

## UNPLAYABLE LIES - Rule 28

**Unplayable Lie Basics** – ONLY you can declare a ball unplayable, and you may do so anywhere EXCEPT in a water hazard. There are 3 options, each with a one stroke penalty: **(a)** Play a ball from a spot where the original ball was last played; **(b)** Drop a ball behind where it lay, keeping that point directly between the hole and where the new ball is dropped. No limit on how far back you can go; **(c)** Drop a ball within 2 clubs lengths of the spot where the ball lay, but not nearer the hole.

Of the 3 options, **(c)** Two clubs length is most often used; **(a)** is often used from the tee, and in that case may be re-teeed; but conditions rarely are right for **(b)**, so it is seldom used. (The story should now make sense.)

Amy, Betsy and Carrie are playing together. All are long, but wild hitters, although pretty good around the green. The hole is a very short par 4 made memorable by a very tight, tree lined fairway, and a sand bunker in front of the green that was nicknamed “Jaws” because of its very high back lip.

Amy hits a long drive that hooks into the last of the trees on the left. Her ball stops in the tree roots of the last tree and is definitely unplayable. Amy does not want to use option (a) and go back to the tee because of the high probability that she will again end up in the trees. So she takes option (c), and drops two club lengths from the spot, and puts her approach on the green, about 20 feet from the pin. She now lies 3, with the probability of a two putt for a 5.

Betsy’s long drive slices into a tall bush in the middle of a bed of ice plant, and although she finds her ball, 2 club lengths is not enough to get her out of the ice plant, and she doesn’t want to go back to the tee (option a) because, like Amy, there is a high probability of again ending up in the trees or ice plant. So she takes option **(b)** and drops the ball behind the bush and ice plant, keeping the spot where her ball was found directly between the pin and her drop (she had to go onto another fairway to achieve this). Although this puts her a good deal farther from the green, she hits a nice iron over the bush and lands about 25 feet from the pin. She lies 3, and like Amy, will probably two putt for a 5.

Carrie hits a long, straight drive that ends up 10 feet from the bunker. An easy wedge, and two putts for a probable win (and a tie if one of the others gets lucky and sinks a long putt). BUT – she gets too cocky, looks up and grounds the ball into the lip of the bunker. The ball buries itself 6 inches from the top, and is in so deep you can only see a small part of the ball. Even a pro probably couldn’t get this one on the green in one try. She will be lucky just to knock it loose and hope that it will roll to a decent lie in the bunker. But Carrie has a better idea. She calls the ball unplayable, drops another ball in the original spot **(a)**, keeps her head down and puts the ball 5 feet from the pin. Now with a one putt – a definite possibility – she will tie with a five.

**Two notes on Carrie’s situation. Had she chosen option (c) (two clubs length) or option (b) (moving behind the spot) she would be required to stay in the bunker. And equally important, if she made any attempt to get out of the bunker, option (a) would be of little use because now the original position is in the bunker.**

End of story: The probabilities became realities and all tied with fives. Carrie, who was about to snatch defeat from the jaws of victory, at least came out with a tie.

