



Ok, we've talked about it before, but it seems that a review might be in order. It was reported to me that on one Wednesday morning, one of the fellas hit a drive from the first tee, which went off to the left in front of the tee boxes. The fella went down and found his ball, and apparently didn't like the lie or something, so he went back to the tee and hit another ball, calling it a provisional. First of all, you can not go forward and search for the ball, and then come back and hit a provisional ball. Once you go forward and search, if you don't find the ball, and you come back to the tee, the new ball from the tee is the ball in play, and the other ball is considered lost/abandoned. To make matters worse, this fella decided he didn't like the second ball any better, so he picked up the second ball, and continued play with the original ball. As you can see, this is one of those sticky wickets! Here is what Jim Becker, from the SCGA, had to say about the situation. Take time to think about this, because it is confusing.

*When the player found his original ball, the player was required to proceed with that ball by playing it or taking penalty relief under Rule 17.1. When the player went back to the teeing area, they unknowingly invoked the stroke and distance option under Rule 17.1d and this becomes the ball in play, now lying 3.*

*When he played the first ball and picked up the second ball, he played a wrong ball and would have received a penalty of two strokes and he would have had to abandon that ball and proceed with the second ball played from teeing area. He would incur an additional penalty for lifting that ball (his ball in play) and he would have to replace that ball at the point from which it was lifted.*

*So, all in all, he has 4 penalty strokes (1 – for original penalty area relief, 2 more for playing the wrong ball, and 1 more for lifting his ball in play). He has played two actual strokes so he would be hitting 7 from the fairway (assuming that is where he lifted the second ball).*

Please keep this in mind. The provisional ball is hit to save time when a ball may be out of bounds, or lost outside of a hazard, like in those blamed bushes alongside of hole number 11 for example. If a ball is known to be in a hazard, you can not hit a provisional ball, unless, there is the chance that it is lost outside of the hazard. Once you have gone forward, to search for your ball, you have abandoned the provisional ball option. (Don't forget the new local rule for a ball out of bounds or lost, where in you can drop a ball two club lengths into the fairway, at a penalty of two strokes, under Model Local Rule E-5.) Remember when hitting a provisional ball, you keep the order on the tee box, you must declare that you are hitting a provisional ball, and you should give the brand and number of the first ball as well as the provisional ball.

Good day, and good golf.