

# MGA Rules of Golf Webinar

## Session #3

# Agenda

- **Rule 7 – Ball Search: Finding and Identifying Ball**
  - 7.1 How to Fairly Search for Ball
  - 7.4 Ball Accidentally Moved in Trying to Find or Identify It
  
- **Rule 9 – Ball at Rest Lifted or Moved**
  - 9.2 Deciding What Caused Ball to Move
  - 9.3 Ball Moved by Natural Forces
  - 9.4 Ball Lifted or Moved by Player
  
- **Rule 16 – Abnormal Course Conditions**
  - 16.3 Lifting Ball to See if it Lies in Condition Where Relief Is Allowed
  - 16.3 Embedded Ball

# Rule 7

## Ball Search: Finding and Identifying Ball

# Rule 7.1 - How to Fairly Search for Ball

**Brooks Koepka**

**The CJ Cup @ Shadow Creek**

**[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)**



## **7.1a. Player May Take Reasonable Actions to Find and Identify Ball**

A player is responsible for finding his or her ball *in play* after each *stroke*.

The player may fairly search for the ball by taking reasonable actions to find and identify it, such as:

- Moving sand and water, and
- Moving or bending grass, bushes, tree branches and other growing or attached natural objects, and also breaking such objects, but only if such breaking is a result of other reasonable actions taken to find or identify the ball.

# Rule 7.2 - How to Identify Ball

## 7.2 How to Identify Ball

A player's ball at rest may be identified in any one of these ways:

- By the player or anyone else seeing a ball come to rest in circumstances where it is known to be the player's ball.
- By seeing the player's identifying mark on the ball (see Rule 6.3a).
- By finding a ball with the same brand, model, number and condition as the player's ball in an area where the player's ball is expected to be (**but** this does not apply if an identical ball is in the same area and there is no way to know which one is the player's ball).

If a player's *provisional ball* cannot be distinguished from his or her original ball, see Rule 18.3c(2).



## Rule 7.3 - Lifting Ball to Identify It



### 7.3 Lifting Ball to Identify It

If a ball might be a player's ball but cannot be identified as it lies:

- The player may lift the ball to identify it (including by rotating it), **but**:
- The spot of the ball must first be *marked*, and the ball must not be cleaned more than needed to identify it (**except** on the *putting green*) (see Rule 14.1). If the lifted ball is the player's ball or another player's ball, it must be replaced on its original spot (see Rule 14.2).

## Rule 7.4

# Ball Accidentally Moved in Trying to Find or Identify

## Ball Moved During Search

- If you move any player's ball (even your own) while searching for it, there is **no penalty, just replace the ball.**



## Rule 7.4

# Ball Accidentally Moved in Trying to Find or Identify

There is no penalty if the player's ball is accidentally *moved* by the player, *opponent* or anyone else while trying to find or identify it.

If this happens, the ball must be *replaced* on its original spot (which if not known must be estimated) (see Rule 14.2). In doing so:

- If the ball was on, under or against any *immovable obstruction, integral object, boundary object* or growing or attached natural object, the ball must be *replaced* on its original spot on, under or against such object (see Rule 14.2c).
- If the ball was covered by sand, the original *lie* must be re-created, and the ball must be *replaced* in that *lie* (see Rule 14.2d(1)). **But** the player may leave a small part of the ball visible when doing so.



# Rule 9

Ball at Rest Lifted or Moved

## Rule 9.2 - Deciding Whether Ball Moved and What Caused it to Move

### Matthew Sharpstene 2020 U.S. Amateur @ Bandon Dunes



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#### a. Deciding Whether Ball Moved

A player's ball at rest is treated as having *moved* only if it is *known or virtually certain* that it did.

If the ball might have *moved* but this is not *known or virtually certain*, it is treated as not having *moved* and must be played as it lies.

# Rule 9.2 - Deciding Whether Ball Moved and What Caused it to Move

## Matthew Sharpstene 2020 U.S. Amateur @ Bandon Dunes



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

### b. Deciding What Caused Ball to Move

When a player's ball at rest has moved:

- It must be decided what caused it to move.
- This determines whether the player must replace the ball or play it as it lies and whether there is a penalty.

#### (1) **Four Possible Causes.**

The Rules recognize only four possible causes for a ball at rest that moves before the player makes a stroke:

- Natural forces, such as wind or water,
- The player, including the player's caddie,
- The opponent in match play, including the opponent's caddie, or
- An outside influence, including any other player in stroke play.

