

2006.01 : Basket Specs

Question - I'd like to build my own basket. Where can I find the technical specifications?

Response - There is not a single set of basket specifications. Any PDGA-approved target must conform to the technical standards, which give ranges of measurement. The exact dimensions are up to the manufacturer. You could of course try measuring existing baskets to get an idea what the dimensions are. The PDGA Technical Standards for targets (as well as discs) can be found in the Information area of the website.

Most or all target designs are protected by patent, so it is unlikely that you would be able to sell a target that is based on a patented design. Before you deploy a homemade basket in a public park (or even for personal use), you should probably check into the applicable laws

2006.02 : Bluebonnets and other protected areas

Question - "I played Disc golf in San Antonio during the Spring Months of 97. The beauty of it all, had to be the scenic surroundings. Texas Bluebonnets were everywhere. My concern was what to do when my disc fell into these flowers, which in fact, was every much apart of the fairways. In the state of Texas, it is illegal to pick or trample on these flowers. Making every effort not to do so, I would walk among these flowers to retrieve my disc. In this case, what is the proper play? 1 throw penalty? Do I select to drop? I'm sure this question needs to be addressed by the sanctioned PDGA Officials. It could create real problems for those who play the game during Spring in Texas."

Response - The question can be boiled down to: How can my disc be retrieved and the lie subsequently played from when it lands in an area of the course that has sensitive, protected, endangered, dangerous (poison ivy) or valuable foliage?
Applicable Rules: 803.05 (Obstacles and Relief), 803.06 (Unplayable Lie), 803.09 (Out-of-Bounds), 804.01 Special Conditions

Discussion - This situation is a good one that COULD be specifically addressed by the rules (though the rules already "cover" this), however there are probably better ways to handle the situation.

We are not sure that there is a "proper play" as far as the PDGA rules go. Like so many "rules issues" this example would appear to be more of a course design problem AND a Course Pro/Tournament Director issue than one involving the PDGA rules. Simply throwing into the Bluebonnets would also be illegal. It sounds as if the course should be re-designed. If the Bluebonnets are protected by the State of Texas then the course SHOULD NOT force one to play near (much less on) a protected species. Or alternatively, the course could be closed while the Bluebonnets are in bloom (although it would seem that the plants could be damaged year-round). That having been stated, what do we do IF the course DOES force us to play near the Bluebonnets?

Though the specific issue of "bluebonnets" (or poison ivy) are not specifically covered in the rules, the rules do cover this situation. The rules do address casual and out-of-bounds areas, which is the direction this question takes us. Some general concepts first: The rules do not make particular areas out-of-bounds (OB). Tournament Directors do. So the paved road or the water hazard or even the bluebonnets are not automatically OB. They become OB when the TD defines them as OB. (In casual play the local customs are used).

For this reason it is a good idea to check with the TD if you know of any questionable areas on the course. TD's should make it a point to include course OB and casual relief areas in a player's meeting. Some top tournaments (and their TDs!) include course maps and OB areas on the scorecards. When this is combined with clearly delineated OB lines (string, tape, paint, etc) a TD has gone a long way to preventing controversy. All areas that MAY produce controversy SHOULD be marked off clearly... and the markings should be in place several days before the tournament is to begin. This will allow traveling players to learn of these areas BEFORE the tourney starts!

So the TD in bluebonnet country has a decision how to handle the discs which encounter the bluebonnets. The TD will decide whether to 1) make no special provision, 2) declare bluebonnet fields to be OB or, 3) declare bluebonnet fields to be casual relief. If the TD chooses option 1, then there are no penalties for venturing into the bluebonnets and players have no idea as to how to play their shots (TD error, not a rules problem). If the TD chooses option 2, then penalties and subsequent placement of the lie are covered 803.09 (Out-of-Bounds). If the TD chooses option 3, then there are no penalties (unless the player chooses to declare an unsafe lie) and subsequent placement of the lie are covered under 803.05 (Obstacles and Relief).

The rules also currently provide for situations such as this. 804.01 (Special Conditions) allows the tournament director to specify "Rules governing special conditions that may exist on the course" such as Bluebonnets. That was the whole purpose for the inclusion of the "Special Conditions" rule. (One caveat though, the special conditions CAN NOT conflict with the PDGA rules.) In this instance the TD would announce (prior to the start of the tourney) exactly how to handle the "bluebonnet scenario." (In effect, coupling option from the above scenario with the Special Conditions rule!)

Amazingly, a precedent has been set. In the days of Boylan Family Farms (A Christmas tree farm) , the Laurel Springs Open and the Amateur National Championships...property owner (And TD) Bill Boylan defined the special condition (his Christmas trees) and detailed how one should obtain relief from the trees. No penalty but stay on the line of play. It worked exceedingly well BECAUSE the TD thought about the situation in advance AND it was clearly explained in the players meeting!

Conclusion - In summary, the bluebonnet issue is like so many other “rules issues”, the “trouble” could be avoided by proper course design, a little extra work on the TD’s part, and through a reasonable and fair application of the existing PDGA Rule Book! PLEASE do everyone a favor...READ THE RULES!

Other Comments - Obviously, the above comments are all well and good...BUT, what if the TD failed to do his job? What IF, the player finds herself in the bluebonnets and does not know what to do? Some of the possibilities are not fun, such as breaking a state law or taking a penalty. We don't want a player to be penalized by her knowledge of and respect for the law. What to do? The player should inform her group, stop play, find the TD (or course official) and request a ruling. (Since the group has halted play while waiting on a ruling, other groups should be allowed to play through!) The TD's best bet would be to declare the bluebonnet area a casual relief area (under 803.05 C) for the rest of the round (since presumably other groups have played the hole in ignorance of the laws regarding bluebonnet protection). It should then remain casual relief for the rest of the tournament.

2006.03 : Bridge Over OB (Multiple Playing Surfaces and Verticality)

Question - My throw landed on a bridge that spans an OB creek. The TD has not said anything about playing from the bridge. Do I play from the bridge, or is my disc OB since it's above the creek? What if I'm on the bridge but over land? Does it matter if the bridge is more than two meters above the ground below?

Response - The answers to these questions revolve around the definition of OB. In the glossary section of the rules, it states that the OB line "extends a vertical plane upward and downward". Where does that plane end? The rules do not address that directly.

There seem to be two reasonable choices:

A: The vertical plane extends indefinitely up and down.

B: The vertical plane ends when it reaches another playing surface.

Option A requires less interpretation, and option B makes more sense intuitively. The Rules Committee has discussed the issue and has decided that option B is preferable.

Although the term "playing surface" is not defined in the rules, it is used frequently and it is unlikely to be a source of confusion. Something is either a playing surface or an object on the course. A bridge, though man-made, is intended for foot traffic and clearly qualifies as a playing surface. Since it is not an object on the course, the two-meter rules does not come into play.

The IB/OB status of a playing surface is not affected by the OB status of another playing surface above or below it. OB applies only to the playing surface that contains it. Otherwise, a number of non-intuitive rulings result:

In the bridge example, the part of the bridge that is above the OB creek would be OB. A perfectly playable lie on the bridge could be OB, a foot away from a lie that is IB, when there is no direct reason for it to be OB. Players will have difficulty extrapolating where the OB part of the bridge is, especially if the OB line below is uneven (if it follows the creek's edge). Even if the TD uses paint or string to mark OB on the bridge, those lines will see a lot of foot traffic and may not last.

At least one course has an OB culvert that runs under and opens into a fairway. If the vertical plane of the OB line extends indefinitely, then there is a strip of OB on the fairway over the culvert. If an OB creek undercuts a bank, then the top of the bank is OB even if it is obviously playable. Someone would have to determine how far the creek undercuts the bank to figure out just where the OB line on the bank is. There is an overpass with a street high above a section of the course. The street, of course, is OB. If the plane extends downward, then a street-wide chunk of the course below is also OB.

If you interpret the vertical plane to end when it reaches another playing surface, you get much more intuitive rulings in the above scenarios. The bridge is IB, the fairway above the culvert is IB, the bank that overhangs the creek is IB, and the ground below the street overpass is IB. All of the playing surfaces above are easily distinguished from those above or below which contain OB.

