

GOLF AUSTRALIA RULES

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2016



GolfAustralia



2016 Australasian Rules & Competition Management School - Brisbane GC

Rules on Tour

Ball Lost in Tree

By Robert Crosby (Chairman Golf Australia Rules of Golf & Amateur Status Sub-Committee)

During the ISPS Handa Women's Australian Open played in Adelaide at The Grange Golf Club - West Course, an interesting situation arose with a ball lodged in a tree.

On the par-3 14th hole the player missed the green left and attempted a chip shot to the green with a pine tree intervening on her line of play. The ball clearly went into the pine tree but did not come down. As the shot was played from only a short distance away, the player, caddie and spectators had a fairly accurate view of where it lodged in the tree. However, it was not visible. Looking from under the tree you could see many areas of accumulated pine needles in the branches such that they formed "birds' nests". It would be fair to say that the ball had settled in one of these nests and was not visible from underneath. Even though the ball was not

far from the ground, much throwing of clubs could not dislodge the thatched pine needles in an attempt to dislodge the ball.

As a result, the ball was indeed "lost" and the player should proceed under Rule 27-1.

There was a similar incident involving Lydia Ko at a tournament in 2015 where she escaped a stroke and distance penalty when she hit her ball into the branches of a tree in front of the green, with hundreds of spectators watching. The LPGA issued this official explanation of the ruling that saved Lydia from having to return to where she last played from:

The officials involved in the ruling with Lydia Ko today on the 14th hole referenced Decision 27/12 to support their ruling. Due to the fact that it was roughly a 30-yard shot, the spectators were able to see Lydia's ball from start to finish and therefore provided indisputable evidence that the ball in the tree was indeed Lydia's ball. Therefore the ball did not need to be identified as it was never

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Your questions answered in this month's 'It's Your Shot'



lost. The USGA confirmed that in a situation where observers indisputably saw the player's ball in motion come to rest in a specific location at which the ball remains visible, the ball has been identified as the player's ball. Thus, since the ball in the tree was deemed as Lydia's ball, she was then able to proceed under Rule 28 – Ball Unplayable.

(The big difference in this case is that the ball remained visible)

And this is the wording of Decision 27/12;

Q. A's ball and B's ball came to rest close together. Neither A nor B could identify one of the balls as his ball because they were using balls with identical markings.

A spectator who saw both shots land was able to state which ball belonged to A and which one belonged to B. May his testimony be accepted, or should both balls be deemed lost because they could not be identified by A and B?

A. If the Committee determined that, based on information given by the spectator, A and B were able to identify their balls, the balls should not be deemed lost. Otherwise, they would have to proceed under Rule 27-1.

Note that Ko was penalised one stroke for deeming her ball in the tree unplayable, but was able to drop a ball within two club-lengths of the point immediately underneath where her ball was at rest in the tree, one of the options afforded by Rule 28. If her ball had not been positively identified by the testimony of the spectators she would have had to return to where she last played from, under penalty of stroke and distance, and would have been faced with the same difficult shot over the tall tree.

One last point to remember in similar circumstances is that the player should deem their ball unplayable before shaking the tree to try to recover it. Until the player deems it unplayable the ball is in play and if they, or their caddie, cause it to move they incur a penalty of one stroke, under Rule 18-2, and would then have to replace the ball where it was in the tree, or deem it unplayable for an additional penalty stroke.

Ball Moved by Backward Motion

By Brian Hill (Golf Victoria Business & Technical Services Manager)

I have a rule issue which happened at the Trainee Professionals Classic at Rich River Golf Club in February.

A player had a swing at his ball which was very close to a bush. He missed the ball and the clubhead struck a part of the bush and immediately rebounded backwards, moving the ball. The player then proceeded to play the next shot from the new position. After his round he asked the Rules Referee what penalties applied and was told to apply the general penalty under Rule 18-2. Having some doubt, the Referee rang me. I then contacted some PGA officials who decided to check with overseas colleagues due to the unusual nature of the incident.

