



Rule of the Month

July 1, 2017

In All Fairness

Rule 25 Abnormal Ground Conditions

“Relief from things unfair”, as it has become known, covers many situations that are not normally found on a golf course. Namely, interference from obstructions and abnormal ground conditions that make the proper playing of the game difficult. While an obstruction is an artificial (man-made) object, abnormal ground conditions might be the result of human activity but also includes natural causes. Rule 25-1 provides relief without penalty from abnormal ground conditions and will look very similar to Rule 24 for relief from obstructions (covered in last month’s article). Once again, the definitions will be vital to understanding this complex Rule.

Questions: True/False

1. A water hazard has overflowed its margins. Any water outside the hazard margin is casual water and relief without penalty is available.
2. A player’s stance is interfered with by a gopher hole. Since the lie of the ball is not affected by the gopher hole the player is not allowed relief without penalty.
3. A rut made by a greenkeeper’s tractor is automatically ground under repair.
4. When taking relief under Rule 25, the ball may always be cleaned or substituted.
5. Relief without penalty is available for interference from casual water in a bunker but not in a water hazard.
6. A player’s ball lies between tree roots and it is physically impossible for him to make a stroke at the ball due to the roots. However, when he takes his stance he is standing in casual water. He may lift and drop the ball within one club-length of the nearest point of relief from the casual water.
7. A ball is struck towards a large area marked as ground under repair. The player is unable to find the ball but is positive it is within the area of ground under repair. He may determine where the ball last crossed the margin of the ground under repair and take relief under Rule 25 from that point.
8. If a player desires relief from ground under repair for the lie of his ball, he must take full relief and must make his next stroke without any interference from the condition to his stance or swing.
9. There is no guarantee that after taking relief from an abnormal ground condition the ball will be in a playable lie.
10. A ball lies in casual water in the fairway. One of the relief without penalty options under Rule 25 is to drop the ball behind the casual water keeping where the ball originally lay between the hole and the spot of the drop. There is no limit to how far behind the casual water the ball may be dropped.