



Rule of the Month

June 1, 2019

Penalty Areas

Areas of the course formally known as water hazards and lateral water hazards are now referred to as penalty areas. While there are still two colors differentiating the type of penalty area, the Committee in charge of the course or competition has greater liberty to use red markings to provide the player with an extra relief option. Additionally, the Committee may now mark any area of the course as a penalty area, such as extreme rough where a ball is often difficult to play.

One note of caution -- in the past, both water hazards and bunkers were clumped together under the definition of hazards. Penalty areas and bunkers now have separate Rules regarding play and relief options. The word "hazard" doesn't exist in the new Rules.

Test your knowledge of penalty areas with the following quiz.

Questions: True/False

1. If a ball lies partially in the general area of the course and partially in a penalty area, the ball is treated as in the penalty area.
2. A player must not ground his or her club before making a stroke in a penalty area.
3. Loose impediments that are in the same penalty area as the ball must not be moved.
4. For a ball that hasn't been found, the player must have knowledge or virtual certainty that the ball is in the penalty area before using the relief procedures provided under Rule 17.
5. When a ball is in either a red or yellow penalty area the player may, under the stroke and distance option, play from where the previous stroke was made.
6. The back on a line relief option may be used for yellow or red penalty areas and allows a player to select their own reference point for relief.
7. The lateral relief option consisting of dropping a ball within two club-lengths of where the original ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area may allow the player to drop on the putting green side of a yellow penalty area.
8. Both the back on a line and the lateral relief options prohibit the player from dropping in and playing from the same penalty area.
9. If the player has interference from an animal hole when playing a ball inside a penalty area, he or she may take free relief but must drop the ball in a relief area inside the penalty area.
10. A ball embedded in the ground in a penalty area may be lifted, cleaned and dropped in a relief area, with no penalty, but must be dropped in the same penalty area.
11. A ball at rest that is moved by an animal has been moved by natural forces and must be played from its new location.