



Rules of Golf - 2019





Disclaimer

The simplified bullet point approach used to quote Rules in this presentation has been done for brevity.

On that basis they must not be quoted verbatim or as authoritative as they may not be to the letter of the law.

The full Rules as per the Rules of Golf 2019 must be quoted when appropriate and necessary.

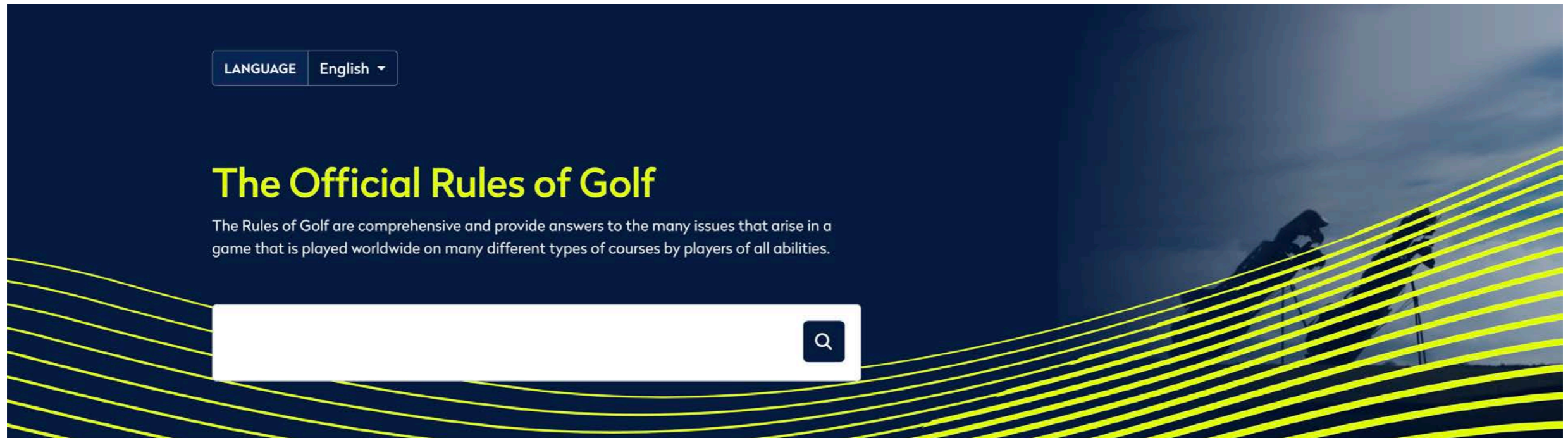
We cannot hope to address every rule in depth and the intention is that we only discuss those Rules which have been bulleted.

We cover the R&As recommended Top 20 Must Know Rules and a few often misunderstood golden oldies.



Rules of Golf [Link](#)

Understanding where ADDITIONAL content is found



Browse the Rules

- Rules of Golf
- Player's Edition
- Definitions
- Interpretations
- Committee Procedures
- Rules for Players with Disabilities

[About The Rules of Golf](#)

[Useful Links](#)



Those Tabs Explained

- Rules of Golf - Administrators
- Players Edition - Abridged Version
- Definitions - 70 plus
- Interpretations - Additional clarification
- Committee Procedures - General guidance
- Rules for Players with Disabilities



Interpretations [Link](#)

- Provide additional clarification on Rules
- An Interpretation section for each of the Rules
- Forerunner to Decisions.
- They are formatted in the same way as previous Decisions on the Rules were written.



Committee Procedures [Link](#)

- Practical advice for both General Play and Competitions to include Model Local Rules.
- Local Rules are no longer found in The Rules of Golf, they are now in:
 - Section 8 of ***Committee Procedures***.



Rules for Players With Disabilities [Link](#)

These Modified Rules only apply if adopted by the **Committee** in charge of a competition. They do not apply automatically to every competition involving players with disabilities.

It is up to each **Committee** to decide whether to adopt any of these Modified Rules for its own competitions.



Visual Search Guide [Link](#)





The R&As - 20 Must Know Rules of Golf for 2019

1. Drop from knee height (NOT shoulder height). **14.3b(2).**
2. Measure the area to drop in with the longest club in your bag (except a putter).
Definitions.
3. Drop in and play from the relief area. **14.3b(3)**
4. When dropping back on the line, your ball cannot be played from nearer the hole than your chosen reference point. **17.1d (2).**
5. Time to search - 3 minutes (NOT 5 minutes). **Definitions.**
6. If you accidentally move your ball when searching for it, replace it without penalty. **7.4.**
7. No penalty for a double hit - it only counts as one stroke. **10.1a.**



8. No penalty if your ball hits you or your equipment accidentally after a stroke. **11.1a.**

9. No penalty if your ball strikes the flagstick when you have chosen to leave it in the hole. **13.2a(2).**

10. Spike mark and other shoe damage on the putting green can be repaired. **13.1c(2).**

11. Ball accidentally moved on the putting green - no penalty and replace. **13.1d(1).**

12. Ball marked, lifted and replaced on the putting green is moved by wind to another position - replace ball on the original spot. **9.4b(3).**

13. Penalty areas replace water hazards, and you can move loose impediments, ground your club and take practice swings in penalty areas without penalty, just as you can on the fairway or in the rough. **17.**



14. You cannot take relief from penalty area unless you are at least 95% certain your ball is in the penalty area. **Definitions.**

15. In bunkers you can move loose impediments. **12.2a.**

16. In bunkers you cannot touch the sand with your club in the area right in front of or right behind your ball, during the backswing or in taking practice swings.
12.2b(1)

17. Free relief is allowed if your ball is embedded on the fairway or in the rough but “embedded” means part of your ball is below the level of the ground. **16.3a(1).**

18. Unplayable ball in bunker - extra option to drop outside the bunker for 2 penalty strokes. **19.3b.**

19. You cannot have your caddie or your partner standing behind you once you begin taking your stance. **10.2b(4)**

20. Pace of Play - it is recommended that you take no longer than 40 seconds to make a stroke (and usually you should be able to play more quickly than that) and Ready Golf in stroke play is encouraged. **5.6b(1).**



Rule 1 - The Game, Player Conduct and the Rules

- **1.2a** - Conduct expected of all players.
 - **Interpretations 1.2a(1)** - Using a handicap that has been established for the purpose of providing an unfair advantage or using the round played to establish such a handicap. For example - continual Nil Returns submitted to manipulate handicap.
- **1.2b** - Code of Conduct. Committee sets its own standards.
- **1.3b(2)** - Accepting player's "Reasonable Judgement."
- **1.3c (2)** - There are 3 main penalty levels in both Match play and Stroke play.
 - **One Stroke Penalty** - For example taking relief from original lie.
 - **General Penalty (2 shots)** - Breach of most Rules.
 - **DQ** - Serious misconduct.



Rule 2 - The Course

- **2.2** - There are 5 areas to the course
 - General area
 - Teeing area
 - Bunkers
 - Penalty areas
 - Putting green
- **2.3** - Objects or Conditions that can interfere with play
 - Loose Impediments (**15.1**)
 - Movable Obstructions (**15.2**)
 - Abnormal Course Conditions (**16.1**)
 - *For all the above read - Definitions.*
- **2.4** - No Play Zones
 - Defined part of an abnormal course condition or a penalty area where play is not allowed.
 - From which a player must take relief.



Rule 3 - The Competition

Not up for discussion today!

- **3.1** - Form of Play
- **3.2** - Match Play
- **3.3** - Stroke Play
- **Rule 21 to 24** - For other forms of Play
 - **21.2** - Maximum Score



Rule 4 - Players Equipment

- **4.3a (1)**
 - DMD allowed by default.
 - DMD which display measured elevation (slope) changes or line of play are NOT allowed.



- Local Rule required to prohibit use.



Rule 5 - Playing The Round

- **5.3a** - When to start round and exceptions
 - **1** - No more than 5 mins late - **General penalty**
 - **2** - No more than 5 mins early - **General penalty**
 - **3** - Exceptional circumstances - No Penalty
- **5.6b** - Prompt pace of play
 - **5.6b(1)** - Be ready to play - 40 secs recommendation
 - **5.6b(2)** - Playing out of turn - time saving



Rule 6 - Playing a Hole

- **6.2b.5** - Ball is not in play until a stroke is made.
- **6.3** - Player gets a **General Penalty** for playing at wrong ball (**6.3c**) or substituted ball when no substitution is allowed.
- **6.3b (1)** - Search time is now 3 minutes
- **6.3c (2)** - What to do when a players ball has been played by another player as a wrong ball and then loses that ball. (**14.2a Exception**)
- **6.4** - Order of Play.
 - Is fundamental in Match Play.
 - Ready golf is encouraged in Stroke play.



Rule 7 - Ball Search; Finding & Identifying the Ball

- **7.2** - How to Identify ball
 - Player should put an identifying mark on the ball - (6.3) and (18.3c(2)).
 - Unable to identify Provisional ball from original, provisional becomes ball in play.
- **7.3** - Mark the spot before lifting or rotating, and no cleaning allowed except on the putting green - (14.1)
- **7.4** - Ball accidentally moved during search.
 - No Penalty replace ball in original position.



Rule 8 - Course Played As It Is Found

- **8.1** - Be mindful of improving conditions that might affect your stroke.
 - The lie of the ball, area of intended stance, intended swing, line of play and the relief area where the player will drop for place a ball.
- **8.1a** - Actions that are not allowed. **General penalty.**
 - Moving, bending or breaking objects or obstructions.
 - Moving impediments or obstructions to be a build a stance.
 - Alter the surface of the ground.
 - Remove or press down sand or loose soil.
 - Remove dew, frost or water
- **8.1b** - Actions that are allowed.
 - Take reasonable actions to search for the ball, remove loose impediments, mark the spot of the ball.
 - Ground the club lightly right in front of or right behind the ball.
 - Firmly place their feet in taking a stance in sand or soil.



Rule 9 - Ball Played as it Lies, Ball at Rest Lifted or Moved

- **9.1b** - Ball moves during backswing or stroke, and player goes onto make the stroke, play from where it comes to rest.
- **9.3** - IF the ball moves due to natural forces, the ball must be played from new spot.
 - **Exception**. Ball on putting green moves after having already been marked, lifted and replaced. Replace ball in original spot. (**13.1d**).
 - Playing ball from wrong place - **General Penalty**.
- **9.4b** - Causing a ball to move - Lifts ball at rest or causes it to move **One shot Penalty**.

There are 4 Exceptions. For example Exception 3 - On the Putting Green - Now matter how it happens such as in a practice stroke - (**13.1d**) replace the ball and **NO** penalty.



