

Rule Tip of the Week January Rules Quiz 2019

The Three Stooges (*Curly Howard, Moe Howard and Larry Fine, as pictured from left to right*) decide to go out and play a round of individual stroke play after ringing in the New Year. Not only are they clueless about most everything, they also have no clue regarding the Rules changes for 2019. See if you can help them by making the correct rulings for the following situations:



1. At the first hole, Moe's drive hooks into the woods lining the left side of the fairway, so he announces that he will play a provisional ball. Before doing so, he notices that his adjustable driver is set on "D" to promote a draw, so he adjusts the driver to the "N" setting to promote a straighter trajectory. He then drives the provisional ball down the middle of the fairway where it ends up about the same distance from the hole as the original ball. He plays the provisional ball before commencing the search for the original ball which he quickly finds in bounds. He finishes the hole with the original ball, abandoning play of the provisional ball. Before teeing off on the next hole, Moe adjusts his driver back to the "D" setting. How many penalty strokes has Moe incurred in this scenario: (a) 0 (b) 1 (c) 2 (d) 3 (e) 4 or (f) Moe is disqualified.
2. At the 4th hole, Larry's drive ends up where he has stance interference from a cart path. Using his 7-iron, the club he would have used for his next stroke had there been no interference from the cart path, he correctly determines, and places a tee at, the nearest point of complete relief. With that as the reference point, he measures one club-length no nearer the hole using his 7-iron and places a second tee at that point. He sees a scuff mark on his ball on the cart path so, without announcing to the other Stooges, he gets another ball out of his bag and drops it from knee-height about 3-inches beyond the second tee, i.e., further from the reference point. That ball comes to rest on the cart path. Instead of re-dropping that ball, he gets another ball out of his bag which he again drops about 3-inches beyond the second tee, and that ball comes to rest nearer the hole than the reference point. At that point, Moe hands Larry a ball which he places on the spot where the second ball first struck the course when it was dropped. How many penalty strokes has Larry incurred in this scenario: (a) 0 (b) 1 (c) 2 (d) 3 (e) 4 or (f) Larry is disqualified.
3. Curly tees up a ball on a par-3 and, playing the stooge, he tries to play the stroke with the clubhead turned around. The ball caroms sideways off the back of the clubhead and hits his foot before it comes to rest in a divot hole within the teeing area. He picks up the ball, replaces the missing divot, and presses it down before teeing another ball just behind the replaced divot. He then successfully plays his next stroke which lands on the green. How many penalty strokes has Curly incurred in this scenario: (a) 0 (b) 1 (c) 2 (d) 3 (e) 4 or (f) Curly is disqualified.

Answers:

1. (a) *Rule 4.1a(3) [Deliberately Changing Club's Performance Characteristics During Round] indicates that a player must not make a stroke with a club whose performance characteristics have been changed during a round by using an adjustable feature. However, Interpretation 4.1a(1)/2 [No Penalty Stroke with Non-Conforming Club When Stroke Disregarded] points out that if a player makes a stroke with a non-conforming club, the player is not disqualified if the stroke does not count in the player's score. An example of this is when a player uses a non-conforming club to make a stroke at a provisional ball that never becomes the ball in play. In Moe's situation, per Rule 18.3c(2) [When Provisional Ball Becomes Ball in Play], the provisional ball never became the ball in play because it was not played from a point nearer the hole than where the original ball was estimated to be.*
2. (a) *In establishing the allowable relief area within which to drop a ball when taking relief from an abnormal course condition (including immovable obstructions) under Rule 16.1b [Relief for Ball in General Area], the size of the relief area is one club-length measured from the reference point. A club-length is defined as the length of the longest club of the 14 (or fewer) clubs that the player has during the round, other than a putter. So, even though Larry measured using his 7-iron, the allowable relief area was his driver-length from the reference point. Thus, in dropping roughly 3-inches beyond the second tee, Larry was dropping well within the allowable relief area. Larry proceeded correctly in the "drop, drop, place" sequence prescribed by Rule 14.3c(2) [What to Do if Ball Dropped in Right Way Comes to Rest Outside Relief Area]. Larry also proceeded correctly despite the fact that he used a different ball each time he dropped or placed a ball. See Rule 14.3a [Dropping Ball in Relief Area: Original Ball or Another Ball May Be Used] which states, "The player may use the original ball or another ball. This means that the player may use any ball each time he or she drops or places a ball under this Rule."*
3. (a) *Curly is not penalized for making the stroke using the back of a clubhead. See Interpretation 10.1a/2 [Player May Use Any Part of Clubhead to Fairly Strike Ball] which reads, "In fairly striking a ball, any part of the clubhead may be used, including the toe, heel and back of the clubhead." Also, there is no penalty for the ball accidentally striking Curly per Rule 11.1a [Ball in Motion Accidentally Hits Person or Outside Influence] which states, 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." Curly incurs no penalty for lifting his ball, altering the surface of the ground, or teeing another ball in a different location within the teeing area as just about "anything goes" when your ball is in the teeing area! Per Rule 6.2a [When Teeing Area Rules Apply], Rule 6.2b [Teeing Area Rules] applies when the player's ball is in play in the teeing area after a stroke. Rule 6.2b(3) [Certain Conditions in Teeing Area May Be Improved] advises that the player may alter the surface of the ground in the teeing area. Rule 6.2b(6) [When Ball Lies in Teeing Area] indicates that, when the player's ball is in the teeing area after a stroke, the player may play that ball or another ball from anywhere in the teeing area from a tee or the ground, including playing the ball as it lies!*