

THE REFEREE

Decisions by the USGA Rules of Golf Committee

*Example of symbols: "No. 48-1" means the first Decision issued in 1948.
"R. 14(3)" means Section (3) of Rule 14 in the 1948 Rules of Golf.*

Practice Swing in Hazard

No. 48-6. R. 7(3)

Q: Kindly wire collect USGA opinion on player taking practice swing in trap.

ED MILES
ATLANTA, GA.

A: Practice swing may be taken any place on course within limitations stated in Rule 7(3).



Handicap Match: Starting Point for Match and for Playoff

No. 48-9. R. 3(1), 5(1), 20(3)

Q: In a match with full handicap difference allowed, the starter started my opponent and myself at No. 10 tee instead of No. 1. I was entitled to receive four strokes from my opponent. The first handicap stroke to fall on No. 4 hole, the second on No. 11, the third on No. 9, and the fourth on No. 13.

After we had teed off, I informed my opponent that while I was not protesting the action of the starter in starting us from No. 10 tee instead of No. 1, I did wish to point out it was a distinct disadvantage to me. I called his attention to the fact that in order for me to receive the advantage of the third handicap stroke which falls on No. 9 hole on our course, I would have to be "alive" at the end of 17 holes, whereas, had the match been started from No. 1 hole, I would have received the full benefit of the four strokes to which I was entitled by the time we had finished the 13th hole of play and the benefit of three strokes at the end of the 11th hole.

The match was halved at the end of 18 holes and, in accordance with the rules of the tournament, an additional nine holes was played on a succeeding day and at full handicap difference.

When we were ready to resume play on that succeeding day, my opponent insisted that play be resumed at hole No. 1. I refused to do so, pointing out that the match had officially started on hole No. 10, that as it was

an 18-hole match with play ending at hole No. 9 the play of the additional nine holes must be resumed at the point where it left off, which would mean that the 19th hole to be played would be hole No. 10 on the course.

The committee in charge suggested flipping a coin to determine whether the match should be resumed at hole No. 1 or No. 10. I refused to do this for the reason that in my opinion the rules provide the proper solution for this dispute.

Under Rule 3(1), a match consists of a round of 18 holes unless otherwise determined. As the match was halved at the end of the 18th hole, by virtue of the rules of the tournament it was extended to a 27-hole match. The holes are played successively and, under USGA rules, if play is postponed then it is resumed at the point where it left off. In my opinion, this rule amply covers the situation.

For future guidance, would you be good enough to inform me if my position was properly taken?

A. H. RABIN
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

A: Yes. When play is discontinued, it shall be resumed from the point at which it was discontinued (see Rule 20(3) of 1948 Rules of Golf). However, when a halved handicap match is replayed at less than 18 holes, committees sometimes are obliged to make other arrangements so that the difference between the handicaps may be truly reflected. The fairest way to settle a halved handicap match is by a replay of 18 holes. Attention is called to Rules 3(1) and 5(1).

Player's Ball Striking Opponent

No. 48-13. Et. 3; D. 1; R. 12(5d)

Q: The foursome consisted of Mr. A and Mr. B as partners, against Mr. C and Mr. D as partners. The hole in question is the 5th, measuring 225 yards.

We were all short of the green on our tee shots, and all had to play two to get on said green. Mr. B played his second shot and landed about 15 feet from pin. Mr. C and Mr. D did likewise. We had no caddies. As Mr. A was playing his second shot, a chip shot to green, the foursome in back of us on the 5th tee started to play for the 5th green

with us on it. Mr. A was in motion of his second shot, with my partner, Mr. C, tending the flag. Mr. A's partner, Mr. B, hollered "Look out" for a ball that was approaching the 5th green from the foursome in back of us. We all ducked, fearing being hit by the ball approaching the green.

In the meantime, Mr. A's ball hit my partner, Mr. C, who was tending the flag, and careened off his leg and stopped about 6 to 8 feet away from pin. Mr. A came over, after his shot stopped, and picked up his ball and moved it from the position of from 6 to 8 feet away from pin to about 2½ feet from pin and, in turn, putted in for a 3 and a win.

I would appreciate a ruling as to his right of action in moving the ball, and what, in your opinion, is the penalty.

WALLACE MCKINNON
BRIGHTON, MASS.

A: The match was a four-ball, not a foursome—see Definition 1.

Under Rule 12(5d), C and D lost the hole when A's ball struck C.

The group playing from the tee breached Etiquette 5.

Straddling Ball, Pendulum Stroke

No. 48-14. D. 4; R. 10(1)

Q: Is there anything in the interpretation of present rules which governs the stance in putting or the type of stroke required in putting the ball, other than that the stroke be a fair strike and not a push, etc.? Is there any interpretation which would prevent a player from "straddling" the ball and using a pendulum stroke, as in croquet, or standing with both feet together, pointed at the hole, and using the same pendulum stroke? In either case, a putter meeting USGA regulations would be used.

LARRY E. IMHOFF
CHEVY CHASE, MD.

A: The Rules of Golf provide no restriction provided the stroke is in fact a stroke and does not conflict with Definition 4 and Rule 10(1) and provided the club conforms with the Rules Governing Form and Make of Golf Clubs.



Lost or Unplayable Ball: Penalties

No. 48-15. R. 8(1, 2)

Q: With reference to Rule 8(1), "adding a penalty stroke to the score for the hole," and (2), "under penalty of two strokes," we do not understand how there can be a one-stroke

penalty and a two-stroke penalty in the same rule. If it is the first drive from tee, are you playing 3 or 4 when the penalty has been added?

