

Rule Tip of the Week

Embedded Exception

During the second round of the 2013 Abu Dhabi HSBC Golf Championship, Tiger Wood's wayward drive on the fifth hole ended up within a large sandy area extending down the right side of the hole.

Tiger found his ball in what appeared to be an embedded lie. He asked one of his fellow competitors, Martin Kaymer, to come over and watch as he marked and lifted his ball to determine if his ball was embedded.

Kaymer agreed that Tiger's ball was embedded in the sand. Woods tossed the ball to his caddie for cleaning and then dropped it as near as possible to the spot where it lay, but not nearer the hole. He subsequently chipped his ball back into the fairway.

So far, so good, right? Wrong!

Rule 25-2 [Embedded Ball] permits relief for a ball that is embedded in a closely mown area. In addition, most PGA events adopt a Local Rule that extends this relief to through the green and this was the case in Abu Dhabi. The Local Rule, which can be found in Appendix I, Part B, 4.a, reads as follows:

"Through the green, a ball that is embedded in its own pitch-mark in the ground may be lifted, without penalty, cleaned and dropped as near as possible to where it lay but not nearer the hole. The ball when dropped must first strike a part of the course through the green."

Exceptions:

- 1. A player may not take relief under this Local Rule if the ball is embedded in sand in an area that is not closely mown.**
- 2. A player may not take relief under this Local Rule if interference by anything other than the condition covered by this Local Rule makes the stroke clearly impracticable.*

PENALTY FOR BREACH OF LOCAL RULE:

Match play – Loss of hole; Stroke play – Two strokes."

The exception (in bold, for emphasis) embedded in the Local Rule precludes Tiger from taking relief for his ball embedded in sand in an area that is not closely mown. Thus, Tiger was assessed a two-stroke penalty, and that proved to be expensive for Tiger because he missed the cut by a single stroke!

Remember, it pays to know the Rules ... and it can cost you if you don't!

