Rule of the Month

February 1, 2017

Here’s Mud In Your Eye!

DOWN AND DIRTY? NOT ALWAYS.

“Here’s mud in your eye.” The origin of this phrase is unclear, but one theory, intended to be an insult, refers to the lead jockey of a horse race spraying mud on the other jockeys. On the other hand, it is more commonly meant as a toast of good will. We would like to offer still another theory of our own. We believe it is the phrase spoken many years ago by the first player ever asked by a fellow-competitor, “May I lift and clean the mud off my ball.”

Playing golf this time of year in Oregon will often produce a similar question. “Are we playing it down?” For golf purists, the question seems contrary to the Rules. “Of course we are playing it down” comes the response. But be forewarned, the result may be “mud in your eye”.

If the Local Rule for preferred lies or cleaning ball is not in effect, the ball must not be cleaned in certain circumstances. This month’s quiz requires a keen knowledge of when a ball may or must not be cleaned (Rule 21).

Questions: True/False

1. A ball embedded in the fairway may be lifted for relief and cleaned.
2. A player is uncertain if his ball is embedded. He announces to his fellow-competitor that he is going to lift to determine if it is embedded. He discovers that it is not embedded. He may clean the ball before replacing it.
3. A ball lifted to take relief from interference by a cart path may be cleaned.
4. After lifting a ball to take relief from an area of ground under repair, the player realizes his drop area will most likely result in an unplayable lie. Prior to dropping the ball he decides to replace the ball in the GUR and play from there. He may not clean the ball prior to replacing.
5. A player finds a ball in tall grass but is unable to identify it. He announces his intention to lift and marks the location of the ball. He lifts the ball but there is mud covering his identification mark. He is not permitted to clean any part of the ball.
6. A player believes his ball has become unfit for play during the play of a hole. He follows the procedure outlined in Rule 5 for lifting the ball for inspection, but there is a large piece of mud covering part of the ball. He may remove only as much mud as necessary to determine if the ball is unfit for play.
7. A player is asked by a fellow-competitor to lift his ball which was very near the fellow-competitor’s ball and interfered with his next stroke. The player may not clean his ball.
8. A player’s ball at rest in a bunker is struck and moved by a fellow-competitor’s ball after a stroke. The fellow-competitor, whose turn it is to play, asks the player to lift his (the player’s) ball because it interferes with the fellow-competitor’s next stroke. The player may not clean his ball.
9. Under Rule 21, there are three situations when a ball lying on the putting green may not be cleaned.
10. A stroke is cancelled under a Rule that requires the stroke to be replayed. The ball may be cleaned.

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