

## Explanation for Rule Change for 2019

### 2. Ball in Motion Accidentally Deflected

**Current Rule:** If a player's ball in motion is accidentally deflected, the outcome depends on what caused the deflection:

- If the ball hits the player or his or her equipment or caddie, the player gets a one-stroke penalty and the ball is played as it lies (with limited exceptions).
- If the ball hits an opponent or his or her equipment or caddie, there is no penalty but the player has a choice to play the ball as it lies or to cancel the stroke and play again.
- If the ball is deflected by any other person, animal or object, there is no penalty and the ball is played as it lies.

**2019 Rule:** Under Rule 11.1, for all accidental deflections, including when the ball hits the player or opponent or their equipment or caddies:

- There will be no penalty and the ball will be played as it lies (with limited exceptions).
- To address any concern that a player might deliberately position equipment to act as a backstop and potentially deflect his or her ball, there will be a penalty if the ball hits equipment that was positioned for that purpose (Rule 11.2a).

#### **Reasons for Change:**

- Many objects, persons and animals are present on a golf course during play; it is inevitable that a ball in motion will sometimes hit them before coming to rest, and a player is generally required to accept the outcome (whether good or bad).
- Just as there is no penalty in stroke play if one player (or his or her equipment or caddie) accidentally deflects another player's ball, there is no need for a penalty when a player (or the player's equipment or caddie) accidentally deflects his or her own ball.
  - Accidental deflections are, by definition, an accident – and this applies equally to players, caddies and equipment, which are necessarily close to the area of play.
  - When a player's ball hits the player or his or her equipment, it is usually the result of a poorly played shot or an unanticipated outcome, such as when a ball bounces off a bunker wall or a tree and hits the player, or when a chip shot rolls over a green and hits the player's cart or golf bag.
  - The outcome in such cases is random and unpredictable, and it results in a disadvantage for the player at least as often as it results in an advantage.
- For the same reasons, there is no need to give the player the option to cancel and replay a stroke when an opponent in match play accidentally deflects the player's ball.
- Treating all accidental deflections the same, no matter who or what caused them, will greatly simplify the Rules in various situations, such as when a player's ball is deflected by equipment being shared with another player (such as a golf cart); it will no longer be necessary to apply complicated analysis to decide which player the shared equipment belonged to at that time.