, some are not. This rule covers the ones you can move easily.

Rights – Movable Obstructions

- A player may remove movable obstructions that interfere with play.
- EXCEPTIONS for Movable Obstructions:
  - Moving tee markers from your teeing area
  - Deliberately removing movable obstructions to affect a ball in motion
  - Removing stakes that determine out of bounds.

Restrictions – Movable Obstructions

- Movable Obstructions:
  - If a player's removal of a movable obstruction causes her ball to move:
    - Ball must be replaced on original spot
    - NO penalty

MOVABLE OBJECTS

Questions –
Rule 2 The Course and
Rule 15
Loose Impediments and Movable Obstructions

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Rule 14 – Ball Procedures

DROPPING PROCEDURES:

- Use these for anytime you have to take relief (either free or penalty).
- How you proceed is determined by the area of the course.
- NOT used when the rules say to replace a ball on a spot.

Simplified Dropping Procedure

- Must drop in the “right way”
  - Knee height
  - Straight down (no throw, spin, roll)
  - Must NOT hit the player or player’s equipment before hitting the relief area
  - Ball must hit in the relief area and stay in the relief area

Club-Lengths

- Relief areas are always measured by the player's longest club
- Other than the putter.

Important Terms for Dropping Procedures

- REFERENCE POINT
  - The starting point for measuring a relief area
  - Will be different depending on relief being taken

- RELIEF AREA
  - Where the ball must be dropped AND come to rest
  - 2 club-lengths for lateral relief
  - 1 club-length for everything else
  - Never closer to hole than reference point (except when using back on the line relief)

Simplified Dropping Procedures

- When to Drop Again
  - Drop, drop, place, place

Simplified Dropping Procedures

- When to Drop Again
  - Drop, drop, place, place
- “wrong way” drops don’t count – you MUST redrop
  - Not knee height
  - Hits player or player’s equipment (before hitting the ground)
  - Doesn’t hit in relief area when dropped
- When taking free and penalty relief, you may use your original or another ball.

Nearest Point of Complete Relief ≠ Best Option

Questions – Rule 14 (Dropping Procedures)

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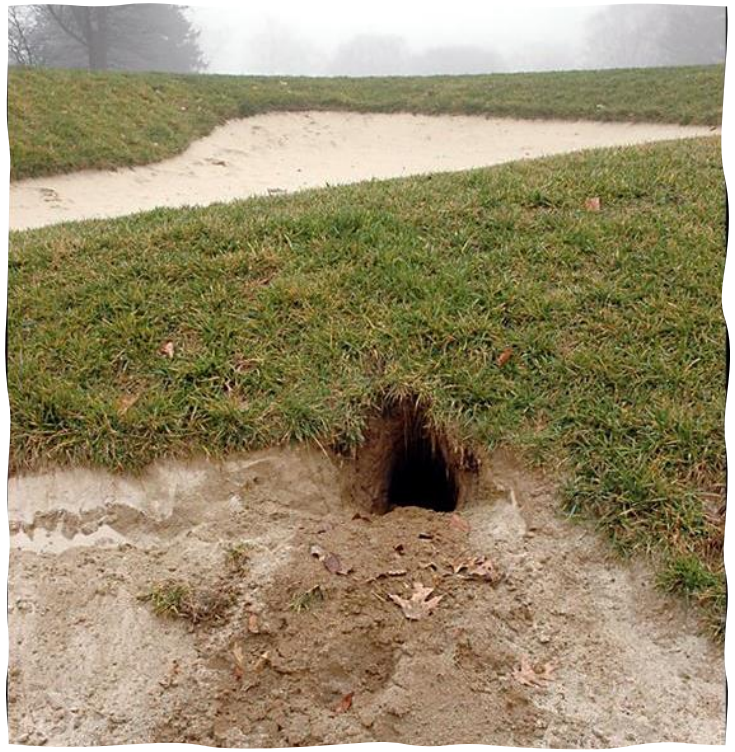
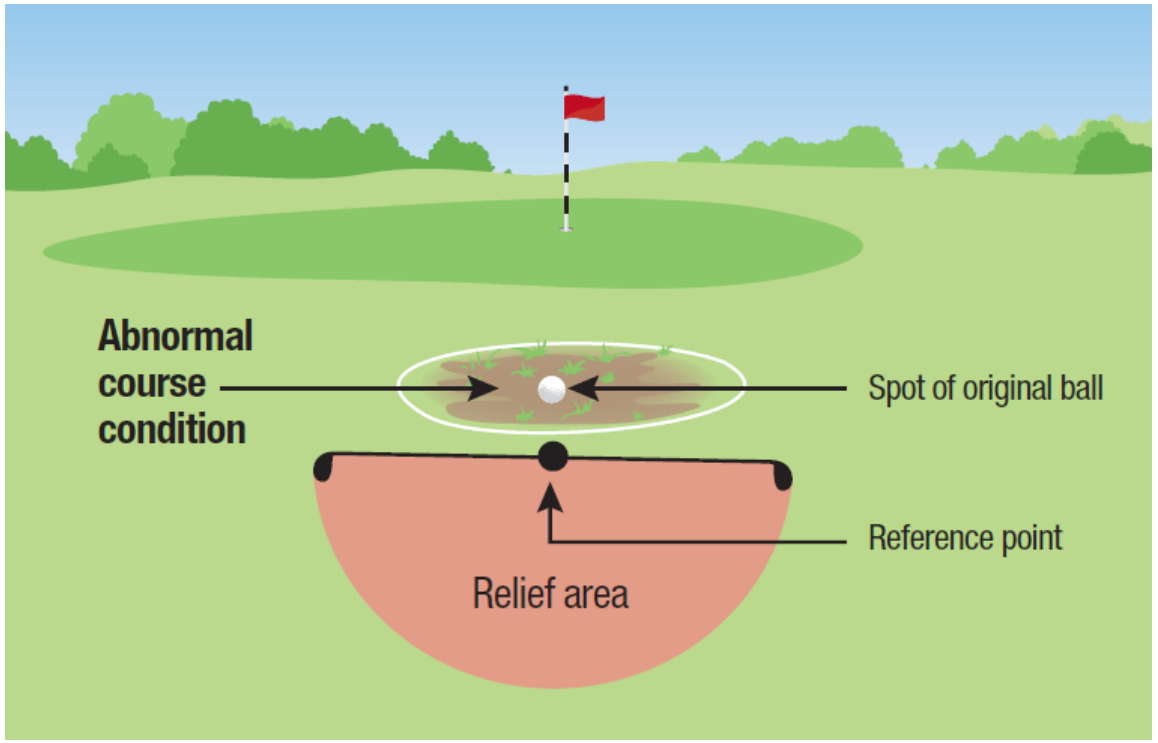
Rule 16 - Abnormal Course Conditions

- Immovable Obstructions
- Ground Under Repair
- Temporary Water
- Animal Holes





Rule 16 - Abnormal Course Conditions

RELIEF GIVEN ANYWHERE ON GOLF COURSE EXCEPT PENALTY AREAS.