The answer came back that the player should not be penalised as it was felt that the swing had not stopped just because the clubhead had passed the ball and therefore the player had actually struck the ball in the one motion. I then rang the referee to rescind the penalty. The R&A via Golf Australia, ultimately confirmed this decision.



Blowin' in the Wind

The third round at Augusta National was an unusually blustery day for the inland course with winds gusting up to 30mph. This proved particularly challenging for many of the players on the firm and fast greens but Billy Horschel (pictured above) had cause to feel particularly unlucky after a strong gust blew his ball off the 15th green. Horschel had chipped his third shot onto the green and walked onto the green and marked it while his fellow-competitors played. Prior to playing his next shot he replaced the ball on the green before walking to the far side of the hole to look at his line. However, as he was walking back to the ball, the wind suddenly picked up and a strong gust started moving the ball, blowing it all the way down the slope and into the water hazard at the front of the green.

When Horschel had replaced his ball on the green, it was back in play. As a result, when the wind blew the ball to the new position, that was where the ball had to be played from (as wind is not considered to be an outside agency) (See also Decision 18-1/12).

As Horschel's ball came to rest in deep water in the hazard, his only options were either to play again from where he played his last shot, or drop a ball back in a line keeping the point where the ball last crossed into the hazard between him and the hole (Rule 26), both under penalty of one-stroke. As the back in a line option would have taken him over to the other side of the hazard, Horschel took the first option and dropped a ball at the back right of the green as near as possible to where he had played his previous stroke from, no nearer the hole. Fortunately for Horschel he chipped and putted for a bogey six.

Implementation of Rule 14-1b (Anchoring)

(Courtesy: The R&A Website)

January 1st 2016 saw the introduction of the anchoring ban with the adoption of Rule 14-1b. This has resulted in those who used the anchored stroke in the past adopting new methods of putting. For example, Adam Scott has gone to the shorter putter and others have adapted the way they use the long putter to conform to the Rule.

The technique adopted by Senior Tour player, Bernhard Langer, has recently been in the spotlight as a result of him using an anchored stroke for a practice putt and then a non-anchored stroke for the actual putt.

The Rule prevents the player from making a stroke with the club anchored, either directly or by use of an anchored point. However, this does not apply to any practice strokes so practising in this manner is perfectly acceptable.

The key with Langer's putting stroke is that he moves his hand away from his chest so it is not touching his body and as a result, the club is not anchored during the stroke.



Guidance on playing in conformance with Rule 14-1b

A. Text of Rule 14-1b

Rule 14-1b focuses only on the method of stroke; it does not limit the conforming equipment that may be used. While making a stroke, a player may not anchor the club (i) "directly" or (ii) indirectly through use of an "anchor point". These concepts are explained in the Rule:

14-1b Anchoring the Club

In making a stroke, the player must not anchor the club, either "directly" or by use of an "anchor point".

Note 1: The club is anchored "directly" when the player intentionally holds the club or a gripping hand in contact with any part of their body, except that the player may hold the club or a gripping hand against a hand or forearm.

Note 2: An "anchor point" exists when the player intentionally holds a forearm in contact with any part of their body to establish a gripping hand as a stable point around which the other hand may swing the club.

Penalty: Match play – Loss of hole; Stroke play – Two strokes

B. Answers to Frequently Asked Questions

The following FAQs respond to various questions received by The R&A and the USGA about the application of Rule 14-1b:

Does this Rule apply only to strokes made from the putting green?

No. Rule 14-1b applies to all types of stroke (i.e. putts, chip shots, pitch shots, full-length shots, etc.), regardless of where those strokes are made (i.e. putting green, fringe, fairway, rough, tee, and everywhere else on the course).

Is this a ban on belly putters and long putters?

No. A player may still use any conforming belly (mid-length) or long putter. Rule 14-1b addresses only the method of stroke, prohibiting a player from anchoring the club directly or by use of an anchor point while making a stroke.

The following images show players using belly and long putters in a permissible manner under Rule 14-1b.



Above: Belly putter

Right: Long putter

What methods of stroke are prohibited?

Rule 14-1b prohibits only a few types of strokes in which the club is intentionally anchored, either directly or through use of a forearm to establish an anchor point against the body. All other currently permissible types of strokes and styles of grip remain permissible.

