



Uneven Lies

Playing Golf's Most Challenging Shots

CONGRATULATIONS! Your tee shot has just landed in the fairway! For many that alone is reason to celebrate, as it sets the tone for how to play the remainder of the hole.

There are many different variables and obstacles which come into play with golf. You will most likely never have more than one opportunity to hit a shot from the same location with the exact same conditions. That being said, you should develop a systematic approach which will help make the right decisions in executing the shot at hand.

Unlike the tee shot, the remaining shots leave you out of control of the lie and conditions from which you play. As you approach the ball, you should begin to assess the situation and plan for the next shot. Let's say that your ball comes to rest in the fairway, but the fairway is not flat like the driving range or the tee.

Ask yourself the following questions when you are trying to make a decision as to how to play your shot:

- 1 How far away am I from my target?
- 2 What type of lie do I have- level, uphill, downhill, etc?
- 3 How will the lie affect my shot?
- 4 Are there any obstacles between me and my target?
- 5 Will the elevation of the green affect my shot?
- 6 Will the wind or other weather conditions affect my shot?
- 7 What is the smartest choice for me based on my level of ability?
- 8 Now then, what club will I select?

Because your ball is on an uneven surface, you must know what to do to hit this shot as well as what will happen to the ball when it gets airborne. If you know what to do and what the outcome should be, you will hit more



DOWNHILL LIE



UPHILL LIE



SIDEHILL LIE
BALL ABOVE FEET



SIDEHILL LIE
BALL BELOW FEET

greens and shoot lower scores. Isn't that our goal? There are four lies you can face when your ball is in the fairway: Downhill/uphill and side hill ball below your feet/side hill ball above your feet. I have grouped these as they are the exact opposite of one another. If you know how to hit a downhill lie, you will know how to hit an uphill lie.

Downhill Lie

When confronted with an uneven lie, the first thing you should always do is determine the distance to your target. In making your club selection, you will want to choose a shorter club with more loft, as the ball will fly lower and travel farther than normal.

Play the ball position toward your uphill foot (for right-handed golfers, this will be your right foot). In order to determine how far back the ball position should be, take a practice swing near the ball and watch where the club soles out to the ground. The ball position should be placed where the divot begins.

Next, put the majority of your weight on your front foot. Match your shoulders, hips and knees with the angle of the slope. They should be parallel with the

ground. Adjust your alignment to aim left of your target. The ball flight will move to the right because of the downhill lie and ball position.

Use the wrists on the backswing to bring the club up the angle of the hill. The follow-through will be low with the slope of the hill. If there is any weight transfer you will follow through as if you are walking down the hill.

Uphill Lie

Determine the distance to your target. For the uphill lie, you will want to choose a longer club with less loft. Because of the slope, the ball will fly higher and travel shorter than normal.

Play the ball position toward your uphill foot. To determine how far forward the ball position should be, take a practice swing under similar conditions and watch where the club starts to hit the ground. The ball position should be placed where the divot begins.

Because weight transfer is so difficult with this shot, turn your front toe to the outside of your heel. Pointing your foot to a ten o'clock position will help you with any weight transfer.

As with the downhill lie, match your shoulders, hips and knees with the angle of the slope. They should be parallel with the hill. The right shoulder, hip and knee will be lower than the left shoulder, hip and knee. Your weight will be on your back foot. Do not lean to your front leg and attempt to level yourself. This will cause you to swing into the hill.

Swing with the slope of the hill. If you have any weight transfer with this shot, it should be minimal. This shot also promotes the ball moving more left of your target, so adjust your alignment at setup accordingly.

Sidehill Lie Ball Above Feet

As with uphill and downhill lies, begin by determining the distance to your target. In making your club selection you will want to choose a shorter club with more loft as the ball will fly lower and travel farther than normal.

Next, place the ball in the normal position for the club you have selected. The hill will not affect your ball position as you make this shot. Because your club will sole to the ground with the heel of

the club lower than the toe of the club, the ball will draw right to left. Be sure to aim right of your target.

Stand taller and closer than normal to the ball because of the slope. Grip down on the club for more control.

Take a 3/4 swing while keeping your shoulders level

with the ground. To get a feel of what it will be like when hitting this shot, take a practice swing making contact with the ground in a similar position as the ball lies.

Sidehill Lie Ball Below Feet

Once you determine the distance to your target, select a longer club with less loft as the ball will fly higher and travel shorter than normal. You want a longer club because the ball is farther away from you.

Next, place the ball in the normal position for the club you have selected. The hill will not affect your ball position as you make this shot. Because the club will sole to the ground with the toe of the club lower than the heel of the club, the ball will slice from left to right. Be sure to aim left of your target.

Widen your stance and lower your center of gravity by bending your knees more than normal for this shot. Bending your knees instead of from your waist will help keep you in balance. Stay level throughout your swing. Because of the lower than normal setup, you may not be able to follow through as well. The longer club can help you lay up to the green. But because of the added loft produced by the lie of this shot, you may not be able to reach the green from the fairway.

Hopefully these tips will help you get successfully from the fairway to the green. See you on the course! ♦

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(615) 778-8823 | www.qsog.com
3901 KEDRON ROAD SPRING HILL, TN 37174



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