



Tournament Players Golf Club Rule and Play Information (AKA - The Rules By Ben)

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The Rules By Ben The "Raked" Putt

We have all witnessed the following illegal stroke. After our lag putt just misses the hole, we are faced with a very short second putt to hole-out. We walk up to the hole and reach across it, rest our putter behind the ball, and pull the ball slowly and deliberately into the hole...the classic raked putt. What are we guilty of? Not fairly striking at the ball!

The definition of a *stroke* is the forward movement of a club made with the intention of fairly striking at and moving the ball. Rule 14-1 states, "The ball shall be fairly struck at with the head of the club and must not be pushed, scraped or spooned."

We know, the rule doesn't say anything about "raking" which is essentially a push from across the hole. So we've come up with some characteristics that all raked putts will have. **No back swing**, a motion towards the hole starting from dead stop; **continuous contact** between the ball and the club face; and **deliberately slow** so you don't miss. To our surprise the putt counts as being holed but a *two-stroke* penalty also applies for breach of Rule 14-1.

Don't say you have seen the pro's on television do this, although they come very close. The only sure way to avoid a penalty is to putt like you normally do.

Decision 14-1/4 elaborates, "In order to strike the ball fairly, it must be swung at with the club head. If the ball is moved by any other method, it has been pushed, scraped or spooned. If a ball is fairly struck at, there is only momentary contact between the club head and the ball or whatever intervenes between the club head and the ball."

Finally, some do's and don'ts. The stroke may use any part of the club head you don't have to use the face. Your stroke must always use the club head never the shaft, grip or handle. A golf stroke is always done with just ONE club never two or more. You are permitted to hold the flagstick in one hand while putting with the other. You are permitted to hold an umbrella in one hand while putting with the other. You are permitted to fairly strike at the ball and hit whatever intervenes, like a boundary fence.