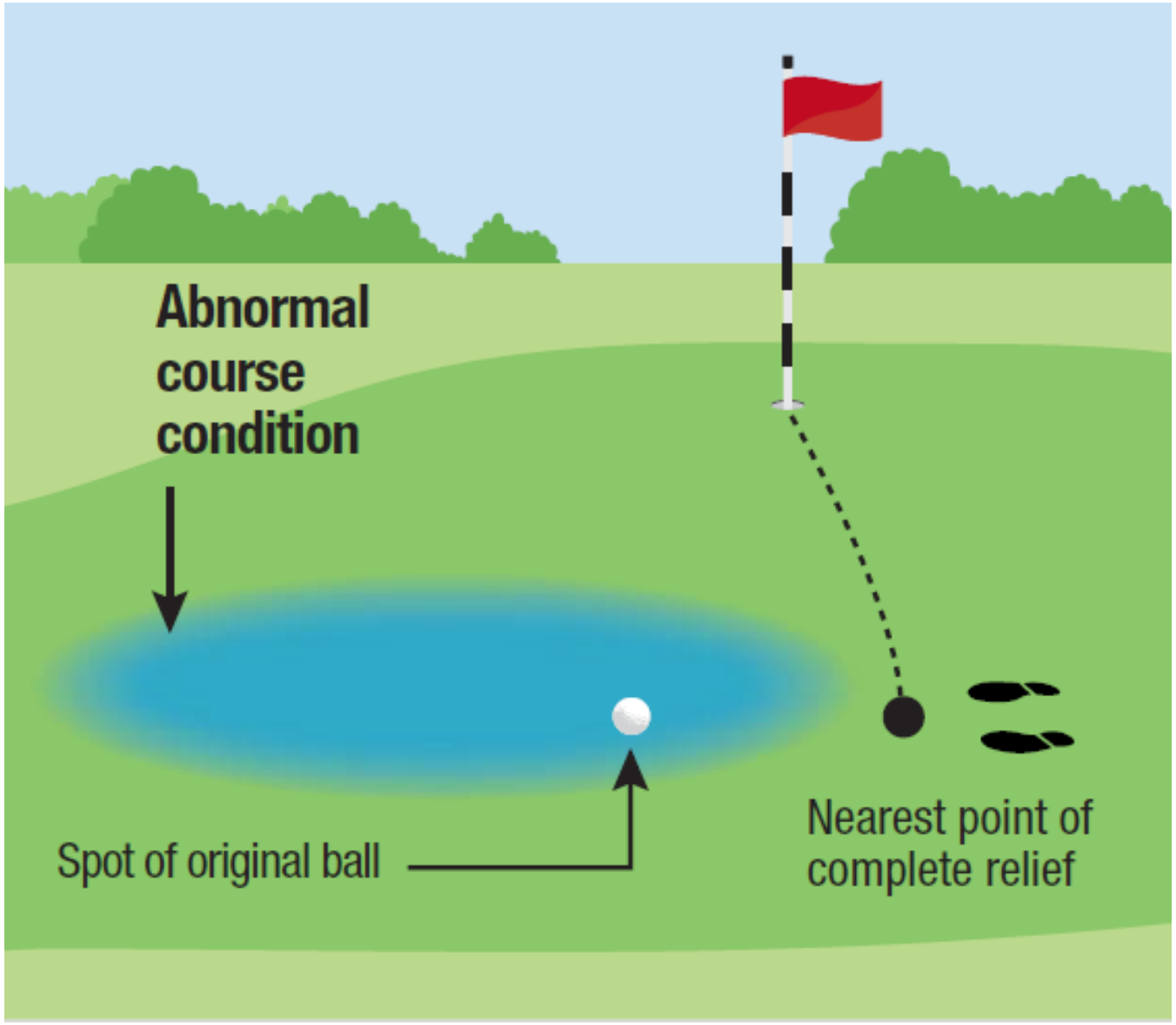
Free Relief

- Player may drop original ball or another ball
- Reference Point:
  - Nearest point of complete relief (*not nicest point of relief*)
  - Must be in general area
- Relief Area Size:
  - One club-length measured from reference point
- Limits on Location of Relief Area:
  - Not nearer the hole than reference point
  - Complete relief for lie, stance, swing
  - Must be in general area unless…
  - If in bunker, must remain in bunker for free relief.

Rule 16 – Abnormal Course Conditions

PUTTING GREEN RELIEF

- Free relief – for lie, stance, and LINE of putt.
- Ball must be on the putting green.
- Player may PLACE original ball or another ball
- On the nearest point of complete relief (putting green or general area)



Dangerous Animal Condition

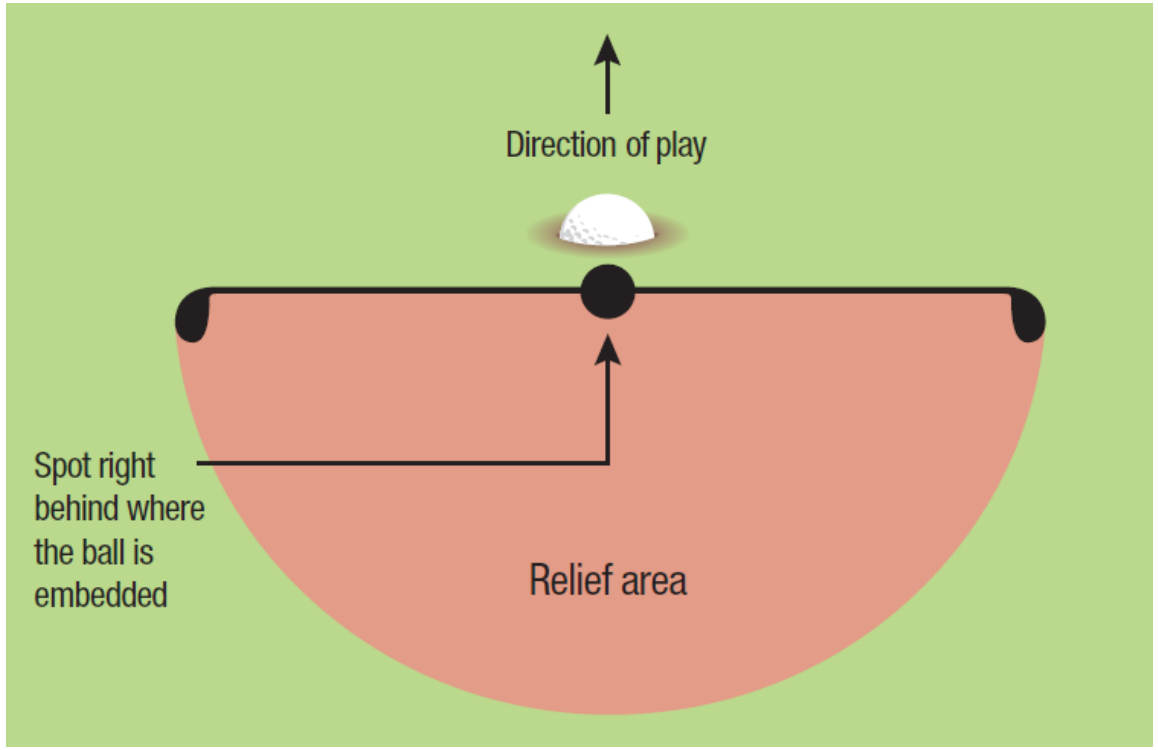
- Exists when a dangerous animal (i.e. – snake, stinging bees, alligators, fire ants, etc.) are near a ball and would cause serious physical injury to the player if she had to play it as it lies.
- Free relief everywhere.
  - If in bunker, must remain in bunker for free relief (can come outside bunker – closest point of complete relief – for one penalty stroke)
  - If in penalty area, must remain in penalty area for free relief. Can use penalty area relief to come out of PA for one penalty shot.

