

RULES OF GOLF EXPLAINED

TRAINER'S GUIDE

IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS



Introduction to the Rules of Golf Explained Video Series

Rules of Golf Explained is a collection of 12 short videos offering simple, straight-forward explanations of how to play by the Rules and what your choices are when applying the Rules in situations that happen while playing. The explanations should be familiar but each will probably contain a thing (or things) not previously known or realized by many golfers who view them.

The following information is provided to help you conduct a presentation approximately 20 minutes in length to a small group of golfers using any of the 12 Rules of Golf Explained videos as the center piece. Each presentation is divided into four parts:

- 1) **TEASER QUESTION (1 to 2 minutes):** Each video begins by showing an incident and asking a Rules question about it. Ask participants to consider the question and write down or remember their answer before continuing to view the video. This question will be reviewed and participants will have the opportunity to find out the correct answer at the end of the video. This teaser question is designed to focus the attention of participants on the topic covered in the video.
- 2) **VIDEO (3 to 5 minutes depending on the video)**
- 3) **TEASER QUESTION REVIEW AND ANSWER (2 to 4 minutes):** Most participants, after watching the video, should be clear on the correct answer to this question (even if they were not entirely sure prior to viewing the video). As the presenter, you will have the option to click the button for either the correct or incorrect answer.
 - a. If the correct answer is selected, a message communicating the answer is correct will appear.
 - b. If the incorrect answer button is selected, a message stating that the answer is incorrect will appear.

Regardless of which answer is selected, three buttons will appear.

- a. **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to review the question.
- b. **<Review>** will replay the portion of video that provides the answer to the question.
- c. **<Continue>** will advance to the next question without reviewing the answer to the question.

Notes are provided in the next section of this Trainer's Guide for this and the other three questions to help you as the presentation leader clear up any confusion participants might have with incorrect answers.

- 4) **THREE FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS (5 to 8 minutes):** The three additional follow-up questions are meant to reinforce other important points made in the video. As the presenter, you will once again have the opportunity to click the buttons for the correct or incorrect answers. As outlined above with the first question, you will always have the option to:
 - a. Review the question.
 - b. Replay the relevant part of the video.
 - c. Continue to the next question or the end of the video.

A note of caution: These videos are not comprehensive explanations of the Rules covered, but broad overviews meant to cover fundamental and commonly encountered aspects of each Rule presented. If questions come up that are not answered by the video, we recommend they be handled individually after the formal presentation session. If you know the answer and are comfortable answering, please do. If you are not, the USGA can be contacted at (908) 326-1850 or by email at Rules@usga.org.

Rules of Golf Explained – Immovable Obstructions

Two of the basic principles of the game of golf are **1) you play the course as you find it** and **2) you play your ball as it lies**. However, the Rules of Golf make an exception to these principles by allowing free relief from immovable obstructions that interfere with your play.

This segment focuses on how to take free relief from interference from artificial immovable objects on the course, things the Rules of Golf call immovable obstructions. Players are entitled to free relief from immovable obstructions if they interfere with their lie, stance or swing, or line of putt.

The primary messages of this segment are:

- Immovable obstructions are ARTIFICIAL OBJECTS golfers encounter during a round that either cannot be moved or could only be moved with a great deal of effort or if moved would cause damage to the course.
- Taking free relief from an immovable obstruction is a two-step procedure: 1) identify the nearest point of relief and 2) drop your ball within one club-length of that point not nearer the hole.
- You are not entitled to relief from an immovable obstruction if your ball is in a water hazard (or lateral water hazard) or because your interference comes about through an unnecessarily abnormal stance, swing or direction of play.

The secondary messages of this segment are:

- Relief is optional.
- Taking free relief from an immovable obstruction on a putting green is a slightly different two-step procedure: 1) identify the nearest point of relief and 2) place your ball at the nearest point of relief.

Teaser Question (Question 1)

Q1.When Paula Creamer takes relief from this sprinkler head, the correct procedure is to drop within one club-length of:

- ☐ the edge of the sprinkler head
- ☐ **the nearest point of relief from the sprinkler head** (correct answer)

Click button "Continue to video to find the answer."

Question answered correctly: "That's correct!"

Question answered incorrectly: "Sorry, that's not correct"

Choose between the three options:

- **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to correctly answer the question, or
- **<Review>** to replay that portion of the video which answers this question, or
- **<Continue>** to go to Question 2.