# Rickie Fowler

## 2019 Waste Management Open

PGA TOUR<sup>i</sup>



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

**MGA**  
—1897—

## Rule 9.3

### Ball Moved by Natural Forces

If *natural forces* (such as wind or water) cause a player's ball at rest to *move*:

- There is no penalty, and
- The ball must be played from its new spot.

### QUESTION

How many total Penalty Strokes would Rickie Fowler incur in the video?

**ANSWER:**  
**Two Penalty Strokes**

### Rickie Fowler 2019 Waste Management Open



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

## Rule 9.3

Ball Moved by Natural Forces

Rickie Fowler

2019 Waste Management Open

**EXCEPTION**  
Ball on Putting Green Must Be  
Replaced if it Moves After Already  
Been Lifted and Replaced



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

## Rule 9.3

Ball Moved by Natural Forces



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

## Rule 9.3

### Ball Moved by Natural Forces

#### EXCEPTION

Ball on Putting Green Must Be Replaced if it Moves After Already Been Lifted and Replaced

If the player's ball on the *putting green moves* after the player had already lifted and *replaced* the ball on the spot from which it *moved*:

- The ball must be *replaced* on its original spot (which if not known must be estimated) (see Rule 14.2).
- This is true no matter what caused it to *move* (including *natural forces*).

Billy Horschel  
2018 Masters



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



**QUESTIONS?**

**Jon Rahm**  
**2020 Memorial Tournament @ Muirfield**



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

## Rule 9.4

### Ball Lifted or Moved by Player

**Jon Rahm**

2020 Memorial Tournament @ Muirfield



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

#### **b. Penalty for Lifting or Deliberately Touching Ball or Causing it to Move**

If the player lifts or deliberately touches his or her ball at rest or causes it to move, the player gets **one penalty stroke**.

## Rule 9.4

### Ball Lifted or Moved by Player

**Jon Rahm**

2020 Memorial Tournament @ Muirfield



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

*This Rule applies only when it is known or virtually certain that a player (including the player's caddie) lifted his or her ball at rest or caused it to move.*

#### **a. When Lifted or Moved Ball Must Be Replaced**

If the player lifts his or her ball at rest or causes it to move, the ball must be replaced on its original spot (which if not known must be estimated), except:

- When the player lifts the ball under a Rule to take relief or to replace the ball on a different spot, or
- When the ball moves only after the player has begun the stroke or the backswing for a stroke and then goes on to make the stroke .

When a player does not follow the correct procedure and does not replace their ball on the original spot, the player will be assessed a **General Penalty for Playing Ball from a Wrong Place.**

**QUESTIONS?**

# Rule 16.3

## Abnormal Course Conditions (Embedded Ball)

# Camilo Villegas

## 2016 RBC Heritage @ Harbour Town



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

## Camilo Villegas 2016 RBC Heritage @ Harbour Town

### Step 1 Rule 7.2 & 7.3:

Under Rule 7.2, Villegas needed to identify that the ball in question was in fact his ball in play.

If necessary, to identify the ball in question, Villegas can operate under Rule 7.3 (Lifting Ball to Identify It)

### Step 2 Rule 16.4:

If a player reasonably believes that his or her ball lies in a condition where free relief is allowed, but cannot decide that without lifting the ball:

- The player may lift the ball to see if relief is allowed but:
- The spot of the ball must first be marked, and the lifted ball must not be cleaned (except on Putting Green).



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)



# Rule 16.3a

## When Relief is Allowed

DIAGRAM 16.3a: WHEN A BALL IS EMBEDDED



### Ball is embedded

Part of the ball (embedded in its own pitch-mark) is below the level of the ground.

← Level of Ground



### Ball is embedded

Despite the fact that the ball is not touching the soil, part of the ball (embedded in its own pitch-mark) is below the level of the ground.



### Ball is NOT embedded

Even though the ball is sitting down in the grass, relief is not available because no part of the ball is below the level of the ground.

**Exceptions** – When Relief Not Allowed for Ball Embedded in General Area: Relief under Rule 16.3b is not allowed:

- When the ball is *embedded* in sand in a part of the *general area* that is not cut to fairway height or less, or
- When interference by anything other than the ball being *embedded* makes the *stroke* clearly unreasonable (for example, when a player is unable to make a *stroke* because of where the ball lies in a bush).

**Camilo Villegas**  
**2016 RBC Heritage @ Harbour Town**

**Step 3**

**Rule 16.4 continued:**

If relief is not allowed, or if the player chooses not to take relief that is allowed:

-The ball must be replaced on its original spot.

-The player gets one penalty stroke if he or she did not mark the spot of the ball before lifting it or cleaned the lifted ball when not allowed.