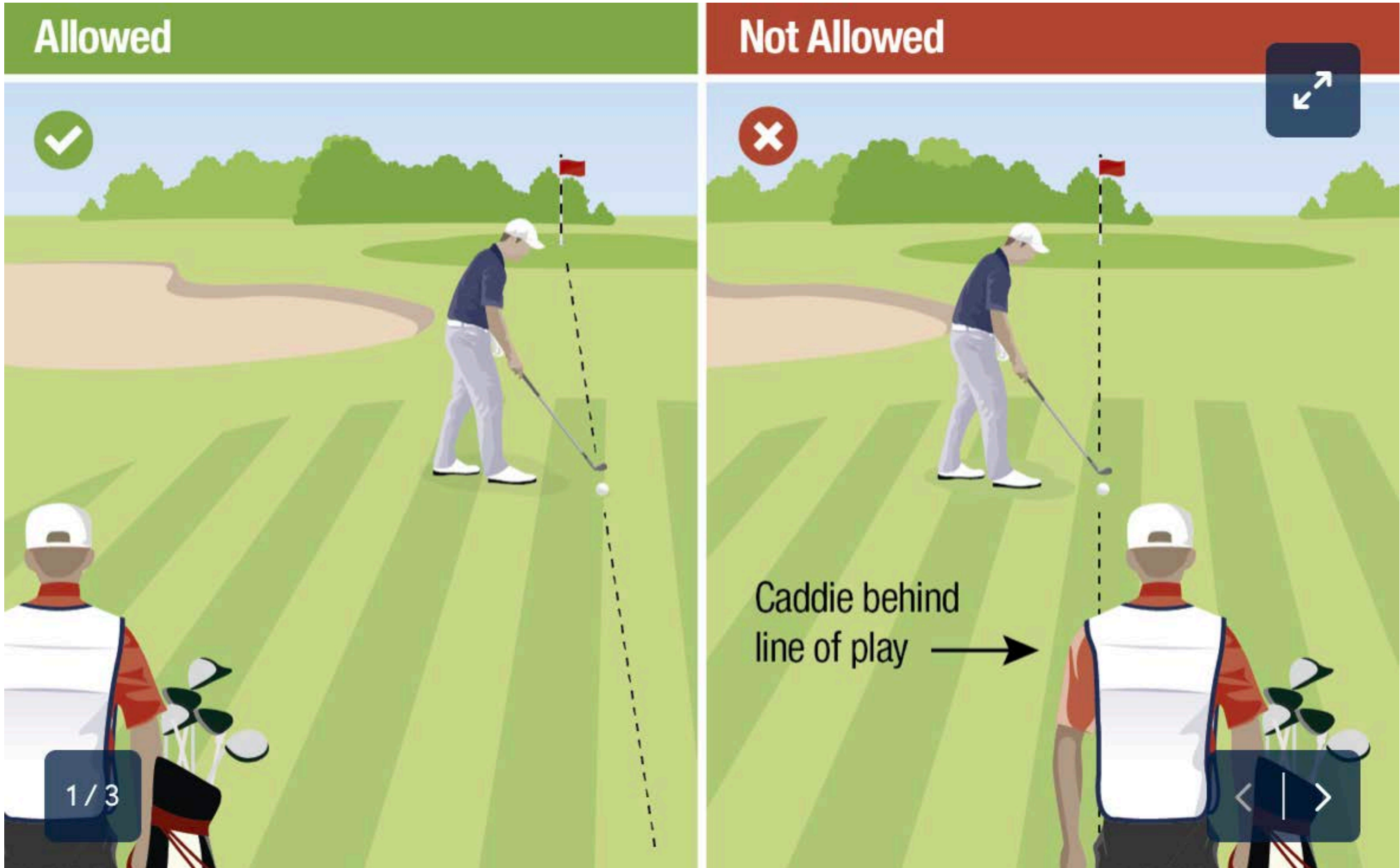
Rule 10 - Preparing for and Making a Stroke; Advice and Help; Caddies

- **10.1a** - Fairly striking the ball - No penalty for double hit.
- **10.1b** - Anchoring a club.
- **10.1d** - Ball wobbling returns to original spot is not a moving ball - no penalty.
- **10.2b (4)** - Caddies must move off an extension of the line of play behind the ball.
 - Note-see Rules 22,23 and 24(in forms of play involving partners, the same limitations apply).
- **10.2b (5)** - The player may hold an umbrella over their own head whilst making a stroke.



Rule 10.2b:

Caddie Standing In Location On Or Close To Line Of Play Behind Ball





Rule 11- Ball in Motion Accidentally Hits Person, Animal or Object; Deliberate Actions to Affect Ball in Motion

- **11.1a** - Ball in motion deflected - accidentally hitting self or equipment. Play as it lies- No penalty.
 - **Exception** - Ball in motion hits another ball at rest on the putting green and both balls were on the putting green before the stroke was made - **General Penalty**.
- **11.2** - Ball deliberately deflected by positioning equipment - **General Penalty**.



Rule 12 - Bunkers

- **12.2a** - May remove loose impediments (**15.1**) and movable obstructions (**15.2**).
- **12.2b (1)** - If touching sand is to improve the conditions affecting the stroke - **General Penalty**.
- **12.2b (2)** - Player may touch the sand in other ways **without penalty**. Touching the sand must not improve the conditions of the stroke. Such as taking a stance, smoothing the bunker in caring for the course, placing clubs or equipment in the bunker, measuring, marking, lifting, replacing or taking other actions under a Rule. Leaning on a club to rest, stay balanced or prevent a fall or striking the sand in frustration or anger.



Rule 12.1: When Ball Is In Bunker



Ball in bunker



Ball not in bunker



Wall or face



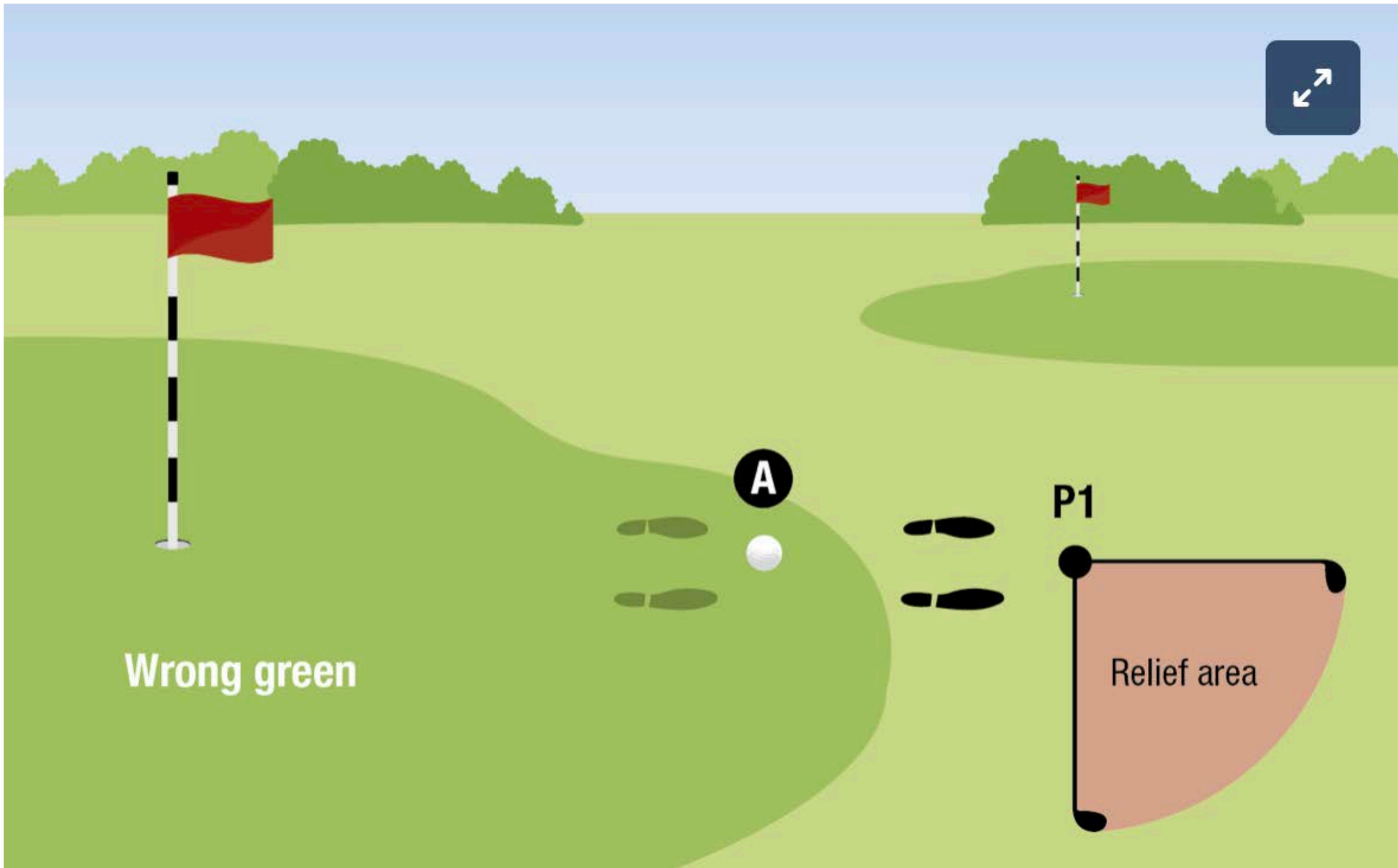


Rule 13 - Putting Green

- **13.1c (2)** - Improvements on the Putting Green - Repair of damage, such as spike marks are allowed, but not aeration holes or natural imperfections - do so without unreasonable delay to play or by creating a pathway, if so the **General Penalty** applies.
- **13.1d (1)** - No penalty for accidentally causing the ball or marker to move on the putting green. For example in getting ready to play the hole or during a practice stroke. Replace the ball or marker to original spot. (**9.4b Exception 3**)
- **13.1f** - Complete relief must be taken from wrong green.
- **13.2a (1) and (2)** - Flagstick can be left in the hole, removed or be tended - No penalty for striking a flag left in the hole.
- **13.2a (3)** - However the flagstick cannot be removed whilst the ball is in motion if so the **General Penalty** applies.
- **13.2b (2)** - Ball hits flagstick or person attending, depends on if action is accidental or deliberate, potential **General Penalty**.
- **13.2c** - Ball holed if ANY part is below surface of the Putting Green.



Rule 13.1f: Free Relief From Wrong Green





Rule 14 - Lifting and Returning a Ball to Play

- **14.1a** - Mark the position of the ball, use marker or hold a club on ground behind or right next to ball.
- **14.1c** - On the green the ball can always be cleaned, elsewhere limits apply. Potential **One shot Penalty**.
- **14.2a** - Original ball must be used - see exception.
- **14.3b (2)** - Drop from knee height.
- **14.3b (3)** - Ball must be dropped in and come to rest in the relief area.
- **14.6** - Stroke and Distance.

