

Rule Tip of the Week

Believe It or Not!

Ripley's *Believe It or Not!* is an American franchise founded by Robert Ripley (1890 – 1949), which offers peculiar events and items so strange and unusual that its readers often find them hard to believe. In the process of becoming more familiar with the new Rules of Golf for 2019, you have probably encountered a provision or two that made you think, “I can’t believe this!” or “For real?” Well, here’s a “Believe It or Not!” True-False quiz to see how well you are doing with learning the new Rules. For each of the following scenarios, if you find it believable, then answer “True”; but, if you find the scenario too bizarre to be credible, then answer “False”.

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or Not![®]

1. To help you get aligned properly, you may place a club or an alignment rod on the ground so long as you remove the club or alignment rod after taking your stance, but before making your next stroke.
2. In correctly taking relief from an immovable obstruction in the general area by dropping within one club-length of, and not nearer the hole than, the nearest point of complete relief, there is no requirement to re-drop the ball provided the dropped ball does not come to rest nearer the hole than the nearest point of complete relief, nor more than two club-lengths from where it first struck a part of the course.
3. If you make a stroke with your putter, after having bent its shaft over your knee in anger during the previous hole of your round, you will be disqualified.
4. In stroke play, if two players agree to play out of turn in order to give one of them an advantage, then both players are disqualified.
5. In playing an approach shot to the green from the fairway, there is no penalty if your caddie stands behind you to assist you in lining up as you take your stance, provided that your caddie moves away before you make your next stroke.
6. In taking on a difficult shot near a course boundary, trying to swerve your ball through several trees and back into the fairway, your ball ricochets off a tree and comes to rest in bounds after accidentally striking your caddie who was standing out of bounds. “Believe It or Not!,” you incur no penalty for this misadventure.

Answers:

1. **False** See new Rule 10.2b(3) [No Setting Down Object to Help in Taking Stance] which points out, “A player must not take a stance for the stroke using any object that was set down by or for the player to help in lining up his or her feet or body, such as a club set down on the ground to show the line of play. If the player takes a stance in breach of this Rule, he or she cannot avoid the penalty by backing away from the stance and removing the object.”
2. **False** See new Rule 14.3c [Ball Dropped in Right Way Must Come to Rest in Relief Area] and new Rule 16.1b [Relief for Ball in General Area] which indicates that the size of the relief area is one club-length measured from the nearest point of complete relief.
3. **False** See new Rule 4.1a(2) [Use or Repair of Club Damaged During Round] which states, in part, “But no matter what the nature or cause of the damage, the damaged club is treated as conforming for the rest of the round.... For the rest of the round, the player may ... (c)ontinue to make strokes with the damaged club.... “Damaged during a round” means when the club’s performance characteristics are changed because of any act during the round ... (b)y the player (such as making a stroke or practice swing with the club, putting it in or taking it out of a golf bag, dropping or leaning on it, or throwing or abusing it”
4. **False** See new Rule 6.4b(1) [Normal Order of Play] which advises, “There is no penalty if a player plays out of turn, except that if two or more players agree to play out of turn to give one of them an advantage, each of them gets the general penalty (two penalty strokes).
5. **False** New Rule 10.2b(4) [Restriction on Caddie Standing Behind Player] states, for a ball not on the putting green, “When a player begins taking a stance for the stroke and until the stroke is made: • The player’s caddie must not deliberately stand in a location on or close to an extension of the line of play behind the ball for any reason. • If the player takes a stance in breach of this Rule, he or she cannot avoid the penalty by backing away.”
6. **True** New Rule 11.1a [No Penalty to Any Player] reads, in part, “If a player’s ball in motion accidentally hits any person or outside influence: • There is no penalty to any player. • This is true even if the ball hits the player, the opponent or any other player or any of their caddies or equipment.” And, per new Rule 11.1b [Ball Must Be Played as It Lies], you may play the ball as it lies in bounds.