Conclusion - You play a disc on a bridge as you would play it anywhere else on the course. Assuming the bridge is not OB, you mark your lie on the bridge and proceed with the hole. If your disc lands under the bridge, you play it from under the bridge, taking any OB into consideration as you normally would. Of course, the TD or course designer is free to make any or all of the bridge OB, in addition to the creek below.

2006.04 : Building a Lie

Question - A player's shot lands in a creek that has been declared casual. Can she place a rock or a broken limb behind her mark, in order to keep her feet dry?

Important Note (4/15/08): Previously we had ruled that this was permitted. This opinion reverses that ruling.

Response - Applicable Rules: 803.01 (General) 803.05, (Obstacles and Relief) C 803.04, (Stance, Subsequent to Teeing Off)A.1

803.01 (General) A states "The game of disc golf consists of throwing a flying disc from the teeing area to a target by a throw or successive throws. Players shall play the course as they find it and play the disc where it lies unless allowed otherwise by the Rules."

Rocks and broken limbs are obstacles on the course, which can not be moved except as specified under 803.05 (Obstacles and Relief) C, pursuant to a safe stance and run up.

Additionally, 803.04 (Stance, Subsequent to Teeing Off) A 1, requires that one "Have at least one supporting point that is in contact with the playing surface on the line of play and within 30 centimeters directly behind the marker disc".

Conclusion - You take a stance in the mud or casual water just as you would in the fairway. One should never expect to be able to move obstacles, except as narrowly defined under "Obstacles and Relief".

2006.05 : Casual relief: ice and snow

Question - Does the term "body of water" in the casual relief rule extend to bodies of ice and snow? I say the intent of the casual relief rule is limited to water as a liquid since the rule doesn't say "any form of water".

But, it's apparent that others argue a broader interpretation of the word water is intended to include all forms. However, if you feel all forms of water are covered, it makes the rule a nightmare. Snow or ice covered fields would allow casual relief by default unless the TD specifies otherwise.

It seems to make more sense to have fields of snow or ice NOT casual by default. The only exception I can see would be a situation where there are a few small patches of ice (under 1 square meter) where casual relief might make sense for safety reasons. But even this exception may not be necessary because the assumption is that if you're playing in those weather conditions, you should be prepared for less than ideal scenarios on the course.

Response - Summary: Does the rule granting relief from casual water apply to ice and snow?

Applicable Rules: 803.04 (Obstacles and Relief)

Discussion - No. The "casual water" listed in the rule is water as it's commonly understood, i.e. in a liquid form. The rules do not grant relief from snow, ice, or even steam should you encounter it. However, the TD may grant relief from "any item or area" before the round. If, for example, there is a patch of ice on the course known to be dangerous, the TD could declare it a casual obstacle and grant the players relief from it.

2006.06 : Changing Marking Methods

Question - Is there a rule that disallows a player to mark his lie with a mini and subsequently decide to replace the disc and pick up the mini? For example, if a player throws near a bush or tree, puts down his mini, obtains his stance, and decides a few inches clearance would better facilitate the throw, replaces the disc and pick up the mini.

Response - Applicable Rules: 803.03 Marking the Lie

Yes, there is a rule that prevents replacing a picked up disc and using it as the mark after having removed it.

803.03 Marking the Lie Section A: A player may instead choose, without touching or repositioning the thrown disc, to use the thrown disc as the marker. In your example the thrower has already "touched and repositioned" the thrown disc, so it can no longer be used as the mark.

What you can do to avoid this situation is to place your mini and then go about taking your stance without touching or moving the thrown disc. Then if you decide that you'd like to play from behind the disc instead of from the mini, you can just pick up your mini.

2006.07 : Disc below the playing surface

Question - I live in the beautiful country of Texas. Our fair nation is enduring a drought that is ruining crops, evaporating lakes, making grown men fight their own kids for the right to soak in the inflatable kiddie pool, and causing havoc on the ol' DGC. Aside from an increase in sunscreen consumption and skin cancer production, the drought is causing cracks to form in our wonderful, though mostly clay, soil. During one of my picturesque drives, my disc hit the ground and began to roll. As fate would have it, my disc made its way into a crack and plunged a thousand feet below, to the land, the land of the lost.

Is there a penalty in this situation? The disc is too deep to be retrieved with any ease which sort of implies a penalty yet the crack is not a normal course feature which may mean no penalty. Water feature usually refers to a regularly standing body of water so a big puddle would not be a stoke giving entity should a disc land within its confines. I could find nothing in the rules about disc swallowing cracks? If the disc is within one meter of the surface is there no penalty? How should I score this shot?

Christopher
SSDG: member # 00001

Response - The question can be boiled down to: "Is there a penalty regarding discs below ground in the PDGA rules?"
Applicable Rules: None

Discussion - While the PDGA rules do specifically cover situations where discs are suspended ABOVE the playing surface, there are currently no rules (or allowances) for discs BELOW the playing surface. Since the rules do not address these situations it is up to the course pro/TD/course designer to determine how to handle these situations. This would be done in accordance with rule 804.01 Special Conditions. (Or the TD could declare that the cracks were Out-of-Bounds areas and play such occurrences accordingly.)

Without a decision being made along these lines by the TD, problems quickly will arise because such a shot can not be legally marked in accordance with PDGA rules. (Currently, 803.03, A, Marking the Lie, indicates that a shot must be marked with the mini marker touching the thrown disc.)

Conclusion - The PDGA Rules do not address this issue. The burden to provide for a solution in this situation would fall on the TD. In terms of casual, recreational play...there should be no real issue. The group could determine how they would handle such occurrences.

Other Comments - Many times in our great sport situations will arise that ARE NOT covered by the rules. This is one of the reasons that we have course pros/TDs/ course designers. The rules do provide several options in these situations: a) use the special conditions rules, b) make the questionable areas OB (taking great care to clearly mark the OB line with string or paint), or in the absence of all else c) simply do what is fair.

2006.08 : Disc knocked out of tree

Question - "In previous versions of the rule book, a disc above two meters that was knocked out of the tree by a competitively thrown disc was played at its new location. In the 2006 book, this exception has been removed. Does that mean that a disc that comes to rest above 2 meters and is hit by another disc and falls below 2 meters should be played as if it were still at its original lie above 2 meters (thus taking a lie below the spot in the tree and a penalty stroke?)."

Response - Summary: "What is the ruling when a disc that is stuck in a tree is knocked out of the tree by another competitors throw during play?"
Applicable Rules: 803.08 Disc Above the Playing Surface, 803.07 Interference

Discussion - If the 2 meter rule is not in effect, it's a moot point, as there's no penalty to deal with.

If the two meter rule IS in effect: Take a close look at 803.08(C). This says if a disc falls "unassisted by a player or spectator" it is not penalized. In this case it was moved by a disc, not a player. One could argue that the disc was thrown by a player, hence was ultimately moved by that player. That is a tough scenario to "buy" however, because there is no way the player could have known his disc would knock the other one out of a tree. It was pure chance. The intent of 803.08(C) is to prevent buddies or fans from moving the player's disc before a 2-meter determination is made (giving the player an advantage). A disc being hit by another disc is no different than a disc being blown down by a gust of wind.

There's no penalty stroke for a lie above the playing surface until you walk up to it, determine that it's over two meters, and mark it. Common sense tells us what's a lucky break and what's not. Another player's shot knocking it down is a lucky break, and it's unlikely someone could do that intentionally without it being obvious. Perhaps the disc was already falling, or would have in a few

moments, before the second disc hit it. If we interpret the rule the other way, then it becomes an unlucky break because as soon as the second disc hits it, it has no chance to come down on its own. Its two-meter status before it was hit is not necessarily clear, either, making a correct ruling in this scenario even more difficult.

Our reading of "unassisted by a player or spectator" infers intent and direct action.

Conclusion - It's a lucky break for the golfer whose shot was originally stuck in the tree! He gets to play his disc where it now lies.

2006.09 : Disc lost in casual water

Question - My disc landed in a murky puddle that had been declared by the TD to be casual water, and we could not find it. Do I play it as lost, or take casual relief?

