

The Rules Applied – July 2022

“Rub of the green.” Four words golfers use regularly. These words are not to be found in the current edition of the rules of golf (they were edited out in 2019), but they have a well-established meaning – play the ball as it lies, with no free relief. The following are a few examples of how these words may be used at DeBell – the good, the bad and the ugly.

The good: *I hit my tee shot way left on 16. It hits a rock on the mountain, bounces down to the cart path, and then rolls downhill all the way onto 17 tee. Rub of the green, that ball is in play.*

The bad: *I hit my approach on 15 a little left, just short of the left bunker. The ball kicks left, onto the cart path, and then rolls backwards, down the cart path, gaining speed until it's past the 200 yard mark. Sorry, this is rub of the green. Wherever the ball comes to rest, it is in play.*

The ugly: *I hit my approach through the green on 2. The ball gets onto the cart path where it proceeds to roll to the right all the way down the cart path on hole 3. Seriously, you're telling me to play from the fairway on 3? Again, sorry, but wherever your ball comes to rest, it is in play (although you may get relief from the cart path – stance and swing, plus one club length, no closer to the hole). Rub of the green.*

You may also hear the pronouncement “rub of the green” if you find your ball in a divot on hole 3, or on a root on hole 9, or on a bare spot on hole 2. Unless the area has been designated as “ground under repair” by the tournament committee, it must be played as it lies.

There is not much comfort to be taken when you have to deal with bad luck and get no relief. But when your playing partner looks at you with that pitiful look of a man cursed by the golf gods and asks for relief, you'll have a ready answer – sorry, rub of the green.