

## **USGA Rule Changes for 2012**

Following an exhaustive, four-year review of golf's 34 playing Rules, nine principal Rules have been amended to improve clarity and ensure penalties are proportionate. Significant changes include:

- **Ball Moving After Address (Rule 18-2b).** A new exception is added which exonerates the player from penalty if their ball moves after it has been addressed when it is known or virtually certain that they did not cause the ball to move. For example, if it is a gust of wind that moves the ball after it has been addressed, there is no penalty and the ball is played from its new position.
- **Ball in Hazard; Prohibited Actions (Rule 13-4).** Exception 2 to this Rule is amended to permit a player to smooth sand or soil in a hazard at any time, including before playing from that hazard, provided it is for the sole purpose of caring for the course and Rule 13-2 (improving lie, area of intended stance or swing or line of play) is not breached.