



**Hi NNGA golfers,**

We have had some questions lately about divots and bunkers. I am going to explain the USGA / NNGA stance on both.

**Rule 8.1 deals with “playing the course as you find it” and restricts what a player may do to improve any of the “conditions affecting the stroke” for the next stroke the player may make. The first of these restrictions involves improving the lie of the player’s ball at rest.**

**In the past this was Rule 13, BALL PLAYED AS IT LIES, and Rule 13.2 read as Rule 8.1 does today.**

**We also had decisions on Rules and Decision 33-8/34, Relief from Divot Holes was as follows:**

**Q. May a Committee make a Local Rule providing relief without penalty from divot holes or repaired divot holes (e.g., holes that have been filled with sand/and or seed mix)?**

**A. No. Such a Local Rule would modify Rule 13-1 (Now Rule 8.1) and is not authorized.**

If relief were to be granted who would determine when the divot hole was no longer one in which free relief should be granted? The problem is that there is no consensus as to when a divot hole is no longer a divot hole.

**The difference for free relief from a bunker and a divot.** The bunker is a defined area and allowing free relief for that area has a defined boundary. As stated above, divots are in random areas and are not definable as to when they are no longer a divot. As a side note, the USGA informed us the events with this “free relief” rule are not played under the rules of golf and therefore not an acceptable score for posting.

No one is happy to find themselves in a divot hole but it is something we have to accept, just as we accept good or bad lies anywhere on the golf course.

I have been in touch with NNGA senior rules official, women’s tournament director, and men’s tournament director along with the USGA. After discussion we have concluded that NNGA events will not allow free relief from divots and the temporary bunker rules are still in effect. We are sending this out to our tournament players so there will be no mistake about our stance when playing in our Men’s, Women’s, or State events.

Thanks for reading this and feel free to pass it on. At this time, it is only going to our NNGA Men’s and Women’s tournament players and will be on the website soon.

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Cc Andrew Workman, Gerry MacDonald, Brenda Lawrence