



Tournament Players Golf Club Rule and Play Information (AKA - The Rules By Ben)

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The Rules By Ben The Putter Ball

With the rising cost of balls today we would like to get some value out of them by playing a round or two before retiring or losing them. On many courses where water hazards abound it is not always possible and we are faced with the probability of losing a brand-new ball after only one stroke. I've done it and it brings out the miser in me and the next ball I put into play is some old piece-of-crap that I don't care if I lose. But alas, you **don't** lose it! Now you are forced (rules of golf) to finish the hole with **that** ball and not substitute a different one before holing out.

The most frequent violation of this (substitution) rule takes place on the putting surface. You have just reached the green and have marked and lifted your ball. The switch takes place in your pocket where a fresh new pearl awaits, just to be used for the putt...the proverbial **putter ball**. No road rash, no tree bark, no scuffs or scratches, perfectly round and totally illegal! The penalty for ball swapping is two-strokes (Rule 5-3) or loss of hole in match play.

The only non-penalized way to substitute another ball for the one in play is...if the original has become **unfit**. A ball is unfit for play if it is visibly **cut**, **cracked** or **out-of-shape**. A player must do the following 4 things to determine if a ball is unfit: (1) Announce his intention to his fellow-competitor. (2) Mark the position of the ball. (3) Lift and examine without cleaning. (4) Give his fellow-competitor an opportunity to examine the ball. If you botch this procedure you incur a one-stroke penalty. If you take your next shot without making any effort to comply with procedures you will have breached Rule 5-3 and a two-stroke penalty applies.
