

One reason that golf is so popular is because it is played by standard rules based on fair play. When golf originated there were only 13 Rules of Golf. In 1894 the United States Golf Association (USGA) brought the rules to this country. Today, the Rules of Golf are contained in a pocket-sized book that is carried by almost all players on the professional tour and by most ranking amateurs. If there is any question about how a rule is applied, the USGA maintains a “Decisions on the Rules of Golf” book, to clarify and interpret rules on a case-by-case basis.

When you boil it all down, a few basic rules for fair play are all you need to remember. Here are the basic Rules of Golf you need to know before playing the game. In tournament-competitive play you are expected to carry, and be familiar with the Rules as published by the USGA, as well as any local rules that might be in effect. When in doubt about a ruling, ask your PGA Professional.

Counting Your Strokes

Mis-hits (whiffs)

You count a stroke anytime you swing at the ball—even if you miss it. Practice swings are not counted as strokes.

Playing the ball as it lies

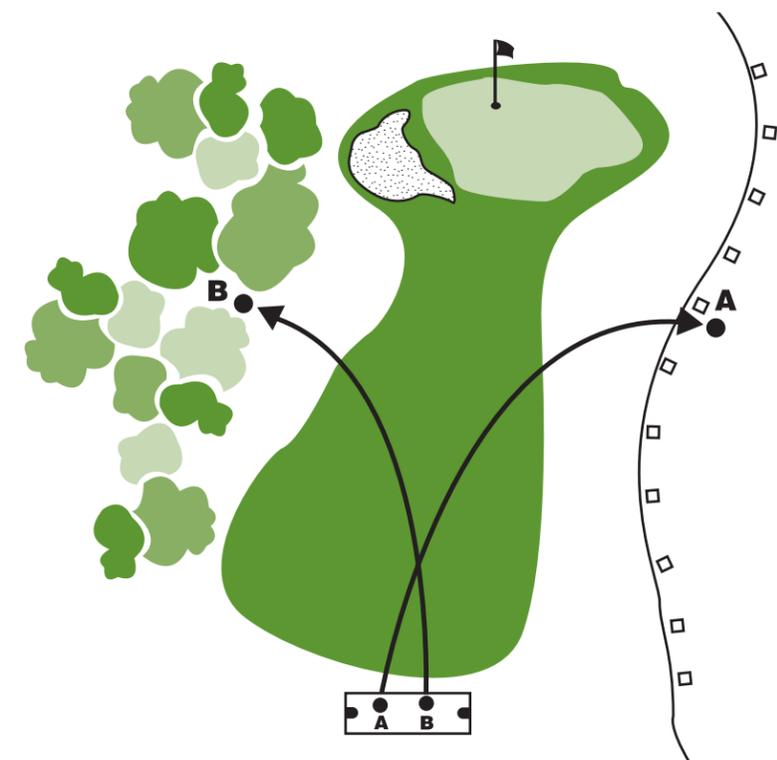
You can't touch the ball unless the Rules say you can. The ball may be marked, lifted, cleaned and replaced when it is on the putting green.

Accidental Movement of the ball

If you cause the ball to accidentally move when in the fairway, rough or on the green, you normally incur a 1-stroke penalty under Rule 18 and you must replace your ball.

Ball Lost or Out of Bounds

If you lose your ball or the ball goes out of bounds, you must add a penalty stroke and replay the shot as near as possible at the spot from which the original ball was last played (Stroke and Distance). When you're not sure you can find your ball or you think it might have traveled out of bounds, play an extra ball (provisional) to save time.



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Ball Unplayable

If you find your ball in a place where you can't play it, except in a water hazard, add a penalty stroke and drop the ball one of the following ways:

- Where you originally played from
- Back on a line, behind where the ball lies and the hole
- Two club lengths from the ball, no closer to the hole.

