



Rule of the Month

October 1, 2017

The Exception to the Rule

Answers:

1. **False.** Since the stroke was completed, the player incurs no penalty for improving the area of his swing. However, if the player had discontinued the swing, he would incur a penalty if the improvement of the area has created a potential advantage. See Decision 13-2/14.5
2. **False.** Once the player has improved the area of his original intended swing, he was in breach of Rule 13-2. Playing in a different direction or declaring the ball unplayable and playing from a different location does not absolve the player of the penalty. See Decision 13-2/24
3. **True.** The teeing ground of the hole being played is a very special spot on the course. An exception in Rule 13-2 allows a player to remove dew, frost and even standing water whether his ball is in play or not.
4. **False.** Rule 13-2 includes an exception to allow damage to the putting green to be repaired. The exception references Rule 16-1 that allows damage caused by the impact of a ball to be repaired, whether or not the player's ball lies on the putting green. Additionally, an old hole plug may also be repaired but other damage must not be repaired if it might assist the player in his subsequent play of the hole.
5. **True.** At any time, whether a ball is in play or not, a player may create or eliminate irregularities within the teeing ground. Therefore, under an exception to Rule 13-2, it is permissible to improve the areas protected by the same Rule when performed within the teeing ground.
6. **False.** While it is not permissible to purposely move an out of bounds stake, a player incurs no penalty if the stake is moved as a result of fairly taking his stance. The player must take his stance in the least intrusive manner and if this results in the out of bounds stake moving or bending there is no penalty. See Decision 13-2/1.
7. **False.** Provided the club is only grounded lightly and not pressed into the sand, there is no penalty for improving the lie. It is important to note that this player's ball is not in a water hazard or bunker. Grounding the club in a water hazard or bunker would breach another part of Rule 13 which prohibits touching the ground in a hazard with a club or hand.
8. **True.** An exception to Rule 13-2 permits a player to remove sand or loose soil from the putting green but not anywhere else on the course except the teeing ground. Therefore, the sand on the fringe must not be removed.
9. **True.** The key phrase in this question is that the player must take his stance in the least intrusive manner. For examples of fairly taking a stance using the least intrusive manner see Decision 13-2/1. A player must use caution when taking his stance being careful not to move interfering branches beyond what is reasonably necessary to take his stance.
10. **False.** Improving a dropping zone is prohibited by Rule 13-2 and there is no exception that would allow a player to repair a divot prior to dropping a ball. This illustrates the importance of replacing your divots as a courtesy to other players later in the round who might use the same dropping zone.