

The Rules Applied – November '23

We've now been going over rules for a couple of years, and this seems like a good time for a review. So here is a quick summary of some problem areas on the first few holes at DeBell.

Hole 1: *Tee shot goes right, behind the electrical box.*

The electrical box is an immovable obstruction. No line-of-sight relief. But if the box interferes with stance or swing, free relief at nearest point, no closer to the hole, plus 1 club length.

Hole 2: *Pushed tee shot right.*

- The fence is marked with red paint, which indicates a red-tipped penalty area. If you hit the ball over the fence, then a few options, but best choice will probably be to take a drop at point of entry, plus 2 club lengths, no closer to hole, with 1 stroke penalty.
- If the ball did not go over the fence and is playable, you're good to play it.
- If the ball is so close to the fence that the fence interferes with your stance or swing, then you get free relief from an immovable obstruction – nearest point of relief plus one club length. No penalty.
- If the ball is in the area marked ground under repair, then you get free relief at the nearest point, no closer to the hole, plus 1 club length. No penalty. This is true even if you cannot identify your ball, provided you know or are virtually certain the ball went into the area. If you are not virtually certain that the ball went into that area, then the ball must be deemed to have gone over (or through) the fence, and you must take a 1-stroke penalty.

Hole 3: Approach shot *runs over the green, across the cart path, and up against the back fence.*

Perimeter fences are boundary markers. You do not get free relief. If you cannot play the shot, you may declare it an unplayable lie and take a 1-stroke penalty. If you do this, you have three options: drop on a line straight back away from the hole (this is not available here, as that would put you outside the course); drop within 2 club lengths, no closer to the hole (this would be almost straight sideways, and – as long as your ball stays within the 2 club length area – you are stuck with it, even if it rolls back against the fence and is again unplayable); or rehit from your original location. If you are worried about the ball rolling into another difficult lie, your best bet might be to rehit from the original location.

Hole 4: *Hit my tee shot way right. Not sure if it stayed in play.*

Hit a provisional shot. To do this, you must clearly state to your playing partners that you are playing a provisional ball, and you must identify the original ball and the ball you are playing as a provisional.

Hole 4: *Hit my approach shot to the left of the green, into heavy grass on the left of the cart path.*

If you find your ball, you can play it. If you wish to deem it unplayable, you must take a 1 stroke penalty and have the options described above. Here the option of going straight back away from the hole might work best. If you cannot find the ball, it is lost, and you must take a “stroke and distance” penalty, that is a 1-stroke penalty, and you must drop at the location of your original shot. The area to the left of the cart path is not ground under repair, and therefore it does not matter if you are certain the ball went into the tall grass – if you cannot find it, it's lost. If you hit into the heavy grass to the left of 4, it would probably be best to hit a provisional shot before trekking up the hill to search for it.

More to come