Rules (USGA – some basic rules)

RULES - BRIEF REVIEWS OF COMMON SITUATIONS

This section summarizes some of the rules which are commonly questioned during an "average" round of golf. However, the USGA's "Rules of Golf" is the final source for resolving issues concerning the rules of the game. Members are encouraged to become familiar with the Rules of Golf and keep a copy of the Rules of Golf in their golf bag. Any rules questions should be addressed to our head PGA professional or the Tournament Chairman. If during stroke play you can not get an answer on a rule, play 2 or more balls and use the correct score when the rule definition is made.

IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS

A common area of confusion arises when a player encounters interference by an "immovable obstruction". Here is a review of the Rules specific to two cases often encountered at the Griff: interference by cart paths and interference by protective fences (on holes 1, 2, 4, 6, and 11.)

Interference by an immovable obstruction defined

"Interference by an immovable obstruction occurs when a ball lies in or on the obstruction, or so close to the obstruction that the obstruction interferes with the player's stance or the area of his intended swing... (However, ) intervention on the line of play is not, of itself, interference under this rule."

Note: The last sentence means that if an immovable obstruction (say, a protective fence) lies between the player's ball and the hole (i.e., on his "line of play" to the hole), the player does not get any relief under this rule UNLESS the immovable obstruction is close enough to his ball so as to cause interfere with his stance or swing.
Relief from interference by an immovable obstruction (through the green)

"...the point on the course nearest to where the ball lies shall be determined (without crossing over, through or under the obstruction) which (a) is not nearer the hole, (b) avoids interference (as defined) and (c) is not in a hazard or on a putting green. The player shall lift the ball and drop it within one club-length of the point thus determined...

"Note: The prohibition against crossing over, through or under the obstruction does not apply to the artificial surfaces and sides of roads and paths ..."

(However, the prohibition against crossing over, through or under the obstruction does apply to protective fences. So, when one of these fences interferes with your stance or swing, relief must be taken on the same side of the fence as the ball.)

When interference by an immovable obstruction occurs, the player is entitled to relief, but only to the extent that the obstruction no longer interferes with his stance or swing. After relief is taken, the obstruction may still interfere with his "line of play" - unfortunate, but no further relief is available.

PROVISIONAL BALL - BALL LOST OR OUT-OF-BOUNDS

If you hit a shot and you think it may be lost outside a hazard or out-of-bounds, play a provisional ball. Before playing the provisional ball, be sure to inform your opponent or fellow competitors of your intention. If the original ball is lost (outside a hazard) or is out-of-bounds, the provisional ball becomes the ball in play (under penalty of stroke and distance.)
For example, if you think your tee shot may be out of bounds, play a provisional ball. If your original ball is then found out-of-bounds, you must play the provisional ball. The next shot with the provisional ball will be your fourth shot.

If the original ball is found in play, abandon the provisional ball and continue play with the original ball.

**BALL UNPLAYABLE**

The player may declare his ball unplayable at any place on the course. The player is the sole judge as to whether his ball is unplayable.

If the player deems his ball to be unplayable, he shall, *under penalty of one stroke*:

a. Play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was last played;
   
   Or
   
   b. Drop a ball within two club-lengths of the spot where the ball lay, but not nearer the hole.
   
   Or
   
   c. Drop behind the point where the ball lay, keeping that point directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped.

If the ball is unplayable in a bunker, the player may proceed under Clause a, b, or c. If he elects to proceed under Clause b or c, the ball must be dropped in the bunker.

The ball may be cleaned when lifted under this Rule.
WATER HAZARDS (INCLUDING LATERAL WATER HAZARDS)

Water hazards (other than lateral water hazards) should be defined by yellow stakes or lines.

Lateral water hazards should be defined by red stakes or lines.

Stakes and lines defining the margins of water hazards (and lateral water hazards) are in the hazards.

A ball is in a water hazard (or lateral water hazard) when it lies in or any part of it touches the hazard.

Ball in a water hazard:

If a ball is in or lost in a water hazard, the player may, under penalty of one stroke:

a. Play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was last played;
   Or
b. Drop a ball behind the water hazard, keeping the point at which the original ball last crossed the margin of the water hazard directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit to how far behind the water hazard the ball may be dropped;

Ball in a lateral water hazard:

If a ball is in or lost in a lateral water hazard, the player may, under penalty of one stroke:

Proceed as in Clause a or b above (for water hazards);
   or
   c. Drop a ball outside the lateral water hazard within two club-lengths of and not nearer the hole than (i) the point where the original ball last crossed the margin of the lateral water hazard or (ii) a point on the opposite margin of the lateral water hazard equidistant from the hole.
The ball may be cleaned when lifted under this Rule.

**WINTER RULES (or "Preferred Lies")**

When the Griff Golf Course posts the "Winter Rules are in effect" sign, the following USGA recommended Local Rule will apply in Men's Club tournament play:

A ball lying on the "fairway" of the hole being played may be lifted and cleaned, without penalty, and placed within one club-length of where it originally lay, not nearer the hole. A ball so lifted is back in play when the player addresses it or, if he does not address it, when he makes his stroke.