Response - Applicable Rules: 803.09.A Out-of-Bounds, 803.05.C Casual Obstacles

Our ruling here follows the line of thought presented in response to the "Lost or OB" question, which is based on the presence of "reasonable evidence" that a disc went OB. If there is clear and compelling evidence that the disc is OB (for example, the entire group watched it land in the middle of a lake), then you play under the assumption that the disc is sitting there in the lake, even though you cannot see it. That assumption takes precedence over the fact that you cannot find it.

To be consistent, we treat the disc that we cannot see in the puddle the same way. We assume that the disc is sitting in the puddle, ignoring the fact that it can't be found. Given the reasonable evidence that the disc is sitting in the casual puddle, we do the same thing that we do with the disc in the OB lake - extrapolate from the evidence and play as if we saw it sitting there in the puddle. You take casual relief, with no penalty stroke.

Of course, it must be clear to the group that the disc went into the puddle. If there is any doubt about that, and the disc cannot be found, it is a lost disc.

2006.10 : Disc resting on top (DROT)

Question - I putted and my disc stayed on top of the basket. Now what?

Response - Applicable rules: 803.13, 803.07.B

The short answer is that it will take you one more throw to complete the hole. Formerly, you could leave it up there and give other players the chance to save you a stroke, but the rule that allowed that (in which a disc struck by another disc was played from its new lie) has been changed. Now, if a disc at rest is struck by another disc, it is returned to its original lie.

Since the person whose disc is on top has no chance of saving the stroke, it is reasonable to ask him to mark it if it may become a distraction.

2006.11 : Divisions available to women

Question - Can women play in any division?

Response - Applicable Rules: 804.08 Classification of Players (See PDGA divisional listings)

Discussion – Yes, provided they meet any age restrictions which may be applied to particular divisions.

2006.12: Fences as OB lines

Question - There's a hole with a ball field on the right that is lined with a chain-link fence. I threw a righty hyzer off the tee which cleared the fence twenty feet ahead of the tee. On its way toward the hole, it hit the inside of the fence 280 feet up ahead and fell OB. Some players have made the argument that the disc touched fair territory where it struck the fence, either by protruding through the fence or by causing the fence to flex. Do I mark it 20 feet ahead, or 280?

Response - Applicable rules: 803.09

Since 803.09 A states that the "line itself is out-of-bounds: the disc is marked where it was last over in-bounds (20 feet ahead) provided: that the TD has not restricted the OB options on that hole AND that the thrower does not elect to re-tee (with a penalty throw) per 803.09 B.

It is doubtful that the "protrusion" nor the "flexing" arguments is strong enough to overcome the common-sense conclusion that the disc has not passed back over fair ground. If you take a disc and press it to one of the diamond-shaped holes in a chain link fence, you'll find that it does not protrude enough to break the plane on the other side. If the fence is the OB line and it does flex some minimal amount when struck, then the OB line itself has flexed.

2006.13 : Grip additives

Question - Is it legal to use stuff on one's hands in order to obtain a better grip on the disc?

Response - Applicable Rules: 802.01 Disc Used in Play, 802.04 Artificial Devices

Many players have long used substances in order to obtain a better grip. Some examples of grip additives/grip aids are: dirt, juice from oranges, rosin bags, birdie bags, talc, sawdust, gorilla grip, pine tar, firm grip, Pow'r-tac, etc. Some are marketed specifically for disc golf and some are marketed for other sports.

Conclusion - The PDGA Rules Committee has discussed these issues. We also solicited the input of the PDGA Technical Standards Committee Chairman. It is our opinion that the use of grip aids is generally acceptable since nothing in the rules specifically prohibits their use.

Other comments - We believe that anything that can help a player secure a better grip would lead to safer play, particularly since we often play in conditions that are cold and/or wet. The rules of most sports allow for grip additives (golf, tennis, basketball, bowling and baseball, for example), thus we see them as a generally accepted part of competitive sports.

The only problem that we foresee is if the substance used (as with the grippier additives like pine tar or Pow'r-tac, etc.) winds up adding thickness or weight to the disc (generally through repeated use and build up, both of the additive and other substances which might stick to the additives). Of course, the player can manage this by periodically cleaning off the discs when build up appears. If a competitor thinks that additives are adding weight and thus affecting the legality of the disc, that player has the right to have the TD inspect the disc and make the final determination of the legality of the disc in question.

2006.14 : Is a drop a throw?

Question - I was playing a casual round with some friends and had a shot wind up deep in some Evergreen trees. I tried to throw a forehand shot as my out shot, and when I brought the disc backward, it hit a tree branch and bounced forward out of my hand. My arm motion did not go forward at the time I lost grip of the disc, but the disc did bounce forward as a result of hitting the branch. The disc then rolled forward about three feet in front of me.

I counted it as a throw, even though my arm motion was not going forward at the time I lost my disc. I am curious if this is indeed how I should have scored the shot for future reference.

Response - Applicable Rules: 800 Definitions ("Throw")

The ruling here hinges on what constitutes a throw, or to put it another way, when a throw begins. A strict construal would have the throw begin once the player has taken a stance. One problem with that is that it is not obvious when a player has taken the stance they will throw from. Also, any release of the disc after that point (even setting the disc on the ground) could be interpreted as a throw. Such a strict interpretation raises other problems.

An alternative is to consider that the throw begins when movement of the disc in the intended direction begins. Under that interpretation, a disc dropped or knocked out before or during a backswing does not count as a throw. The rules committee prefers this more forgiving interpretation.

It is analogous to the requirement in football that the quarterback's arm must be moving forward for a pass to have occurred. At the point of time under consideration, the disc is still held, so forward arm movement equates to forward disc movement. After the release, direction of intent no longer matters. The disc may go sideways or backwards, but the important thing is that the arm moved in the direction of intent after a stance was taken and the disc was released, hence a throw occurred.

2006.15 : Kneeling on a towel

Question - A player's shot lands in a spot that has very hard, rocky ground. Can she place a towel or pad down in order to prevent abrasions to her body (or to keep her knee/clothes clean and/or dry)?

Important Note (4/15/08): Previously we had ruled that this was not permitted. This opinion reverses that ruling.

Response

Applicable Rules: 802.04 Artificial Devices, 803.05 (Obstacles and Relief) C, 803.04 (Stance, Subsequent to Teeing Off) A.1

802.04 allows the use of items that reduce or control abrasion. Towels or pads may fulfill this purpose. Assuming that the unsafe items on the playing surface are not subject to removal or relief under PDGA rule 803.05.C (which covers relief from obstacles to one's stance), she is allowed to place a towel or small pad under any body part, with the exception of her feet (which should already be covered by protective devices such as shoes).

Note: She may move items under 803.05 C and also use a towel or small pad under her knee.

A "small pad" is defined as being 1 centimeter or less in thickness, when compressed.

Conclusion - One may use a towel or small pad (with a maximum compressed thickness of 1 centimeter) in order to prevent harm/abrasions to the body during competitive play. A towel or pad may be used under one's foot only on the tee box.

2006.16 : Lost or OB?

Question - My shot was headed toward an OB lake when it went out of sight, and we never found it. Do I play it as lost or OB?

Response - Applicable Rules: 803.09.A Out-of-Bounds

The rule states that if there is "reasonable evidence" that the disc is OB, you play it as OB. Otherwise, it is lost, and you proceed by rule 803.11.

"Reasonable evidence" implies a high degree of confidence. For example, seeing a disc hit the water and observing the splash clearly passes the test. Seeing a disc head into some thick bushes at the edge of the lake does not result in "reasonable evidence" of OB, because you cannot be reasonably sure that it's not in the bushes somewhere. To declare it OB, you must be able to establish that it's not in an area where it could reasonably be lost.

