

Rule 18 – Ball at Rest Moved
(R & A Decisions on the Rules of Golf 2008 – 2009)

18-2 Ball oscillates during address

In addressing the ball, a player accidentally causes the ball to oscillate, but it returns to its original position. Has the ball “moved”?

A: NO.

18-2a General

Suggest you read complete Rule 18-2a for exemptions of penalty if player causes ball to move. BUT, if a ball moves it must be replaced, UNLESS the movement of the ball occurs after the player has begun the stroke or the backward movement of the club for the stroke and the stroke is made.

18-2b BALL MOVING AFTER ADDRESS

If a player’s ball in play moves after he has addressed it (other than as a result of a stroke), the player is deemed to have moved the ball and **incurs a penalty of one stroke**. The ball must be replaced, unless the movement of the ball occurs after the player has begun the stroke or the backward movement of the club for the stroke and the stroke is made.

18-2a/1 Player who misses Tee Shot tees ball lower before making next stroke

A player playing from the teeing ground misses the ball completely. He pushes this tee further into the ground and plays. What is the ruling?

A: When the player made a stroke, the ball was in play (See Definition of “Ball in Play”). By pushing the tee further into the ground, he moved the ball and incurred a penalty of one stroke under Rule 18-2a and was required to replace it.

However, when the player made a stroke at the ball without replacing it, he played under penalty of stroke and distance (see Rule 27-1a). This procedure overrides Rule 18-2a and, therefore, the penalty under Rule 18-2a does not apply. (Revised)

18-2a/2 Ball falling off tee when stroke just touches it is picked up and re-teeed

A player making his first stroke on a hole just touched the ball and it fell off the tee. He picked up the ball, re-teeed it and played out the hole. What is the ruling?

A: When the player made a stroke, the ball was in play (See Definition of “Ball in Play”). When he lifted the ball, incurred a penalty of one stroke under Rule 18-2a and was required to replace it. However, when the player made a stroke at the ball without replacing it, he played under penalty of stroke and distance (see Rule 27-1a). This procedure overrides Rule 18-2a and, therefore, the penalty under Rule 18-2a does not apply. (Revised)

18-2a/19 Ball moved accidentally by practice swing prior to TEE SHOT

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 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

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

BALL MOVING AFTER ADDRESS

18-2b/1 Ball moves after stance taken but before address

Outside a hazard, the player took his stance but did not ground his club. The ball moved. What is the ruling?

A: As the player had not addressed the ball, he did not incur a penalty under Rule 18-2b. If however, the player caused the ball to move, he was subject to penalty and the ball should have been replaced. (Rule 18-2a).

18-2b/4 Ball moves after Player grounds club but before stance completed

A player's routine prior to making a stroke is as follows: He first grounds the club directly behind the ball with his feet together. Then he gradually widens his feet to shoulder width. At that point, he makes the stroke.

If the ball moves after he grounds the club but before he widens his stance to shoulder width, does he incur a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2b (Ball Moving After Address)?

A: No. A player has not addressed the ball until he completes taking his stance. However, if the ball moved after the club was grounded but before the player had completed taking his stance, he incurs a penalty under Rule 18-2a for having caused the ball to move and must replace the ball, unless there is strong evidence that wind or some other agency caused the ball to move. (Revised).

18-2b/5.5 Placing clubhead on ground in front of ball when addressing

A player takes his stance and places his clubhead on the ground in front of the ball without pressing anything down. Before the player grounds the club behind the ball, the ball moves. Has the player "addressed the ball" so that he is subject to penalty under Rule 18-2b?

A: YES.

18-2b/7 Ball moves after player address it and then step away

A player takes his stance and grounds his club. Realising that the ball is precariously balanced and may move, he steps away from the ball and starts again. This time he does not ground his club, but before he strikes the ball, it moves. What is the ruling?

A: The player incurs a penalty under Rule 18-2b, and the ball must be replaced.

Penalty for Breach of Rule 18:

Matchplay – Loss of hole