Embedded Ball Relief (Rule 16.3)

- Embedded ball (general area ONLY):
  - When a player's ball is in its **<u>own</u>** 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).

Embedded Ball Relief (Rule 16.3)

- On the putting green
  - Mark and lift, then repair the pitch-mark, then replace on spot.
- No relief for embedded ball in bunkers or penalty areas
- Free relief available ANYWHERE in GENERAL AREA
  - Reference Point:
    - spot right behind where ball is embedded
  - Relief Area Size:
    - One club-length measured from reference point
    - Not nearer the hole than reference point
    - Must be in general area



Questions – Rule 16 (Abnormal Course Conditions, Dangerous Animal Condition, Embedded Ball)

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Rule 17 – Penalty Areas

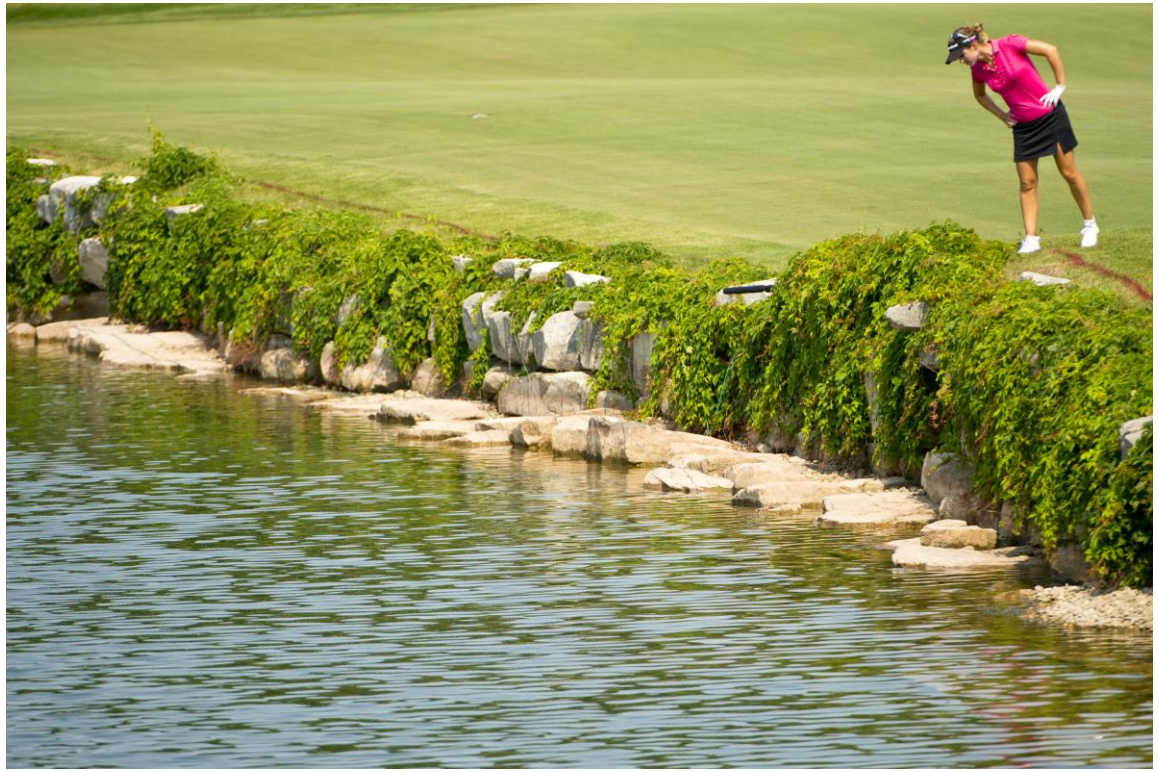
- Penalty Areas:
  - Player always has option to play the ball out of the penalty area.
  - Area from which relief with a 1-stroke penalty is allowed if player's ball comes to rest there.
  - Includes:
    - Any body of water on the course (i.e. – sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, etc.)
    - Any other part of the course marked as penalty area
  - Two different types:
    - Yellow – 2 relief options
    - Red – 3 relief options
  - Should be defined by stakes or lines or physical features (i.e. – wall). If stakes and lines present, lines define the area.

Rule 17 – Penalty Areas

- Play from inside Penalty Areas allowed:
  - May move loose impediments
  - Make practice swings that touch the ground
  - Ground your club behind the ball
  - Touch water

