

USGA
SHORT COURSE

Dealing with Immovable Objects

1. A red penalty area is 10 yards to the right of the fairway, and water has overflowed from it such that a small area of water extends out some 20 yards into the fairway. You see your tee shot land in the fairway and roll into the water, which is shallow and muddy. You search by probing the water with a club but decide not to wade into the water to search. After three minutes, the ball has not been found. Which one of the following is correct?
 - a. You did not find your ball within three minutes, so it is lost. You must take stroke-and-distance relief under Rule 18.2.
 - b. You saw the ball roll into water nearly 30 yards from the edge of the penalty area, so it is known or virtually certain the ball is in temporary water. You may take free relief by estimating the point where the ball last crossed the edge of the temporary water and using that as the spot for finding the nearest point of complete relief, following Rule 16.1b.
 - c. The water is part of the red penalty area and since you did not find your ball outside the penalty area, it must be treated as being in the penalty area. You must take penalty relief under any of the options available under Rule 17.1d, estimating the point where the ball last crossed the edge of the penalty area as the reference point.

2. Your ball comes to rest a few inches from the base of a cactus, near an animal hole. The cactus is in a position such that you cannot play toward the hole right-handed. As a right-handed player, when you take a stance to chip out sideways, there is no interference by the animal hole, but you will be standing on a mound of sand and loose soil dug out of the animal hole. If you play left-handed you could advance the ball in the direction of the hole using the back of your putter but, for that stroke, the animal hole would interfere with the area of your intended swing. Which one of the following is correct?
 - a. The materials dug out of the hole are loose impediments. You may remove them without penalty so long as your ball does not move in the process. Because the cactus prevents you from playing toward the hole, you are not entitled to any other free relief for either a right-handed or left-handed stroke.
 - b. The materials dug out of the hole are part of the animal hole and you may remove them without penalty from the area of your stance for the right-handed stroke.
 - c. If you decide your best play is toward the hole with a left-handed stroke with your putter, you are allowed to take free relief from the animal hole. After taking relief, you are allowed to play in any direction, may play either right- or left-handed and may use any club.

3. After a shot to a blind green, you find your ball embedded in a pitch-mark in an area of soft ground in the fairway just short of the green. You ask a ball spotter in the area if she saw the ball land and she replies that she didn't see it land and come to rest. Since it is the only pitch-mark in the area, you believe your ball came to rest in its own pitch-mark and lift the ball without marking its position to take relief under Rule 16.3. However, before dropping a ball to take relief, a couple of spectators who you didn't realize were there inform you that your ball bounced just short of the green and spun back into the pitch-mark that had been made by a ball from a previous group. The ruling is:
 - a. You were not allowed to lift your ball because the ball was not embedded in its own pitch-mark. You get one penalty stroke and the ball must be replaced.
 - b. Because it was reasonable to conclude the ball was embedded in its own pitch-mark at the time you lifted it, Rule 16.3 applied at the time you lifted it. However, because of the additional information that is now known, and it became known before you dropped a ball to take relief, you are no longer allowed relief under Rule 16.3 and must replace the ball without penalty.

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- c. Because it was reasonable to conclude the ball was embedded in its own pitch-mark at the time you lifted it, Rule 16.3 applies and you must continue to take free relief under Rule 16.3 even though new information has become known.
 - d. You have the option of taking relief from the pitch-mark without penalty or replacing the ball without penalty.
4. Model Local Rule F-23 is in effect and your ball has come to rest behind a grandstand that is defined as a temporary immovable obstruction (TIO). Although the grandstand does not interfere with your stance or area of intended swing, it is on a direct line between your ball and the hole and you could play toward the hole if the grandstand was not there. You determine that your nearest point of complete relief is in another TIO (a concession stand). Which of the following is true?
- a. If it is unreasonable to play from the relief area in the concession stand, you may take relief from both TIOs at the same time without first dropping a ball to take relief from the grandstand into the concession stand.
 - b. All TIOs are treated as the same condition. Therefore, to take relief from a TIO, you must find the nearest point of complete relief where there is no interference from any TIO.
 - c. You are required to drop a ball first to take relief from the grandstand before determining if you are allowed to take relief for the concession stand.
 - d. You are not entitled to free relief because the grandstand does not interfere with the lie of your ball, the area of your intended stance or the area of your intended swing.
5. Model Local Rule F-5 (Immovable Obstructions Close to Putting Green) is in effect. Your ball has come to rest in the general area near a putting green and you intend to play parallel to the green and along the fringe in order to get to a hole location that is tucked in a corner of the green. There is a sprinkler head about one and a half club-lengths from your ball and a few inches to the side of where you intend to play. When measured on that line to the hole, the sprinkler head is about four club lengths from the edge of the putting green. But, when measured directly toward the green, it is only about one club length from the edge. What is the ruling?
- a. You are not allowed to take free relief since there is no interference as it is defined under MLR F-5 from the sprinkler head.
 - b. You are not allowed to take free relief if you intend to use a club other than your putter for the next stroke.
 - c. You are allowed to take free relief, but must do so by dropping a ball at the nearest point of complete relief.
 - d. You are allowed to take free relief and may take it by dropping a ball in the general area within one club-length of, and no closer to the hole than, the nearest point of complete relief.