Rule 14.3b (3)

Ball Must Be Dropped in and Come to Rest in Relief Area

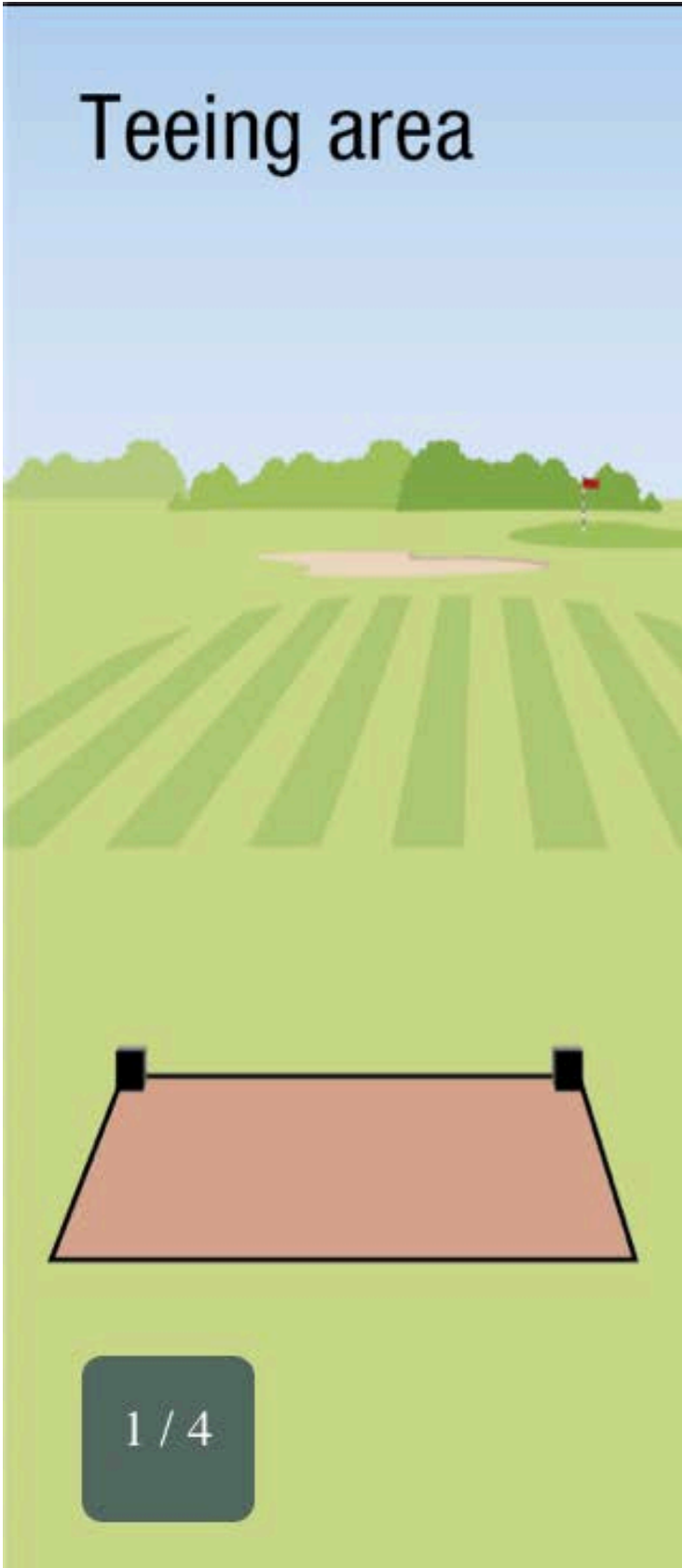




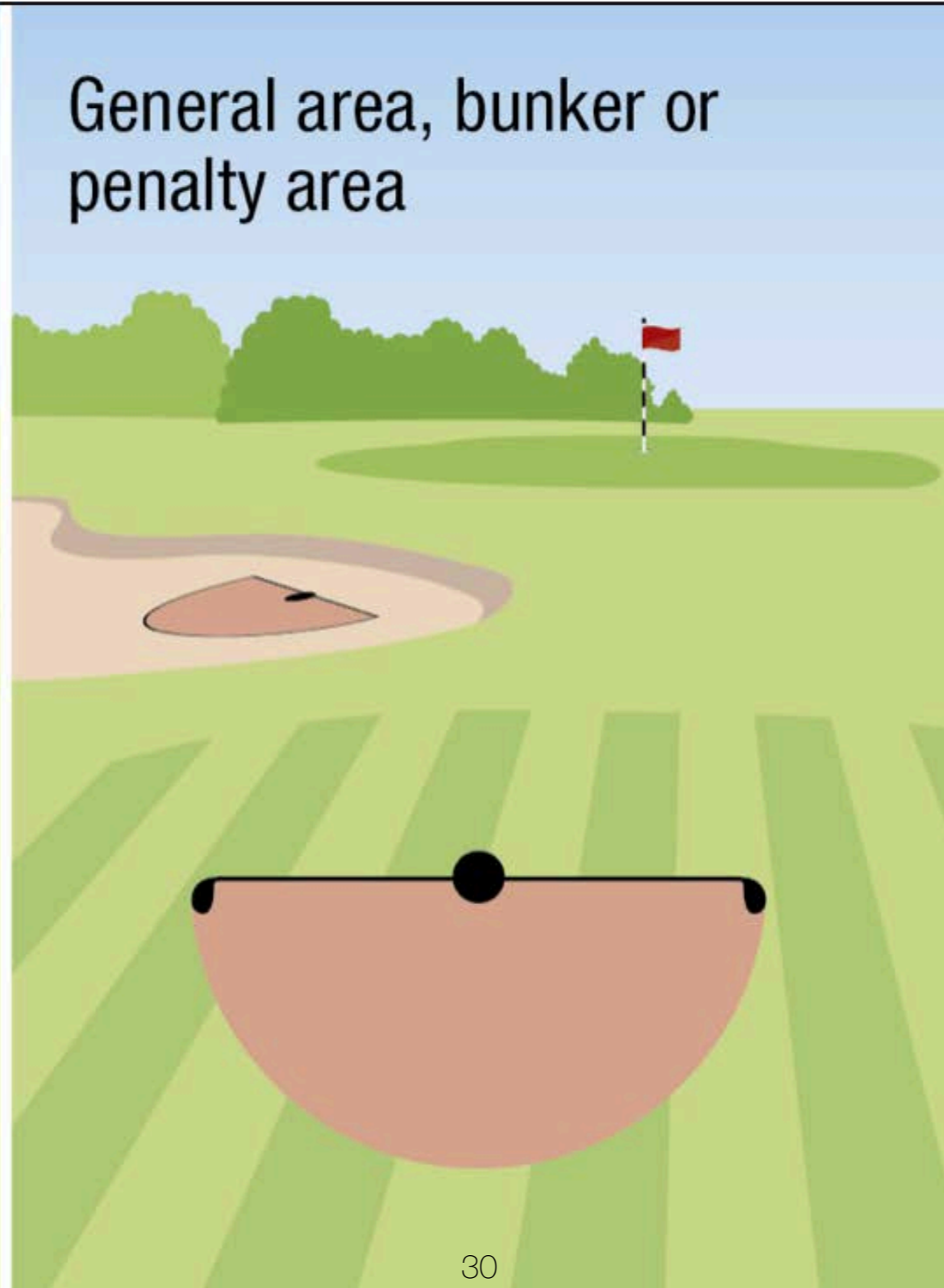
Rule 14.6

Making Next Stroke from Where Previous Stroke Made

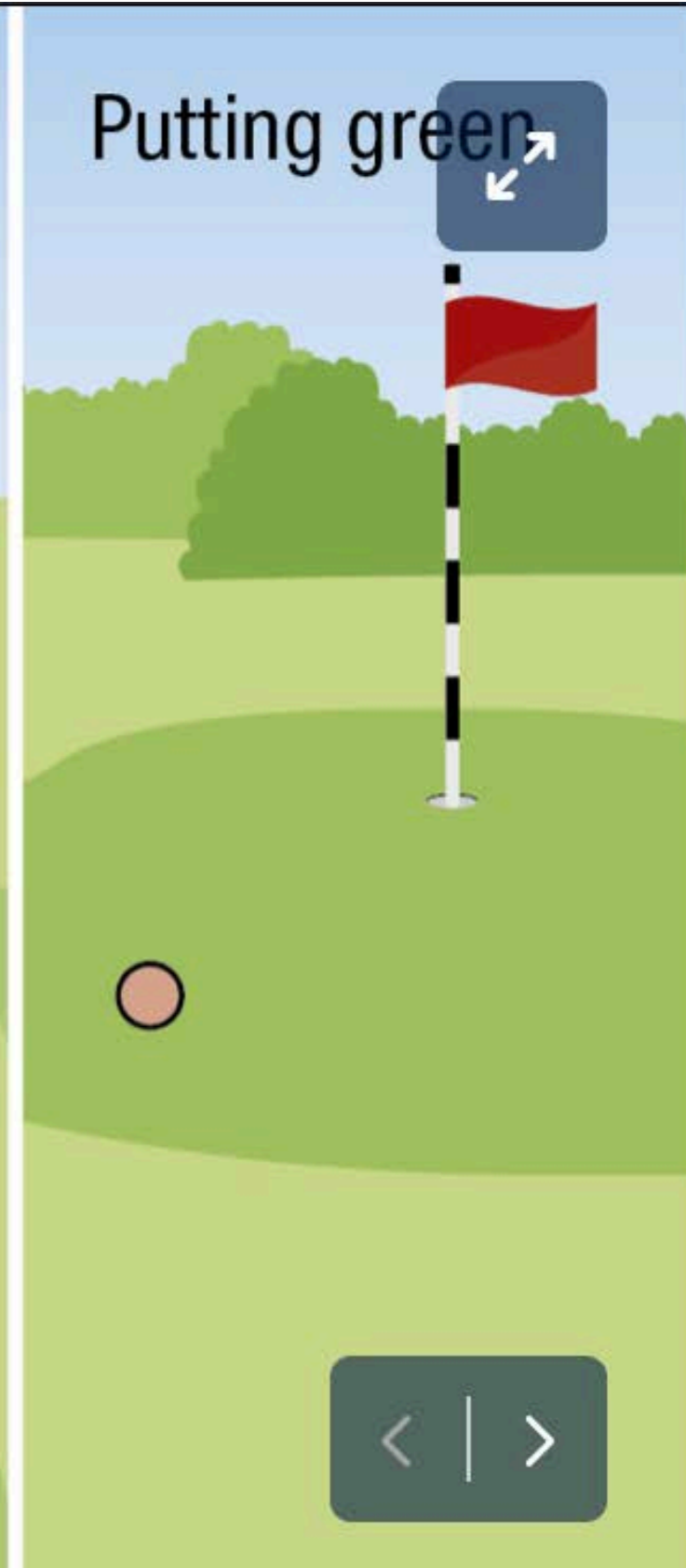
Teeing area



General area, bunker or penalty area



Putting green





Rule 15 - Relief from Loose Impediments and Movable Obstructions

- **15.3a** - If 2 or more Players agree to leave a ball in play on the putting green and that ball is helping play, **General Penalty** for each player.
- **15.3b (2)** - A player is not allowed to lift their ball based only on the players belief that the ball might interfere with another players ball. Other than on the putting green. **One shot Penalty.**



Rule 15 - Explanation of Definitions used (abbreviated)

Loose Impediments

(Rules Page 209 and Players Edition 142).