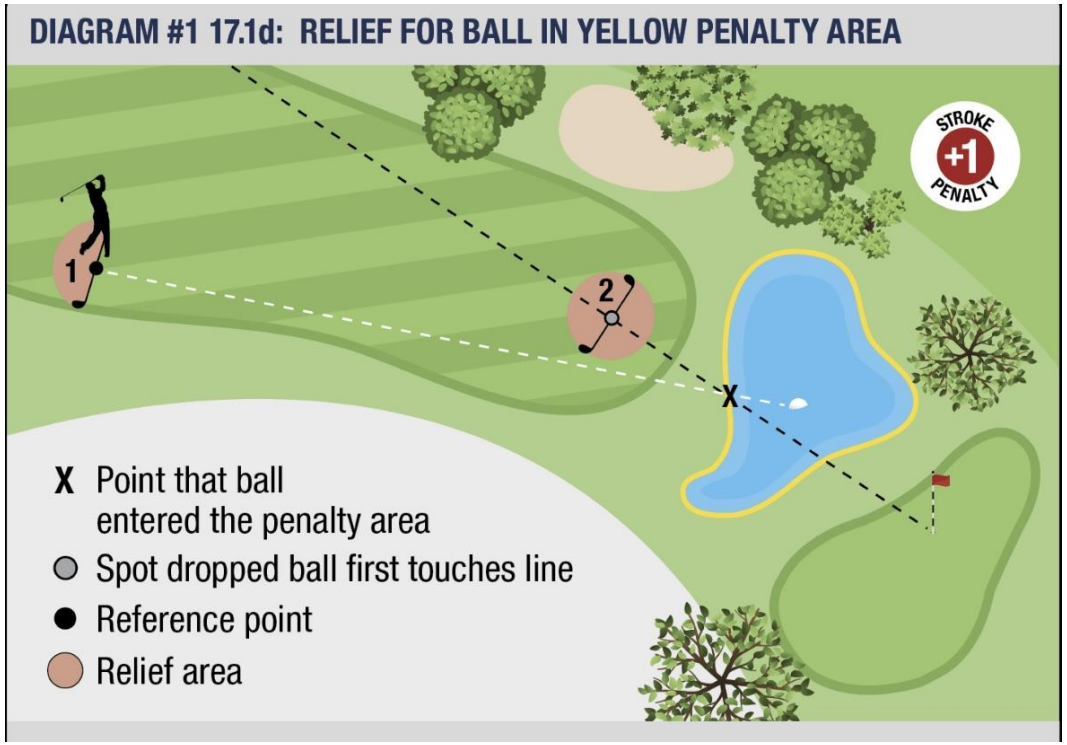
Rule 17 – Penalty Areas

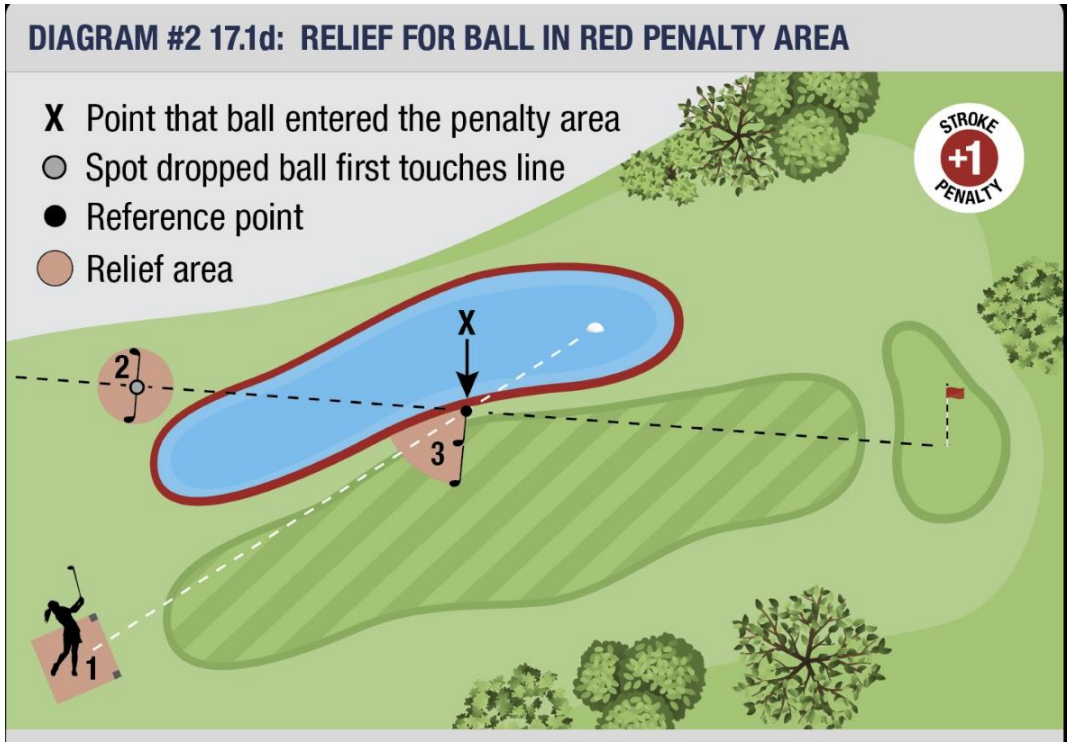
- Relief from Penalty Areas
  - Available when:
    - Player's ball is found in the penalty areas
    - Or is known or virtually certain to be in penalty area (even if not found)
- Known or Virtually Certain:
  - Rules of Golf standard for determining what happened to a player's ball.
    - Either conclusive evidence (i.e. – someone saw what happened)
    - Or 95% likely that the event in question happened



Rule 17 – Penalty Areas

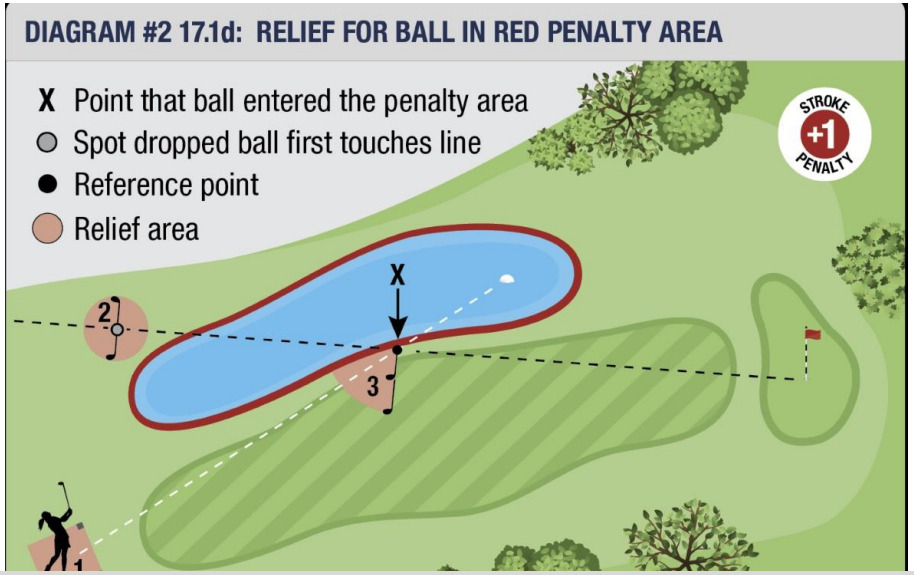
- Relief Options from Penalty Areas (1 penalty stroke):
  1. Stroke and Distance Relief – Red or Yellow penalty areas
     - Go back to where you last hit the ball and follow procedures to put another ball in play.