For comparison, here is the explanation of "reasonable evidence" as defined by Decision 26-1/1 in the 2006-2007 USGA Book of Decisions on the Rules of Golf:

The term reasonable evidence in Rule 26-1 is purposely and necessarily broad so as to permit sensible judgments to be reached on the basis of all the relevant circumstances of particular cases. As applied in this context, a player may not deem his ball lost in a water hazard simply because he thinks the ball may be in the hazard. The evidence must be preponderantly in favor of its being in the hazard. Otherwise, the ball must be considered lost outside the hazard and the player must proceed under Rule 27-1. Physical conditions in the area have a great deal to do with it. For example, if a water hazard is surrounded by a fairway on which a ball could hardly be lost, the existence of reasonable evidence that the ball is in the hazard would be more likely than if there was deep rough in the area. Observing a ball splash in a water hazard would not necessarily provide reasonable evidence as splashing balls sometimes skip out of hazards. It would depend on all the circumstances.

Ultimately, it is of course a group decision. If the group is unable to settle the matter and an official is available, you can present the evidence to the official for a ruling.

Conclusion - In general, it is good practice in course design to avoid holes with blind OB, or with thickets bordering OB. Such holes in tournament play should have spotters.

2006.17 : Lost then found

Question - Jon Player can't find his tee shot. He enlists the aid of the entire group. They begin searching for Jon's disc, officially noting when the three minute clock starts. The timer goes off on the three minute clock. As the group is discussing where the "disc was last seen", so that they could determine the lie for Jon's next shot, they stumble upon Jon's disc. What's the ruling and from where does Jon take his next shot?

Response - A player's disc is lost. After the three minute timer sounds the disc is found. What's the penalty and where does the affected player resume play?

Applicable Rules: 803.11 Lost Disc

Discussion - Time expired during the search for Jon's disc, so Jon is assessed one penalty throw for the lost disc. (It doesn't matter that Jon's disc was found one second after time expired. The rules allow three minutes for finding a lost disc. Once the three minutes are up the disc is officially lost.) Jon resumes play from his previous lie and is assessed a one throw penalty.

Conclusion - A disc is officially lost at the end of the three-minute search, and a penalty throw is assessed. It makes no difference where the disc is found after it has been determined to be lost; the thrower plays from their previous lie.

2006.18 : Maintaining balance while putting

Question - "I have a good rules question for you involving the stance rules. A player uses an object (in this case a branch) behind him to maintain balance for a putt. First, would this be considered "full control of balance"? Second, could you argue, if the branch is not so large that the player's body weight will not move it, that it is a violation of 803.03 D and or 803.04 A because they could have moved the branch less by not hanging on it? Thanks for any input."

Response - The question can be boiled down to: Can a player hold on to an object behind his lie to maintain balance while throwing/putting?

Applicable rules: 803.04 (Stance), 803.05 (Obstacles and Relief), 804.05 (Disqualification and Suspension)

Discussion - The rules do not require that you maintain your balance while putting. You can have a grand mal seizure as long as you don't step ahead of your lie. At the time you decide to step ahead of your lie is when you have to demonstrate balance. This is simply to prove that you are not committing a falling putt, such that you would not be able to stop yourself from falling forward due to the motion of your putt. Grabbing a branch is merely acquiring another support point, which is perfectly legal, as long as it is not ahead of your lie.

Holding on to something BEHIND your lie is not prohibited by the rules, provided that the tree that the golfer is using as a supporting point is in-bounds (803.03.A (3)). The branch must not be moved, or else the player would be in violation of one or both of 803.04.D and 803.05.A, which require you to take the stance that results in the least movement of objects that are part of the course and which prohibit you from moving a branch to "make room for a throwing motion".

Conclusion - A player can hold on to something behind her lie, in certain circumstances, without violating the PDGA rules. In general that which is not prohibited by the PDGA rules is allowed, provided of course, that the action done by the player is not considered "a willful attempt to circumvent the rules of play". (This, of course, is cheating!)

Other Comments - Many members of the committee have actually tried to hold on to some object behind their lie, while leaning forward to throw or putt. In our opinion this action makes the ensuing throw/putt MORE difficult to accomplish.

2006.19 : Marking a disc below a tree

Question - "I was just reading and checking on some of the rules in disc golf and came across one I was wondering about: the rule in 803.08 about a disc being in a tree and where it should be marked. I have always played and been told that you mark it directly below the disc. So what is meant in this rule about inside a tree? If my disc is in a tree but when I mark it below it I am still beneath the tree, is this considered in the tree or not? Do I continue to play as I have and get under the tree and make a throw or do I place it directly behind the tree and then make my throw? We have one course in town where this can happen a lot and just want to make sure I have been doing it correctly. Thanks for your information."

Response - The question can be boiled down to: "Where is the lie, or mark, placed when a disc comes to rest above the playing surface in a tree?"

Applicable Rules: 803.08 (Disc Above the Playing Surface)

Discussion - The most basic premise behind the rules of golf (both traditional and disc) is to "play it where it lies". In situations where a disc is stuck in a tree or bush, this still holds true. However, for preservation of our foliage (and the safety of the golfers themselves) the rules try to ensure that we do not have players climbing into trees in order to make a shot. Therefore, the rules dictate that the shot be made from a spot on the ground directly beneath the spot where the disc is suspended. So, golfers are to mark their lies directly below where the disc is stuck and then proceed to make their next shot. (If the two meter rule is in affect, they would be assessed a penalty stroke IF the disc is two meters or above, or playing without a penalty IF the disc is below two meters. If the two meter rule is not in affect then there is no penalty regardless of the distance the disc is suspended above the playing surface.)

803.08 A handles the situation where the lie directly below the disc would be within a solid object such as a tree trunk. The words "inside a tree?" refer to being actually within the trunk of the tree. These situations can sometimes occur when a disc is caught in a fork of a large-trunked tree, where the point directly below the suspended disc is physically within the trunk of the tree, making it impossible to place the lie directly below the suspended disc. In these rare cases the lie shall be marked on the line of play immediately behind the tree or other solid obstacle. (Note: the phrase "or other solid obstacle" as listed in 803.08 A, is specifically trying to make it clear that the "inside the tree" language refers to the trunk and not the branches or canopy.)

Conclusion - If you can physically mark the lie directly beneath where the disc is suspended, do that. If you physically CAN NOT mark the lie directly beneath the suspended disc, mark it directly behind the tree and proceed with the next shot. Remember to add any applicable penalty throws.

Other Comments - This means that you can get stuck in a cedar tree and then have to play from directly beneath the suspended disc with a whole bevy of itchy, scratchy limbs/boughs in the way. When you take a penalty throw, in cases where the suspended disc is above two meters (and the two meter rule is in affect), it can sometimes seem unfair to have an obstructed shot AFTER taking a penalty. A player with good knowledge of the course will know to be especially careful to avoid these types of trees. Also, you have the option of declaring an unplayable lie (and taking the applicable penalty throws, depending on how far you need to move your lie - see 803.06) in case your new lie is an impossible one.

2006.20 : Measuring devices within 10 meters

Question - Is it legal to use a range finder to determine whether a putt is within 10 meters?

Response - Applicable rules: 802.04 Artificial Devices

The rule states that: "The use of devices which assist in determining distances, such as range finders, are prohibited." On first glance, that rule could be read to prohibit any device used to determine any distance, for example, the use of a tape measure to determine the height of a disc stuck in a tree. But in this and similar cases (one meter from OB, five meters for relief, three meters on the tee pad, etc), the measuring is not done in order to assist the making of the throw, as mentioned at the beginning of the rule.

On the other hand, using range finders (or anything else) to measure distance for an upcoming shot from the fairway or tee directly assists the making of that throw, and is illegal. Measuring devices are allowed when it's necessary to determine a distance in order to make a ruling:

- 30 centimeters, stance
- 1 meter, lie near OB
- 2 meters, lie above ground
- 3 meters, stance on tee pad
- 5 meters, casual relief and unsafe lie
- 10 meters, putting

Summary - The use of a measuring device (including range finders and any other device) to determine the ten-meter status of a putt is legal, since it does not assist in the making of the putt.

2006.21 : Missed mandatory

Question - What do you do if you play most of a hole without realizing there's a mandatory?

"I throw a hole and without realizing it I miss the wrong side of a mando tree and land beyond the mando. Nobody in the foursome realizes it either, so nobody says anything. I mark my disc and proceed to make an up shot to the hole. When my disc comes to rest someone notices that I didn't throw the mando and mentions that I missed it. Do I unwind? Do I complete the hole? Do I having a screaming fit over not being aware of the mando? What do you think? This is a variation of a question on the PDGA Officials test that actually happened to me at the Oregon Amateur Championships. I unfortunately chose to have a fit. Oh well, wrong again. But what is the correct answer? All I can say is that the PDGA official missed the correct call during the tournament."

