



TOMGC Rules and Greens

January 2021

First things first; it has happened again, and it really needs to stop. I've had reports of people conceding putts to themselves, putting the ball and missing the hole, and then reaching over and hitting the ball while it is still moving; and then, not adding the penalty strokes, and often not adding the extra couple of strokes they took hitting the moving ball back to the hole. You must putt out in stroke play! Match play and Stableford play are a different matter. Now, I don't have a big issue with conceding those putts inside a foot as a matter of expediency, however, if your group is in position and keeping up, there is no need for any of that. When in doubt, putt it out! Remember, if it is your turn to putt, you can continue until the ball is holed. You can simply say, "I'll finish", and then you can still mark the ball if needed and continue until the ball is holed, being sure to avoid standing on anyone else's line, of course. It is only in match play that you must ask permission to finish if you are no longer away.

How about that Patrick Reed, eh? He has, once again, tarnished his reputation. Yes, he may have followed proper procedure, but it sure looked suspicious to me. We did have a lot of rain, and the ground might have been soft enough for his ball to actually have plugged after that small bounce, but I think he should have left that up to a playing partner or an official, without moving the ball and probing down in the grass afterward. Now many of you may have said, "wait a minute, he doesn't get relief from an embedded ball in the rough anyway"! Well, not according to the new rules. The old rule, 25-2, used the term "embedded in any closely mown area through the green" when talking about relief from an embedded ball. The new rule, 16.3 says that relief may be taken for an embedded ball, in the "general area" of the golf course. The general area does not include the teeing ground of that hole, the green for that hole, any penalty area, or any bunker. And so, as it turns out, he ended up getting relief, and he did par the hole on his way to victory.

Good old Bob Horton, asked about when a ball can be substituted during a round, commenting that he had heard announcers on TV saying the ball could be replaced at any time? Generally, the old rules say that you must hole out with the ball you started with from the teeing ground on that hole, unless, like me, you lose the ball and have to replace it, or the ball is visibly cut, cracked, and/or out of shape. This, according to Rule 5. Our new rules, as of January 2019, would seem to say the same thing under Rule 4.2c(2). You may change balls between holes at any time, but you must finish the hole with the ball you hit from the teeing ground, unless lost or damaged. Good day, and good golf.