

Rule Tip **February Rules Quiz** 2019 **One Week**

It's mid-February which means that the PGA Tour is in Pacific Palisades, California for its annual tournament at the Riviera Country Club, aka "Hogan's Alley." Players competing in the 2019 Genesis Open will have to contend with very wet conditions, poa annua grass greens, and gnarly kikuyu grass rough. They will also be challenged by one of the more unusual par-3 holes in the world. The 6th hole at Riviera, as designed by George C. Thomas, Jr., has a bunker smack dab in the middle of the green! In this month's quiz, see if you can provide some of our PGA Tour superstars with the correct rulings on this particular hole.



1. With the hole cut in the back-left portion of the green, and with his ball lying on the right-front portion of the green, the intervening bunker prevents Tiger Woods from putting directly toward the hole. Thus, Tiger decides to use a lob wedge to loft his ball over the bunker. In playing this unusual stroke from the putting green, which of the following statements is FALSE? (a) Tiger may ground his club and take a divot in the green. (b) He may leave the flagstick in the hole unattended, but there is a two-stroke penalty if his ball strikes the flagstick. (c) Tiger may repair spike marks near the hole prior to playing the stroke. (d) Tiger's caddie may remove the flagstick and hold it directly above the hole to show the desired line of play.
 2. As shown in the adjacent photograph, Ricky Fowler's tee shot comes to rest against the flagstick with part of the ball above the surface of the putting green. Which of the following statements is TRUE? (a) The ball is holed, so Ricky can simply pick up the ball and proceed to the next hole. (b) In order for the ball to be holed, Ricky must move the flagstick so that the ball falls comes to rest in the hole below the surface of the green. (c) If Ricky carelessly jiggles the flagstick causing the ball to pop up and move away from the hole, Ricky must play the ball from its new position. (d) If the ball moves away from the hole after jiggling the flagstick, Ricky must place the ball on the lip of the hole for the next stroke.
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3. Due to the wet conditions, Phil Mickelson's tee shot plugs in the green. How should Phil proceed after marking and lifting his ball and then repairing the ball mark? (a) Phil may take relief for an embedded ball per Rule 16.3 [Embedded Ball] by placing a ball within one club-length of, and no nearer the hole than, the reference point which is the point right behind where the ball was embedded. (b) Phil may take relief for an embedded ball per Rule 16.3 [Embedded Ball] by dropping a ball within one club-length of, and no nearer the hole than, the reference point which is the point right behind where the ball was embedded. (c) Phil may take relief for an embedded ball per Rule 16.3 [Embedded Ball] by dropping the ball as near as possible on the spot of the repaired ball mark. (d) Phil may not take relief under Rule 16.3, but he may repair the ball mark and then replace the ball under Rule 13.1c [Improvements Allowed on Putting Green].
 4. Jordan Spieth's tee shot splashes out of the bunker and ends up on a sprinkler head within a narrow strip of fringe between the putting green and the bunker. The nearest point of complete relief from the sprinkler head is in the fringe a few inches behind the immovable obstruction. A one club-length measurement from the nearest point of complete relief perpendicular to the hole in one direction extends onto the putting green; in the opposite direction, it extends into the bunker. In taking relief from the sprinkler head, (a) The relief area extends onto the putting green and into the bunker. (b) Since the putting green is within one club-length of the reference point, Jordan will be able to place a ball on the putting green. (c) Jordan may not substitute a ball. (d) Jordan must drop either the original ball or another ball in the fringe within one club-length of, and not nearer the hole than, the nearest point of complete relief. Moreover, that dropped ball must come to rest in the fringe within one club-length of, and not nearer the hole than, the nearest point of complete relief.

Answers:

1. (b) *As of 2019, per Rule 13.2a [Leaving Flagstick in Hole], the player may elect to leave the flagstick in the hole unattended when playing a stroke from anywhere on the course, including the putting green, and there is no penalty if the ball strikes the flagstick in the hole. Per Rule 13.1c [Improvements Allowed on Putting Green], Tiger may repair spike marks on the putting green. Rule 13.2b(1) [Player May Have Flagstick Removed from Hole] advises that attending the flagstick means to first hold the flagstick "in, above or next to the hole before and during the stroke to show the player where the hole is"*

2. (a) *According to Rule 13.2c [Ball Resting Against Flagstick], “If any part of the ball is in the hole below the surface of the putting green, the ball is treated as holed even if the entire ball is not below the surface.” Since Ricky completed play of the hole with his first stroke, it does not matter if he thinks otherwise and jiggles the flagstick to cause the ball to fall into the hole or putts out from the lip of the hole or elsewhere. See Interpretation 6.5/1 [Another Ball Played After Hole Was Unknowingly Completed].*
3. (d) *Rule 16.3a(1) [Ball Must Be Embedded in General Area] states, in part, “Relief is allowed under Rule 16.3b only when a player’s ball is embedded in the general area. ... There is no relief under this Rule if the ball is embedded anywhere except in the general area. ... But, if the ball is embedded on the putting green, the player may mark the spot of the ball and lift and clean the ball, repair the damage caused by the ball’s impact, and replace the ball on its original spot (see Rule 13.1c(2)).”*
4. (d) *The fringe of a putting green is part of the general area. Per its definition, the “general area” is “The area of the course that covers all of the course except for the other four defined areas: (1) the teeing area the player must play from in starting the hole he or she is playing; (2) all penalty areas; (3) all bunkers, and (4) the putting green of the hole the player is playing.”*

Rule 16.1b [Abnormal Course Conditions: Relief for Ball in General Area] states, in part.

“If a player’s ball is in the general area and there is interference by an abnormal course condition on the course, the player may take free relief by dropping the original ball or another ball in this relief area (see Rule 14.3):

- *Reference Point: The nearest point of complete relief in the general area.*
- *Size of Relief Area Measured from Reference Point: One club-length, but with these limits:*
- *Limits on Location of Relief Area:*
 - » *Must be in the general area.*
 - » *Must not be nearer the hole than the reference point, and*
 - » *There must be complete relief from all interference by the abnormal course condition.”*