

The Rules Applied – Jan 2022

It is the responsibility of all golfers to know the rules of golf and to apply them properly in tournament play. In order to better acquaint BMGC members with the rules and their application to particular situations which occur at DeBell, the club will be providing a short discussion in connection with each tournament. Today . . .

So I hit my tee shot up along the right side of the first hole at DeBell, about 5 feet behind the sprinkler box. The box is directly in my line. Do I get line of sight relief?

Sorry, no. Sprinkler boxes are immovable obstructions, like cart paths, sprinkler heads and interior protective fences (not perimeter fences). These are all known as abnormal course conditions. You get free relief when the condition interferes with your lie, stance or area of intended swing. However, when an abnormal course condition interferes only with your line of play, free relief is not allowed.

What if I'm 1 foot behind the sprinkler box, and it does interfere with my stance or swing?

Ah, in that case, you would indeed be entitled to free relief. In taking relief, the player first marks his ball, and then determines the nearest point of complete relief – the point where the obstruction does not interfere with lie, stance or swing – making sure that the point is no nearer to the hole. In determining whether the obstruction interferes with your swing, you must use the club which you, in good faith, would use on your next shot if the obstruction were not there. You must mark your nearest point of relief.

From the relief point the player measures 1 club length (this time using your longest club). You may measure your 1 club length in any direction, provided it is no nearer to the hole than your original ball. The player marks the extremities of relief and drops (knee high drop) within the area of relief. Please note that the ball must come to rest within 1 club length of the nearest point of relief (imagine a semi circle around the nearest point of relief). If the ball rolls outside the semi circle the player drops again. If the ball rolls outside the semi circle a second time the player places the ball where the drop landed. Upon completion of the drop the player picks up his marks and continues to play with no penalty.

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules/rules-2019/rules-of-golf/rule-16.html>