The following images show the two most common types of stroke that are prohibited under the Rule.



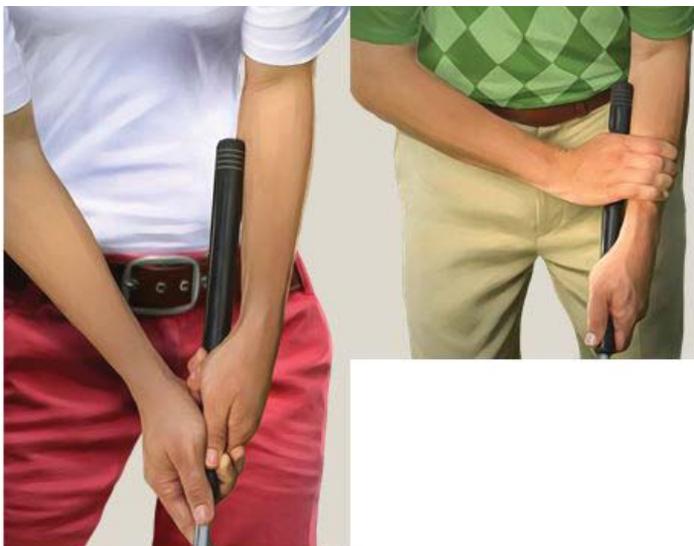
Above: Belly putter

Right: Long putter

Rule 14-1b permits a player to hold their club against their hand or forearm in making a stroke. How is the “forearm” defined?

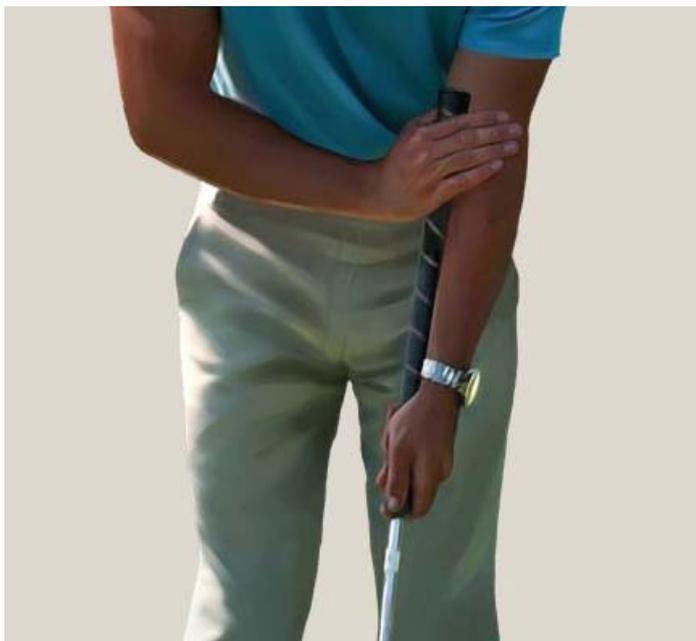
For purposes of Rule 14-1b, the “forearm” is the part of the arm below the elbow joint and includes the wrist.

The following images illustrate permissible strokes where the club is intentionally held against the forearm.



However, a player is in breach of the Rule if he or she makes a stroke while intentionally holding the club against any part of the arm at or above the elbow.

This is illustrated in the following image.



What does the term “anchor point” mean under this Rule?

The “anchor point” provision prohibits only a very specific type of stroke in which a forearm is intentionally held against the body to indirectly anchor the club.

An anchor point exists if both of the following are true:

1. the player intentionally holds a forearm (i.e. the part of the arm below the elbow, including the wrist) against the body; and
2. the player grips the club so that the hands are separated and work independently of one another (i.e. the top hand effectively secures the club in place as if attached to the body to establish a stable point, while the bottom hand is held down the shaft to swing the lower portion of the club around that point).

The following images are two examples of the hands being separated and the forearm being used to create an “anchor point” in breach of the Rule.



Does Rule 14-1b mean that a player is always prohibited from intentionally resting one or both forearms against his or her body while making a stroke?