Unattached natural objects such as:

- Stones, loose grass, leaves, branches and sticks
- Dead Animals and animal waste.
- Worms, Insects and similar animals, mounds, webs, worm cast and ant hills.

Movable Obstruction

(Rules Page 210 and Players Edition 143).

- An obstruction that can be moved with reasonable effort and without damaging the obstruction or the course.
- Items such as rakes, towels, litter.



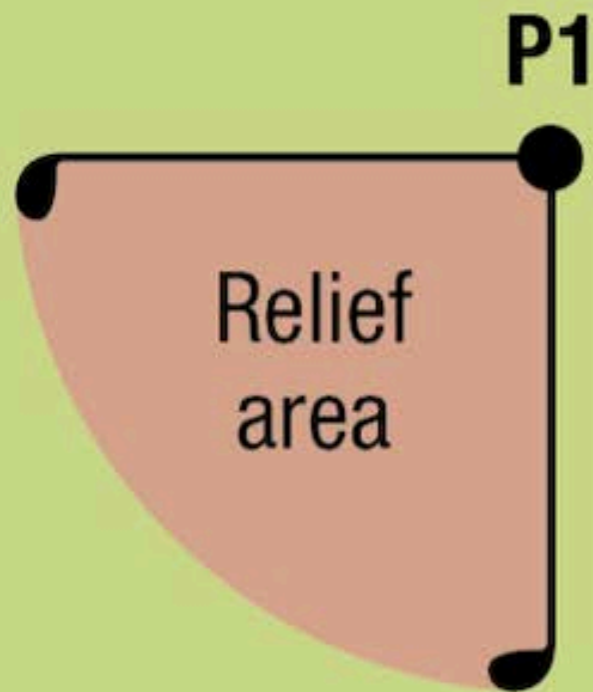
Rule 16 - Relief from Abnormal Conditions, (Inc Immovable Obstructions), Dangerous Animal Condition, Embedded Ball

- **16.1b** - Reference point - Nearest point of complete relief in general area. Use an object such as a tee to mark the point.
 - Even when not required by the Rules it is “Good Practice” to mark the balls position,
- **16.1f** - When ball is in No Play Zones
- **16.2** - Dangerous animal condition
- **16.3a (1)** - Embedded ball in general area



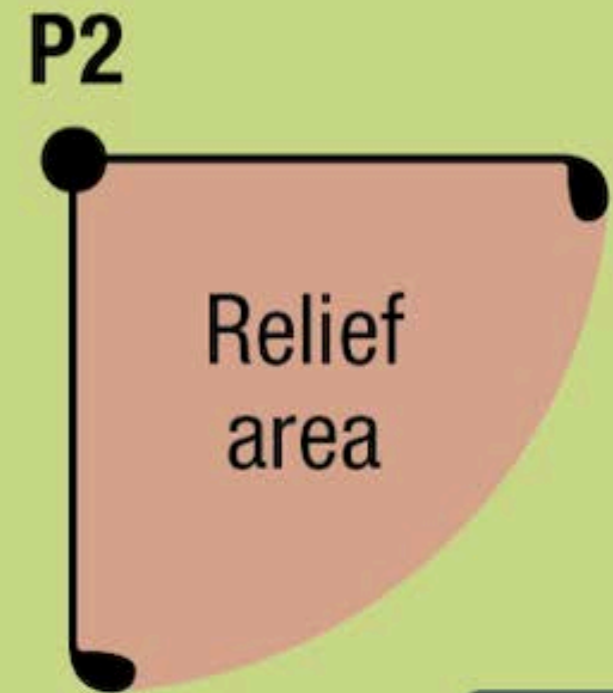
Rule 16.1a

When Relief is allowed for Abnormal Course Condition



**Abnormal
course
condition**

↑
Direction of play





Rule 16.1b

Free Relief from Abnormal Course Condition in General Area



**Abnormal
course
condition**

Spot of original ball

Reference point

Relief area



Rule 16.1c

Relief from Abnormal Course Condition in Bunker

Abnormal
course
condition

Spot of original ball

Relief area

Reference point

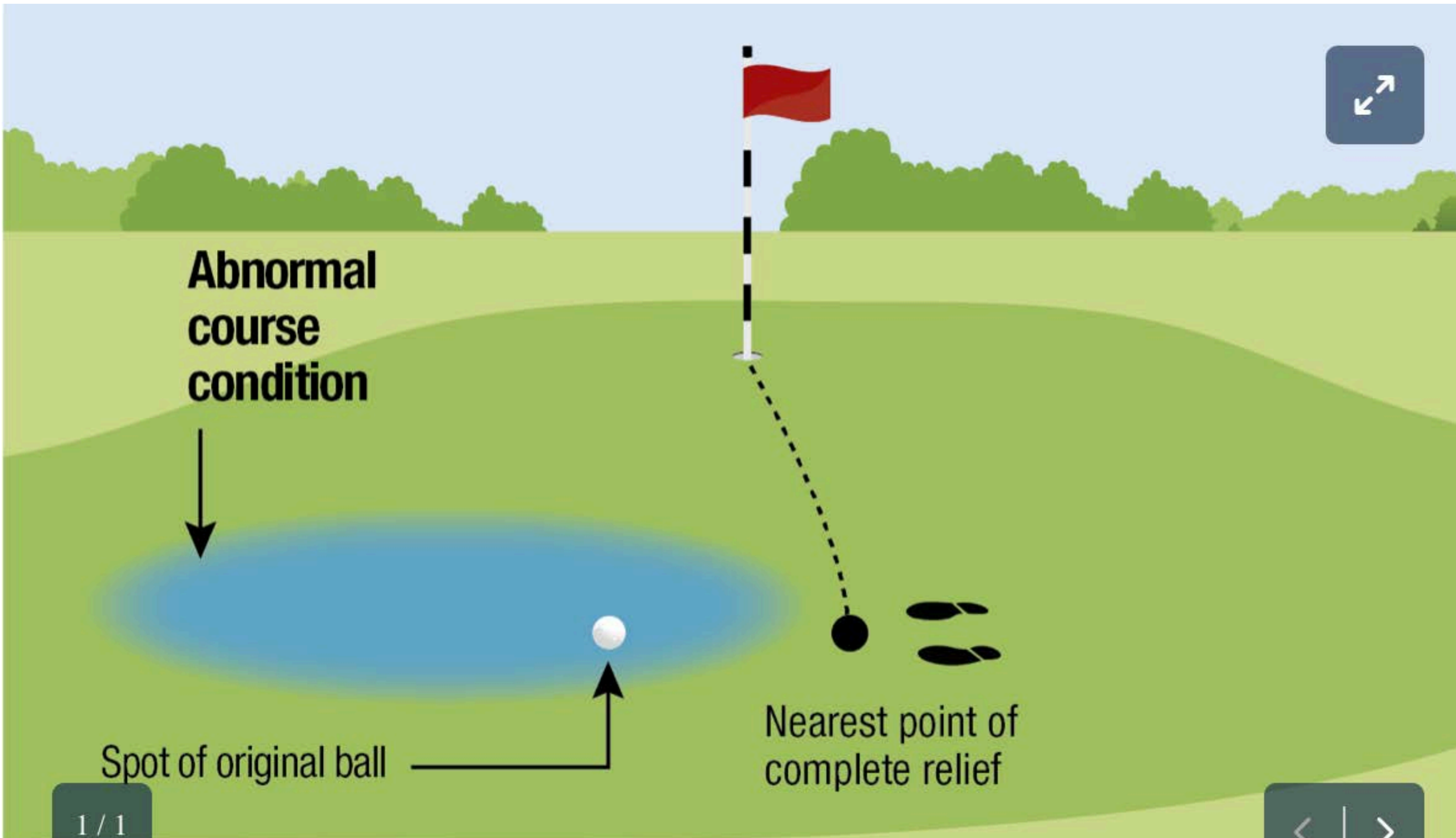
Relief area





Rule 16.1d

Free Relief from Abnormal Course Condition on Putting Green



Rule 16.3a

When ball is embedded



Ball is embedded

Part of the ball (embedded in its own pitch-mark) is below the level of the ground.

← Level of Ground



Ball is embedded

Despite the fact that the ball is not touching the soil, part of the ball (embedded in its own pitch-mark) is below the level of the ground.

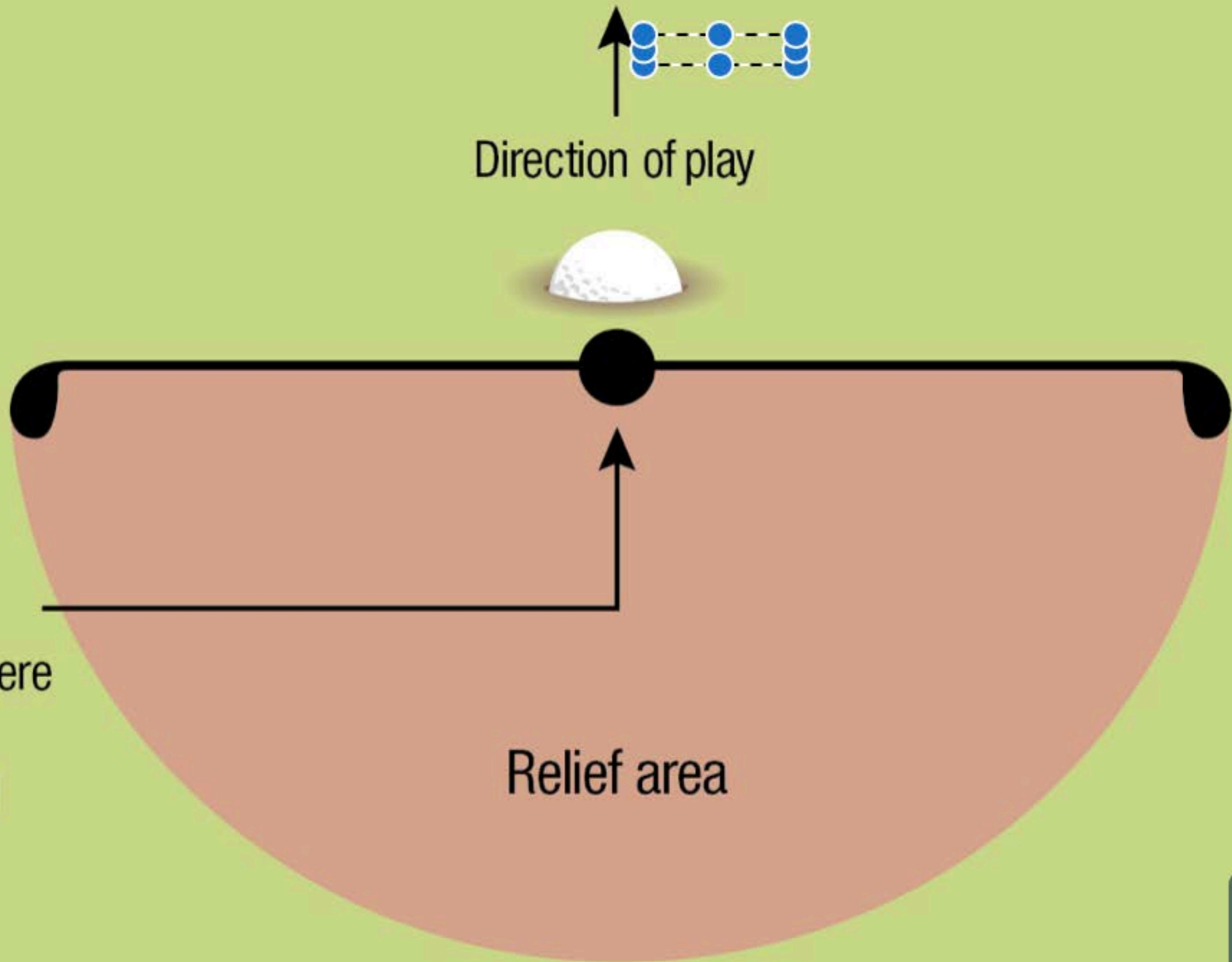


Ball is NOT embedded

Even though the ball is sitting down in the grass, relief is not available because no part of the ball is below the level of the ground.



