

PDGA Rules Q & A (v12_2011)

QA1: Bluebonnets and Other Protected Areas

Q: How do I mark my lie when my disc lands in an area of the course that has sensitive, protected, endangered, dangerous, or valuable foliage?

A: The TD may declare an area to be OB, or a casual obstacle, in which case you mark your lie according to the relevant rule. If a Drop Zone has been provided, your lie is in the Drop Zone. If the area has not been declared to be OB or a casual obstacle, then you mark your lie in the standard fashion, with one exception: you may take casual relief, with no penalty, from an area which you are prohibited by law from entering. Note that you can always take Optional Relief (move the lie back along the line of play) or an Optional Rethrow (go back to the previous lie) at the cost of an additional penalty throw.

Applicable Rules: 803.05 Obstacles and Relief; 803.06 Optional Rethrow; 803.09 Out-of-Bounds; 804.01 Special Conditions

QA2: Bridge Over OB

Q: My throw landed on a bridge that spans an OB creek. 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?

A: A bridge is an example where one playing surface is vertically stacked above another playing surface. Each playing surface is treated independently. The bridge is in-bounds unless the TD has explicitly declared it to be OB, regardless of whether a playing surface above or below it is OB. If the two-meter rule is in use, it does not apply because your disc is on, not above, the playing surface. You mark your lie on the bridge, and there is no penalty.

Applicable Rules: 803.09 Out-of-Bounds; 800 Definitions (Playing Surface)

QA3: Building a Lie

Q: My disc landed in a creek that has been declared casual. May I place a rock or a broken limb behind my mark, to stand on in order to keep my feet dry?

A: If you choose not to take casual relief up to 5m back on the line of play, then you must take your stance as you would anywhere else on the course. You are not allowed to move obstacles on the course to build your lie, or for any other reason, unless they are casual obstacles. If you do not want to play the lie as is, or take casual relief, you may declare Optional Relief or an Optional Rethrow at the cost of one throw.

Applicable Rules: 803.04 Stance, Subsequent to Teeing Off; 803.01 General; 803.05 Obstacles and Relief; 803.06 Optional Rethrow

QA4: Ice and Snow

Q: Does the term "body of water" in the casual relief rule include bodies of ice and snow?

A: No. "Casual water" as listed in the rules is water as it's commonly understood, in its liquid form. The rules do not grant casual relief from snow, ice, or even steam should you encounter it.

Applicable Rules: 803.05 Obstacles and Relief

QA5: Changing Marking Methods

Q: May I mark my lie with a mini, then decide to place the original disc back in position and pick up the mini?

A: No. The thrown disc may only be used to mark the lie if it has not been moved. Once it has been moved, it can no longer be used to mark the lie. To avoid that situation, place your mini without moving the thrown disc. You may now choose either of the two discs to mark your lie, and simply pick up the other one once you've decided.

Applicable Rules: 803.03 Marking the Lie

QA6: Disc Below the Playing Surface

Q: How do I mark a disc in an inaccessible location below the playing surface like a crevice? Is there a penalty?

A: The rules that apply to a disc above the playing surface have been extended to apply to a disc below the playing surface. If you can locate your disc in the crevice, you can mark your lie directly above it on the playing surface without penalty. If the point directly above the disc is in the air or within a solid object, mark your lie back along the line of play.

Applicable Rules: 803.08 Disc Above Or Below the Playing Surface

QA7: Disc Resting on Top (DROT)

Q: I putted and my disc stayed on top of the basket. Now what?

A: You have not holed out. Mark your lie below the disc and continue.

Applicable rules: 803.13 Holing Out; 803.08 Disc Above Or Below the Playing Surface

QA8: Disc Knocked out of Tree

Q: My disc was stuck in a tree well above two meters (with the two-meter rule in effect), when another player's throw knocked it to the ground. Where is my lie, and am I subject to a two-meter penalty throw?

A: The disc is played from the resulting lie, so there is no two-meter penalty. The same is true if the two-meter rule is not in effect. As for the player whose throw knocked your disc down, the interference rule does not apply to a competitively thrown disc.

Applicable Rules: 803.07 Interference; 803.08 Disc Above the Playing Surface

QA9: Disc Lost in Casual Water

Q: My group agrees that my disc landed in a murky body of casual water. We could not find it. Do I play it as lost, or take casual relief?

A: If your group agrees that there is compelling evidence that the disc is in the puddle, then you assume it is in fact in the puddle, and take casual relief without penalty. Your group will need to agree on an approximate location so that you can take your relief. If your group is not confident that the disc is in the puddle, it is played as a lost disc.