No. Intentionally holding a forearm against the body is prohibited only where done to create an anchor point. Otherwise, intentionally holding the forearms against the body while making a stroke is not a breach of Rule 14-1b.



The above is an extract from the R&A's website document. The full R&A document can be viewed in the attachment

<http://www.randa.org/~media/Files/Anchoring/RA-Anchoring-Rule-Document.ashx>

Additional resources, such as an infographic and an explanatory video, are available at www.randa.org/anchoring. Questions about Rule 14-1b can be forwarded to your state golf association.

Rules Quiz

By Brian Nesbitt (Victorian State Level Referee)

Club Level, No Rule Book Quiz – Rule Headings Please.

The key here is to try to learn Pages 2 and 3 in the Rule Book

1. Rule 28 Heading is....
2. Rule 26
3. Rule 24
4. Rule 22
5. Rule 20
6. Rule 18
7. Rule 16
8. Rule 14
9. Rule 12
10. Rule 10

Club Level, you may use the Rule Book if necessary here, but I want the Rule number and sub-para as well please.

1. Stroke Play – failure to hole out
2. The Ball – foreign material
3. Information as to Strokes Taken – Match Play
4. Practice – during round
5. Teeing Ground – tee markers
6. Ball Played as it Lies – improving lie
7. Substituted Ball, Wrong Ball – substituted ball
8. Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped – by player
9. Flagstick – unauthorised attendance
10. Cleaning the Ball

This next Section will require the use of the Decisions Book and is aimed at State Level Referees. Please give the Decision number, but you should be able to give the Rule number and possibly the sub-para from memory! Ideally we want a decision within 3 minutes.

1. You are refereeing a match and have been summoned by the players to resolve an issue. Player A's ball lies on an earthen step cut into the side of a steep bank. He claims he is entitled to relief as the step is clearly man-made and an obstruction. Player B objects. What is your decision?
2. You are called over by Player B in a stroke play competition as he feels that Player A has incurred a penalty. Player A was practice-swinging in a hazard and touched some long grass. What is your decision?
3. Player A is putting on the green and his ball is on its way to the hole when Player B realises that no-one is attending the flag and he rushes across the green and removes the flag from the hole just before the ball comes to rest about 30cms past the hole. Player A looks up to see Player B removing the flag from the hole and immediately calls for a referee. What is your decision?
4. In a stroke play competition the flagstick has been removed from the hole and is lying on the ground. Believing that no-one is allowed to move the flagstick his fellow-competitors watch in horror as Player A's ball strikes the flagstick. You are called.
5. In stroke play competition, a player hits a bad chip shot and their ball comes to rest on the back edge of the green, a long distance from the hole. In frustration, the player marks the ball and throws it into nearby scrub. The player pulls another ball out of their pocket and holes out with this ball. What is the ruling?

DECISIONS ANDROID APP NOW AVAILABLE

The R&A is pleased to advise that the Decisions on the Rules of Golf 2016-2017 App is now available for Android devices for the first time. The App continues to be available for iPhones and iPads and all 2016-2017 versions of this App are now **free of charge**.

For information on how to download the Rules of Golf and Decisions on the Rules of Golf Apps, please see the link below.

<http://www.randa.org/apps>



Rule 6-6d – R&A Policy on the Application of the Exception to Rule 6-6d

(Courtesy: The R&A)

General Position

In a multiple round stroke play event, after the cut line has been established and the groupings and starting times for the next round have been “approved” by the Committee, no withdrawal, disqualification or imposed penalty will impact the calculation of the cut line or the groupings and starting times. A player with an imposed penalty under the Exception to Rule 6-6d will be removed from the field if the adjusted score results in the player missing the cut, but no players will be added to fill the open position.

If the groupings and starting times for the next round have not been “approved” by the Committee and a penalty under the Exception to Rule 6-6d comes to light, the Committee should always amend the player’s score and position before the groupings and timings are produced and approved.

Note: “Approved” means the point at which the Committee finalises the groupings/matches and starting times for the next round, which may be prior to the groupings/matches and starting times being published. Final approval is considered to be a more definitive cut off point, versus publishing (which may be dependent on when the information goes live on a website, is first posted on a notice board, etc.).

