

Question:

In a match, a player is playing his second stroke on a par 5 and hits his ball into a “swamp” water hazard which is overgrown with trees. He finds his ball and lifts and moves loose twigs and branches to get a stance. Plays the ball and the ball goes further into the water hazard. What are the options available to the player and what penalty, if any?

Answer:

Unfortunately, the only option is Loss of Hole to the player as soon as he touched a loose impediment inside the margins of a hazard. Rule 13-4c. In a stroke play type competition, a 2 stroke penalty will apply.

So what if the player did not touch or move any loose impediments and played the stroke from the water hazard and the ball ended up further into the water hazard. What are the options available and the associated penalties?

Rule 26-2 covers this in detail as follows:

If a ball played from within a *water hazard* comes to rest in the same or another *water hazard* after the *stroke*, the player may:

- (i) *Under penalty of one stroke* proceed under *Stroke and Distance*, Rule 26-1a, and drop another ball as close to the spot as possible from where the ball was last played inside the *water hazard*.

If, after dropping in the *hazard*, the player elects not to play the dropped ball, he may:

- (a) proceed under Rule 26-1b, or if applicable Rule 26-1c, adding the additional penalty of one stroke prescribed by the Rule and using as the reference point the point where the original ball last crossed the margin of this *hazard* before it came to rest in this *hazard*; or
 - (b) add an additional penalty of one stroke and play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which the last *stroke* from outside a *water hazard* was made (see Rule 20-5); or
- (ii) *Under penalty of one stroke* a player may;
 - a) Drop a ball behind the *water hazard*, keeping the point at which the original ball last crossed the margin of the *water hazard* directly between the *hole* and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit to how far behind the *water hazard* the ball may be dropped; or
 - b) As additional options available only if the ball last crossed the margin of a lateral water hazard, drop a ball outside the *water hazard* within two club-lengths of and not nearer the *hole* than (i) the point where the original ball last crossed the margin of the *water hazard* or (ii) a point on the opposite margin of the *water hazard* equidistant from the *hole*.
- (iii) *Under penalty of one stroke*, play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which the last *stroke* from outside a *water hazard* was made (see Rule 20-5).