

## The Rules Applied - September 2022

Because there are so many scenarios for last month's topic, we continue with it again this month in "It Moved – part 2".

*So I'm lying in the rough on 13, and I take a practice swing, and the ball moves. 1-stroke penalty right? I learned this from Bagger Vance.*

Amazingly, that's right. You can learn all kinds of things from that movie, like finding your place in the field and looking for your own authentic shot and getting yourself out of your own way. But again the standard is whether you know or are virtually certain that the ball moved and you caused it to move (Rule 9.2 a and b.) If you dug up the grass or moved a stick an inch from your ball, well, yeah, sorry. But if you were 3 feet away, maybe not. Also, remember that "move" means change position. So if the ball shakes but ends up in the same place, it has not moved. If the ball rotates, you can be certain that it moved. All that being said, if you are not on the putting green (see last month's discussion) and you caused your ball to move, you must replace it in its original spot and take a 1-stroke penalty (Rule 9.4). If the ball moved independent of you, there is no penalty, and you play from the new location (Rule 9.3).

*What if I accidentally kick the ball while I'm looking for it?*

One of the 2019 changes to the rules of golf made clear that this is not a penalty. (Rule 7.4.) However, the ball must be replaced in its original location and lie. If the ball was at the bottom of a thick clump of grass when you kicked it, it must be placed back at the bottom of the thick clump of grass. You may not improve your lie.

*What if I accidentally knock the ball off the tee? It happens, you know.*

Yes, it happens. And fortunately, there is no penalty for this. (Rule 6.2b/5.) The ball is not in play until you make your first stroke on a hole. A stroke is an intentional movement made for the purpose of causing the ball to move forward. So if you tap the ball with your club while setting up, or accidentally hit it while taking a warm up swing, there is neither a stroke nor a penalty. However, if your playing partners spend the rest of the round laughing at you, there's nothing we can do about it.