Response - The question can be boiled down to: "What happens when a mando is missed and it is discovered after a subsequent shot is made towards the hole?"

Applicable Rules: 801.04 Playing the Stipulated Course, 803.12 Mandatories

Discussion - First we would like to underscore that the Rules Committee believes that mandatories SHOULD be avoided if at all possible when designing a course, though we do agree that they are sometimes needed for safety considerations. This is so because we believe that fantastic holes can be designed WITHOUT the use of mandos and that the use of mandos inevitably leads to "rules situations." If mandos are used, we believe that they should be designed such that they are almost impossible to miss when throwing on a particular hole. In other words, a player should not have to risk missing the mando in order to have a good (or great) shot on a hole.

Second, course pros and TDs should go to great lengths to CLEARLY mark mandos, such that they are incredibly obvious to the casual and tournament golfer. The mandos should also be clearly discussed during the players meeting. TDs should also ensure that the drop zone is clearly marked.

In the example above the committee is forced to wonder: Was the mando clearly marked? Was the mando discussed in the players' meeting? Was the involved golfer paying attention during the players' meeting? What were the rest of the golfers in the group doing (and thinking) when the involved golfer FIRST missed the mando? Why did they not mention it until AFTER his subsequent up shot? Did the involved golfer have a rule book in his golf bag or pocket? Did the official have a rule book handy?

However, given the facts as presented above the rules are very clear on this. 801.04 B (2) Playing the Stipulated Course - Misplayed Mandatory covers this exact situation. We believe that in this situation the player would receive a 5. He drove unaware of the mando, then made an approach shot still unaware of the mando, at this time the mando was suddenly discovered. How did everyone else in the group forget about the mando? At this point the rules indicate that the player completes the hole. Assuming that the golfer holes out his putt on the 3rd throw a two-throw penalty is assessed, and he gets a 5.

The missed mando rule, indeed ALL "playing the stipulated course" rules, hinges on when the course misplay is discovered. If you look at the "course misplays" rule it is structured around the time when a misplay is discovered.

Discovery means the time when the player realizes a course misplay has occurred. If a player recognizes that a misplay has occurred but doesn't try to correct it in conformity with the rules it is called cheating and subject to a Disqualification (DQ). For example, on my home course I clearly miss a mando but make no attempt to proceed to the drop zone and subsequently hole out. I knew the mando was there, I knew I missed it, but chose not to play from the drop zone to save my score. That's cheating. DQ!

Generally, if the misplay is discovered after the hole is completed, no replay occurs and the player gets hit with a 2 stroke penalty. "Hey dudes, I was watching from the group behind you guys. All you guys just missed the mando on that hole. You gotta go around the big tree to the right. We better get an official over here to make a call."

If the misplay is discovered BEFORE the throwers next shot is made "Hey dude, do you know that you just missed the mando with your drive?" the player has to proceed to the drop zone and play from there (in accordance with 803.12 B).

If the misplay is discovered AFTER the throwers second shot is made, there is a 2 throw penalty. No need to go to the drop zone, just count the throws made (until the hole is completed) plus the 2 throw penalty.

Conclusion - The PDGA rules are very clear in this instance. The golfer in question continues to complete the hole, tallies his score and then tacks on the two throw penalty.

Other Comments - Situations like this one can be easily avoided with a little work on the TD's part. Also, players must learn to play attention to the course that they will be playing and the items that are discussed in the player's meeting.

One of the most difficult rules to write, read and understand is 801.04 Playing the Stipulated Course. The number of ways that a misplay can occur is truly mind bending. This rule SHOULD not even be necessary; golfers who are planning on competing in a competitive event SHOULD know the layout of the course that they wish to compete upon. If they do not...then it's nobody's fault but their own. However, TDs can make life much easier for everyone by clearly marking the course, having everyone tee from the same tees, and by clearly explaining "how" the golfers will proceed through difficult areas of the course.

This is also a prime example of how EVERY golfer should not only read the rules, but also keep a copy in their bag!

2006.22 : Missed the mandatory, went OB

Question - I was playing a hole with a mandatory tree ahead of the tee to the left, with an OB road running along the hole a bit further left. The mandatory is to the right side of the tree. My drive missed the tree on the left and flew another 250 feet before landing on the OB road. Where do I play my next shot?

This question was posed by Chuck Kennedy, who provided the following illustration:

Response - Applicable Rules: 803.08.Out of Bounds, 803.12 Mandatories

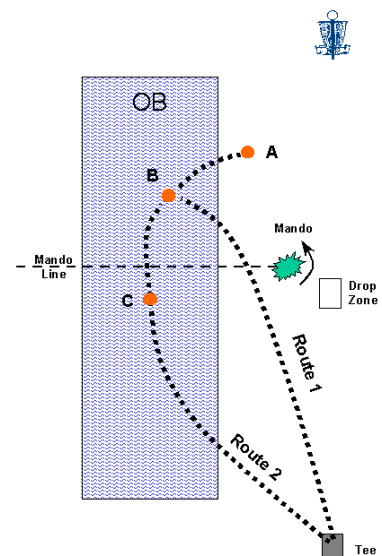
803.08.E states that missing the mandatory takes precedence: E. A throw that misses a mandatory shall be penalized and the lie marked according to the mandatory rule (803.11). It will not be further penalized for any other reason, such as out-of-bounds or above two meters.

That leads to straightforward rulings in the cases illustrated above:

Shot C, route 2: The disc has not missed the mandatory because it has not crossed the mandatory line on the wrong side, therefore it is played where it was last in-bounds with a one-throw penalty.

Shot B, route 1: This shot has missed the mandatory and then gone OB. According to the rule above, missing the mandatory takes precedence. The next shot is played from the drop zone with a one-throw penalty.

Shot A, route 2: This shot is in-bounds but has missed the mandatory. The next shot is played from the drop zone with a one-throw penalty.



Shot B, route 2: This shot has missed the mandatory and gone OB. Missing the mandatory takes precedence, and the next shot is played from the drop zone with a one-throw penalty.

Conscientious TDs will of course endeavor not to place hazards (such as mandatories and OB) close to each other, and, if it becomes necessary to do so, will ensure in the players' meeting that the players understand how to play the different possible scenarios.

2006.23 : Missing scores

Question - I was wondering if there were a certain number of stroke penalties given to a player that has a score missing on his or her cards after he or she turns in their cards. We could not find the penalty in the rule book last weekend during the Highland Springs Open. So the players involved were assembled at the Tournament Central and were asked their scores and they were written in the empty box with no penalties. This happened at the end of the tournament in which I placed 6th but the players just in front of me could have gotten penalties for this. Maybe you could let me know if there is a penalty for this so I will know what to do if this ever happens again.

Response - The question can be boiled down to: "Is there a penalty for players failing to record scores on their scorecard?"
Applicable Rules: 804.03 (Scoring)

Discussion - The rules clearly state in 804.03 C that the lack of a score represents an incorrect hole or total score and is subject to the penalty as described in 804.03 G (2); which states " If it is determined that the total score was incorrectly recorded, either by an error on a hole score or by an error in totaling the hole scores, including omission of the total score, the director shall add two penalty throws to the correct total score."

Conclusion - Score cards submitted without an individual hole score or a total score are incorrect and will have 2 penalty throws added to the correct total score.

2006.24 : Mixing divisions

Question - Can a TD put players from different divisions in the same group?

Response - Only if absolutely necessary per 804.06; a TD must strive to place players into groups with players from the same division insofar as is possible. That is especially true with regard to the border between pro and am divisions. Pros should play with pros, and ams should play with ams.

A TD may need to mix divisions in order to fill a group, because divisions are rarely evenly divisible by the group size. That is fine. (For example, there may be three senior grandmasters and two women masters at a tournament with groups of five; they may be placed within the same group.)

Exceptions to the grouping constraints may also be obtained by the TD by petitioning the Competition Director.

