

USGA
SHORT COURSE

The Back Nine: Status of the Ball

10. After hitting your tee shot toward a bunker, you find a ball in a poor lie in that bunker. Because you cannot tell if the ball is yours, you mark the spot of the ball and lift it. After seeing it is the same brand, model and number of the ball you are playing, you replace it in the same lie. You make a stroke at that ball and it comes to rest on the putting green. While you are raking the sand, you move another ball and realize it is your original ball you played from the tee. At this point, you call for a referee. What is the ruling in stroke play?
- a. You proceeded correctly and must continue with the ball you played from the bunker.
 - b. You have played a wrong ball and must correct your mistake by abandoning the ball played from the bunker and continue play with your original ball.
 - c. You were not allowed to substitute a ball. You get a total of two penalty strokes total for substituting a ball in a wrong place and must continue with the ball played from the bunker.
 - d. Your play of the substituted ball is treated as taking stroke-and-distance relief. In addition to that one-stroke penalty you get two additional penalty strokes for playing from a wrong place and may need to correct the wrong place if it's considered a serious breach.
11. After mishitting a short approach shot over the putting green and out of sight, you arrive at the back of the green and see a steep slope leading to a red penalty area that is adjacent to an area that is out of bounds. Other players have already started to search for your ball and, after briefly joining the search, and without knowledge or virtual certainty, you assume your ball is in the penalty area and inform the players in your group that you are going to take penalty area relief. Though you consider taking lateral relief, you quickly decide your best option is to go back and try the approach shot again. Based on the estimated point where you made your last stroke, you correctly drop a ball in the relief area. Before making a stroke, and before the end of the 3-minute search time, your original ball is found just outside the penalty area. What is the correct ruling?
- a. Your original ball is now a wrong ball and you must continue with the substituted ball.
 - b. Since your original ball was found before the end of the 3-minute search time, your original ball is in play and you must continue with that ball.
 - c. Since your original ball was found before the end of the 3-minute search time, you may choose to play either your original ball or the substituted ball.
12. Unbeknownst to you, a spectator tosses your original ball onto the course after your tee shot came to rest out of bounds. You play your original ball from its new location onto the putting green and hole out. After you have started play of the next hole, the actions of the spectator are brought to your attention. What is the status of the ball when you played it from its new location?
- a. Provisional ball
 - b. Wrong ball
 - c. Ball in play
 - d. Substituted ball

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13. On a long par 4, you hook your tee shot into a large area of rocks to the left of the hole. You play a provisional ball that comes to rest on the right side of the fairway the same distance from the hole as where you estimate your original ball to be. Although spectators are already looking in the rocks for your original ball, you choose not to search for it, believing you won't be able to play it from the rocks and that stroke-and-distance relief is your only good option. You ask the spectators to stop looking and declare the ball lost. You then make a stroke at your provisional ball and it comes to rest on the green, close to the hole. After having marked the spot of and lifted your provisional ball from the putting green, you hear that a spectator found your original ball in a terrible lie amongst the rocks after having searched for about 10 minutes. Which one of the following statements is true?
- Once you declared your original ball lost, the fact that someone found it is irrelevant. You must continue with the provisional ball.
 - Your original could no longer be played when you played another stroke with the provisional ball from at or nearer to the hole than where the original ball was estimated to be, so your provisional ball is in play.
 - Since your original was found in an unplayable position, you can declare it unplayable and continue with your provisional ball under penalty of stroke and distance.
 - You must abandon your provisional ball and proceed with your original ball. If it is unplayable, your best option might be to return to the tee to make your third stroke.
14. Your tee shot heads toward a wooded area. Believing it might be lost outside a penalty area, you play a provisional ball to the fairway and then find your original ball in a red penalty area. The provisional ball is farther from the hole than the original. Which one of the following is false?
- The provisional ball must be abandoned.
 - You may return to the tee to play under stroke and distance.
 - You may play another stroke with the provisional ball because it is farther from the hole than the original.
 - The provisional ball is a wrong ball.
15. In stroke play, another player has set down her ball on the putting green just behind her ball-marker to help her read her putt. With her ball still at rest on the green in that location, you putt from the putting green and your ball hits it, deflecting your ball into the hole. What is the ruling?
- No penalty to either player and your ball is holed.
 - No penalty to either player. Your stroke does not count and your original ball or another ball must be replaced on its original spot.
 - You get two penalty strokes and your ball is holed.
 - You get two penalty strokes. Your stroke does not count and your original ball or another ball must be replaced on its original spot.



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16. Your tee shot heads toward a wooded area and you play a provisional ball. Unknown to you, your partner's caddie – who was walking ahead of you, your partner, and your caddie – started searching for your original ball about two minutes before the three of you arrived. Just as you begin to search, play is suspended. You search for 2 more minutes and find your original ball in a playable position in the general area about 10 yards from your provisional ball that is in a similar playable position. You mark the spot of and lift the original ball and then pick up your provisional without marking its spot. When play resumes, you place a new ball on the spot from which your original was lifted and play from there. How many total penalty strokes do you get in stroke play, if any?
- 0
 - 1
 - 2
 - 3
17. After a thinned second shot, you mark and lift your ball (Ball A) in the rough to see if it is cut or cracked. There is a scuff mark on the ball, so you conclude that you are allowed to substitute. You replace Ball B on the spot and play it onto the putting green. Another player asks you what you did, and you show him the scuffed ball. The other player tells you that you were not allowed to substitute balls, so you lift Ball B from the putting green, replace Ball A on that spot and hole out. What is the ruling?
- There is no penalty.
 - In match play you lose the hole, and in stroke play you get a total penalty of two strokes.
 - In match play you lose the hole, and in stroke play you get a total penalty of four strokes.
 - In match play you lose the hole, and in stroke play you are disqualified.
18. You hit your second shot into a red penalty area and after a brief search, you estimate the point that the ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area and drop a ball under the lateral relief option. After dropping the ball in the right way and it coming to rest in the relief area, and before the 3 minute-search time is up, you see your original ball ten yards ahead in the penalty area and realize the ball must have last crossed the edge of the penalty area closer to where the original ball was found. Which one of the following is true?
- Because the original ball was found before the 3 minute-search time is up, you have the option to play the original ball as it lies or take penalty area relief.
 - You must continue with the ball you substituted to take penalty area relief, getting only one penalty stroke for relief.
 - You must abandon the substituted ball and continue with the original ball in the penalty area.
 - You must continue with relief from the penalty area, but must drop a ball again to take relief based on the location of the original ball. In doing so, you may use any penalty area relief option.