Rule 16.3b Free Relief for Embedded Ball



Spot right behind where the ball is embedded

Direction of play

Relief area

1 / 1



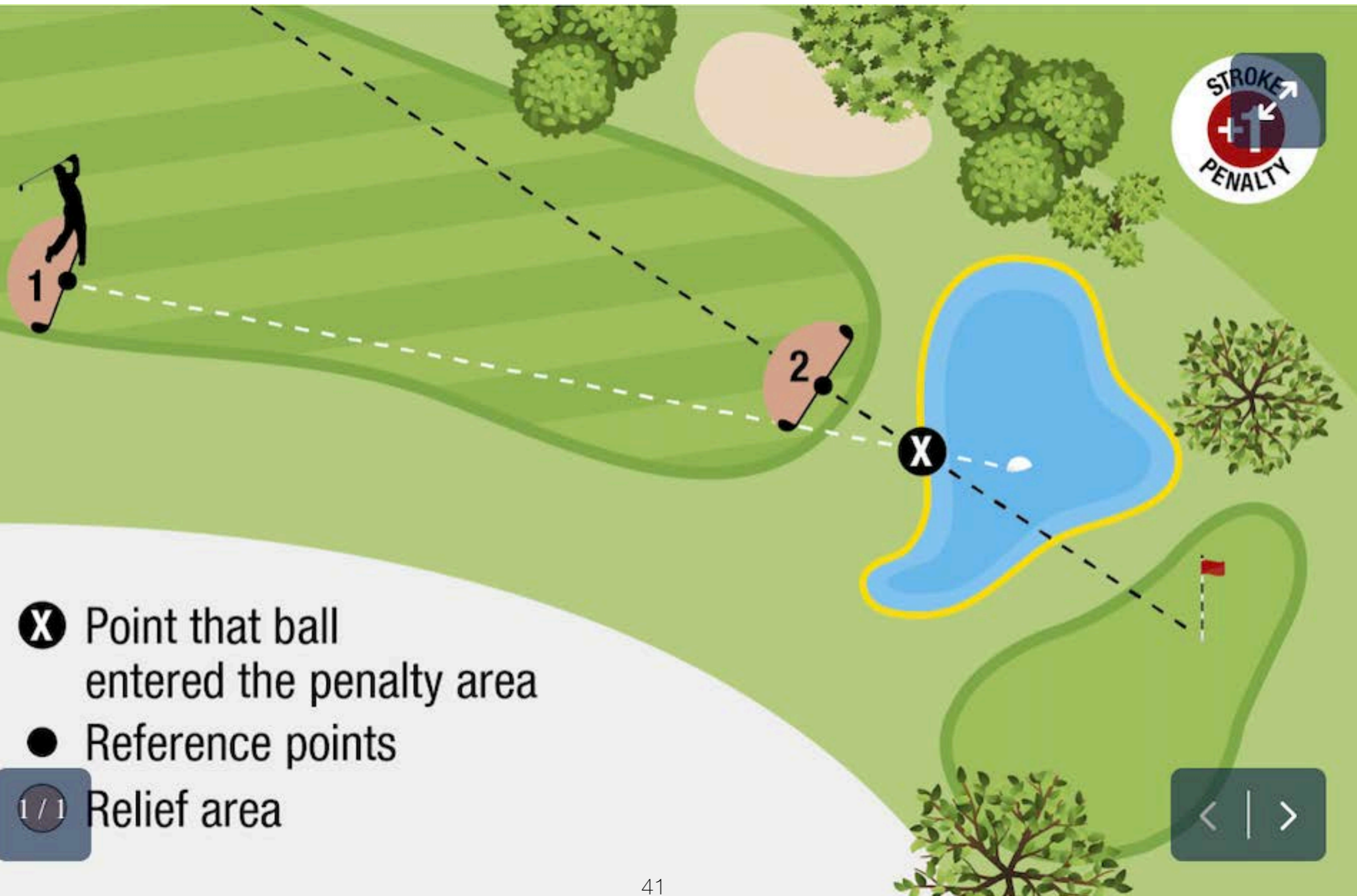


Rule 17 - Penalty Areas

- **17.1** - Yellow and red marked hazards are now defined as yellow and red penalty areas.
 - You may move loose impediments or take a practice swing, and can ground the club lightly behind the ball.
- **17.1b** - Play the ball as it lies without penalty **OR** play the ball from outside the penalty area by taking penalty relief.
- **17.1d (1)** - Stroke and distance Relief (**Rule 14.6**)
- **17.1d (2)** - Back on line relief. Reference point and line, indicate the point by using an object such as a tee. One club length from reference point.

Refer to the diagrams that follow to review relief Options. Key words to remember are **Known** or **Virtually certain**.