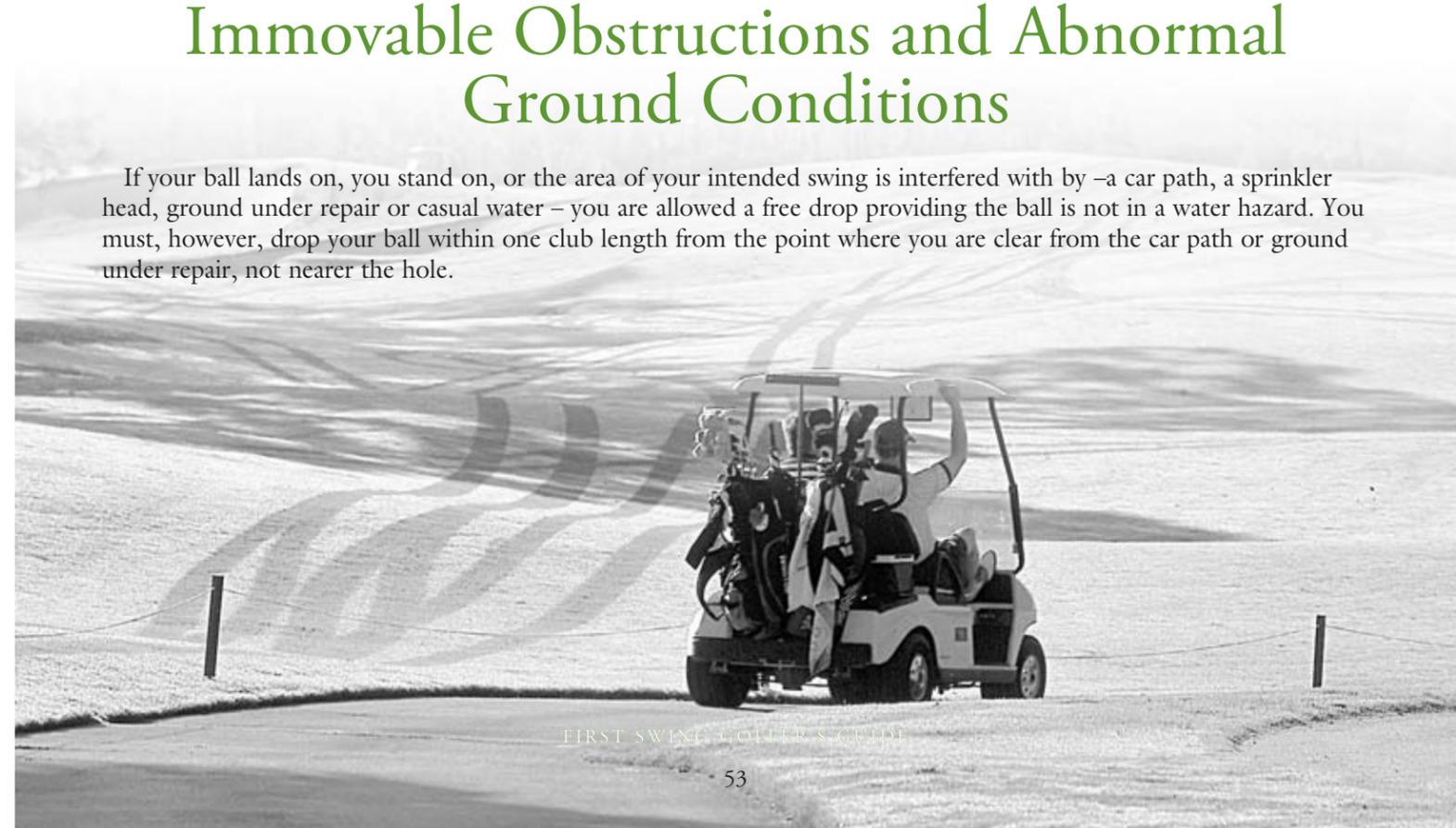
Dropping a ball

When you have to drop a ball, stand up straight with the ball at shoulder height and at an arms length and drop it. Make sure you are not dropping closer to the hole than where the original ball was positioned.



Immovable Obstructions and Abnormal Ground Conditions

If your ball lands on, you stand on, or the area of your intended swing is interfered with by—a car path, a sprinkler head, ground under repair or casual water—you are allowed a free drop providing the ball is not in a water hazard. You must, however, drop your ball within one club length from the point where you are clear from the car path or ground under repair, not nearer the hole.