2006.25 : Mando drop zone not marked

Question - What if I go to an event, miss the mandatory and there's no Drop Zone marked?

Response - A player has missed a mandatory, but there is no drop zone marked. The rule says that there is a one-stroke penalty and that the next shot is played from the drop zone. But the TD has neglected to mark a drop zone. Where does the player place his lie?

Applicable Rules: 803.12 Mandatories

Discussion - That should not occur. With any new version of the rules all players, Tournament Directors (TDs) and Course Designers (CDs) are expected to read, review and know the new rules. This is especially true for TDs and CDs as they sometimes will have additional responsibilities as to how their events are run and their courses are laid out.

The mandatory should always be clearly marked. If so, then you should have taken note of the mando during practice. If you see that there's no drop zone, or that the drop zone is not clearly marked, you should bring it to the attention of the TD as soon as possible. Certainly mention it during the players's meeting. The TD should then take a few moments (it doesn't take long) to mark a drop zone.

Here's the definition of Drop Zone (straight from the Rule Book): "Drop Zone: an area on the course, as designated by the course designer or director, from which play is resumed after the preceding shot (1) was thrown out-of-bounds, (2) missed a mandatory,

or (3) landed in a protected area (governed by 804.01, Special Conditions). The throwing area from within the drop zone should be clearly marked in a manner similar to the marking of a teeing area."

Still, it may happen that the TD and CD ignored their responsibilities and you (as a player) ignored your responsibility to question it before play. In cases where the drop zone is not designated, the lie is marked within five meters of the mandatory object and one meter behind the mandatory line which extends from the correct side of the mandatory, per 803.12 C. The reason for going one meter behind the line is so that the disc crosses the line in flight, rather than being carried over.

Assuming that your tee shot missed the mandatory (as defined by the rules), you would proceed from this lie with a one throw penalty. You would be preparing to throw your third shot.

Conclusion - Mark it within five meters of the mandatory on the correct side, and one meter behind the line.

2006.26 : Obstacle to Stance and Flight Path

Question - Steve throws his drive under a large fallen tree branch. The branch is clearly dead and unattached from the tree it formerly came from. Steve knows that he can normally move casual obstacles that interfere with his stance, throwing motion, and/or run-up under PDGA rule 803.05C2 and 803.05C3. However, the branch is quite large, and part of the branch lies between Steve's lie and the hole. Can Steve legally move this branch?

Response - Applicable Rules: 803:05 Obstacles and Relief

No. PDGA rule 803.05C(2) states that an obstacle between the lie and the hole can not be moved. No relief is granted from casual obstacles between the lie and the hole. Steve needs to avoid throwing next to such obstacles if he doesn't want to have to negotiate them! If the branch is such that Steve cannot take a stance, then Steve can relocate his lie to the CLOSEST point of relief on the line of play that is no more than 5 meters away from the original lie with no penalty. Steve could also declare an unplayable lie under 803.06. This ruling also applies, even if the obstacle in question is NOT in the flight path between the lie and the hole. Steve is not allowed to move any obstacle that is totally or partially between his lie and the hole.

2006.27 : Par 3 for every hole?

Question - Is every hole par 3?

Response - The simple answer is no, not necessarily, though in practice it's almost always done that way. In a way, par is irrelevant since it's your total score that matters. That's what you should be using to measure your performance (against prior rounds, against those you're competing with, etc). But par is useful in that it provides a general reference point, as it does in traditional golf.

Par is whatever is assigned to a hole by the designer. Since disc golf was originally modeled after "par three" ball golf, disc golf holes have a tradition of being par three as well. In the early days that worked fine, as pretty much every hole was reachable. Since then, holes which require two or more shots to reach have become fairly common. While they may have a realistic par of 4, 5, or more, they are often played as par threes in tournament play. The practical par is sometimes posted on tee signs so that newer players have a reasonable goal.

Almost all experienced golfers consider an 18-hole course to have a par of 54, and will speak of scores in reference to that, so that (for example) "2 under" means 52. It's often easier to talk about scores relative to par than total scores.

2006.28 : Played A Hole That Is Not Part Of Official Course

Question - During the third round of a tourney, 2 groups played a hole that was not part of the 27 hole course that was being played that day. One group threw one throw, except one player who threw two strokes before realizing that they were on the wrong hole. A second group played the hole out. The question: Is this a two-throw penalty for the second group or are all of their throws 'practice throws'?

The hole did not actually exist in the round so the grey area of the rulebook in this area has been a point of debate. The TD ruling was for the first group...one stroke for each player except for the player that threw two strokes. For the second group, each player was stroked two strokes, regardless of how many throws they took.

Response - Applicable Rules: 803.01 (General) B

The second group takes all practice throws, because the hole is not part of the tournament course. It is not a matter of a misplayed hole, because a misplayed hole involves playing a hole that actually exists on the course being played. This instance can only be interpreted as practice throws. They still have to complete the 18 holes on the real course.

2006.29 : Playing the stipulated course

Question - Case #1: Taro was supposed to start on hole #5. By mistake, he and his group started on hole #7 and finished that hole completely. After that, they realized they had misplayed. What's the right procedure and what penalty will be given to them?

Case #2: Taro was supposed to start on hole #5. By mistake, he and his group started from hole #7 and finished their first throw only. After that, they realized they had misplayed. What's the right procedure and what penalty will be given to them? The above questions were submitted by Kuri of the JPDGA Rules Committee (Japan), and concern what to do if a player/group starts at the wrong hole.

Summary of the question: What's the ruling when a player/group begins play on the wrong hole?

Response - Applicable Rules: 801.04 Playing the stipulated course

Case #1: Taro and his group, after finishing hole #7, should record the score for hole #7 on the scorecard, including a two throw penalty each for playing the course incorrectly. The group then goes and resumes play on hole #5. They play hole #5 and then hole #6. They then skip hole #7, which they have already played. After that they play hole #8 and the remainder of the course in the normal fashion.

To break this example down into one with scores, let's look at just one player. Assume that Taro completed each hole in three throws. His score for the round would be 56. (Eighteen holes times 3 = 54, plus the two-throw penalty on #3 = 56).

Case #2: Taro and his group, upon realizing the error after taking their first throws, should retrieve their discs and go to hole #5. That throw will count as a practice throw for each of them, so they'll each receive a one-throw penalty added on to their score for #5. They then play the course in the normal fashion.

To break this example down into one with scores, we'll look at just one player. Let's assume that Taro completed each hole in three throws. His score for the round would be 55. (Eighteen holes times 3 = 54, plus the one-throw penalty on #1 = 55).

Discussion - The rules regarding playing the stipulated course can be hard to comprehend. This is true due to the mind-numbing number of ways that a course can be incorrectly played. This is further complicated by the fact that there are multiple members of each group and these members may be at different stages of completion of the particular hole in question. The Committee would like to stress that it is up to the players themselves to ensure that they are aware of the layout of the course, tees being used, mandatories in use, and on which hole they should begin play.

Conclusion - In general, misplays of the course result in either a one-throw or a two-throw penalty. If more than one throw was made on the incorrect hole, that hole is completed and a two-throw penalty is assessed. If just one throw was made, that throw is counted as a practice throw, which incurs a one-throw penalty.

Though it is clearly the player's responsibility to know the course and to play it correctly, many times the TD or the course layout contributes greatly to the problem. At many events the course is changed from its normal layout. Tees are extended. Alternate tees or baskets are used. Holes are added. Holes are changed. Out-of-bounds areas are added or removed. Many times the changes ARE NOT very obvious and in some cases the changes cause the hole numbers or tee signs to be incorrect. Oftentimes a "local" leads the group astray ("We always play it this way.") For this reason the committee would recommend that the TD take great pains to prepare the course properly for the event at hand. Make certain that ALL tees are properly marked, especially if a tee is not going to be used in the event. Place a sign on top of the actual pad indicating that this pad IS NOT to be used. Cover all non-used baskets with bags so that players will not inadvertently be tempted to play to them. Mark all OB areas and mandatories clearly. Still... It is the responsibility of the player to play the course correctly!

