

# How will new proposed rules change things?

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With today's forecast of strong wind gusts here in the desert, it made me think about how the rules work in dealing with tough conditions. Generally, when balls start rolling on their own on greens, we are forced to stop play, but the new proposed rules changes for 2019 might give us a little bit more latitude in dealing with it.

Many of you will remember when Ji Young Oh's ball was marked and replaced on the 18<sup>th</sup> green at the then Kraft Nabisco in 2009 and the strong winds proceeded to make it roll into the lake in front of the green. She had three options under Rule 26-1, keep the point where she entered the hazard between her and the flag and play a shot from as far back as she wanted, use the drop zone designated for the hole, or play a shot from where she had played her previous stroke from which her ball landed on the 18th putting green.

The Decision that covers the circumstances above is 18-1/12 - Ball Replaced and at Rest Is Thereafter Moved by Wind;

**Q.** A player replaces his ball on the putting green and the ball is at rest. Before the player addresses the ball, a sudden gust of wind blows the ball farther from the hole. The player plays the ball from its new position. Is that correct?

**A.** Yes. Wind is not an outside agency — see Definition of 'Outside Agency.' Accordingly, Rule 18-1 does not apply.

If a player moves the ball it has to be replaced and they incur a one-stroke penalty. If wind, water or acts of God move the ball then it has to be played it from where it comes to rest and there is no penalty. Of course, in Ji Young Oh's case she did incur a one-stroke penalty because her ball was blown into a water hazard and was unplayable.

If the proposed rules changes that were announced by the USGA and R&A on March 1<sup>st</sup>, go into effect as written now, the outcome will be much different. If a player has

marked, lifted and replaced their ball on the putting green, they will replace the ball on its spot – even if it was blown by the wind or moved for no clear reason with no penalty. The relaxed rules will go even further in making it easier on the player by saying if you don't know the exact spot, we are going to trust you to estimate and replace.

The new proposed changes are striving to make the rules more intuitive and easy to learn. They are also working hard at making sense to all of us who groaned and felt it just wasn't fair to see a player's ball be blown into the water from wind on a very fast green.

**Share your opinion on golf's proposed new Rules. Take the survey at [usga.org/rules](https://usga.org/rules), send an email at [rules@usga.org](mailto:rules@usga.org) or call them at 908-326-1850.**