

## Rules of Golf

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motion after a stroke on a putting green is deflected or stopped by, or comes to rest in or on a piece of maintenance equipment, the stroke shall be cancelled, the ball replaced ball lands in or on a piece of maintenance equipment and the equipment drives away with the ball, another ball may be substituted, with no penalty.

In all instances, if the ball in play is embedded by piece of maintenance equipment, the golfer is permitted to lift, clean and place the ball without penalty

(Rule 20-3b: Lie of Ball Altered). And if the ball is deemed to be damaged by a mower or any other piece of maintenance equipment, another ball may be substituted (Rule 5-3: Ball Unfit for Play).

Rule 25 is the rule dealing with Abnormal Ground Conditions (casual water, ground under repair, certain damage to course), and there are a number of interesting decisions based on Rule 25 relating to golf course maintenance. Decision 25/14 defines a "hole made by a greenskeeper" as ground temporarily dug up in connection with course maintenance, such as a hole made in removing turf or a tree stump, laying pipelines, etc.

Decision 25/15 states that an aeration hole is not a hole made by a greenskeeper, therefore relief is not granted. However, a local rule (33-8/32) is suggested which may be adopted by your club that does allow a player to take relief from aeration plugs can be found in Decision 23/12. It states that although loose soil is not a loose impediment through the green, aeration plugs are considered to be "compacted soil," so they are considered to be loose impediments, which may be moved away from the ball before making a shot. Just don't move the ball when you move the plugs, or you'll be assessed a one stroke penalty under Rule 182c (Ball Moved After Touching - Loose Impediment).

How should ruts made by tractors be treated under the rules? Decision 25/16 explains that a rut made by a tractor is not a hole made by a groundskeeper. Deep ruts should be declared as ground under repair by the committee, however shallow indentations made by greenkeeping equipment is not ground under repair. A ball in a shallow indentation would have to be played as it lies.

Is there relief from a tree stump under the rules? Decision 25/8 says that unless the stump is marked as ground under repair, or is in the process of being removed there is no relief. A tree stump is nothing more than a short tree, according to the USGA. Decision 25/11 explains the many ramifications of grass clippings. Grass clippings are only ground under repair if they have piled for removal. A player is entitled to relief if clippings piled for removal interfere with his stance or swing. Grass clippings are by definition, loose impediments, whether or not they are piled for removal, and may be removed by the player. But again, don't move that ball when removing loose grass clippings, or you'll pick up a penalty stroke under Rule 1 8-2c.

Have your members ever had to invoke the "leaf rule" in the fall? Actually there is no such thing, however the Decisions Book does allow the committee to adopt a local rule to deal with the seasonal problems of leaves. Decision 33-8/31 suggests adoption of a local rule declaring the accumulation of leaves through the green to be Ground Under Repair, allowing Rule 25-1 (Abnormal Ground Conditions) to apply.

And finally, what is the ruling if a member of your staff rakes a bunker when the player's ball lies in it, and the raking improves the lie of the ball or line of play? Decision 13-2/4 states that if the staff member raked the bunker on the instructions, or with the sanction of the player, the player would incur a two stroke or loss or hole penalty otherwise, there would be no penalty. If however in raking the bunker your staff member acci-

dentally rakes over the ball partially burying it, Rule 20-3B, the original lie of the ball shall be recreated as nearly as possible, and the ball shall be placed in that lie.

The rules of golf and their application to our side of the business can be involved, even a bit complicated, but always interesting. If a question ever arises at your club regarding your operation and the rules of the game, the best and closest source of information on the rules is your local golf association. In our area of the country, both the West Virginia Golf Association, and the Western Pennsylvania Golf Association have knowledgeable, competent rules people on the staff. You can also refer your rules questions directly to the USGA, but keep in mind that the USGA will render a decision only to clubs that conduct their competitions in accordance with the Rules of Golf.

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8th Annual MD Turfgrass Research Tournament

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2-Man Best Ball

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