Application of the Exception to Rule 6-6d in Stroke Play Scenarios

Various scenarios in stroke play are outlined below and prescribe how the Committee should proceed in situations where a player receives the general penalty under the Exception to Rule 6-6d following the cut.

For all scenarios, it should be assumed that the player had made the cut and then subsequently received a penalty under the Exception to Rule 6-6d. In situations where the player fails to make the cut and subsequently receives a penalty under the Exception to Rule 6-6d prior to the close of competition, the finishing score and positioning of the player should be amended for the final results.

Scenario 1:

The penalty strokes received do not push the player over the cut line.

Action:

- If groupings and starting times have been approved by the Committee, no change is made other than the score for the player is adjusted. The approved groupings and starting times are maintained.
- If groupings and starting times have not been approved by the Committee, the score and positioning of all affected players should be amended before the groupings and starting times are produced.

Scenario 2:

The penalty strokes received push the player over the cut line, but there is otherwise no impact on the cut.

Action:

- If groupings and starting times have been approved by the Committee, no change is made other than the player is removed from the remaining stroke play field. The finishing score and positioning of the player should be amended for the final results.

- If groupings and starting times have not been approved by the Committee, the player’s finishing score and the positioning of all affected players should be amended before the groupings and starting times are produced.

Scenario 3:

The penalty strokes received moves the cut line and creates a “plus ties” situation.

Action:

- If groupings and starting times have been approved by the Committee, and the penalty strokes received result in the player missing the cut, the only change to be made is to remove the player from the remaining stroke play field (groupings and starting times will not be adjusted to include resulting “plus ties”). The finishing score and positioning of the player should be amended for the final results.
- If groupings and starting times have been approved by the Committee, and the penalty strokes received puts the player in a “plus ties” situation (i.e. on the adjusted cut line), the player is removed from the remaining stroke play field (groupings and starting times will not be adjusted to include resulting “plus ties”). The finishing score and positioning of the player should be amended for the final results.
- If groupings and starting times have not been approved by the Committee, the score and positioning of the player should be amended before the groupings and starting times are produced. The groupings would include all players affected and now impacted by the “plus ties” situation.

Scenario 4:

The penalty strokes received moves the cut line and the player is the only person on the new cut line.

Action:

- If groupings and starting times have been approved by the Committee, no change is made other than the score for the player is adjusted. The approved groupings and starting times are maintained.
- If groupings and starting times have not been approved by the Committee, the player’s finishing score and the positioning of all affected players should be amended before the groupings and starting times are produced.

Application of the Exception to Rule 6-6d in Stroke Play Qualifying followed by Match Play Scenarios

Various scenarios in stroke play qualifying followed by match play are outlined below and prescribe how the Committee should proceed in situations where a player receives the general penalty under the Exception to Rule 6-6d following the cut.

For all scenarios, it should be assumed that the player had made the cut and then subsequently received a penalty under the Exception to Rule 6-6d. It should also be assumed that the player has not started their first round match, and thus the stroke play portion of the competition has not yet closed for the player (Rule 34-1b applies after a player has started their first round match).

Scenario 1:

The penalty strokes received do not push the player over the cut line (i.e. the player's score with the penalty strokes still qualifies for match play).

Action:

- a. If the Committee has approved the stroke play results and the match play draw, the player is to proceed in the position produced by the original draw. The player's stroke play score should be adjusted for historical purposes.
- b. If the Committee has not yet approved the match play draw, the player's score should be amended and the match play draw produced on the basis of the player's amended score.

Scenario 2:

The conditions provide that a preliminary match play round is used to determine the final 64 when there is a 64 and ties situation.

The original stroke play results indicate that the exact number have qualified for the match play stages (e.g. 64 players qualify for 64 places); however, the penalty strokes received under the Exception to Rule 6-6d result in there being a 64 and ties situation.

Action:

- a. If the Committee has approved the stroke play results and the match play draw, the original draw is maintained with the exception that the player is removed from his original match play position. The player's first round opponent receives a bye.
- b. If the Committee has not yet approved the match play draw, the player's score should be amended and the match play draw should be adjusted accordingly (and would incorporate a preliminary match play round due to the fact that a 64 and ties situation has been created).

