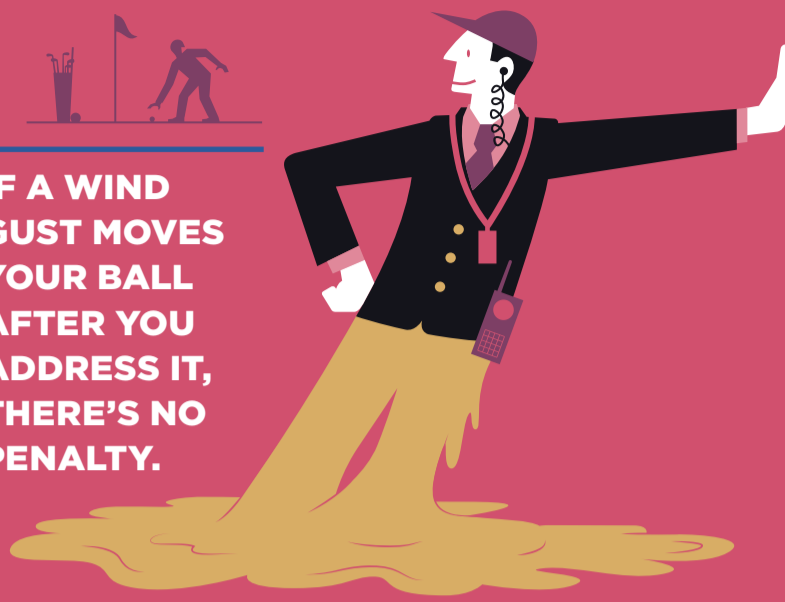


IF A WIND GUST MOVES YOUR BALL AFTER YOU ADDRESS IT, THERE'S NO PENALTY.



CHANGES IN LATITUDE

GOLF'S RULES-MAKERS SOFTEN THEIR STANCE ON SOME THINGS FOR 2016

very four years the USGA and R&A, golf's governing bodies, jointly release an updated Rules of Golf. The newest version, and its corresponding Decisions book, have an unmistakably kinder attitude. Here are the most significant changes:

— Ron Kaspriske

1 Ball moves after address? There is no longer an automatic penalty (RULE 18-2). If your ball moves, all relevant information will be used to determine what caused it. If it's more likely than not that you caused the ball to move, you will be penalised one stroke, and the ball should be replaced. If not, the ball is played as it lies unless some other agency (spectator, opponent, etc.) caused it to move. In those cases, replace it without penalty.

2 Use of unusual equipment or abnormal use of equipment during a round is no longer grounds for automatic disqualification (RULE 14-3). Your first breach during a round will come with a two-shot penalty in stroke play or loss of hole in match play. A second violation during the same round results in disqualification.

3 Turn in an individual hole score lower than you made in stroke play, and you aren't disqualified if you did so because you weren't aware of penalty strokes incurred on that hole. Instead, you receive the original penalty plus two additional strokes for failing to include it on your scorecard (RULE 6-6D).

4 Shared equipment, other than golf carts, is considered to be the equipment of the last player to carry or use it (DEFINITION: EQUIPMENT). Golf carts are still considered to be the equipment of the player whose ball is involved unless the cart is being driven by the other person.

5 Possess a 15th club on the first tee of your round and realise it before starting? You can declare it out of play without penalty (DECISION 4-4C/1). It's recommended that you segregate it in some way, such as turning it upside down in the bag or placing it on the floor of a cart.

6 A provisional ball dropped in error can be picked up if your original ball is found within five minutes of starting to search, given you haven't made a stroke at it (DECISION 27-2B/5). Example: You start searching for your ball and mistakenly think you can still play a provisional, so you return to your previous spot and drop a ball. If, before you make a stroke at that ball, your original is found within five minutes of when you started searching, pick up the second ball with no penalty. Once you make a stroke at the second ball, your original is lost, and the second ball is in play under penalty of stroke and distance.

7 Distance-measuring devices that offer prohibited functions such as gauges that factor elevation change or wind speed may be used as long as you don't use the prohibited functions (APPENDIX IV, PART 5). But a Local Rule allowing distance-measuring devices must first be adopted (DECISION 14-3/0.5).

8 Animal hoof prints can be repaired on the putting green or treated as ground under repair if a Local Rule has been adopted (DECISION 33-8/32).



FIXED ON TWITTER
BY HANK HANEY

PLAY YOUR BEST BUNKER FUNDAMENTALS

MAKE SURE YOU DON'T SKIMP ON THE SWING

Having to repeat a sand shot because of a failed attempt is the absolute enemy of good scores. To avoid that, you need a basic greenside bunker shot that will get you on the putting surface every time.

In the bunker, set up so the sand wedge can do what it was designed to do: Glide along the surface of the sand. Open your stance and the clubface and set the ball forward of centre to get the club pre-set to skid this way.

The open stance will encourage a slightly steeper swing, which will allow you to get under the ball.

Don't skimp on the length of your swing back and through.

The sand will resist when you hit it, so it's important to keep your speed up all the way to a full finish to get the ball up and out. Control distance by opening the face and your stance more for shorter shots – not by slowing down your swing.

Hank Haney is based at the Hank Haney Golf Ranch, Lewisville, Texas. To get fixed in Golf Digest, send Hank your swing on Twitter: @HankHaney.



ADD SOME SPEED
Make enough swing back and through to counter the sand's resistance.

SET UP OPEN
Open the clubface and your stance slightly to utilise the club's bounce.

Illustration by Aad Goudappel, photos by J.D. Cuban