**Step 4**

**Rule 15.1:**

a. Removal of Loose Impediment

Without penalty, a player may remove a loose impediment anywhere on or off the course and may do so in any way (such as using a hand or foot or a club or other equipment).



**[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)**

**QUESTIONS?**

# Colin Morikawa

## 2020 Tour Championship @ East Lake



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

**MGA**  
—1897—

# Colin Morikawa

## 2020 Tour Championship @ East Lake



[CLICK HERE FOR VIDEO](#)

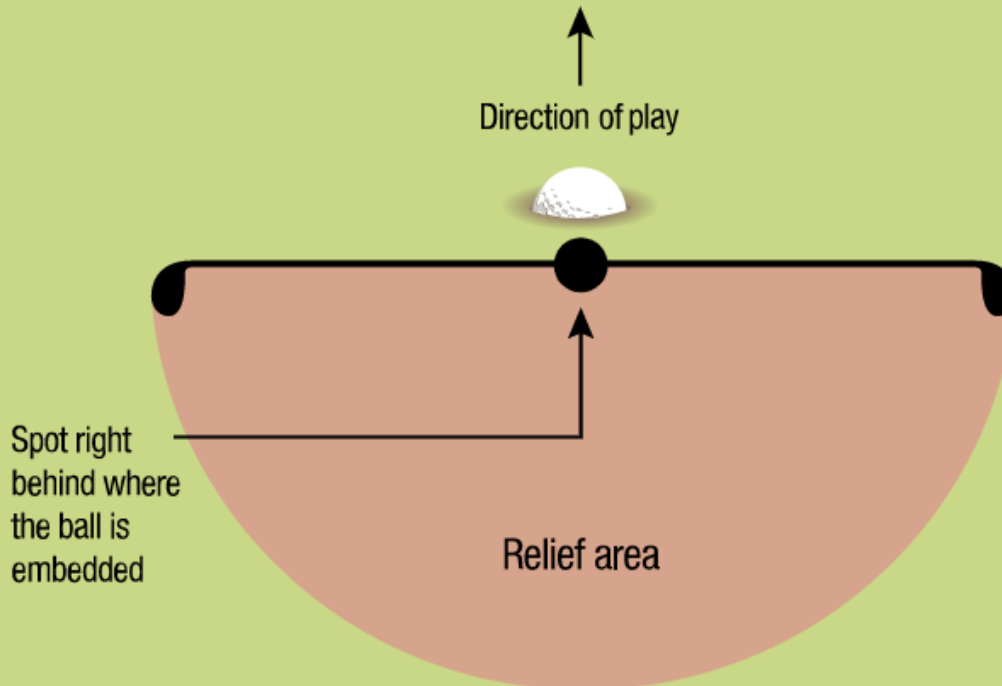
### Step 1 Rule 16.4:

If a player reasonably believes that his or her ball lies in a condition where free relief is allowed, but cannot decide that without lifting the ball:

- The player may lift the ball to see if relief is allowed but:
- The spot of the ball must first be marked, and the lifted ball must not be cleaned (except on Putting Green).