Scenario 3:

The conditions provide that a preliminary match play round is used to determine the final 64 when there is a 64 and ties situation.

The original stroke play results indicate that more than the required numbers have qualified for the match play stages (e.g. 70 players qualify for 64 places). The penalty strokes received push the player out of the top 64 and ties.

Action:

- a. If the Committee has approved the stroke play results and the match play draw, the original draw is maintained with the exception that the player is removed from his original match play position. The player's first round opponent receives a bye.
- b. If the Committee has not yet approved the match play draw, the player's score should be amended and the match play draw should be adjusted accordingly.

Scenario 4:

The conditions provide that a play-off is used to determine the final 64 when there is a 64 and ties situation.

The original stroke play results indicate that a play-off is not required (e.g. 64 players qualify for 64 places); however, the penalty strokes received under the Exception to Rule 6-6d result in a play-off for the final match play position.

Action:

- a. If the Committee has approved the stroke play results and the match play draw, a reasonable effort should be made to conduct a play-off to fill the player's original position in the match play field. If the player is included in the play-off (i.e. the adjusted score after the penalty strokes places the player in a tie for the final match play position), they should be assigned in the final play-off grouping. If it is not reasonable to conduct a play-off, the player's first round opponent receives a bye.
- b. If the Committee has not yet approved the match play draw, the player's score should be amended and the match play draw and the number of final match play positions available in the play-off adjusted accordingly.

Scenario 5:

The conditions provide that a play-off is used to determine the final 64 when there is a 64 and ties situation.

The original stroke play results indicate that more than the required numbers have qualified for the match play stages (e.g. 70 players qualify for 64 places). The penalty strokes received push the player out of the top 64 and ties.

Action:

- a. If the Committee has approved the stroke play results and the match play draw, the player is withdrawn from the match play portion of the competition. If the breach is discovered prior to the conclusion of a play-off for the final match play position, the player's match play position is awarded to the lowest scorer in the play-off. If there was not otherwise a play-off, or the play-off has already concluded, the player's first round opponent receives a bye.
- b. If the Committee has not yet approved the match play draw, the player's score should be amended and the match play draw and the number of final match play positions available in the play-off adjusted accordingly.

Scenario 6:

The conditions provide that a play-off is used to determine the final 64 when there is a 64 and ties situation.

The penalty strokes received puts the player in the play-off for the final match play position(s).

Action:

- a. If the Committee has approved the stroke play results and the match play draw, the original draw is maintained with the exception that the player is removed from their original match play position. The player is assigned to the final grouping for the play-off and the player's original match play position is awarded to the lowest scorer in the play-off (note: the player must be present and ready to play at the assigned starting time for the play-off – see Rule 6-3). If the play-off has already concluded, the player's first round opponent receives a bye.
- b. If the Committee has not yet approved the match play draw, the player's score should be amended and the match play draw and the number of final match play positions available in the play-off adjusted accordingly.

It's Your Shot!

David Blake, Golf Victoria's Golf Services Officer responds to two queries from Victorian readers.

"During a game recently, a member hit his ball off the tee into a lateral water hazard. Due to the drought conditions being experienced in the Wimmera region, the water level has dropped and he chose to play the ball from the hazard. The stroke was made and the ball disappeared into the reeds located within the hazard. The ball was unable to be found. It was lost. The question is where does the next shot get played from?"

Is it stroke and distance or does it get played from outside the hazard for a one shot penalty? If it is outside the hazard where is it dropped since it did not really cross the margin.

Thanks for your deliberation and answer."

Iain McNee – Horsham Golf Club, Victoria

Dear Iain,

Thank you for your question.

As you have assumed, just because a water hazard does not have any water in it, does not mean it discontinues being a water hazard (Def. water hazard pg. 44).



Therefore in the situation you have described, the answer can be found under Rule 26-2a – Ball Comes to Rest in Same or Another Water Hazard, which describes the options a player has when they play a ball from within a water hazard and are virtually certain that it has come to rest within the same or another water hazard.