Rule 17.1d Relief for ball in Yellow Penalty Area



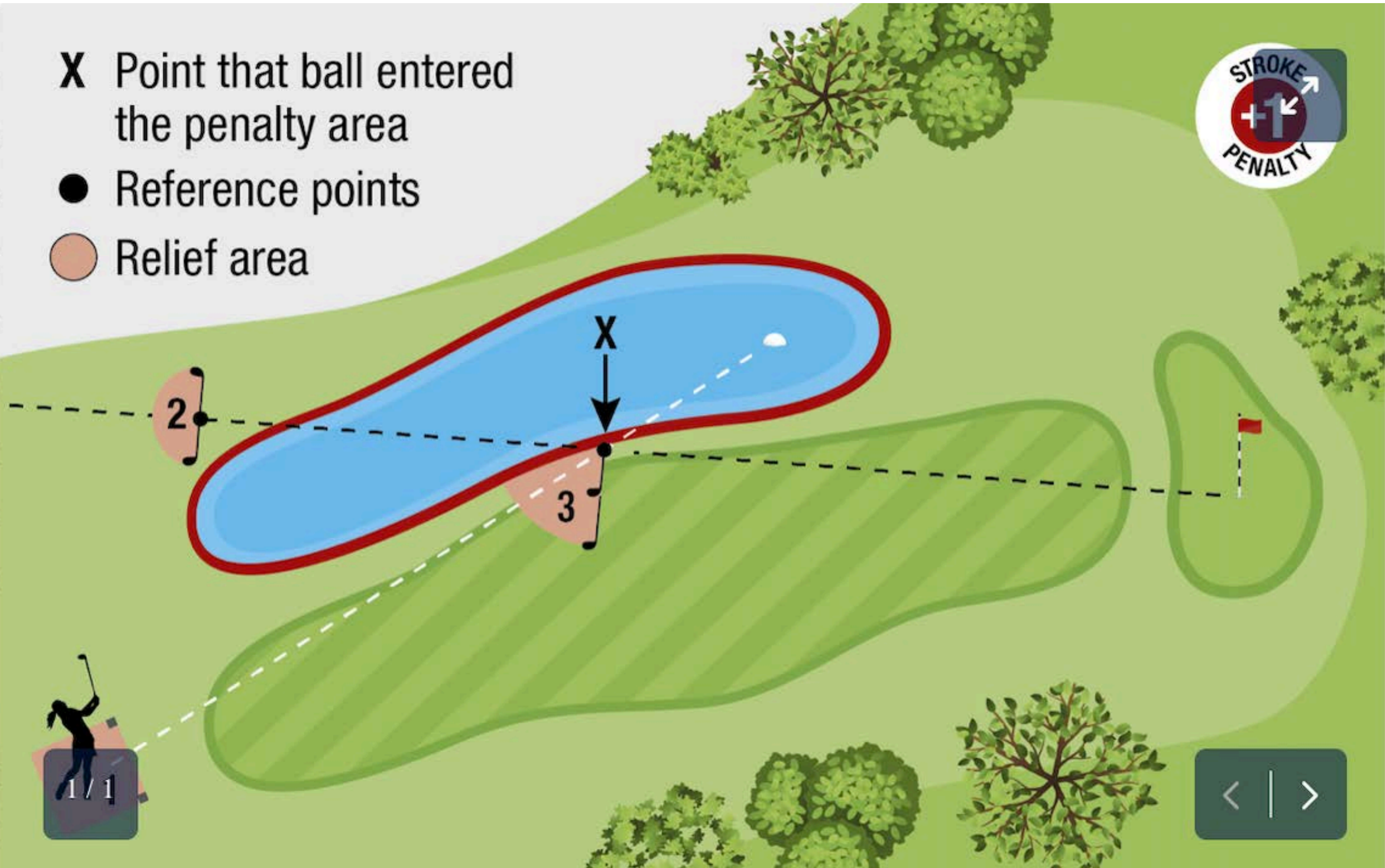
Rule 17.1d

Relief for ball in Red Penalty Area

X Point that ball entered the penalty area

● Reference points

○ Relief area





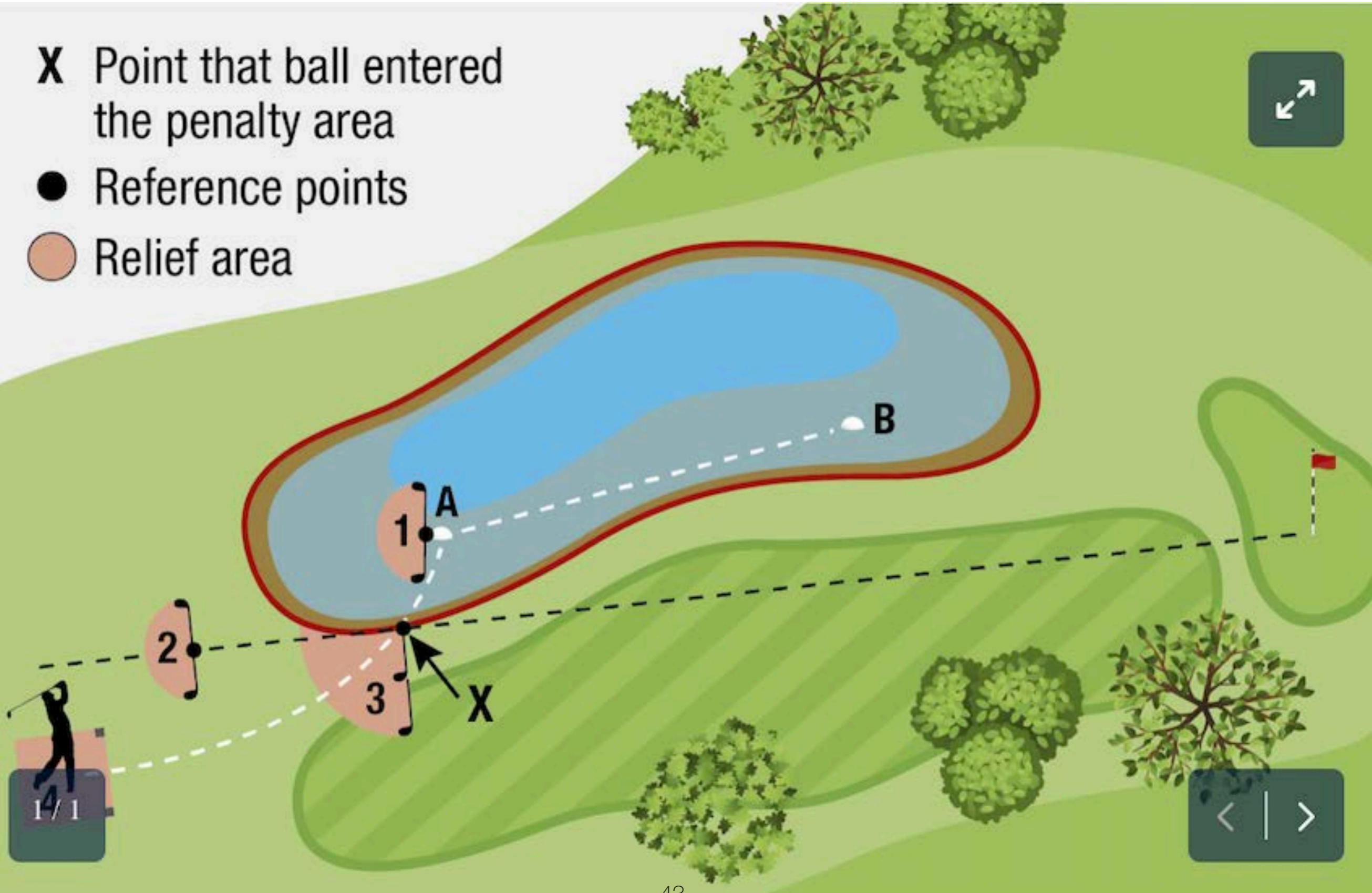
Rule 17.2a

Ball Played From Penalty Area Comes To Rest In Same Penalty Area

X Point that ball entered the penalty area

● Reference points

○ Relief area





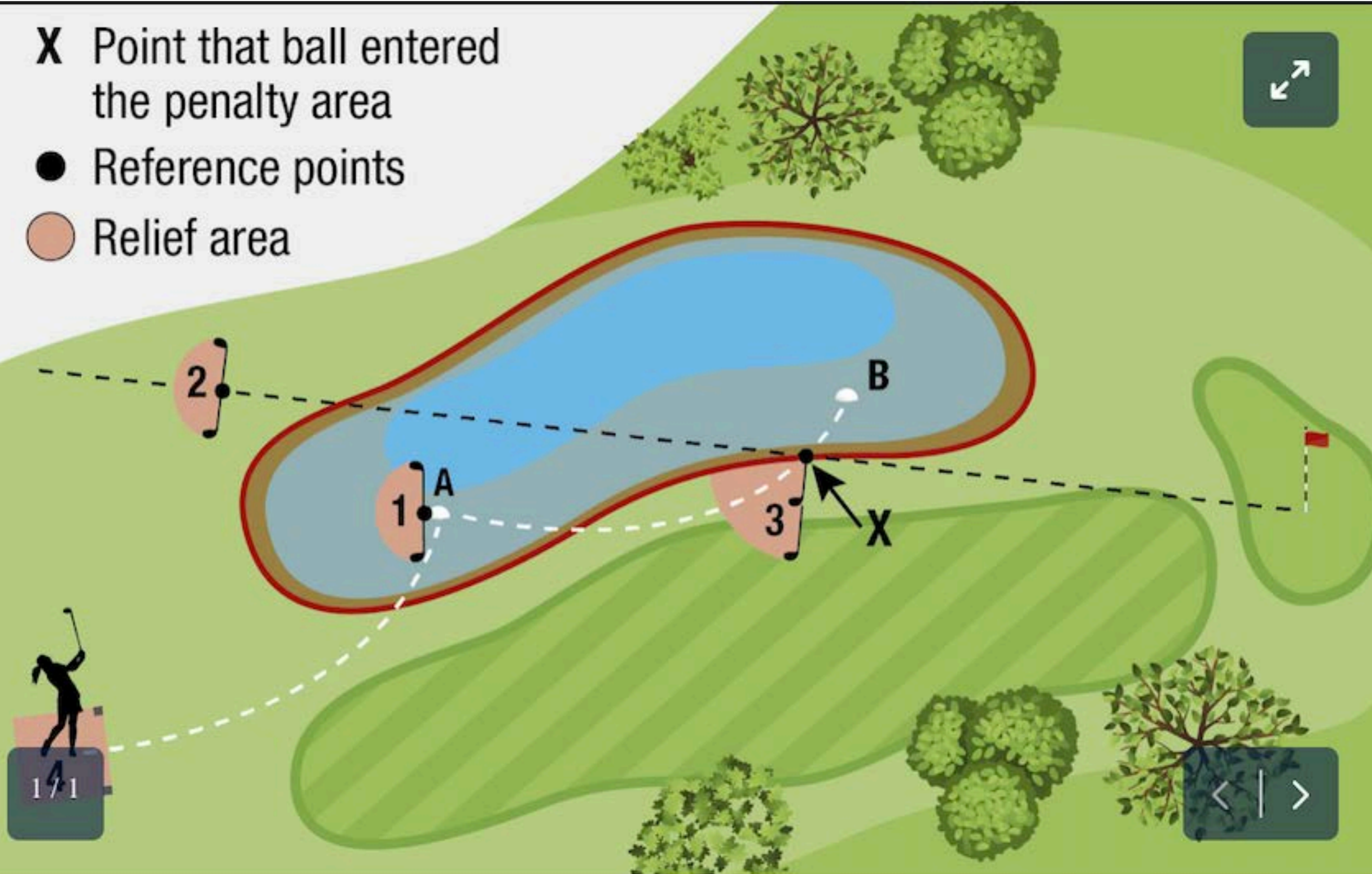
Rule 17.2a

Ball Played From Penalty Area Comes To Rest In Same Penalty Area Having Exited And Re-Entered

X Point that ball entered the penalty area

● Reference points

○ Relief area





Rule 18 - Stroke and Distance Relief, Ball Lost or Out of Bounds, Provisional Ball

- **18.2a(1)** - A ball is lost if not found in 3 minutes after the player or his caddie begins to search for it.
- It is important to decide if it is *known or virtually certain* where the ball lies when applying these Rules. If the ball is Lost outside a Penalty area because it may have “pinged off” an obstruction in any direction on for example the fairway, the player must proceed under Stroke and Distance (**Rule 14.6 and 19.2a**) **one shot penalty**.
- A new Model Local Rule, MLR E-5 for Lost Ball and OOB, to include a **2 shot penalty** can be introduced from 1 Jan 2019. [Link](#).
- The next slides are examples of situations and available relief options.
- If adopted for general Club Q events, it can be withdrawn for specific events at Comps committee discretion.



Rule 18.2a

When Ball Is Out Of Bounds

Out of bounds

Out of bounds

1 / 3

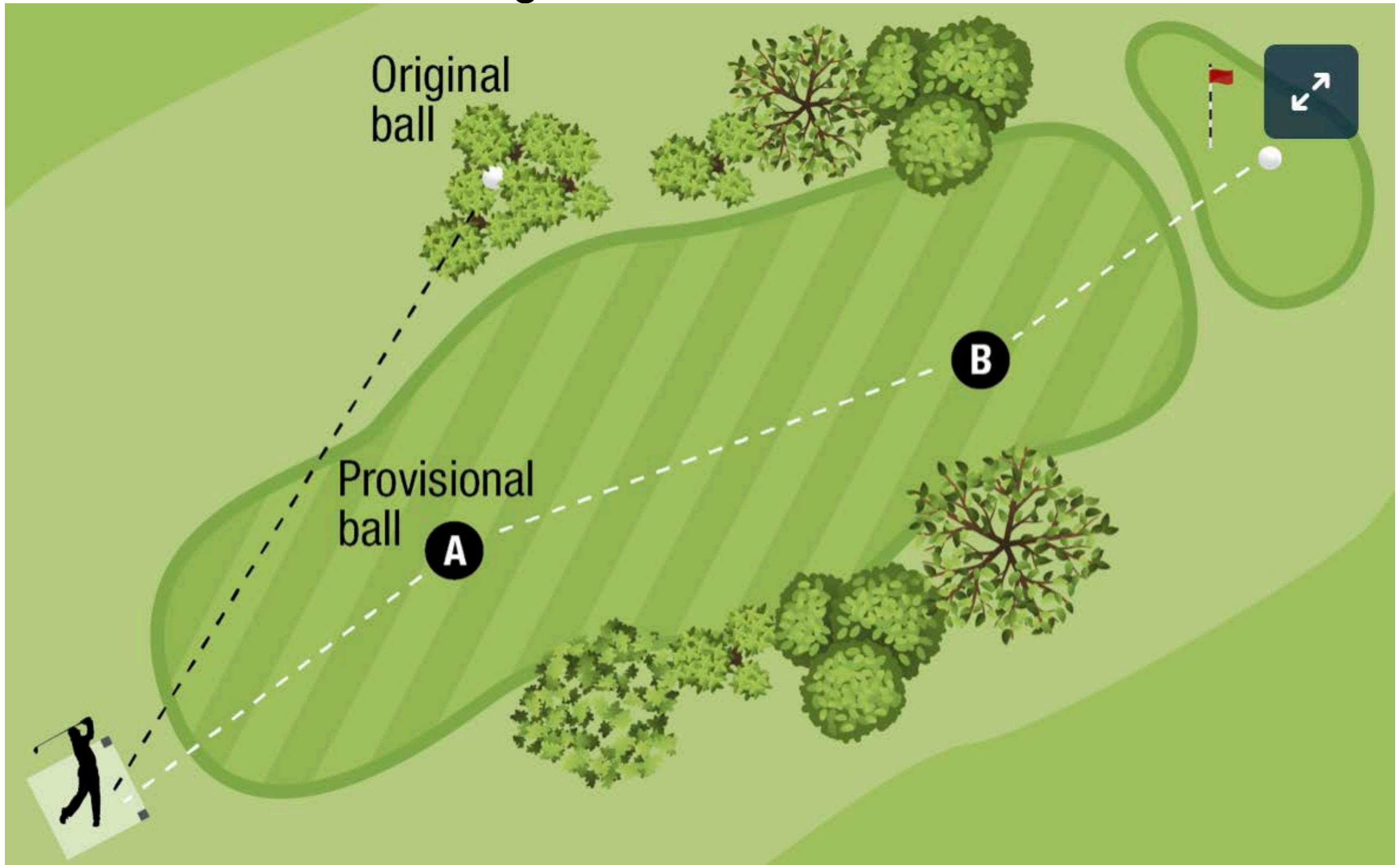
- ✓ Ball in bounds
- ✗ Ball out of bounds

