



LINKS PLAYERS DAILY DEVOTIONAL

Links Players

There Is No Mercy In Golf

Christ is the sacrifice that takes away our sins and the sins of all the world's people. (1 John 2:2)

Below are some of the harshest penalties in golf:

Wrong Ball:

Hitting the wrong ball results in a two-stroke penalty and the requirement to play your original ball to finish the hole.

Out of Bounds/Lost Ball:

If a ball goes out of bounds or is lost, the penalty is stroke and distance, meaning you add a stroke and return to where you hit the ball.

Scoring:

Recording an incorrect score on a scorecard can lead to disqualification if the score is lower than the actual score for a hole. If a score is higher than the actual score, the higher score stands. Additionally, a two-stroke penalty may be added to the correct score for an incorrectly submitted total score.

Golf is, by nature, a legalistic game. The rules are rigid and impartial—they bend for no one. It is a sport of merit, where performance alone determines outcome. There is no room for mercy.

Mercy is the act of withholding a penalty from someone who deserves it. It is a decision by someone in authority to forgive, or to refrain from imposing the consequences their power entitles them to enforce.

In the world of competitive golf, mercy is not only out of place—it's costly. To overlook a penalty does more than benefit the offending player; it compromises the entire field. Every other competitor, having played by the rules, bears the weight of that injustice. Mercy, in such a system, comes at the expense of integrity.

While unpopular in modern culture, punishment plays a necessary role in justice. It restores what was broken, rights what was wronged, and preserves fairness. Whenever rules are violated, someone is harmed, whether directly or indirectly. Justice seeks to restore balance and protect community peace—Shalom.

The religions of the world require moral performance to receive mercy. In Islam, it is only the merciful who are shown mercy. In Hinduism, the concept of karma ensures that those who act immorally are punished—not in this life, but in the next.

This belief undergirds the caste system, which often goes unchallenged. If someone is poor or suffering, it's assumed to be the result of wrongdoing in a previous life. They are simply getting what they deserve.

Christianity, however, offers a profound contrast. It uniquely upholds both justice and mercy, without compromising either. According to the Christian faith, the penalty for human wrongdoing is not dismissed, but paid in full by God Himself.

With Jesus Christ's sacrificial death, justice is not sidestepped; it is satisfied. Jesus bears the punishment that others deserve, securing forgiveness for those who repent and believe—not through merit, but through grace.

The Gospel of Jesus is unlike any other message in the world. It satisfies justice, extends mercy, and freely gives grace to anyone who believes. Through this divine act, a legal system built on law and justice, which is necessary for peace, is ultimately transformed into a system grounded in love. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. (John 15:13)

And perfect love casts out all fear. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. (1 John 4:18)

Prayer: Lord Jesus, You are God, perfect in justice and love, and overflowing with grace. You demonstrated your great love for me, even when I did not deserve it. With a heart full of gratitude, I commit my life to you.

Boo Arnold

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