



WGA Golf Rules Series: Unplayable Lie

A player can take an unplayable lie any time they so choose except from within a water or lateral hazard. The player is the sole judge, and the ball doesn't really have to be unplayable—a more accurate name would be 'an I don't want to play it' lie.

This is one of the times when the rules of golf properly applied can really help if a player takes the time to think about their options.

If a player takes an unplayable lie, they incur a 1 stroke penalty and can do one of 3 things:

1. Hit again from the same spot
2. Take a legal drop two club lengths from the ball
3. Drop the anywhere behind the ball on the line between the ball and the flag. There is no limit to how far back the player can go on this line, even if it improves the lie (eg fairway vs. rough)

If a player takes an unplayable lie in a bunker, they have the same options except that the ball must remain in the hazard and no closer to the hole. So taking an unplayable lie can improve the lie within the bunker but not remove the ball from the bunker.