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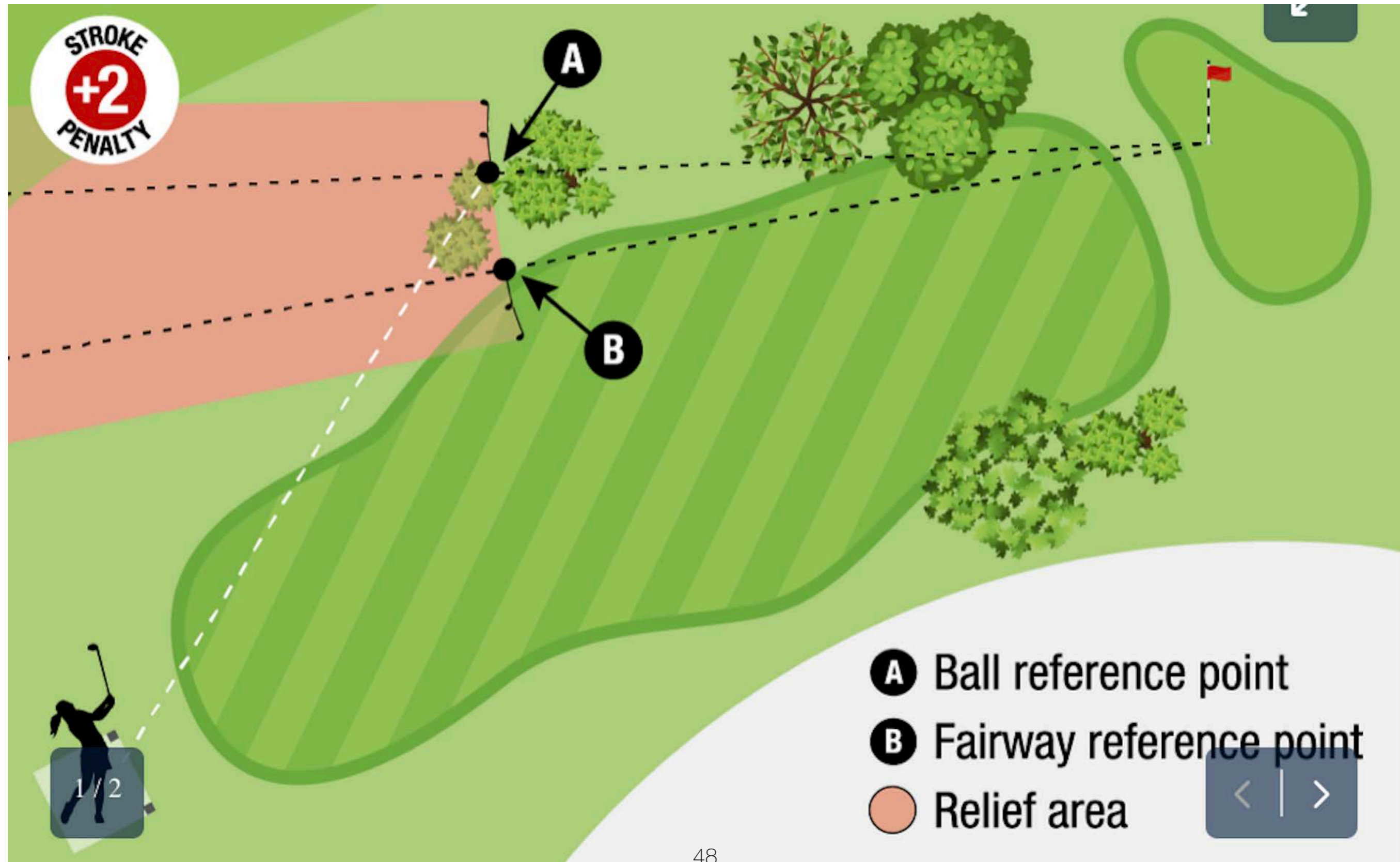
Rule 18.3c

Provisional Ball Played From Spot Nearer The Hole Than
Where Original Ball Is Estimated To Be





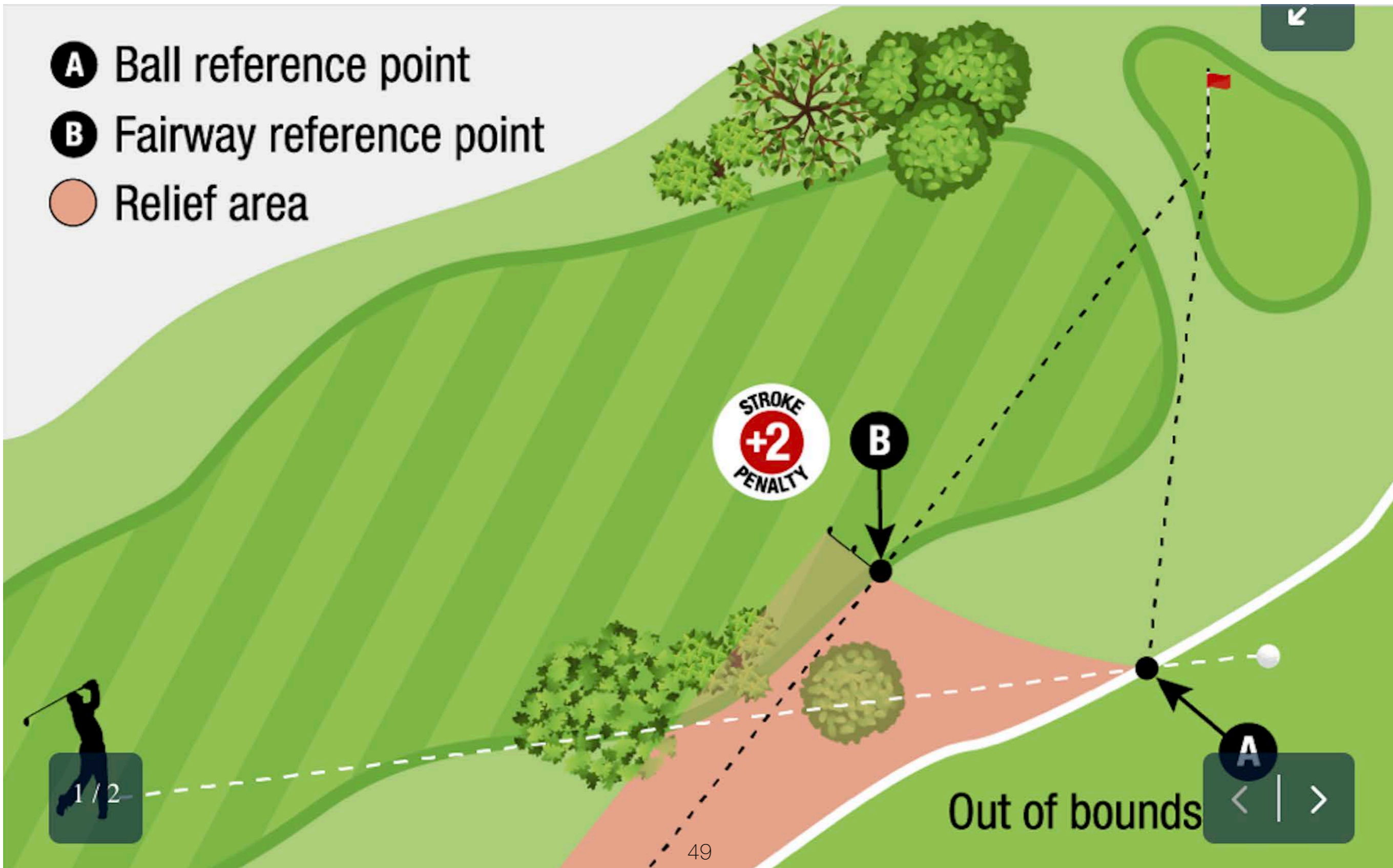
Model Local Rule E-5: Ball Not Found





Model Local Rule E-5: Ball Out Of Bounds

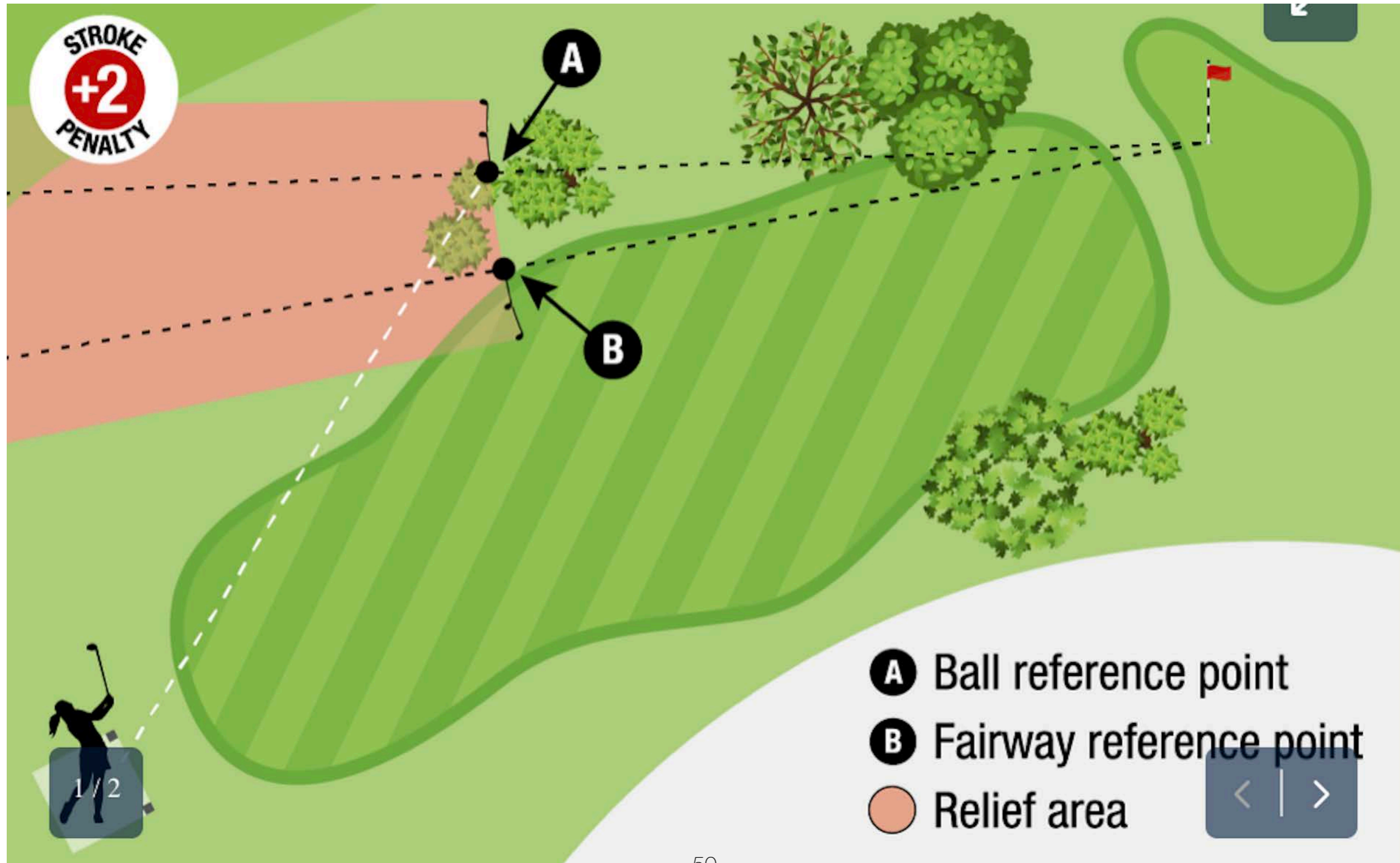
- A** Ball reference point
- B** Fairway reference point
- Relief area





