



Basic Golf Theory

Green Card Course



Golf Course

Tee

An area designated by two markers where you start the game on each hole.

On a golf courses, there are three main types of Tee Boxes:

- *White* – tee box for male professional players (pro)
- *Yellow* – tee box for men and female professional players
- *Red* – tee box for women and juniors - closest to the hole.

You can tee off from the line of the markers or from up to 2-club-lengths distance back from the marker line



First shots from the Tee Boxes on each hole are the only times during a round of golf when you can use a wooden peg (also called tee) to place your ball on





Green

An area of closely mowed grass where the hole is.



Fairway

Fairway is an area of short grass between the tee and green.



Rough

It's all the area outside of fairways with higher grass of different heights and densities



Hazard

Area on the golf course marked with yellow (*water hazard*) or red (*lateral water hazard*) stakes and/or lines, most of the time with water inside. Special rules apply.



Bunker

A hollow filled with sand. Bunker is also a *hazard*, so special rules apply when playing from it.

It is forbidden to touch the sand with the club before hitting the ball. Even accidental touching the sand with the club costs 2 penalty shots.

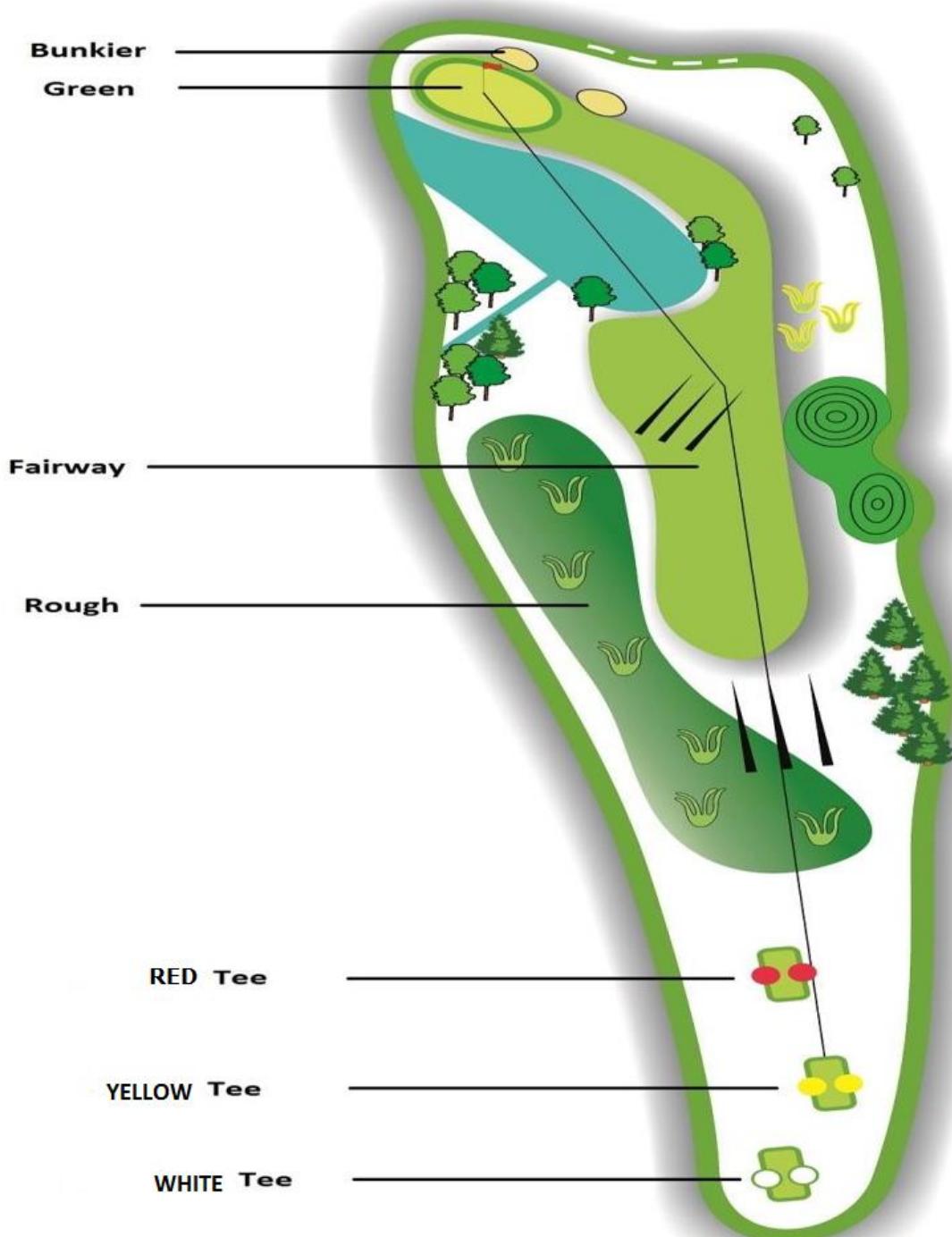
After hitting the ball out of the bunker you should rake the sand to restore it to its original state.