# Colin Morikawa 2020 Tour Championship @ East Lake

**DIAGRAM 16.3b: FREE RELIEF FOR EMBEDDED BALL**

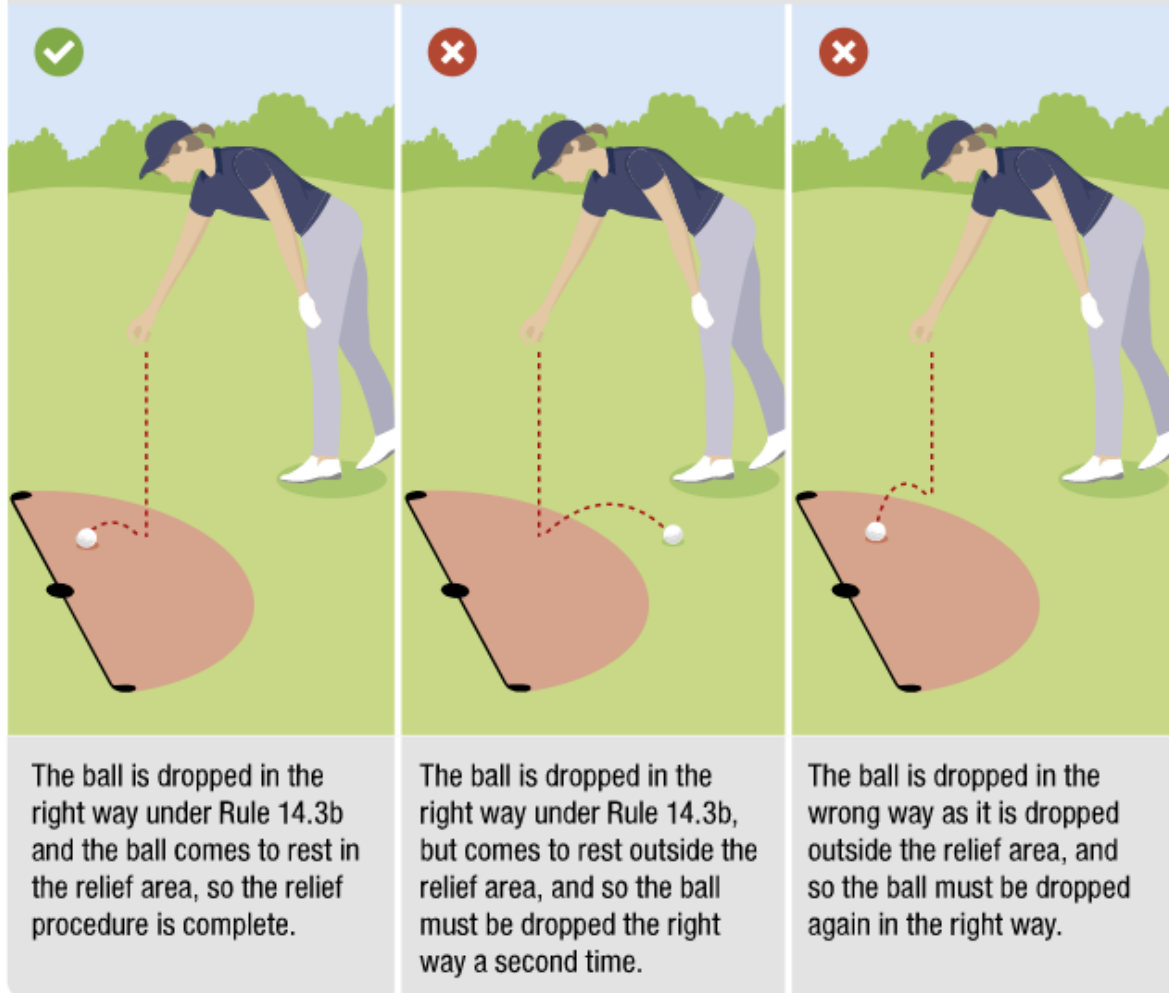


When a ball is embedded in the general area, free relief may be taken. The reference point for taking relief is the spot right behind where the ball is embedded. A ball must be dropped in and come to rest in the relief area. The relief area is one club-length from the reference point, is not nearer to the hole than the reference point and must be in the general area.

# Colin Morikawa

## 2020 Tour Championship @ East Lake

**DIAGRAM 14.3c: BALL MUST BE DROPPED IN AND COME TO REST IN RELIEF AREA**



# Colin Morikawa

## 2020 Tour Championship @ East Lake

### Rule 14.3c(2) What to Do if Ball Dropped in Right Way Comes to Rest Outside Relief Area.

If the ball comes to rest outside the *relief area*, the player must *drop* a ball in the right way a second time.

If that ball also comes to rest outside the *relief area*, the player must then complete taking relief by placing a ball using the procedures for *replacing* a ball in Rules 14.2b(2) and 14.2e:

- The player must place a ball on the spot where the ball *dropped* the second time first touched the ground.
- If the placed ball does not stay at rest on that spot, the player must place a ball on that spot a second time.
- If the ball placed a second time also does not stay on that spot, the player must place a ball on the nearest spot where the ball will stay at rest, subject to the limits in Rule 14.2e.





**QUESTIONS?**

# Video Links

[Brooks Koepka - Ball Search](#)

[Matthew Sharpstene - Ball at Rest Moved \(U.S. Amateur\)](#)

[Rickie Fowler - Ball Moved by Natural Forces](#)

[Billy Horschel - Ball Moved After Marked on Putting Green](#)

[Jon Rahm - Ball at Rest Moved by Player](#)

[Camilo Villegas - Embedded Ball](#)

[Colin Morikawa - Embedded Ball](#)

# THANK YOU!

Join Us Again  
Thursday, December 17th  
1:00 p.m.

[REGISTER HERE](#)

Contact MGA Staff:

Sean Murphy: [smurphy@mgagolf.org](mailto:smurphy@mgagolf.org)

Chris Gaffney: [cgaffney@mgagolf.org](mailto:cgaffney@mgagolf.org)

Nick Roden: [nroden@mgagolf.org](mailto:nroden@mgagolf.org)