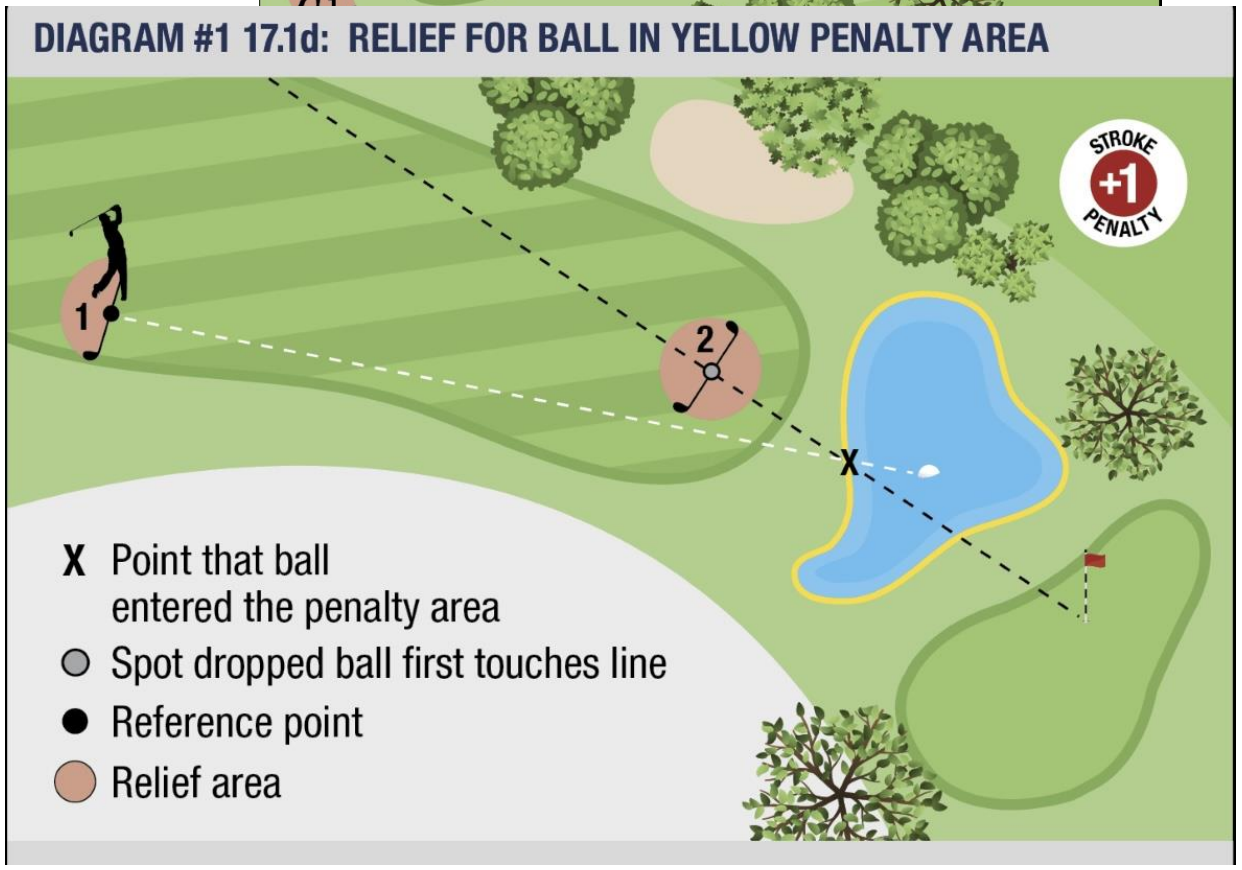




Rule 17 – Penalty Areas

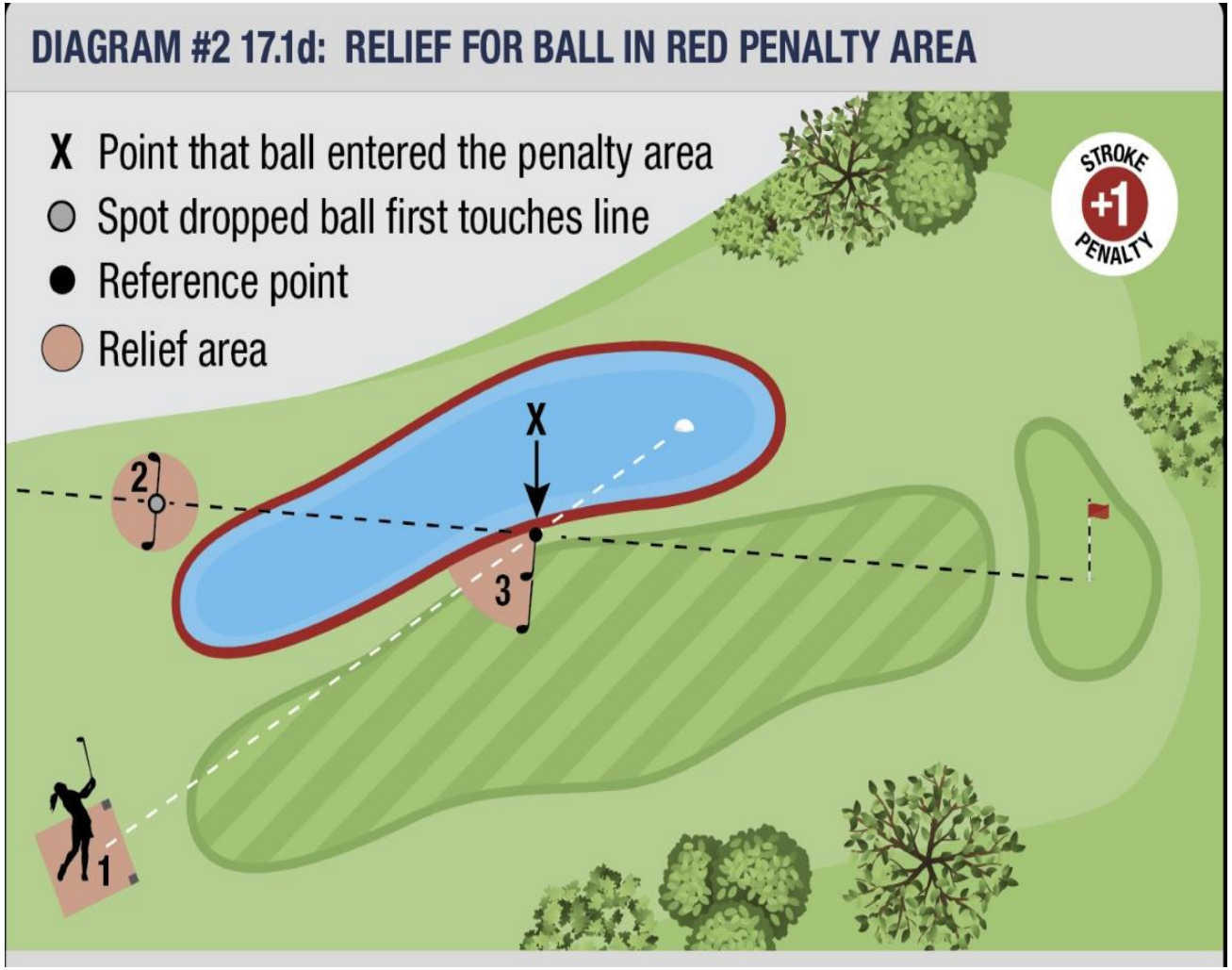
- Relief Options from Penalty Areas (1 penalty stroke):
  1. Stroke and Distance Relief – Red or Yellow penalty areas
  2. Back on the Line Relief – Red or Yellow penalty areas
     - Reference Point – picked by player on invisible line keeping point where the ball last crossed penalty area and pin in line (mark point with tee)
     - Relief Area – one club-length measured from reference point, **IN ANY DIRECTION**, may be any area of the course except same penalty area
     - Ball must first hit on the line and then can roll in any direction up to one club-length





Rule 17 – Penalty Areas

- Relief Options from Penalty Areas (1 penalty stroke):
  1. Stroke and Distance Relief – Red or Yellow penalty areas
  2. Back on the Line Relief – Red or Yellow penalty areas
  3. Lateral Relief – Red penalty area ONLY
     - Reference Point – where original ball last crossed the edge of the red penalty area
     - Relief Area – 2 club-lengths measured from reference point, not nearer the hole than reference point, in any area of the course (except same penalty area)



Questions – Rule 17 Penalty Areas

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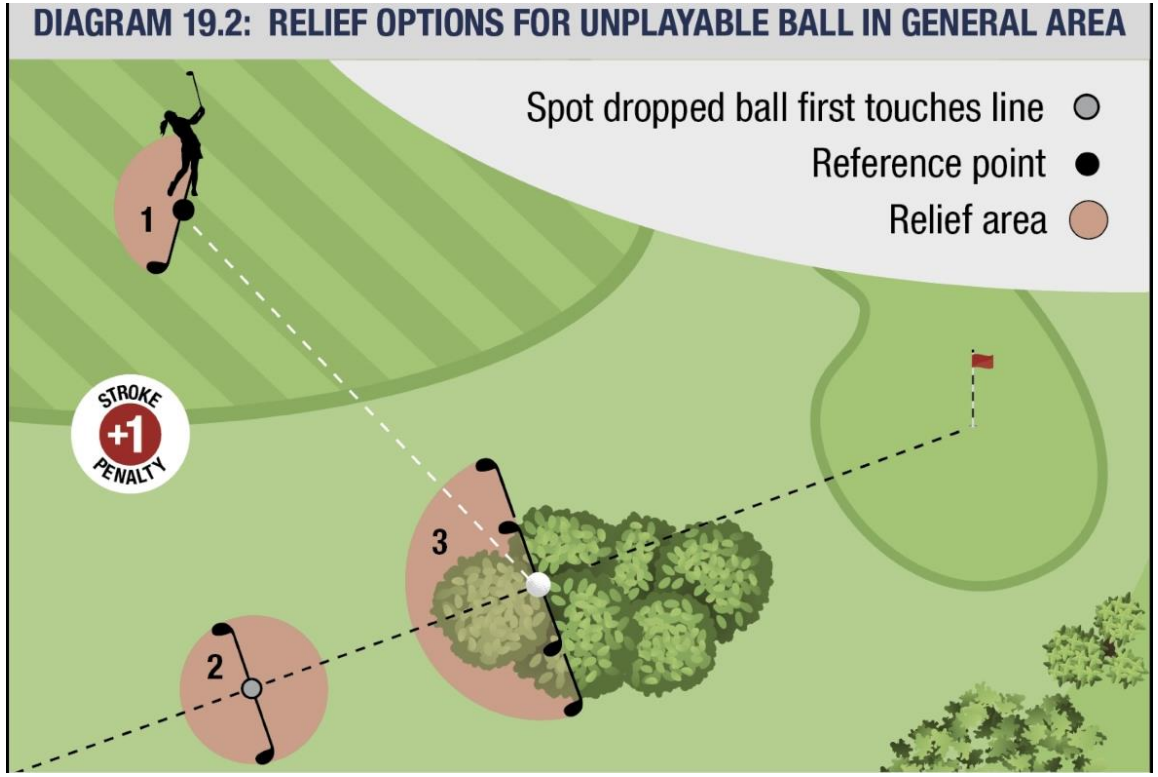
Rule 19 – Unplayable Ball