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Example of a Hole



Types of holes:

On a golf course we have 3 types of golf holes:

Par 3 – short holes (50 to 220 meters)

Par 4 – medium length holes (230 to 440 meters)

Par 5 – long holes (450 to 700 meters)

Par:

Professional average result – standard, determines the number of strokes that professional players should achieve.

Course Par:

The sum of all the Pars of the holes on the golf course. Most of the time an 18-hole golf course consists of:

10 holes - PAR 4

4 holes - PAR 3

4 holes - PAR 5

=PAR 72

Names of possible scores on a given hole:

-*Hole In One* – 1 stroke on a hole, first shot off the tee going straight to the hole

-*Albatross* – 3 strokes less than PAR (for example 2 strokes on a PAR 5 hole)

-*Eagle* – 2 strokes less than PAR (3 strokes on a PAR 5 hole or 2 strokes on a PAR 4 hole)

-*Birdie* – 1 stroke less than PAR of a hole

- *Par* – standard number of strokes on the given hole

- *Bogey* – 1 stroke above the norm (PAR)

- *Double Bogey* – 2 strokes above the norm (PAR)

- *Triple Bogey* – 3 strokes above the norm (PAR)

- *Quattro Bogey* – 4 strokes above the norm (PAR)

- Etc...



Equipment

Woods

Clubs used for the longest shots. The most common are woods No. 1, 3, 5.

Wood No. 1 is called a ***Driver*** and we use it to make the first stroke on longest holes (or wherever we need most distance from the tee). Most drivers have a loft (angle of the face) from 9 to 12 degrees. You need to use a wooden tee to hit a driver.



Woods above 1 (No. 2-7) are called fairway woods. They are used for long distance shots and it's possible to play them without using a wooden tee.



Irons

Clubs usually numbered from 4 to 9, used for medium distance shots. This type of clubs have an iron head and a steel or a graphite shaft, depending on the predispositions of the player.



Wedges

Clubs used for short and high shots, pitching and chipping. Marked by their loft angle or letters – PW – Pitching Wedge ($46\text{-}49^\circ$), G – Gap Wedge ($50\text{-}53^\circ$), S – Sand Wedge ($54\text{-}57^\circ$), L – Lob Wedge ($58\text{-}64^\circ$).



Putter

Club that we use on a green. Very little loft on the face of a putter (3-4 degrees) allows to roll the ball with little to no air time.

Putters come in hundreds of lengths, shapes and types so that everyone can choose one that suits them best.





Etiquette and more golf terms

Dress code

Golf is a sport in which traditionally the outfit was quite important. Despite some subtle changes the traditional dress code still remains in many golf clubs:

- Collared shirt (polo shirt, dress shirt, golf) – no T-shirts or sweatshirts
- Material trousers (chinos, corduroy, suit type) – no jeans or tracksuits
- Shorts are allowed for amateurs
- Dress code for women is much less restrictive, but the collar is also needed



„Fore!”

A word, which every golfer **MUST know!!!** It is an exclamation signifying that our ball flies in someone's direction. If you happen to hit the ball so that it flies in the direction of other golfers, you should yell loudly: FORE! Remember, that on the golf course, rather no one responds to „WATCH OUT!”.

On the other hand, if you hear FORE, put your hands over your head and squat immediately. This will minimise the possible damage if the ball hits you. However, this is extremely rare.





Flight

A group that plays together on the golf course. The maximum number of players in a flight is 4.

At tournaments we usually play in flights of 3 or 4 players. Who we play with is determined by the organizer of the event and it is most often a result of a draw. Of course you are free to play with whoever you want outside tournaments.

Order of play on the first hole:

There are two main ways of determining the order of play on the 1st tee during competition:

1. Order of the names on the draw sheet
2. Handicap order (player with lowest handicap tees off first) [*handicap explained later in the presentation*]

People playing from furthest tees always start first (white – yellow – red)

Order of play on the following holes:

Whoever had the **least number of strokes** on the previous hole should tee off first etc.

However, the order of tee boxes still applies (white – yellow – red)

Pace of Play

Players, especially beginners often play at a fairly slow pace. A round of golf for a flight of 4 players should take about 4,5 hours to complete.