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

QA10: Fences as OB Lines

Q: My disc hit a flexible fence from the OB side. Was the disc briefly over in-bounds when the fence flexed, or perhaps by having slightly penetrated a hole in the fence?

A: No. The fence defines an OB plane which flexes as the fence flexes. Unless the disc has penetrated and remained lodged within the fence, the fence is considered to be a continuous impenetrable surface. Your disc was not in-bounds at any point when it struck the fence.

Applicable Rules: 803.09 Out-of-Bounds

QA11: Grip Additives

Q: May I use stuff on my hands to get a better grip?

A: Yes. The use of grip aids is generally acceptable since nothing in the rules specifically prohibits their use. You may need to clean the disc periodically to prevent grip material from building up and adding thickness or weight to the disc.

Applicable Rules: 802.04 Artificial Devices; 802.01 Discs Used in Play

QA12: Is a Drop a Throw?

Q: My throwing hand bumped a tree branch during my backswing knocking the disc to the ground, and the disc rolled forward of my lie. Was that a throw?

A: No. The throw begins when movement of the disc in the intended direction begins. A disc dropped or knocked out before or during a backswing does not count as a throw.

Applicable Rules: 800 Definitions ("Throw")

QA13: Kneeling on a Towel

Q: My disc landed in a spot that has very hard, rocky ground. May I place a towel or pad down in order to protect my knee?

A: Yes. You may place a towel or a small pad which is less than 1cm thick when compressed under any body part, with the exception of your feet. A towel or pad may be placed under your feet only within the teeing area.

Applicable Rules: 802.04 Artificial Devices; 803.05 Obstacles and Relief; 803.04 Stance, Subsequent to Teeing Off

QA14: Lost or OB?

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

A: If your group agrees that there is compelling evidence that the disc went into the OB lake, then you assume that that is what happened, and play it as OB. If there is uncertainty about whether it went in the lake, then you play it as lost.

Applicable Rules: 803.09.A Out-of-Bounds

QA15: Lost Then Found

Q: My disc was declared lost after a fruitless 3-minute search. As I began to head back to my previous lie, we found the disc. Now what do I do?

A: It remains a lost disc, and you continue back to your previous lie.

QA16: Using an Object Behind the Lie for Support

Q: Can I hold onto a branch or other object behind my lie while putting?

A: Holding on to something behind your lie is not prohibited by the rules, provided that the object is in-bounds. It also must not be moved, since you are required to take the stance that results in the least movement of obstacles on the course. You are not allowed to hold onto another person for support, as that person is not part of the course.

Applicable rules: 803.04 Stance, Subsequent to Teeing Off; 803.05 Obstacles and Relief

QA17: Marking the Lie of a Disc in a Tree

Q: Rule 803.08 describes what to do if the playing surface below the disc is "inside a tree", but I'm not sure what that means. Does it refer to the area encompassed by the ground-level branches, or just the trunk?

A: It refers to the trunk, or any other large solid part where it would be physically impossible to place a marker disc. If there is room to mark your disc directly below, that is what you do. If not, you mark at the first available spot back along the line of play.

Applicable Rules: 803.08 Disc Above Or Below the Playing Surface

QA18: Missed Mandatory

Q: I missed a mandatory, but we didn't realize it until after I had made another throw. What do I do?

A: You finish the hole and take a two-throw penalty for not having played the mandatory.

QA19: Missing Scores

Q: Is there a penalty for failing to record a score for a particular hole, even if the total is correct?

A: Scorecards submitted without a score marked for a hole are incorrect and will have two penalty throws added to the correct total score.

Applicable Rules: 804.03 Scoring

QA20: Mandatory Has No Drop Zone

Q: I missed the mandatory, and no Drop Zone has been marked. Where is my lie?

A: Mark your lie within five meters of the mandatory on the correct side, and up to one meter behind the mandatory line.

Applicable Rules: 803.12 Mandatories

QA21: Obstacle to Stance and Flight Path

Q: My disc came to rest under a large fallen tree branch. The branch is clearly dead and unattached from the tree, and extends from behind my disc to in front of it. Can I move the branch?

A: Yes. If part of the branch is in your stance or run-up, you're allowed to move it, even if another part is between your lie and the hole.

Applicable Rules: 803.05 Obstacles and Relief

QA22: Played A Hole That Is Not Part Of Official Course

Q: My group played a hole that is not part of the tournament course. What is the penalty?

A: Since the hole was not part of the course, all throws made count as practice throws. The penalty throws can be added to the hole immediately before or after the practice throws were taken.

QA23: Starting on the Wrong Hole

Q: My group started on the wrong hole. What should we do?