Model Local Rule E-5: Ball Not Found Or Out Of Bounds Close To Green

STROKE
+2
PENALTY





Rule 19 - Unplayable Ball

- **19.1** - Only the player can decide if their ball is unplayable and relief is allowed anywhere on the course **except in a penalty area.**
- **19.2a** - Stroke and distance
- **19.2b** - Back on line relief
- **19.2c** - Lateral relief
- **19.3b** - Extra relief option (**2 shot penalty**) back on line outside a bunker.

Rule 19.2

Relief Options for Ball Unplayable in General Area



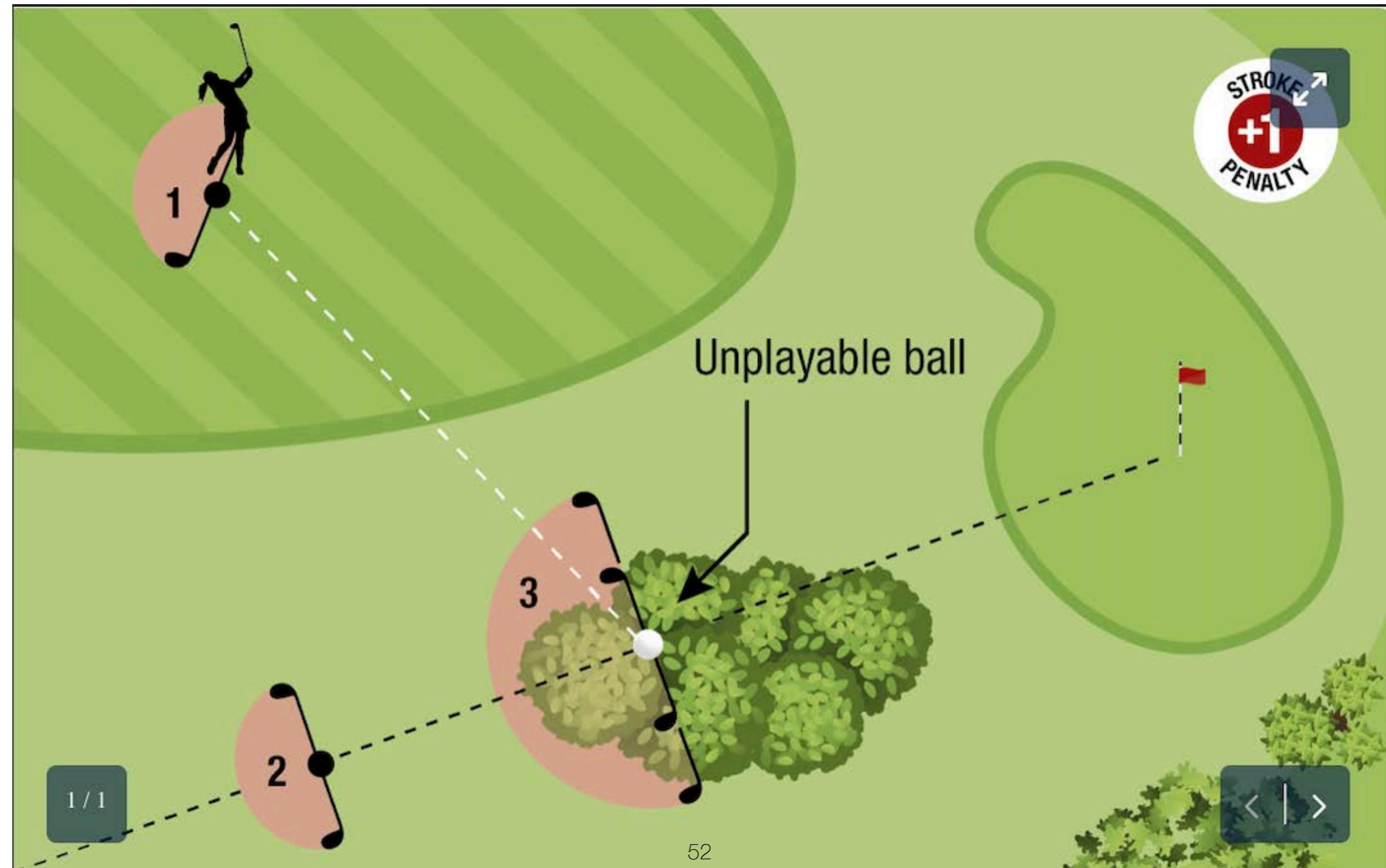
Unplayable ball

1

3

2

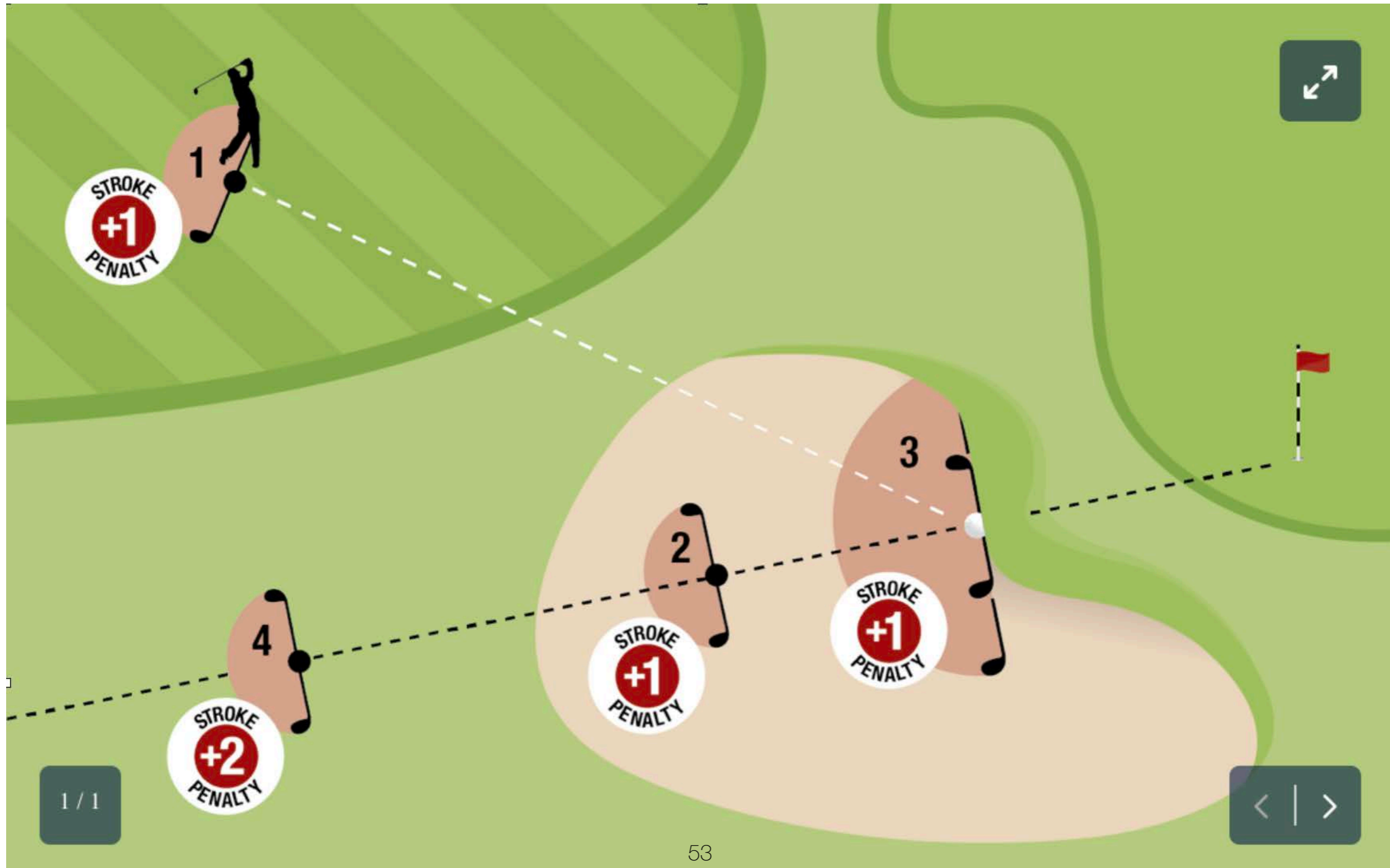
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Rule 19.3

Relief Options for Ball Unplayable in Bunker





Rules Not Covered in this Presentation

- **Rule 20** - Resolving Rules Issues During Round; Rulings by Referee and Committee
- **Rule 21**- Other Forms of Individual Stroke Play and Match Play
 - Stableford
 - Maximum Score
 - Par/Bogey
 - Three Ball Match Play
- **Rule 22** - Foursomes
- **Rule 23** - Four Ball
- **Rule 24** -Team Competitions

See [Committee Procedures Section 9](#) for other forms of play such as; Scrambles and Greensomes.

[Link](#)



Local Rules, Videos & Hyperlinks

Update your Local Rules

R&A

- Model Local Rules [HERE](#)
- Committee Toolkit > Local Rules Creator [HERE](#)
- Resource Centre > Educating and Understanding [HERE](#)

USGA

- [Explanatory Video Links](#)

Golf Australia

- Local Rules Guide [HERE](#)
- [One min Rules video clips](#)

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