



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

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The Rules By Ben Nice Splash!!! Now What?

The most common misconception of where to drop for relief from a water hazard is somewhere along the line of the ball's trajectory. If I am successful in making you see that this is INCORRECT it will be worth my breath. The ball's trajectory (flight path) is **never** where you drop for relief from any situation in golf, but everyone who plays the game and has not opened a rulebook thinks it does.

Rule 26-1 covers what to do, please open your rules book now and follow along. You can do three things when your ball lies in a water hazard (typically identified by yellow stakes). First, you may play the ball as it lies. Second, you may replay the entire shot. Third, you may drop a ball any distance *behind* the hazard.

You can do two **additional** things when your ball lies in a *lateral* water hazard (typically identified by red stakes). Fourth, you may drop a ball within **two** club-lengths of where it last crossed the margin. Or fifth, you may drop a ball within **two** club-lengths on the opposite margin that's equidistant from the hole. You **Never drop** along the ball's flight path to trouble!

Every one of the relief situations will cost you *one stroke*. Of course, playing your ball as it lies isn't relief at all so that's free, but there are restrictions. You may NOT move your ball whatsoever to identify it. You may NOT move any natural debris; stones, sticks, leaves and animal poop stay where they are. You may NOT sole your club (touch the surface) prior to the stroke. You MAY remove all human trash like, coffee cups, cigarette butts, and Kleenex etc. You MAY also remove the stakes that identify the hazard margins (please replace them).

Replaying the entire shot (stroke and distance penalty, Rule 20-5) is available for every shot in golf. Every stroke with every club incurring every result can be redone with a *one-stroke* penalty.

If you choose to take a drop let's discuss where (Rule 26-1b). All shots that end up in water hazards must do one last and final thing...cross the margin at some point (even if it's a guess). You line up that

point with the *flagstick* and along that imaginary line you drop a ball any distance *behind* the hazard with a *one-stroke* penalty. You **Never** drop along the ball's flight path!

If you choose to take a drop at a *lateral* water hazard (Rule 26-1c), you again determine where the ball last crossed the margin and from that *point* a **two** club-length area is available for your drop. A second *point* on the opposite margin is also available if it's equidistant from the hole. The **two** club-length measurements can be done with ANY club in your bag but the area to drop in **cannot** be closer to the hole. Add the *one-stroke* penalty and play on and one final time, you **never** drop along the ball's flight path.