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6. In stroke play, your ball lies in the general area. In taking your stance, you notice that your left heel touches the dirt lip around a sprinkler head and overhangs but does not touch the sprinkler head itself, which is two inches below the level of the ground. Unsure whether you are entitled to free relief, you decide to play two balls and announce that you want the second ball to count. You play the first ball as it lies. For the second ball, you take relief under Rule 16.1b but, when doing so, you drop a ball from waist height. You believe you have scored 6 with the first ball and 5 with the second ball. You report to the Committee before returning your scorecard. How should the Committee rule?
- a. That your score for the hole is 5.
 - b. That your score for the hole is 6.
 - c. That your score for the hole is 7.
 - d. That you are disqualified.
7. You arrive at the spot where your tee shot is meant to be and a spectator says that it disappeared into a plastic pipe that comes out of the ground. The pipe is located just outside of a nearby penalty area and based on the angle of the pipe, it is known that the ball has come to rest in the pipe and that the ball is located in the red penalty area. You believe you now need to take penalty area relief but another player in your group thinks you might be allowed free relief. You decide to play two balls just in case and, without choosing a ball, you make a stroke at a ball you dropped two club-lengths from the edge of the red penalty area and then make a stroke at a ball you dropped in taking relief from the pipe's entrance. You make four additional strokes to complete the hole with the first ball played and two additional strokes to complete the hole with the second ball. You report the facts in the scoring area. What is your score on the hole?
- a. 4
 - b. 5
 - c. 6
 - d. 7
8. On a day when the Committee has allowed the use of the preferred lies Local Rule (Model Local Rule E-3), you arrive at your tee shot on a par five when a spectator mentions that your ball bounced forward only a short distance after having made such a large pitch-mark in the fairway. You take preferred lies relief and do so by placing your ball just in front of the pitch-mark because it helps "tee-up" your ball for your next stroke. However, while you are assessing your next shot and as a result of natural forces, your ball rolls into the pitch-mark. Which one of the following is true?
- a. You are not allowed to take embedded ball relief, so you must play the ball as it lies or take unplayable ball relief.
 - b. You are not allowed to take embedded ball relief, but because your ball rolled after it was placed you may take preferred lies relief again.
 - c. You are allowed to take embedded ball relief, but may not take preferred lies relief again, even after taking embedded ball relief.
 - d. You are allowed to take embedded ball relief and, after doing so, are also allowed to take preferred lies relief.

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9. You find your ball in a sandy area in the general area outside the fairway. The ball is sitting down in a depression within the sand and you are unsure if it is embedded in its own pitch-mark. You mark the spot of the ball and lift it to check to see if your ball is embedded. Even after lifting the ball, you are unsure if it came to rest below the level of the ground. Another player in your group sees you have lifted the ball and informs you that embedded ball relief is not allowed in sand. Which one of the following is true?
- a. Because you did not inform another player in your group before lifting your ball under Rule 16.4, you get a one-stroke penalty under that Rule. Additionally, because you were not entitled to embedded ball relief in sand, you also get an additional penalty for moving your ball at rest under Rule 9.4 and your ball must be replaced by re-creating the original lie.
 - b. Even though you are not allowed to take embedded ball relief in sand, this does not prevent you from using Rule 16.4 when you reasonably believe you are entitled to embedded ball relief but cannot decide without lifting the ball. The ball must be replaced without penalty by re-creating the original lie.
 - c. Because you were not entitled to embedded ball relief in sand, Rule 16.4 does not apply to your situation and you get one penalty stroke and must replace the ball by re-creating the original lie.