2006.30 : Poor pin placement

Question - I have a rules question with regard to the placement of holes on a course. I play at the Timber Park course in Estacada, OR sometimes and I like the course a lot. But recently they added some new pin placements that are outrageous. Am I wrong or is there a rule about pin placement with respect to permanent obstacles? 3 holes now are "in the bushes". One of the holes is less than a foot from a large (100'+) tree and less than 3' from another tree. I thought I heard someone say that the hole has to be at least 10' from any permanent obstacle. Is this correct or can you just put the hole "in the bushes"? Submitted by Jordan Lewis, Portland, Oregon

Response - The question can be boiled down to: "Are there any restrictions on the placement of pins as stated in the PDGA rules?"
Applicable Rules: None

Discussion - First we would like to underscore that the Rules Committee believes that holes should be designed so that they are fair, above all else. Placing a pin where it is SO surrounded by obstacles can lead to holes where bad shots can be rewarded and good shots can be penalized. (For example, if the pin is surrounded by a bunch of small trees and bushes, it is possible for a shot

that is thrown too hard to smack these objects and bounce into an easy putt for the thrower. Conversely, a seemingly perfect shot can slide up into easy putting range, only to leave the thrower with an obscured approach to the hole.) Placements in areas like these also invite players to break the rules (by breaking the branches, taking illegal stances, and by producing falling putts). We believe that such pin placements should be avoided.

However, we also believe that some obstacles on the "putting green" can have value and can actually make a hole better. In these cases we support a few objects which the enterprising golfer can easily overcome, generally through the use of a straddle or side-armed putt.

The rules do not (nor should they) address appropriate course design. We see no way that the rules can prevent "bad design" in disc golf course construction. The PDGA does have an active Course Design Committee and they attempt to address all of the "dos" and "don'ts" of professional disc golf course design. (Check out the PDGA web page!)

Conclusion - The PDGA Rules do not address this issue.

Other Comments - In many cases courses are designed and play begins before the course is fully "ready". Also, many courses see significant re-design throughout their lives and it is the responsibility of local players to assist with the re-design and also to volunteer to fix what needs fixing. (This means helping through manual, sometimes VERY physical labor!) Our suggestion would be to contact the course designer/course pro and discuss your concerns and volunteer to help clear the area surrounding the basket to a more "acceptable" level.

2006.31 : Poorly defined mandatory

Question - Dear PDGA, I have a question about a discrepancy with a rule regarding a mandatory. The "Mando" is marked on the base of the trunk of a tree. Player "A" throws and his disc passes just left of the upper part of the right portion of the trunk about 20 feet high. The question I have is this...The trunk grows straight up from ground level to about 7 feet in height, then it splits and the right-hand side grows "into" and straight up on the "correct" area by about 4 feet width. The left trunk grew into the "incorrect" side by about the same distance, thus creating approx. 8 feet of questionable boundary in between. In other words, a short legged "Y" with very long and separated arms. Does the left trunk portion indicate the "outside" boundary of the mando? Or, is the mando considered an imaginary vertical line starting at the left portion of the trunk base, similar to the O.B. rule of verticality?

I have attempted to display an ASCII representation of an image of this below:

```
||  || < tree trunk
```

```
||  -|| < disc position
```

```
||  ||
```

```
|\-----/
```

```
\-----/
```

```
||
```

```
>-MANDO->
```

```
||
```

```
===== <ground level
```

This ruling would not change the placement outcome of a tournament (in terms of any cashing). It was at the time ruled a fair disc throw as it past to the right of, or "through" the vertical representation of the mandatory arrow's "pole" or support (tree trunk). In essence passing "through" the mando. What is the preferred ruling on this?

Response - Applicable Rules: 803.12 Mandatories

Discussion - First we would like to underscore that the Rules Committee believes that mandatories should be avoided if at all possible when designing a course (though we do agree that they are sometimes needed for safety considerations). This is so because we believe that fantastic holes can be designed without the use of mandos and that the use of mandos inevitably leads to

rules situations. If mandos are used, we believe that they should be designed such that they are almost impossible to miss when throwing on a particular hole. In other words, a player should not have to risk missing the mando in order to have a good (or great) shot on a hole.

Second, course pros and TDs should go to great lengths to clearly mark mandos (as well as drop zones), such that they are incredibly obvious to the casual and tournament golfer. The mandos and drop zones should also be clearly discussed during the players meeting.

This is actually not a rules issue at all, but one regarding course design. Only the course designer/TD can truly know what constitutes a successful "passing" of this mando.

This question would seem to be an example of an extremely poor object to use as a mandatory (as well as an apparently poor spot to position the mandatory).

However, was the "proper means of negotiating the mando" covered during the players meeting?

Other Comments - In strange cases such as this one, involved players are at the mercy/discretion of the TD/course official (and the players in their, and surrounding, groups). The rules generally provide little guidance for poor course design or for players who do not listen to "special conditions" when covered by the TD during the players meeting.

2006.32 : Premature start of play

Question - What happens if a group starts play before the official signal is given?

Response - Applicable Rules: 804.02 Beginning Play

A group might start early for any of a number of reasons: they may have thought they heard the start horn, another group may have told them to start, they may see other groups playing, or they look at the time and guess incorrectly that the start signal was given and they missed it. In any case, they may be playing along when they hear what is unmistakably the official start signal. What then?

At this point, the group should return to its official starting hole and begin play, discarding any play that occurred before the start signal. Although they have thrown after the two-minute signal, penalties can only be levied in that case after a warning, and there presumably have been no warnings (since a warning would make it obvious that they have started early).

If the group plays out their round without ever hearing the official start signal, then their scores stand as they are. A smooth start to a tournament requires effort on the parts of both the TD (to provide a start signal that can be heard throughout the course) and the players (to be listening for the start signal).

2006.33 : Provisional throws

Question - "Does anybody have an example of when a provisional throw makes sense? Does the player throw '2 legs' (the group's interpretation and the player's interpretation)? I don't think so. I am soooo confused!"

Response - Summary: "What is the provisional throw rule and when should it be used?"

Applicable Rules: 803.01.C, and especially 803.01 D.(3)

Discussion - Provisional throws are generally used in two different situations:

Situation 1: Provisional throws are used when a golfer disagrees with the group's majority ruling and no official is available. That way a player isn't forced to accept a penalty just because the majority of her group happens to be wrong. The "provisional throw" section lets the affected player finish the hole by playing two different sets of shots. Both resulting scores are recorded (use the margin of the card for both). Then the TD/official makes their ruling and that ruling determines which of the two scores the player gets.

Situation 2: Provisional throws can also be used when they might save the group time. (Possible lost or OB disc, etc.)

Here's one scenario: Suppose her drive went out over a lake and landed in a large puddle that sort of connects to the lake. The rest of her group believes the puddle is part of the lake, making her disc is OB, but she's adamant that the puddle is casual water, and there are no officials around. Knowing that she's not bound by the rules to accept the group's ruling, she decides to take provisional throws.

So she plays two paths to the hole, one for each possible ruling:

1) Say the disc is OB. She goes back to where it was last over safe ground and plays the hole out from there. Assuming it takes her two to get in from there, she gets a 4.

2) Say the disc is not OB. She plays the hole out from where her original drive landed. Assuming it takes her two to get in from there, she gets a 3.

Both scores are noted on the card. After the round is over she and her group commandeer an official or the TD to go make a ruling. In this case agreeing exactly where the disc was (and even marking that spot somehow if possible) before she picks it up would be a good idea. If the disc is ruled to have been OB, she gets the 4. If not, she gets the 3. Then her scorecard can be totaled.

Provisional throws allow play to continue by deferring the ruling until later, when an official is available to settle the matter. Provisional throws are NOT counted as practice throws.

Here's the other scenario: Our golfer's drive clears the OB lake but hits a tree and bounces back towards the water. The TD has restricted the OB options on this hole to a re-tee for any drive that winds up OB. From the tee, it's not clear if our golfer's shot is in bounds or out of bounds. Our golfer can declare a provisional and throw her second shot from the tee (with a one throw penalty) in case the original drive is OB. Then the group proceeds around the lake and determines the status of our golfer's original drive. If it's in bounds, she plays from there...picking up the provisional re-tee with no penalty. If she's OB, she picks up the original drive and completes the hole from the re-tee'd disc's location, adding a one throw penalty for going OB. The rule is used to save time and avoid two possible treks around the lake.

