

player's corner

SITUATIONS, STRATEGIES AND INSTRUCTION **BY TRENT WEARNER PHOTOGRAPHS BY BARRY STAVER**

Putting the Cart Before the Course

KNOW YOUR OPTIONS WHEN A CART PATH COMES INTO PLAY

ON MOST Front Range golf courses cart paths weave their way along each and every fairway, producing monster-sized bounces and scarring five-dollar golf balls. These concrete ribbons can propel your ball 50 yards past your playing partner's drive or 50 yards into the native grass, italicizing the expression, "That's how the ball bounces."

If you've hit your tee shot and walk up to find it in a position where the ball or your stance is on the path, you're allowed relief without having to take a penalty. The cart path is in most instances an immovable obstruction under Rule 24-2, as stated by the *USGA Rules of Golf*.

If a cart path interferes with your feet, club head, ball or intended swing, you can take relief or you can play it from where it lies. In some circumstances, playing the ball from the path can be the best choice. Remember, in taking relief you must drop the ball at the nearest point from its original position. You do not get to choose which side of the path to drop as there is only one nearest point of relief. For this reason, you should never immediately pick up your ball when you find it on the path. Leave it while you evaluate options. Typically, though, you'll find yourself taking relief from this situation, and you should follow the correct procedure.



RELIEF PROCESS

While attempting to find the nearest point of relief, leave the ball in its original position. Set up on both sides of the cart path with the club you intend to use. (The driver on the ground is for an illustration we will talk about later.) Notice that the player is taking "complete relief," which means his feet and club head must be clear of the cart path. For now focus on where the player's seven iron is soled on the ground. This player will then place a tee in the ground at the sweet spot of his seven iron. He proceeds to do the same process on the other