A: For each player, it depends on how many throws were made. If only one throw was made, it is counted as a practice throw, and the hole is not completed. If more than one throw was made, the hole is completed, and a two-throw penalty is assessed. Your group should then proceed to the correct hole.

Applicable Rules: 801.04 Playing the Stipulated Course

QA24: Poorly Defined Mandatory

Q: A mandatory was marked on the trunk of a tree, with the arrow pointing left. The trunk splits into two main trunks. My disc passed between the two upper trunks. Did I pass the mandatory?

A: It's not an easy call, because the mandatory is poorly defined. Your group will first need to decide what the mandatory object is - whether one of the two upper trunks is a continuation of the lower one. Once that has been decided, picture the mandatory line as extending straight up from the end of that object. Your group will then have to decide on which side of that line your disc passed.

QA25: Provisional Throws

Q: What is the provisional throw rule and when should it be used?

A: A provisional throw is used when a player disagrees with the group's ruling and no official is available, or when it might save time in case of a possible lost or OB disc. Provisional throws allow play to continue by deferring the ruling until the status of the disc in question can be determined, or an official is available to settle the matter. In the case where a ruling is disputed or uncertain, a player may have to play out from both the original and the provisional throws, essentially completing two legs. Provisional throws are not counted as practice throws once the proper ruling has been made. A provisional throw cannot subsequently be declared to be an Optional Rethrow. Applicable Rules: 800 Definitions; 803.01 General

QA26: Remaindered Discs

Q: Are remaindered discs (X-ed out discs, factory seconds, hot stamp rejects, etc) of PDGA-approved models legal for use in PDGA competitions?

A: Yes. They are legal for PDGA play as long as they also meet the overall restrictions (weight, rim sharpness, flexibility, etc) as outlined by the PDGA Technical Standards document. Players always have the right to question the legality of a disc used in competition. In such cases the TD will make the final call.

Applicable Rules: 802.01

QA27: Reteeing after an OB Drive

Q: My drive went into an OB pond which is surrounded by tall reeds. One meter from where the disc was last in-bounds puts me in the middle of the reeds. Can I just go back to the tee?

A: Yes. You always have two options as to where to mark your lie after going OB: (1) Within one meter of where your disc was last in-bounds, or (2) The previous lie. You may have a third option if the TD has provided a Drop Zone. Note that the TD may choose to limit OB options. Whichever option you choose, there is a one-throw penalty for going OB.

QA28: Shakedown!

Q: An official ruled that my disc was more than two meters above the playing surface before I got there to take a look at it. Another player shook my disc down before I could mark the lie. The two-meter rule was in effect. What's the ruling?

A: Since an official has ruled, the two-meter penalty is applied, and the lie is placed directly below where your disc had stuck, as can best be determined by the official and your group.

Applicable Rules: 803.08 Disc Above Or Below the Playing Surface;
803.07 Interference

QA29: Legal Throwing Styles

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

A: 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. Note: That also means that kicking the disc can be penalized as a practice throw.

Applicable Rules: 800 Definitions (Throw); 803.01 General

QA30: Unplayable or Unsafe Tees

Q: What can I do about an unplayable, unsafe, or poorly marked tee?

A: If the problem with the tee is a casual obstacle that cannot be easily removed (such as standing water), you can take casual relief up to 5m behind the tee. No relief is provided for other adverse tee conditions, though you can place a towel down to provide traction if the tee is slippery. If you're desperate, you can use the Optional Relief rule to move back along the line of play as far as you like, at the cost of one penalty throw. If the tee is poorly marked, locate an official or a local player in other groups if possible to help identify the tee area boundaries.

Applicable Rules: 803.05 Obstacles and Relief

QA31: The Two-Meter Rule

Q: Is the two-meter rule still in effect?

A: By default, the two-meter rule is not in effect. The TD may choose to put it into play for as much of the tournament as they choose, including for particular obstacles. If that happens, it will be covered in the players' meeting.

Applicable Rules: 800 Definitions; 803.08 Disc Above Or Below the Playing Surface

QA32: Optional Relief When Disc Is OB

Q: My disc went OB. Can I use the Optional Relief rule to mark my lie back along the line of play, instead of one meter from OB?

A: No. The Optional Relief rule specifies you can take relief from a lie and the disc that is OB is not located at a lie yet. Once you have established your lie, you may then use the Optional Relief rule to relocate your lie back along the line of play, at the cost of an additional penalty throw.

Applicable Rules: 803.05 Obstacles and Relief; 803.09 Out-of-Bounds

QA33: Penalty Rule Priorities

Q: Is there a priority order for which penalty rule should be applied if more than one applies?

