



Rule of the Month

July 1, 2018

Movers and Shakers

What May be Moved?

Answers:

1. **False.** Rule 13-4c prohibits a player from touching or removing a loose impediment from any hazard in which the ball is located. Because the pine cone has come to rest in the bunker through natural causes, the player may not remove it. See Decisions 13-4/18 and /18.5.
2. **True.** An abandoned ball is considered a movable obstruction and under Rule 24-1, it may be removed anywhere on the course. If the player's ball moves as a result of the removal, there is no penalty provided the movement of the player's ball is directly attributable to the removal of the abandoned ball.
3. **False.** By definition, water hazard stakes are obstructions and, if designed to be movable, may be removed regardless of where the ball lies. See Rule 24-1.
4. **True.** Out of bounds stakes (which are themselves out of bounds and therefore off the course) are treated differently than stakes on the course. By definition, stakes that define or identify out of bounds are considered fixed and Rule 13-2 prohibits a player from improving the area of the swing by moving anything fixed either on or off the course.
5. **True.** Generally, an object that might influence the movement of a ball in motion must not be moved. However, Rule 24-1, which states the above prohibition, also includes an exception regarding the equipment of any player. See question #6 for another exception to the Rule.
6. **False.** Rule 24-1 states that a flagstick that has been attended, removed or held up to indicate the location of the hole, may be moved even when a ball is in motion. It is important to note that Rules 17-1 and 17-2 prohibit moving the flagstick if it was not attended, removed or held up prior to the stroke and the movement might influence the movement of the ball.
7. **False.** Rule 13-2 prohibits improving the area of the swing by removing water as such an action may improve the area by eliminating a distraction.
8. **True.** Provided the movement of the ball is directly attributable to the removal of the loose impediments, there is no penalty. Caution should still be used when removing loose impediments on the putting green as it is still possible to incur a penalty if the movement of the ball or ball-marker is a result of actions that would not be considered directly attributable to the removal of the loose impediments. See Rule 23. Additionally, many clubs have adopted a recommended Local Rule that exonerates a player from penalty for accidentally moving the ball when located on the putting green.
9. **True.** Rule 11-2 states that tee-markers are fixed and moving them to eliminate interference is a breach of Rule 13-2. If a tee-marker is accidentally moved, for instance, by tripping over it, there would be no penalty and the marker must be replaced before teeing off.
10. **True.** This is a rare occasion in the rules when the player may purposely cause the ball to move. When the player's ball rests against the flagstick but has not fallen into the hole, the player may purposely cause his or her ball in play to move by moving the flagstick without incurring a penalty. If the ball falls into the hole, it is considered holed by the last stroke made. See Rule 17-4.