3 options for unplayable ball relief – each adding 1 penalty stroke.

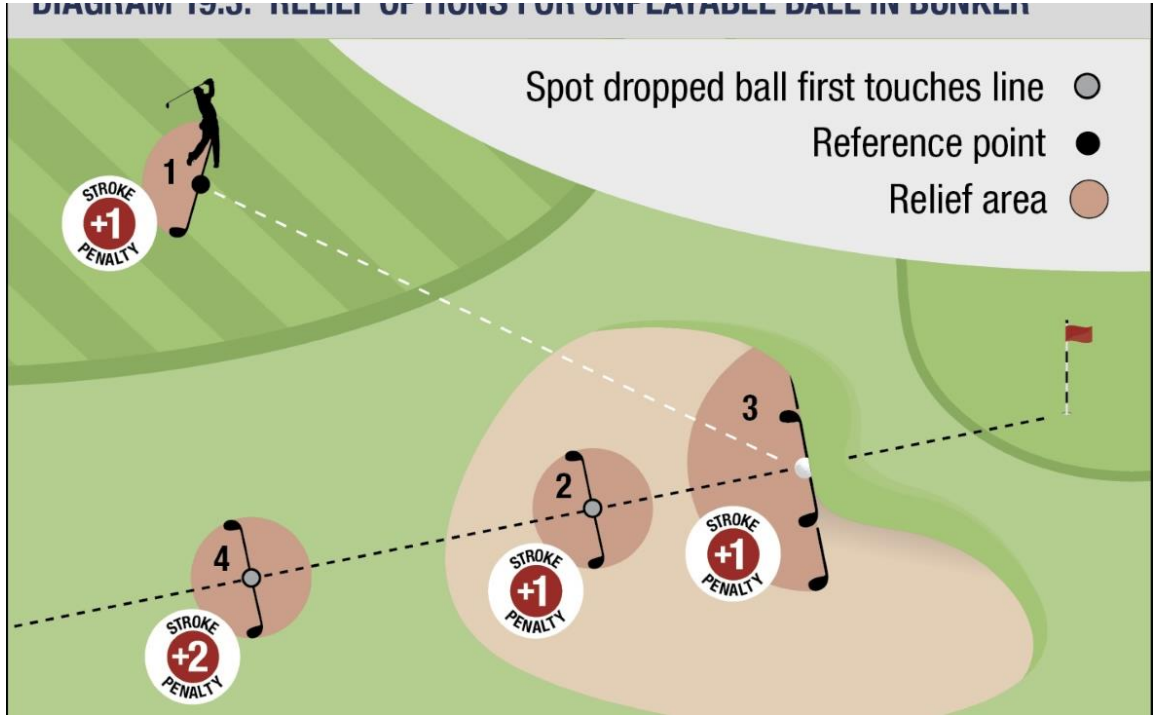
1. Stroke and Distance relief – an option even if original ball not found and identified
2. Back on the Line relief – drop in a 1 club-length relief area on a line using reference point (where original ball came to rest) and pin going back as far as the player chooses.
3. Lateral relief – use spot original ball came to rest as reference point and relief area is two club-lengths from there.



Rule 19 – Unplayable Ball

Special Rules for taking an unplayable ball in a bunker:

- Same three one-penalty stroke options apply, but for back on the line and lateral relief, the ball MUST remain in the bunker.
- Extra Option:
  - Back on the Line relief OUTSIDE bunker – 2 penalty strokes applied.



Questions – Rule 19 Unplayable Ball

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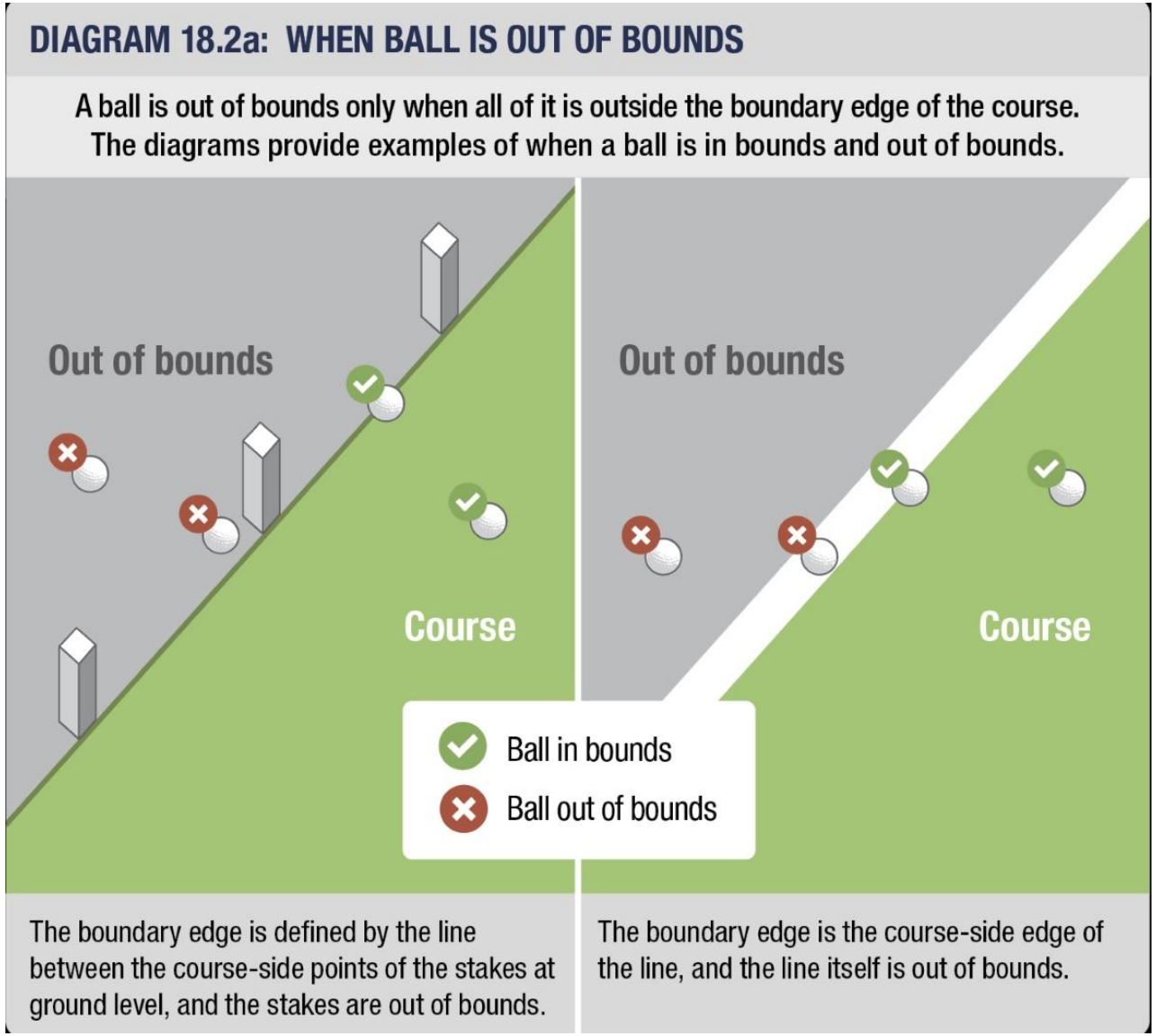
Rule 18 – Stroke and Distance, Lost Ball/Out of Bounds, Provisional Ball