Slow play causes traffic on the course, and often requires long periods of idle time, waiting for your turn. In order to speed the game up for all players, players should let the group behind them through if that group plays quicker (for example there is less players).

If we see that the group behind us is waiting for us to finish the hole, and there is nobody in front of us slowing us down, we should move to the side of the hole and allow the waiting group to hit their balls. Then we should wait until that group moves ahead of us (to a safe distance) and continue.

Remember that your game should not slow down other players. Experienced golfers are often lenient, but you have to remember to move swiftly on the golf course. It is not about the time taken to take the shots, but about following elements:

- try to move quickly between the strokes,
- be ready when it's your turn, try to do whatever you need to do before taking a shot (choosing club, looking at the lie of the ball, putting your glove on etc.) while your partners are playing, of course without disturbing them,
- play a provisional ball whenever it might be needed, it costs nothing and can significantly speed up the game,
- When approaching the green, leave your golf bag on the way to the following hole so that you don't have to walk back to take your bag

Divot

It is a piece of torn grass taken out when hitting a ball or making a practice swing.

The player is obliged to put back the torn grass.

Etiquette suggests not to make many divots with practice swings, especially on the tee boxes to care for the course.





Game formats and handicap

Handicap

It is basically our golf ability level.

Thanks to the handicap system beginners can compete with experienced players (in **net categories**) which makes golf a unique sport. Also golfers can see and control the progress they're making.

In simplified terms handicap is the number of strokes **over PAR** a player usually makes. For **net** competitions, the handicap gets subtracted from player's **gross** score, so if your handicap is 30 and your score on a PAR-72 golf course is 100, your **net** score is 70.

A Green Card corresponds to a club (internal) handicap of **54**.

You can use your handicap to know the **Net Par** of each hole. A handicap of 54 gives you 3 strokes on each hole ($54 / 18 = 3$), so the **Net Par** of a Par 3 hole would be **6**, Par 4 – **7** and Par 5 – **8**.

Player's handicap is calculated using net STB (stableford) Points [*explained later*].

Strokeplay

The most popular format of play. We count every stroke that we've made on the course. The person who made least of all wins.

There are two categories of strokeplay competitions: gross and net (brutto and netto in Polish)
Net means that we subtract our handicap index from our overall result.

Gross is just the number of strokes on the course, with no changes.

Matchplay

The oldest format of the game. It means a match between players, where each hole is worth 1 point. We play until one of the players will have more points than the number of holes that remain.

So if a player has 5 points and there are 4 holes remaining, she/he wins and the score of the match is 5&4 (5 and 4, 5up with 4 to play)

Stableford

It is the most popular format for beginners. Stableford is a game of points not strokes, with points given on each hole according to the number of strokes, par of the hole, player's handicap and handicap index of the hole.

The easiest way of explaining Stableford system is that points are given for **net scores** on each hole:

Albatros: 5 Points

Eagle: 4

Birdie: 3

Par: **2**

Bogey: 1

Double Bogey: 0

Triple Bogey: 0

Quadriple Bogey: 0 Points

For example, if your playing handicap is 36, you get 2 strokes on each hole. So if you take 7 strokes to finish a Par 4 hole (a gross triple bogey), 2 shots are subtracted to give your net score (5 – which is a bogey). In stableford, that would give you 1 Point.

The nice characteristic of the stableford system is that you don't have to finish the hole at all cost, you can pick your ball up whenever you have no chance of gaining points on a given hole (safe rule of thumb is Par+5).

Fourball

Fourball otherwise is called a „better ball”. Team game where everyone plays their ball. On the scorecard we write down only the best score of the team. Only one player from the team has to finish the hole.

Foursome

Otherwise known as „alternate shot”. Two-player game in which partners take turns in hitting the ball. The tee shots are alternated as well - one of the players tees off on odd holes, second player on even holes. We use one ball in this format, and reach one score for the team.

Texas Scramble

Game of 2-4 people in the team. Everyone hits a shot from the teebox. The team selects the best ball from all the balls played. The rest of the balls are taken to the position of the best ball and so it continues (everyone hits from that spot, and the best ball is chosen etc.). We play until one of our balls gets into the hole. We write down only one result for the team.



Basic Rules

Stakes

White stakes – out of bounds (O.B.) - territory outside the course. When our ball flies out of bounds, we have to repeat the shot from the same place and we get 1 penalty stroke.

Red stakes – lateral water hazard – hazard that runs parallel to our fairway. For losing the ball in the water hazard you get 1 penalty stroke.

Yellow stakes – water hazard - hazard that crosses our fairway. For losing the ball in the water hazard you get 1 penalty stroke.