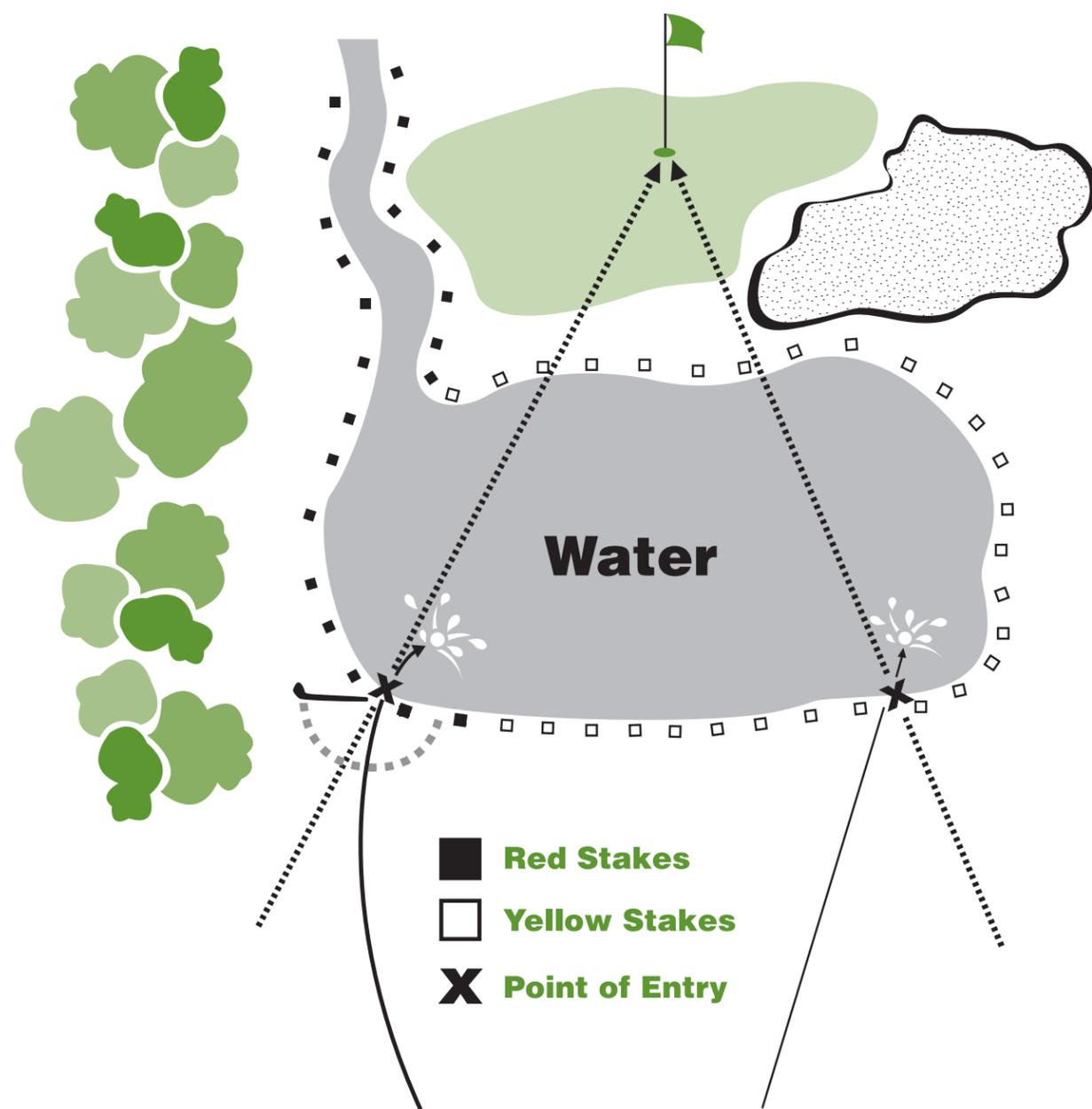


FIRST SWING: GOLFER'S GUIDE

Water Hazards

Two types of water hazards, regular and lateral are found on golf courses. A regular water hazard, marked with yellow stakes, is usually located so that you can only drop behind where the ball entered in line with the hole to replay the shot. A lateral water hazard, marked with red stakes, runs along the edge of the fairway. A ball that enters a lateral water hazard

may also be dropped up to two club lengths from the hazard and no closer to the hole from where the ball entered the water or equidistant to the hole on the other side of the lateral water hazard as additional options under the water hazard rule. If your ball lands in the water a one-stroke penalty is incurred.



Movable Obstructions and Loose Impediments

There are two types of objects on the course that could interfere with your play. Artificial objects such as rakes, bottles, etc. are called obstructions and can be removed so that you can play your ball. If an obstruction is immovable, like a shed or water cooler, you are allowed to drop away without penalty no nearer to

the hole. Natural objects like leaves, branches, insects, etc. are called loose impediments, and can be removed everywhere except in a hazard as long as they are not growing or fixed, solidly embedded and do not adhere to the ball.