MISS FRANCES GALLAGHER
PASADENA, CAL.

A: *Match Play:* In case of a lost or unplayable ball, the player's score is 3 after he has played the next stroke from the tee, the penalty being loss of stroke and distance.

See Rule 8(1).

Stroke Play:

(a) LOST BALL—as above for match play.
(b) UNPLAYABLE BALL—the player has two choices, as follows:

(1) As above for match play; or
(2) As provided in Rule 8(2b).

However, this second option does not exist if a provisional ball has been played from the tee—See Rule 8(2c).



Playing Off Tied Handicap Matches

No. 48-17. Hdcp.

Q: Please explain the rule for playing off a tie in handicap matches. In our recent tournament (handicap) a lady with a 6 handicap played another lady with a 26 handicap and spotted her ¾ of the handicap difference, which was 15 strokes, and at the end of the 18th hole they were all even. From there on they decided to continue to play on an even basis, which to me seems entirely unfair as the next hole happens to be the No. 1 handicap hole on our course.

MRS. J. T. PERALTA
YUMA, ARIZ.

A: Where a handicap match is even at the end of 18 holes the fairest way is to replay the entire match at 18 holes. If this is not possible for want of time or for other reasons, we recommend that the winner be determined by playing a lesser number of holes which will truly reflect the handicap difference. For example, if A gives B six strokes, one of which comes on the first three holes, the competitors can play those three holes; or, if A gives B 10 strokes, it would be equitable to play nine holes under a handicap allowance of five strokes. It is, of course, a matter for the committee in charge to determine, it knowing all the circumstances and being best able to determine the practical solution. The committee in charge should determine how halved matches shall be decided before the start of the tournament. If unforeseen circumstances prevent application of the foregoing recommendations, the committee should settle the matter equitably.

(Note: 85% of the difference between stroke play handicaps is the allowance now recommended.)

Boundaries Within Course

No. 48-23. R. 9

Q: Is out of bounds within boundary of golf course permissible in national or club tournaments?

A. P. REYES
MANILA, PHILIPPINES

A: Boundaries within course generally inadvisable except for large buildings, parking spaces and the like. Are never used USGA Championships. However, under Rule 9 committee may designate any boundaries desired.



Water Hazard: No Provisional Ball

No. 48-24. R. 7(4), 17(1, 2), 19(e); LR

Q 1: Rule 17(2), Paragraph 4, states "It is a question of fact whether a ball lost after having been struck toward a water hazard is lost in the hazard or outside the hazard, etc." The next paragraph then states that "a provisional ball may not be played for a ball which *may be* in a water hazard, etc."

Now put yourself on the 14th tee at Pine Valley with a hook that hits a tree on the 15th tee. You do not know whether it has bounced out into the water or onto the tee where it can be played or in between two little trees where it cannot be played. *It may be* in the water. Therefore, you are not entitled to a provisional ball, yet if you go down to the tee and find it unplayable you can then go back to the 14th tee under Rule 8 and play another ball. That is impractical.

I think the wording of the rule should be changed so that you can hit one or more provisional balls from the 14th tee and another from the tee by the lake and take your choice, depending on where you find the ball, not being compelled to play any of the provisional balls if you find the first ball playable.

A 1: In the 1948 Rules of Golf the subject is covered by Rule 17(2), 4th paragraph, and Rule 19(e). The Rules allow playing a provisional ball for a ball which may be lost or unplayable outside of a water hazard or casual water in a hazard. However, if a provisional ball has been so played and the first ball is actually in a water hazard or casual water in a hazard, further play is regulated by Rule 19(e).

The suggestion in the question would give the player a choice of several balls. That would be opposed to the spirit of the Rules. Further, in match play, it is fundamental that the opponent has the right to know how he stands; obviously, he could not do so if the suggested procedure were permitted.

One possible deviation is suggested, how-

ever, by Recommendations for Local Rules, for Water Hazards, 3. Pursuant thereto, the following local rule could be adopted:

"Hole 14—A provisional ball may be played from the tee for any contingency, as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was played. If the original ball be in a water hazard or in casual water in a hazard, the player may play it; but if it be unplayable he must continue play with the provisional ball."

Casual Water in Hazard

Q 2: Suggestion No. 2 concerns casual water in a trap. To me it is the only illogical rule in the whole book of golf and must have been made by some obverse official who had a grudge against a competitor so caught. If the weather is to have that much influence on the penalties, why in the world not let it apply uniformly? Under this rule, if you get in a puddle behind a tree where you are completely stymied or where if the ground was dry you might have an unplayable lie you are relieved of the penalty, whereas if it is in a trap where under normal weather conditions a good player might have a reasonable expectation of getting in the cup in two strokes you have an abnormal and, to me, very unfair penalty when the ball happens to lie in water so deep that it makes it difficult to play.

I suggest that the rule be changed to treat casual water in a trap like any other casual water except when a trap is completely filled so that the ball must be dropped outside it, in which event it should be treated as a water hazard. It seems to me reasonable and logical that contestants would be aware of the fact in wet weather that their shot might be aimed towards a water hazard rather than a trap and that they could use proper judgment accordingly.

A 2: Although the present Rule may occasionally seem unfair, it would be even more unfair to allow a player to remove a ball from a hazard without penalty. It is impossible to eliminate all elements of chance from the game.

Questions by GORDON BROWN
NEW YORK, N. Y.



A Golfer's Prayer

Lord, give me grace
To make a score
That even I
Need not lie about
To my fellow men.