- A player ALWAYS has the option to take stroke and distance relief with 1 penalty stroke and go back to where she played her last shot.
  - Option with penalty areas, unplayable ball, lost ball, ball out of bounds, etc.
- Once a player puts another ball in play under stroke and distance penalty, that is it. The original ball can no longer be played.
  - Doesn't apply to provisional balls or when playing a 2nd ball in stroke play

Out of Bounds

No relief given for boundary objects ~ fences, stakes, walls

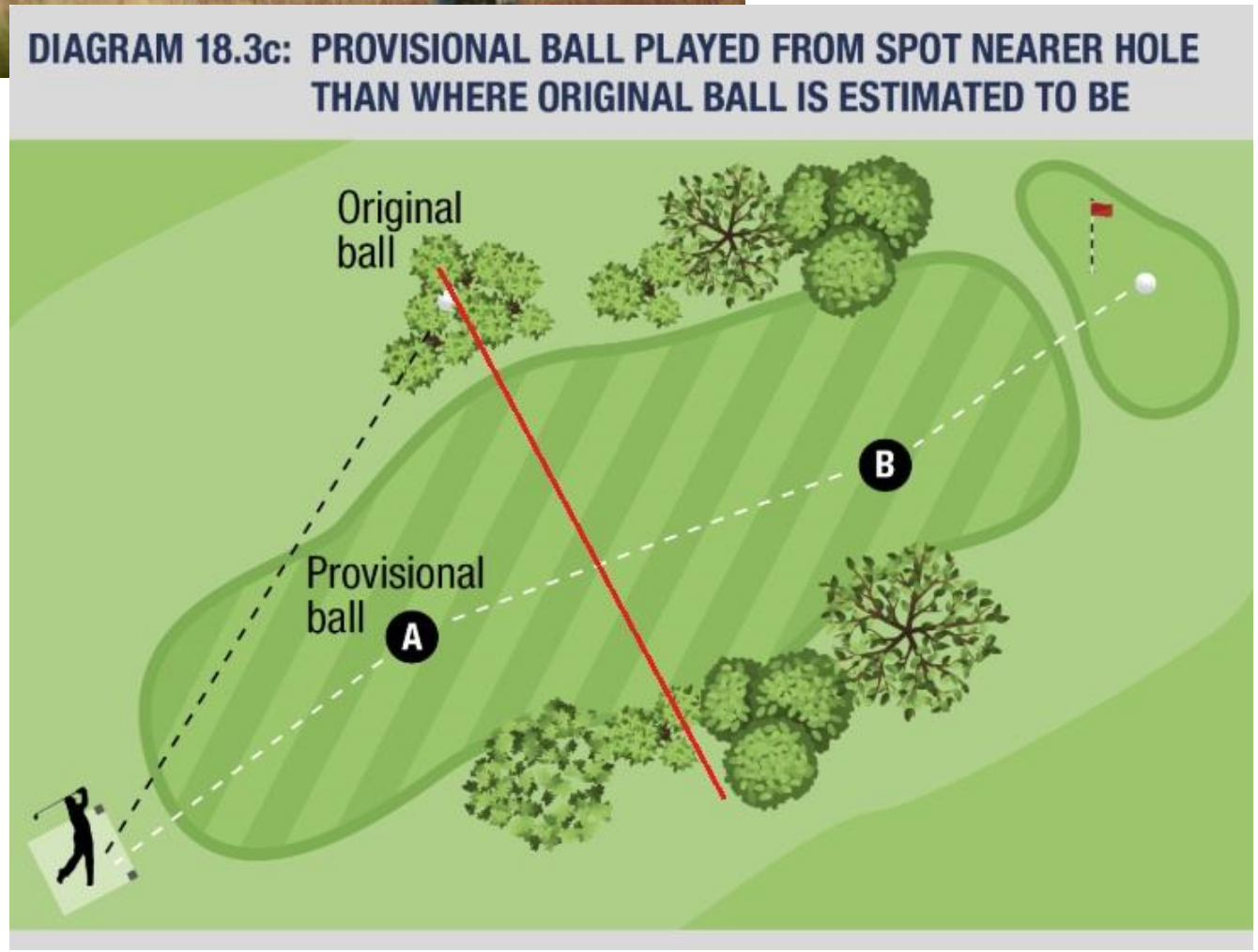


Rule 18 – Lost or Out of Bounds

- Ball is lost if, at the end of the 3-minute search, it is not found.
- Time starts when search initiated by player, her caddie, or her partner or partner's caddie.
- Only option for player is to use stroke and distance (with 1 penalty stroke) to put another ball in play.

Rule 18 – Provisional Ball

- If a player believes her ball may be lost (outside of a penalty area) or out of bounds, she may hit a provisional.
- Before a stroke is made at the provisional ball, the player must announce that she is playing a provisional.
- She can play the provisional up to the point where she believes the original ball came to rest. If she finds the original ball within the 3-minute search time, the provisional ball is abandoned.



Rule 7 - Reasonably Searching for Your Ball

- 3-minute search window starts when you or your caddie start looking for your ball.
- You can take reasonable actions to find your ball:
  - Moving sand/water
  - Moving/bending grass, bushes, tree branches, other growing or attached natural objects
- If reasonable actions as part of a fair search improve conditions affecting the stroke, no penalty. If excessive, then there is a penalty.
- If ball accidentally moved during search, no penalty. Must be replaced on its original spot (and original lie).
- If you can't identify the ball as yours:
  - Mark the spot of the ball first.
  - Lift to identify (DO NOT CLEAN). Then replace on its spot.