For a penalty of one stroke, the player may:

- i. play a ball as nearly as possible to the spot from which the original ball was last played outside the hazard; or*
- ii. proceed under:*
 - Rule 26-1a, or*
 - 26-1b, or*
 - 26-1c (only applicable for lateral water hazards)*

incurring the penalty of one stroke under that Rule. The reference point is the point where the original ball last crossed the margin of the hazard in which it lies.

If the player drops a ball under Rule 26-1a, by dropping a ball as near as possible to the spot last played within the hazard, but then decides the lie of the ball doesn't appeal to them, for an extra one stroke penalty, they may lift the ball and drop it at the following places:

- as per Clause i) above, or*
- under Rule 26-1b, or*
- Rule 26-1c.*

Hello Rules News,

I have a couple of questions on rules scenarios:

In four-ball match play, there was a situation where one of our opponents accidentally ran over his partner's ball with his buggy and in so doing caused it to move. Under Rule 18-3, the penalty is one stroke to the player. However, the question is, who is the player? Is it the owner of the ball (who did nothing to cause the ball to move) or is it the player (his playing partner) who caused the ball to move? Who gets the one shot penalty?

There was a funny situation on the green where a player marked his ball legitimately with a ball marker, picked his ball up, and then nonchalantly tapped the marker with his putter and walked away. When it was his turn to putt, he could not find his marker, because unknown to him, his marker was magnetised and had stuck to his putter!! What is the ruling?

Michael Meneghini - Woodlands Golf Club, Victoria

Hi Michael

Thank you for your email.

In regards to your first query, where a player moves their partner's ball, Rule 18-2, not 18-3 is the correct reference to read. In view of this, the player is the owner of the ball and a partner is associated with that player on the same side. Therefore, the owner of the ball incurs the penalty when their partner causes their ball to move.

For your second query, regarding a ball marker stuck to the bottom of the putter after being tapped down by the player, Decision 20-1/6 specifically covers that:

'In this case, the movement of the ball-marker was directly attributable to the specific act of marking the position of the ball. Accordingly, no penalty is incurred and the ball or the ball-marker must be replaced. If the spot where the ball or the ball-marker lay is not known, it must be placed as near as possible to where it lay but not nearer the hole.'

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Rules Quiz Answers

Answers to Club Level Quiz - Rule Numbers

1. Ball Unplayable
2. Water Hazards
3. Obstructions
4. Ball Assisting or Interfering with Play
5. Lifting, Dropping and Placing; Playing from Wrong Place
6. Ball at Rest Moved
7. The Putting Green
8. Striking the Ball
9. Searching for and Identifying the Ball
10. Order of Play

Answers to Club Level Quiz using Rule Book

1. Rule 3-2
2. Rule 5-2
3. Rule 9-2
4. Rule 7-2
5. Rule 11-2
6. Rule 13-2
7. Rule 15-2
8. Rule 19-2
9. Rule 17-2
10. Rule 21

Decision Book Answers

1. Player B is correct and no relief should be granted. Decision 24/12 gives the answer: "Wooden steps which have been constructed on a steep bank are obstructions- see Decision 23/1. Steps which have been cut into a steep bank but which have not been covered with any artificial material such as wooden planks are not obstructions."
2. No penalty –see Decision 13-4/4. However, the player must ensure that his actions do not breach Rule 13-2 or constitute testing the condition of the hazard. See also Decision 13-4/8.
3. Under Rule 17-2, the fellow-competitor is penalised if the removal of the flagstick might have influenced the movement of the ball. As the ball had passed the hole when the flagstick was removed there is no penalty.
4. Generally, the player's ball must not strike the flagstick when removed from the hole (Rule 17-3). Decision 17-3/3 (a) Player A incurs a penalty of two strokes. But see Rule 24-1b. Had the fellow-competitors known their rules, any one of them could have moved the flagstick in this instance and Player A would not have suffered a penalty of two strokes.
5. Decision 15-2/1. The player is penalised two strokes. Rule 16-1b, under which the ball was lifted, does not permit the substitution of another ball.

