

## **SPECIAL EXCEPTIONS TO APPLICATION OF RULE 18-2**

The general situation where a player moves his own ball in play, as for example by kicking it, is covered under Rule 18-2 where the player incurs a one stroke penalty. However, within Rule 18-2 there is a list of seven exceptions where there is no penalty if the player accidentally causes his ball to move. Additionally, there is another class of exceptions to be derived from the principle established in the situation described in Decision 18-2/27 where the player, after announcing his intentions, may dislodge a ball, without penalty under Rule 18-2, by shaking a tree so that he may proceed under the unplayable ball Rule.

The component parts of this Decision are that the player initially has not identified the ball and further that he wishes to intentionally move it to proceed under a Rule that governs his not playing the ball as it lies. If it is desired to extend this Decision to related situations, the question arises concerning whether all of these component parts are essential to any extension or whether they are simply characteristics of this particular situation of a ball in a tree. It would seem that the latter is true, not the former, and that the essence of the principle is that the player with his announcement of his intentions or by the reasonableness of his actions is protected from penalty under Rule 18-2 if he wishes to proceed under a Rule that governs his not playing the ball as it lies and subsequently moves his ball. This conclusion is supported by Decision 18-2/30, which states that the player is protected until he considers playing the ball as it lies. Although not specifically stated in either Decision, it is not necessary for the player to first see a ball that he intends to recover for the purpose of proceeding under a Rule other than Rule 13-1.

A secondary question is whether any extension of this Decision is restricted to the player proceeding under a Rule involving a penalty such as Rule 28. It is logical that the Rule 28 aspect is simply a condition to the specific situation in the Decision and that a broader principle has been established relating to proceeding under a Rule that requires or permits not playing the ball as it lies, whether involving a penalty or not. Of course, the principle's corollary is that once the player considers playing the ball as it lies, he is then subject to Rule 18-2, which is supported by both Decisions 18-2/26 and 18-2/30.

Thus, the principle of Decision 18-2/27 can be stated as follows:

A player is not subject to penalty under Rule 18-2 for causing his ball in play to move if before taking any action, he announces his intentions to move the ball to proceed under a Rule other than Rule 13-1 or it is reasonable to assume from his actions that he will not make his next stroke at the ball as it lies as required by Rule 13-1 but intends to proceed under another Rule, such as Rules 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28.

However, for this principle to apply, the movement of the ball must directly result from the process of searching for the ball, identifying the ball, or recovering the ball.

Accidentally moving the ball while not in one of these processes would result in a penalty under Rule 18-2. Furthermore, once the player considers playing the ball as it lies, he is then subject to Rule 18-2. There are two examples where this principle would apply:

- A player's ball lies in tall grass in a water hazard and he states that he intends to proceed under Rule 26-1. He then walks into the tall grass to find and retrieve his ball but in so doing kicks the ball. He would not be subject to penalty under Rule 18-2 because he was in the process of searching for the ball to retrieve it for the purpose of proceeding under Rule 26-1.
- A player's ball lies on a cart path and the player states that he will take relief under Rule 24-2. If the player is reaching for the ball to lift it and he causes it to move, he would not be subject to penalty under Rule 18 because he was directly in the process of lifting the ball. However, if he accidentally kicks the ball in selecting a club for measuring the nearest point of relief not directly in the process of recovering the ball, he is subject to penalty. The same answer would apply if the ball lay on a wrong putting green and the player intended to proceed under Rule 25-3.