



It is amazing to me how many times we seem to revisit a lot of the same questions regarding the rules of golf. Even though, the changes made at the beginning of this year were meant to make the rules a little easier to understand, and to help speed the general pace of play. My handsome little friend, and long-time board member, Scott McClellan, recently brought another concern to my attention regarding relief from a Red penalty area. These areas were previously known as lateral water hazards. Remember, we are talking about taking relief. Not Phil Bystrom near the 8th tee box relief, but relief as in dropping the ball out of the penalty area at a cost of one stroke to play the next shot at the hole. I say this, because you are still allowed to make an attempt to play the ball from the penalty area if you wish. You should investigate this option with regards to the rules governing this decision. Now it seems that Scott was involved in a Senior League match at Twin Oaks, when one of his opponents hit his tee shot into the penalty area directly in front of the 18th tee. The ball did not clear the penalty area, so the opponent did not have the option of going to the drop zone on the other side of the penalty area. The rub occurred when the opponent explained to Scott, that he could take his two-club relief off to the side of the penalty area, no closer to the hole. Scott, not being one to argue, let the man have his way. So, what were his options? There were three options available for the gentleman in the instance. He could have re-teed, he could have dropped a ball within two club-lengths of where his ball last crossed the margin of the penalty area, or, he could have dropped a ball back on a line from the flagstick to where the player's ball last crossed the margin of the hazard, as far back as he would have liked, but he could not drop his ball to the side of the penalty area in question. As it turns out, the gentleman elected to drop a ball at the forward tee box on the tee side of the penalty area, which is one of the correct options.

You may remember that one of the new rules is that you cannot position a club for alignment. This is not talking about plumb-bobbing, but you are not allowed to lay a club down to show alignment. Fred Couples used to do this routinely to suggest his putting line. Well, in a match against one of our Senior opponents, one of the fellows in my group, stepped up to the tee and proceeded to take the brick used to mark the tee box, set it up on its side, and then hit his tee shot while standing outside the teeing area. Well, this raises a question? First, you are not allowed to move tee markers according to rule 6.2b to improve stance, but if he had taken time to align the brick with his target, could this have been a violation with regards to using an alignment aid? Food for thought, eh? Good day, and good golf.