Questions – Rule 18 (Lost/OB/Provisional) and Rule 7 (Fairly Searching for Ball)

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Rule 12 - Bunkers

- Loose impediments can be moved (leaves, sticks, rocks)
- Relaxed restrictions:
  - Digging in with feet to take stance
  - Smooth bunker to care for course
  - Place clubs, other equipment in bunker
  - Lean on club to rest/balance/prevent fall
  - Strike sand in frustration/anger

Rule 12 - Bunkers

- Remaining restrictions:
  - Cannot test the surface of the sand (with hand, club, rake, other)
  - Cannot touch sand with club right behind or in front of your ball
  - Cannot make practice swings where club hits sand
  - Cannot touch the sand as you make a backswing
- Special rules apply when taking relief in bunker

Rule 13 – Putting Green

- Lots of rights on putting green (ball has to be touching the green to be considered on it).
- Rights:
  - May mark, lift, and clean ball
  - May remove sand or loose soil from green
  - May repair damage – but cannot delay play….
    - Ball marks/shoe marks/scuffs/indentation from equipment or flag
    - Old hole plugs, turf plugs, seams of cut turf, scrapes/indents from maintenance equipment
    - Animal tracks, hoof prints
    - Embedded objects (i.e. – acorn, stone)
  - Not considered “damage” – <u>cannot fix</u>
    - Normal maintenance (i.e. aeration holes)
    - Irrigation/rain/other natural forces
    - Natural imperfections (weeds, wear, disease)
    - Natural wear around the hole

Rule 13 – Putting Green

- No penalty if you (or someone else) accidentally cause your ball (or ball-marker to move) on putting green. Just replace on original spot.

- After marking and lifting your ball, if your ball moves for ANY reason (even natural forces), you may replace it on its original spot with no penalty.
- If you haven't marked and lifted it, you may not replace it if it is moved by natural forces (wind, water). Must play it as it lies.

Rule 13 – Putting Greens

- Flagstick
  - No penalty if a putt strikes an unattended flagstick in the hole.
  - Must play it as it lies if not holed.
  - If ball ends up resting against flagstick and edge of cup, considered holed if part of the ball is below the surface of the green.

Questions – Rule 12 (Bunkers) and Rule 13 (Putting Green)

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Match Play Rules to Know ~ Rule 3.2

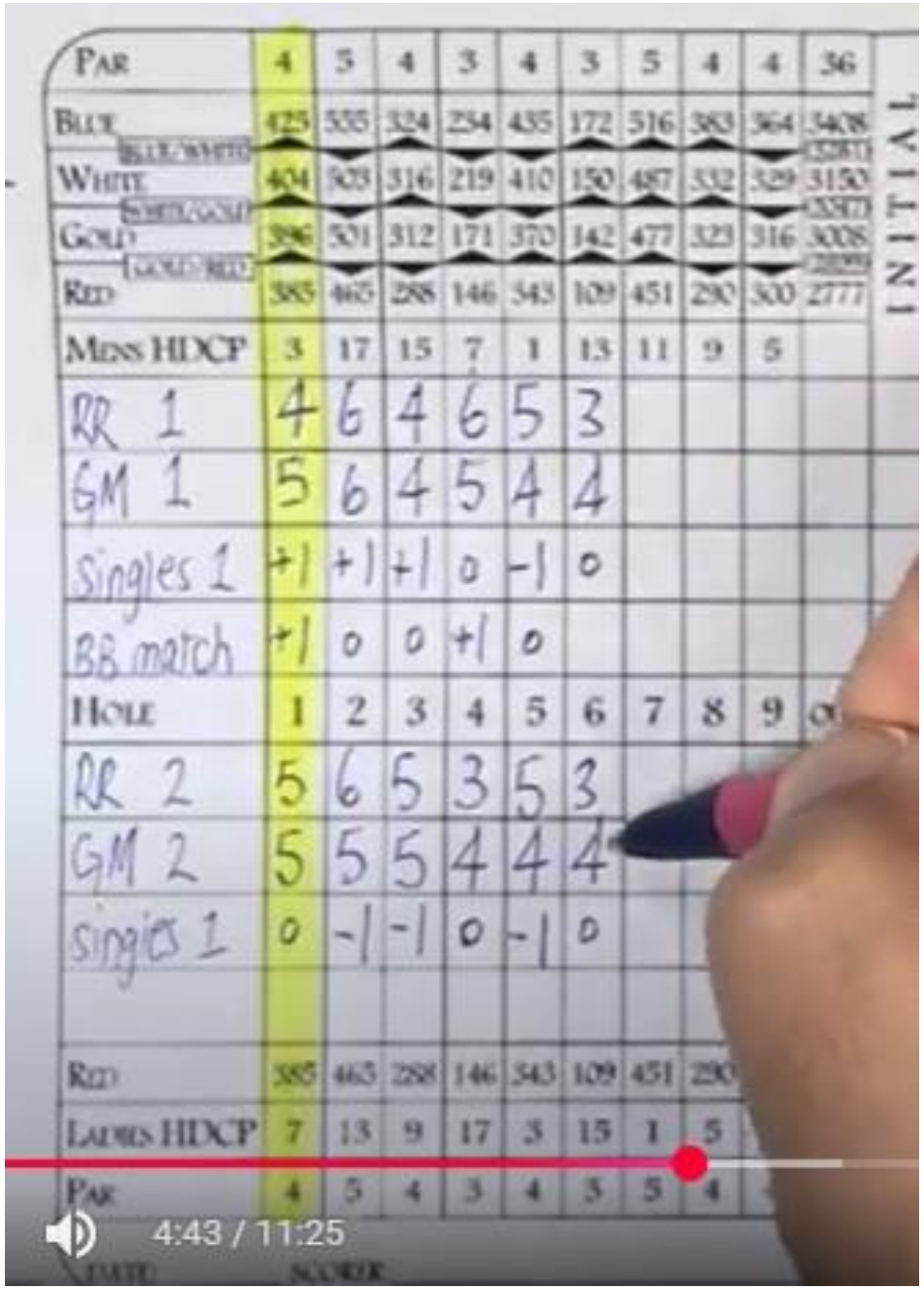
- Playing against one opponent in 18 individual competitions. Either win, lose, or tie hole. Winner of match has won more holes than there are left to compete on.
- A player may concede their opponent's next stroke, a hole, or the match.
  - Concede next stroke anytime before the opponent's next stroke is made.
  - Concede hole any time before hole is completed (including before you start it).
  - Concede the match anytime before the result of the match is decided.
- Concession must be verbal or a motion that implies concession.
  - If you pick up your ball because of a reasonable misunderstanding of concession, there is no penalty. Just replace it and play on.
- Concessions cannot be withdrawn. Once made, they are final.

Match Play Rules to Know ~ Rule 3.2

- You and your opponent always have the right to know how many strokes you each have taken on a hole.
- You and your opponent have a responsibility to tell the other about any penalty strokes taken.
- If the wrong number of strokes taken is reported, it is the general penalty unless corrected in time. (one exception – when it doesn't affect the results of the hole)
- If you disagree about a ruling, you have the right to make a claim before anyone tees off the next hole.
- No penalty if you and your opponent apply an incorrect Rule or in an incorrect way.
  - Cannot agree to ignore or waive Rules.

2024 Team Match Changes

- Playing a Singles Match and a Four-Ball (Better Ball of Partners) Match concurrently.
  - Just play your own ball and worry about your singles match. The best score between you and your partner will count towards the four-ball match.
- Each match worth 1 point. No extra holes. If you are tied at the end of 18 holes, you and your opponent each get ½ point.



Additional Questions for WGAP Team Matches before the April 22nd Start?

- April 17 – Zoom open meeting from 6:30pm – 8:00pm
  - Log on at any time to ask your questions.
  - Feel free to stay and listen or just ask and leave. Whatever you have time for.
- Make sure to tune in to the 5 videos on YouTube covering:
  - Concessions
  - Honor on the Tee
  - Late Player Protocol
  - Scoring a WGAP Match – 2 different ways (tee times and shotgun start)
  - Pace of Play Tips

Thank you for coming!

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