

RULE OF THE MONTH

March, 2010

18-2a/19 Ball Moved Accidentally by Practice Swing Prior to Tee Shot

Q. Before playing from the teeing ground, a player took a practice swing, in the course of which he accidentally struck and moved the teed ball with his club. Did the player play a stroke or incur a penalty?

A. The player did not make a stroke — see Definition of "Stroke." Since the ball was not in play — see Definition of "Ball in Play" — he incurred no penalty under Rule 18-2a. The player must put a ball into play from the teeing ground.

18-2a/20 Ball in Play Moved Accidentally by Practice Swing

Q. A player makes a practice swing and accidentally moves his ball in play with his club. Has he made a stroke?

A. No. He had no intention of moving the ball — see Definition of "Stroke".

However, he incurs a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2a for moving his ball in play, and the ball must be replaced.

Definition of Stroke:

A stroke is the forward movement of the club made with the intention of striking at and moving the ball, but if a player checks his down swing voluntarily before the club head reaches the ball, he has not made a stroke.

Please note the difference in the two scenarios above:

18-2a/19 – No ball was in play when the player made a practice swing and caused the ball to move.

18-2a/20 – The ball was in play when the player made a practice swing and caused the ball to move.