A: Yes. The priority order that penalty rules should be applied is as follows: Missing a Mandatory, Out-of-Bounds, Disc Above Two Meters (when the two-meter rule is in effect), and Lost Disc. For example, if a throw misses a mandatory and lands in an OB area, the player moves to the Mandatory's Drop Zone and receives a one-throw penalty. A player does not receive more than one penalty throw even if their throw violates more than one of those penalty rules.

Applicable Rules: 803.06 Optional Rethrow; 803.08 Disc Above or Below the Playing Surface; 803.09 Out-of-Bounds; 803.11 Lost Disc; 803.12 Mandatories

QA34: Putts not Entering the Target Properly

Q: Everyone in my group watched my soft putter push thru the side of the basket and land completely inside of it, not wedged at all. They said the putt was not good. What gives?

A: Starting with the 2011 rules, throws that are observed by the group or an official to enter the target below the top wire of the basket or thru the top of the chain support will not be considered good, even if they come to rest in the basket or chains. If no one sees the throw on a blind hole or when the target is too far away, the benefit of the doubt is given to the player.

Applicable Rules: 803.13 Holing Out

QA35: Who's an Official?

Q: Everyone in my playing group is a certified official. Certain rules require either two players in the group or an official to make the call. Can just one of us make these calls since we're all officials?

A: No. Officials have restrictions on making calls depending on whether they are playing or not. An official (including the TD) who is playing cannot act as the sole official to make rules calls that affect players in their division. An official who is playing may make a call for another group of players in any division but theirs. A non-playing official can be the sole person to make a call in any group where rules indicate one official may make the call. While spectators who are not part of the tournament staff or volunteers may be officials, it's not considered good form for them to make calls unless requested to do so. Spotters, even if they are not officials, may make calls regarding the position of a disc (for example, where it was last in-bounds), and those calls qualify as official rulings.

Applicable Rules: 800 Definitions (Official); 1.11 Officials (Competition Manual)

QA36: Is Video Evidence Allowed for Rulings?

Q: A spectator managed to capture video evidence of some stance violations and courtesy violations like one player swearing and another drinking during the round. Can any of those video clips or snapshots be reviewed by an official to subsequently issue warnings or penalties?

A: No. At this point, media evidence such as video, photos or audio clips cannot be used by officials or TDs for making rulings. Only direct visual accounts of possible rules infractions observed by players, spectators or officials may be used by TDs to make rulings.

Applicable Rules: 804.03 Scoring

QA37: What is "Demonstrate Balance" for Putts?

Q: As I release a putt, I push off from my back foot so that after release I am balanced on my front foot. I typically freeze there for a couple of seconds, then swing my back foot forward and continue toward the hole. Is that a foot fault?

A: It's hard to say. Your group will have to make a judgment call. To demonstrate "full control of balance" the player must perform some action that breaks up the flow of movement after release before proceeding toward the target. Some examples of actions that demonstrate balance might be: (1) a clear pause and display of balance, (2) placement of the back foot on the ground behind the mark, or (3) retrieval of the marker disc. The key to all of those is to show balance and control of your body behind the mark before moving forward. The best course of action is to leave no room for doubt, which is easy to do if you are indeed in control of your body after you've released the putt.

Applicable Rules: 803.04 Stance Subsequent to Teeing Off

QA38: Relief from Culvert in Side of Hill

Q: Our course has two horizontal rainwater run-off culverts that exit from the side of a hill into the fairway. They are about 2 feet in diameter with metal grills over their exits that have gaps big enough for discs to enter but not a player. If a disc enters a culvert, can the player simply mark higher up on the hillside directly vertical from their disc's location in the culvert with no penalty by following the new Disc Below Playing Surface rule?

A: Yes. Inside the culvert is not a playing surface, but the hillside above it is. If the TD has not provided guidance on how to handle discs entering these culverts, then players can mark on the hillside directly above their disc's location with no penalty.

Applicable Rules: 803.08 Disc Above or Below the Playing Surface

QA39: Divisions Available to Women

Q: Can women play in any division?

A: A woman may play in any division as long as she meets the qualification criteria for that division. There are no divisions that are restricted to men only.

Applicable Rules: 2.1 Division Qualifications (Competition Manual)

QA40: Jumping the Gun

Q: What happens if a group starts play before the official signal is given?

A: If a group mistakenly starts play early and then hears the official start signal, they return to the tee and start over. None of those throws count as practice throws even if made after the 2-minute warning. If the group actually started early but never heard the official start signal, their scores stand as thrown with no penalties.

Applicable Rules: 1.5 Practice Rounds and Beginning Play (Competition Manual)