Three Follow-up Questions (Questions 2, 3 and 4)

Q2.Which of the following do the Rules of Golf consider immovable obstructions?

- ☐ bottle
- ☐ **cart path** (correct answer)
- ☐ bunker rake
- ☐ out of bounds fence
- ☐ water hazard stake

Question answered correctly: "That's correct!"

If one or more of the incorrect answers is chosen: "Sorry, that's not correct."

Choose between the three options:

- **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to correctly answer the question, or
- **<Review>** to replay that portion of the video which answers this question, or
- **<Continue>** to go to Question 3.

Q3. You are entitled to relief from an immovable obstruction when the obstruction interferes with your:

- ☐ **lie** (correct answer)
- ☐ **stance** (correct answer)
- ☐ **area of swing** (correct answer)
- ☐ line of play

If all three correct answers are chosen: "That's correct!"

If only one or two of the three correct answers are chosen, "Your choices are correct! However, there are three correct choices among the four offered."

Question answered incorrectly: "Sorry, that's not correct, there is no relief from an immovable obstruction on your line of play."

Choose between the three options:

- **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to correctly answer the question, or
- **<Review>** to replay that portion of the video which answers this question, or
- **<Continue>** to go to Question 4.

Q4. If a player widens his stance more than normal, is he entitled to relief if one of his feet is now on an obstruction?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ **No** (correct answer)

Question answered correctly: "That's correct!"

Question answered incorrectly: "Sorry, that's not correct."

Choose between the three options:

- **<Back to Question>** allows the opportunity to correctly answer the question, or
- **<Review>** to replay that portion of the video which answers this question, or
- **<Continue>** to go to the video's conclusion.

Resources:

Video Script:

► – VIDEO CLIP WITH INTRODUCTORY QUESTION

PART 1 – INTRODUCTION

Two fundamental principles underlie the Rules of Golf; they are you **PLAY THE COURSE AS YOU FIND IT** and you **PLAY YOUR BALL AS IT LIES**.

The Rules however make an exception to these principles by providing relief without penalty when an **IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTION** interferes with your play.

PART 2 – DEFINITION

IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS are **ARTIFICIAL OBJECTS** which, though they may be present for a good reason, are not meant to interfere with your playing of the game.

Immovable Obstructions a golfer could encounter during a round include things permanently fixed in place like cart paths and sprinkler heads as well as objects like this divot mix box that can be moved, but only with a lot of effort or if moved would cause damage or unduly delay play.

PART 3 – RELIEF

You are entitled to relief without penalty from an **IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTION**, like this drain, only when it directly interferes with at least one of the following: your **LIE**, **AREA OF INTENDED STANCE** or **AREA OF INTENDED SWING**.

While the Rules allow you from play your ball from an obstruction, if you choose to take relief, a two step procedure is involved.

The **FIRST STEP** is to determine the spot not closer to the hole that the Rules call the **NEAREST POINT OF RELIEF**. For this player that point behind the drain.

The **SECOND STEP** is to determine the area within one club-length of the **NEAREST POINT OF RELIEF** that is not nearer the hole. Then lift and drop your ball within that area.

While marking the location of the nearest point of relief and measuring the **ONE CLUB-LENGTH DROPPING AREA** are not required by the Rules, they are good practices to follow.

Dropping within one club-length of the nearest point of relief is always what you'll do when you take relief from an immovable obstruction, **EXCEPT** when your ball is on the putting green.

In preparing to play from the putting green, this player's stance is interfered with by a sprinkler head. His two-step relief procedure is 1) to determine his nearest point of relief and 2) to simply **PLACE** his ball **AT** the nearest point of relief.

PART 4 –EXCEPTIONS

The Rules include several exceptions to the general treatment of IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS as just reviewed. If one applies, you cannot take free relief. The two that occur most frequently are: There is no free relief when interference from an IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTION occurs only because you use a stance, swing or direction of play that is unnecessarily abnormal.

When your ball is in a water hazard, you are not entitled to relief from an IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTION no matter where the obstruction is. You either have to play your ball as it lies or take it out of the hazard with a penalty.

PART 5 – QUESTIONS

For more information on IMMOVABLE OBSTRUCTIONS refer to the Definition of Obstructions on page 30 of the Rules of Golf and to Rule 24-2 (Immovable Obstruction) on page 91.

(pause)

The USGA and the R&A jointly govern the game worldwide, administering the Rules of Golf, Rules of Amateur Status, Equipment Standards and World Amateur Golf Rankings.