Blue/white and blue stakes – ground under repair (G.U.R.) - we don't have to play from this area and get a release without penalty. We **can't** play from blue/white staked area but we take the ball outside the area with no penalty.

Obstacles

On the course there are two types of obstacles:

Natural – water obstacle, bunkers, trees,

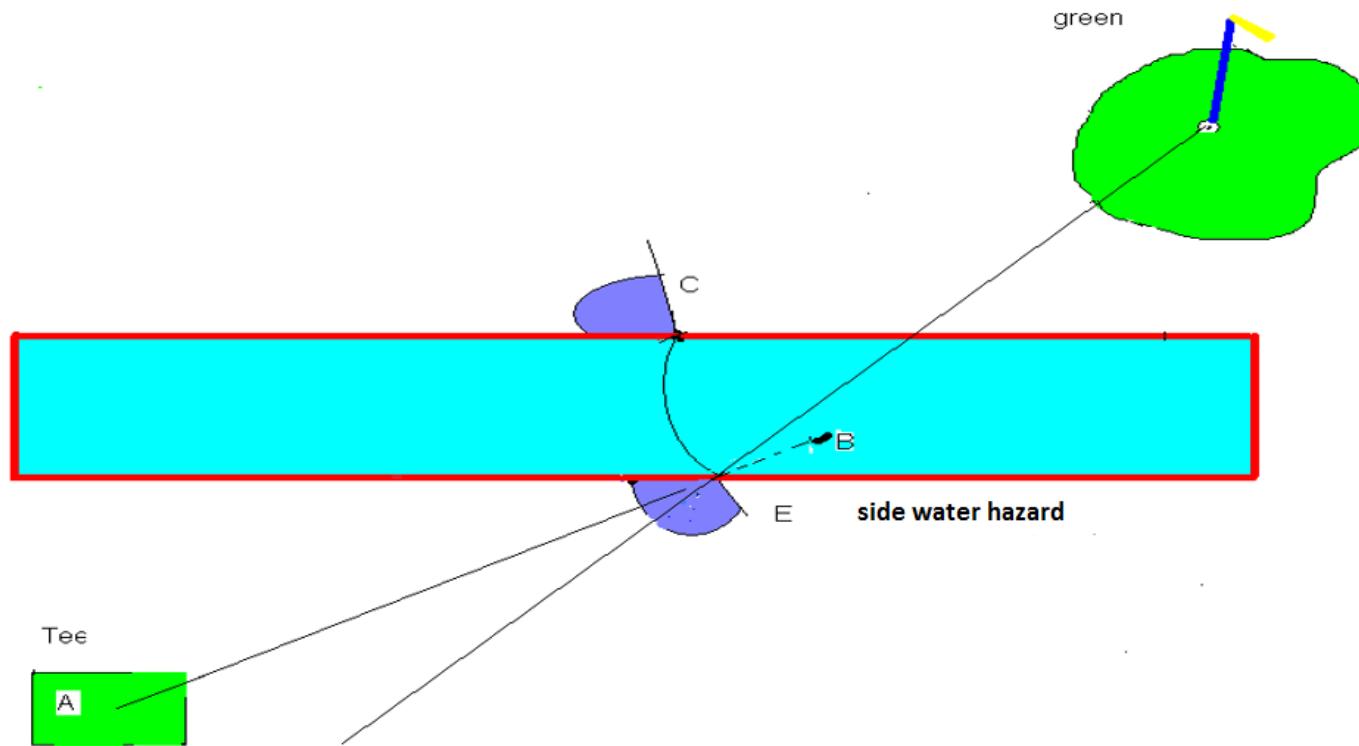
Unnatural – banner, bench, advertising, trash, etc.

You don't get a release from natural obstacles, you have to play the ball as it lies. However, you can take a penalty-free release from unnatural obstacles that stand in your way.

