



WHAT IF YOUR BALL GETS STUCK IN A TREE



Jean-Claude under the tree

Procedure When Player's Ball Is dislodged from Tree

[Rule 9.4](#) applies wherever a ball in play is on the course. This includes when a ball is in a tree. However, when the player does not intend to play the ball as it lies but is trying only to identify it, or intends to retrieve it to use another Rule, the Exceptions to [Rule 9.4b](#) apply and there is no penalty. For example:

- In searching for their ball, a player sees a ball lying in a tree but cannot identify it. The player climbs the tree in an attempt to identify the ball and in doing so accidentally dislodges the ball from the tree. The ball is identified as the player's ball. In this case, since the ball was accidentally moved in taking reasonable actions to identify it, there is no penalty for moving the ball ([Rule 7.4](#)).

The player must replace the ball or may directly use a relief Rule (such as [Rule 19](#) - Unplayable Ball).

In two situations, the player's only option is to take relief under a relief Rule:

- The player is unable to replace the ball because they cannot reach the spot where the ball was moved from when the player was identifying it, or
 - The player can reach that spot but the ball will not come to rest on that spot and the player cannot reach the spot where it will come to rest under [Rule 14.2e](#) (Replaced Ball Does Not Stay on Spot).
- A player's ball has not yet been found but is believed to be lodged in a tree in the general area. The player makes it clear that if the ball is found they will take unplayable ball relief under [Rule 19](#).

The player shakes the tree; the ball falls down and is identified by the player within three minutes of starting search. The player may now take relief under [Rule 19](#) (Unplayable Ball) adding only the one penalty stroke prescribed by that Rule with no additional penalty for causing the ball to

move. If not known, the player must estimate the spot where the ball lay in the tree when applying [Rule 19](#).

However, if the player moves the ball when they are not intending to identify it or without intending to take relief under another Rule, the player does get a penalty for a breach of [Rule 9.4](#). For example:

- A player's ball is in a tree and they intend to play it. In preparing for the stroke, the player accidentally dislodges the ball.
The player gets one penalty stroke under [Rule 9.4](#) for causing the ball to move. The player must replace the ball or may take relief directly under a relief Rule. If the player takes relief under [Rule 19](#), they get a total of two penalty strokes, one under [Rule 9.4](#) and one under [Rule 19](#).

More information in: <https://www.randa.org/rog/clarifications/rule-9>