



TOMGC Rules and Greens

October 2019

While there have been a lot of changes to the Rules of Golf, most for the better in my opinion, there are those things that have not changed. We had a question in my group one Wednesday about those pesky sprinkler heads located near the green. Specifically, the question was, “if my ball is behind one of those sprinklers, but not on the sprinkler, do I get relief as I am planning to putt this ball to the flagstick? Rule 16.1a answers this question nicely. Basically, if the ball touches the immovable obstruction (Abnormal Course Condition), or the condition physically interferes with the player’s area of intended stance or area of intended swing, the player may take relief. Line of play does not, in itself, provide reason for relief.

Last Wednesday, I was hitting to the always precocious number 7 green. Even playing from the red tees, it still presents an always daunting shot. I hit an 8 iron I believe, which should have been plenty of club to reach the slope behind the forward pin placement and hopefully roll back toward the flag. Well, it was the right club for the situation, but as I tend to do on occasion, or anytime I am swinging a golf club, I came over the top and pulled the shot just left of the green. My ball plugged right next to the pilings, just in front of the yellow stake marking the penalty area. Now, as most of you know, we play the pilings in front of the green as a yellow penalty area, while the other areas of the pond are played as a red penalty area. You should also know, by local rule, we are allowed to remove clean and drop a plugged shot through the green. Well, this is all well and good, but through the green, by definition, does not include penalty areas. So, what are my options? As a red penalty area, I have three options: re-tee, at a penalty of one stroke, take relief from the penalty area, again at penalty of one stroke, or, play the ball as it lies in the penalty area, which carries no penalty. I choose the latter option. I was able to get the ball up onto the bank near the bunker, chip it on to the green, and make a putt for a four. Not a bad outcome, considering.

Another note regarding penalty areas. Prior to this last year, you were not allowed to move loose impediments in the penalty areas or in a bunker. As of January’s, rule changes, rule 15.1a says now that you can move loose impediments anywhere on or off the course, and may do so in any fashion you like. You may move the loose impediment with your hand, foot, club, or other equipment. Please remember that there are restrictions with regards to moving loose impediments which you may want to re-visit. Know your rules, and specifically rule 15.1. Good day, and good golf.