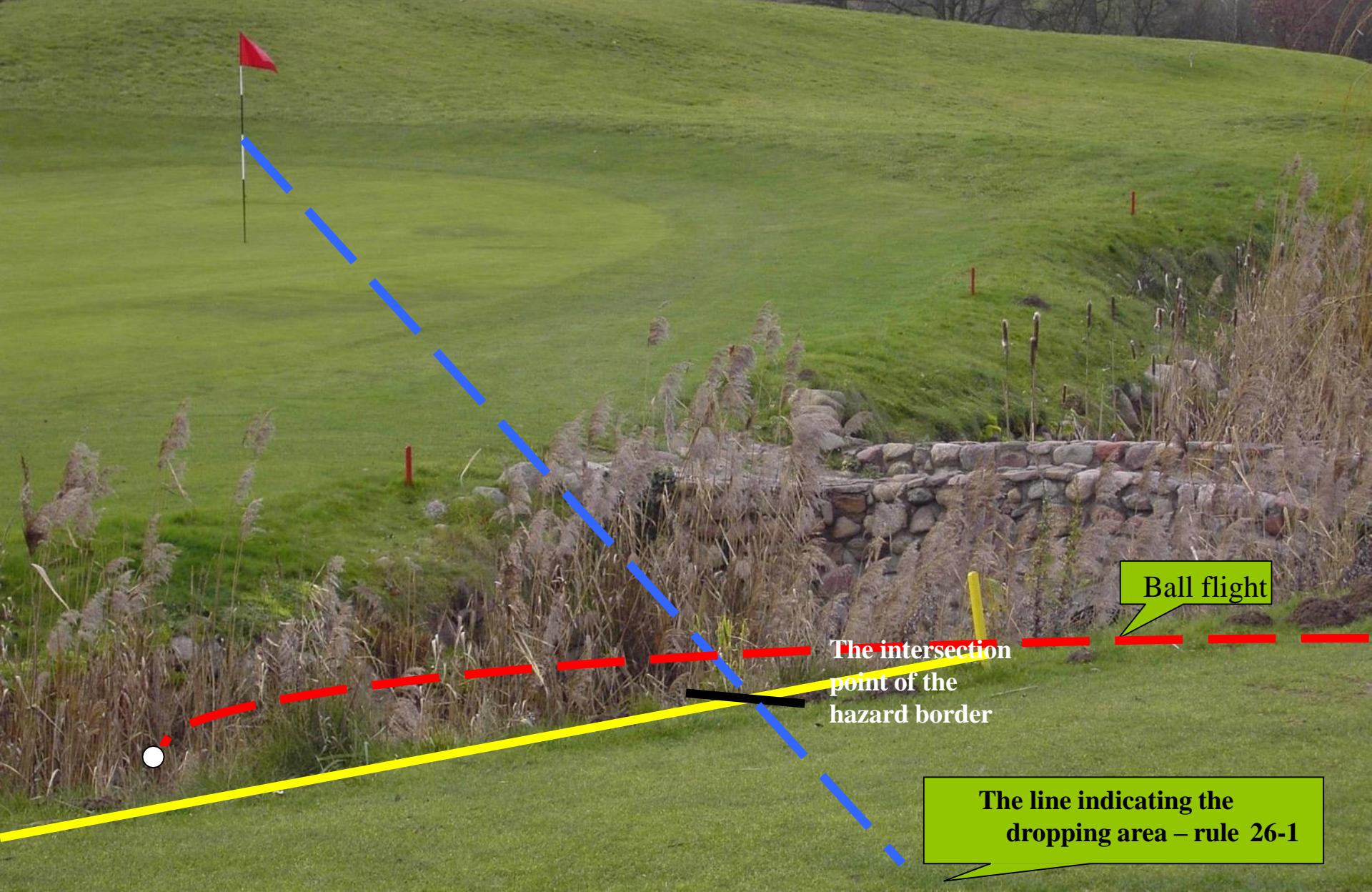


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Dropping the ball on the side of water hazard (red stakes)



Dropping by the water hazard (yellow stakes)





Other rules

Number of clubs:

The player cannot start a regular round with more than **fourteen clubs** in the bag.

Searching for the ball on the course:

The player who hit the ball out off the fairway can spend 5 minutes searching for the ball. If after 5 minutes he cannot find his ball, player is obliged to repeat the stroke from the previous position. Also, 1 penalty stroke is given.

Provisional ball:

The player has the right to play a provisional ball when they are not sure where their ball flew.

If a player has played a provisional ball, but finds his first (original) ball, he has to continue playing with the first ball with no penalty strokes.

However, if the player does not find his original ball, he continues to play the provisional ball and adds 1 penalty point to his score (the original ball is treated as a lost ball).

A player can hit as many provisional balls as needed from any place on the golf course, but they have to be able to recognise each ball.

Other rules

Distance measuring:

Because there are so many measures worldwide (cm, inch, etc.), it was decided that the measure on the golf courses is a golf club. You can use any club from your bag for measurement purposes.

A basic rule of thumb is:

When the player gets a penalty stroke, 2-club-length release is taken .

When the player gets a release without penalty point, the release distance is 1 club's length.

Penalties:

The easiest way to judge if the player gets 1 or 2 penalty points is:

- 1 for compliance with the rules and regulations (release, lost ball etc.)
- 2 for breaking the rules (hitting someone else's ball, hitting the flag when putting from the green etc.)