Conclusion - Provisional throws can be used in two situations: To continue play when there is a ruling disagreement or to save time when a shot may be lost of OB. Remember, the benefit of the doubt goes to the player. If a disc's in-bounds status is too close to call, it's in bounds. Provisional throws would come into play more for questions of fact (Is this water casual or OB water?) rather than of judgment (Is the edge of the disc over safe ground?).

2006.34 : Remaindered discs

Question - Are remaindered discs (for example: Xed out discs, factory seconds, or hot stamping rejects) of PDGA-approved models legal for use in PDGA competitions?

Response - Applicable Rules: 802.01

Conclusion - Since these discs were produced from the molds for PDGA-approved models, they have already been indirectly approved by the PDGA Technical Standards Committee, and as such they are legal for PDGA play, as long as they meet the overall restrictions (weight, rim sharpness, flexibility, etc) as outlined by the PDGA Technical Standards document.

The committee understands that many of these discs may have slight molding imperfections but it is our opinion that they still perform essentially the same as other production discs and they meet the standards under which their original models were tested. Players always have the right (per 802.01 D) to question the legality of a disc used in competition. In such cases the Tournament Director will make the final call.

2006.35 : Reteeing after an OB drive

Question - Erik Robinson of Lansing, MI writes: "I am questioning why a person who enters a hazard (e.g. any disc thrown into an area designated as out-of-bounds (O.B.), such as an O.B. river or pond) would have to throw the disc within 1 meter from where it crossed into the O.B. area? Why can't he/she be able to take one penalty stroke and re-drive from the pad?"

Response - Applicable rules: 803.09 B (Out-of-Bounds), 804.01 (Special Conditions)

Dear Erik: Normally in this case, the player CAN re-drive from the tee if he/she so chooses. The player actually has 3 options after throwing his/her tee shot OB:

1) The player can choose to play the disc from the previous lie. The previous lie in this case is the tee pad.

2) The player can play from a spot up to 1 meter from where the point the player's tee shot was last in-bounds.

3) The player can play from within a designated Drop Zone, if the TD (Tournament Director) has designated one for this hole.

Each of these options carries a one-throw penalty. The TD can also limit any or all of these options as a special condition under rule 804.01.

2006.36 : Shakedown

Question - At the Norman Pro-Am May 29-30, there is one bear of a hole. The hole requires a spotter, and at the time of play the TD just happened to be spotting. There were two individuals out, but due to the difficulties of finding discs, all players would find and mark discs before the players out would play. As I walked up to the location the disc should have been, the TD stated the disc had not been located yet, but that from above it was apparently above the 2-meter mark. He said that he could see it from a hill nearby, but not from below. I continued to walk to the disc's suspected location and as I arrived, another player shook the tree and the disc fell out of the tree. I had not had the opportunity to see the disc or to mark it. As a matter of fact, the disc had not been seen from below. The disc fell forward into an unfavorable lie. We continued to play the hole, but after the hole was completed I asked the TD if it was proper for the other player to shake the tree and dislodge the disc prior to me having had the opportunity to spot and mark the disc.

As per rule 803.08, it is questionable that this should be considered OB (above 2 meters), however since an official was on site, he had stated that it was OB. The problem is, neither the TD nor I had seen the disc from below.

I believe it was OB, and told the TD and group as much. I also stated that because I had not marked it the fall left me with an unfavorable lie that cost me a stroke above the penalty stroke. If I were a jackass, I could have complained, because it was a relative of the TD that moved the tree, who ended up tying me for fourth. The stroke from the unfavorable lie tied the game.

What do I believe? I believe it was OB, I also believe that the tree being shaken, before I had marked it, resulted in an additional stroke from an unfavorable lie. Anyway, a consideration for a rule to be added is to allow the thrower to view the disc prior to any move to dislodge.

Response - An official ruled a disc as being two meters above the playing surface, before the thrower could arrive at the scene. Another player shook the disc down before the player could mark the lie. What's the ruling?
Applicable Rules: 803.08 Disc Above the Playing Surface, 803.07 Interference

Discussion - Since OB (above 2 meters) was mentioned we'll assume that the 2 meter rule (with penalty) was in effect. An official was on hand to make the ruling about the two-meter status of the tee shot. According to 804.09.D, the disc is above two-meters if the official says it is. Thus a one-throw penalty was given to the thrower. However, the thrower should have been able to play his subsequent shot from directly below where the disc was suspended, not from where it wound up after it was knocked loose from the tree.

The interference rule covers this situation: the group makes a judgment about where it was suspended in the tree, and marks to the best of their ability to restore the lie to the approximate position prior to the interference taking place. (Then the thrower is given a mark directly beneath where the disc had been suspended.)

Also, the player that shook the disc out of the tree ran the very real risk of being penalized two penalty throws in accordance with the interference rules. (We will assume that he didn't shake the disc down until after the official had made the two meter determination.)

Conclusion - Never move a disc at rest until all interested parties (who wish to do so) have had a chance to inspect the lie in question and determine its status. In the case of a lie above the playing surface, the player should mark the lie directly below the disc before any attempts are made to retrieve it.

2006.37 : Throwing Styles: What's Legal?

Question - Are there any restrictions on how you throw the disc? For example, can you throw nothing but overhand shots?

Response - No, there are no restrictions on how you throw the disc. You may throw backhand, sidearm, overhand, thumber, or any other way that occurs to you. You can throw it with your foot if that works for you.

The definition of "Throw" in the glossary of the rules describes a throw as a "propulsion" of a disc that changes its position. There are many ways to propel a disc. As long as you use only your body and no artificial devices (see 802.04), you may throw the disc in any manner you like.

2006.38 : Unplayable tees

Question - How does one deal with an unplayable tee?

Response - Applicable Rules: 803.05 Obstacles and Relief, 803.01 General (pay close attention to section C. part (3))

We are assuming that you are referring to situations during a tournament, since you could simply tee from nearby during casual play. First, point out the poor tee during the pre-event players' meeting. Ask the TD/official how it could be played. Request that

the tee be repaired or a temporary one set up. If you didn't know ahead of time or forgot to mention it, then simply follow the rule book. Your first option is to play from the tee as is. If an official or the TD is available, you could stand aside and call for a ruling. If both those options seem unworkable, you could invoke the option of "provisional throws" (Section 803.01.C), and play two sets of shots, one set from the messy tee and one set from an alternate tee (as decided by the group). Mark both scores in the margin and seek a ruling from the TD/official after the round.

A. What if the tee is completely under water (e.g., due to rain)? According to 803.05.C, you can take relief. You simply back up behind the tee. That would be the nearest lie no closer to the hole and still on the line of play. You can only move up to 5 meters back.

B. What if the tee is not clearly marked? Same basic set of options. In the absence of an official, your group will have to decide. Where's the TD? Didn't anybody notice this before the event?

C. What about tees that are unsafe (such as a wet tee on a downgrade, or one with slippery sand on it)? Same basic set of options. Where's the TD? Many players improve their stance and safety by putting a small towel down and placing their plant foot on it in order to avoid slipping. Whenever I find sand on a tee pad, I simply brush it off with my towel. If it's really bad you could carry a small whiskbroom in your bag.

D. What if a tee is in a condition such that in order to try to make the best shot possible one must risk possible injury (such as twisting an ankle because the tee is covered in wet mud)? Same basic set of options. One might wish to try the safest shot possible (as opposed to the best shot possible) if personal health is at risk. We always choose safety over deuces.

Conclusion - Common sense should come into play. Always play it safe and politely request that the TD either fix it or make a ruling on how to play it. If the situation was not known prior to the round, be sure to report it to the TD immediately following the round, and request that it be remedied.

2006.39 : Is the 2-meter rule still in effect?

Question - Is the 2-meter rule still in effect?

Response - In the latest version of the rules, the 2 meter rule is NOT in effect unless specifically invoked by the TD. The PDGA default is NO 2 meter rule. So if the TD doesn't mention it in the players' meeting, the 2 meter rule is NOT in effect.

The PDGA Rules Committee

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