

# 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.

### Ground Under Repair

**No. 48-26. R. 7(5)**

**Q:** The 1948 changes in the Rules of Golf, particularly Rule 7(5), were under discussion.

Granted that in tournaments a committee is well informed and can define and mark ground under repair. What happens in local club play when the greenkeeper makes repairs as the occasion arises? Unless the repair is of major character, the chairman or her committee is seldom notified.

Suppose a committee does not know that the greenkeeper yesterday decided to repair a broken drain crossing one of the fairways, also insert a square foot or so of new sod in worn places on one' or more putting greens. The usual Ladies' Day play gets under way. Meeting these conditions (unmarked), in stroke play the player can proceed under Rule 1(4). In match play, no referee, must the player make her own decision?

Sub-paragraph (b) : Where new bent or sod has been inserted in the green, there can be no doubt that it is repair even though not marked. Must player proceed according to Rule 1(4) in stroke play? In match play with no referee? Can yesterday's cup (that is, the plugged hole made when cup was changed) be considered ground under repair and so treated according to Rule 16(2 and 3) and the note giving precedence over stymies?

MRS. ROBERT HURKA  
CHICAGO, ILL.

**A:** In match play, player should discontinue play and request ruling, else proceed at risk of opponent entering claim under Rule 1(2a). New sod is not necessarily ground under repair. Its condition is determining factor. Old cup locations are not ground under repair. New Rule 7(5) does not alter former USGA interpretations but simply incorporates them in body of Rules. Ground under repair basically means what the term states.



### Practicing Before Match

**No. 48-27. R. 21(3)**

**Q:** May player practice on or on to the putting greens before start of play in match play the day of the competition?

TONY BUTLER  
HARLINGEN, TEXAS

**A: Yes.** Rule 21(3) does not apply to match play.



### Opponent's Ball : Knocking Into Hole

**No. 48-30. R. 18(7, 9)**

**Q:** In match John Doe's ball is on the lip of the C U D. In attempting to hit the ball thereby conceding the next-putt, his opponent hits the ball into the cup, accidentally or otherwise. At the time John Doe was lying 3. Please give me John Doe's score for the hole.

PETER RIZZOLO  
BLOOMFIELD, N. J.

**A:** John Doe's score was 4.

If the opponent had not holed out, it would have been better for the opponent to require John Doe to lift his ball as provided in Rule 18(7).

Had John Doe's ball not been within six inches of the hole and if the opponent had not holed out, the opponent would have lost the hole under Rule 12(5).

### Obstructions in Hazards

**No. 48-31. R. 2(1), 5(4), 7(4)**

**Q. 1:** I find what I consider an important change in the new Rules not included in those listed on pages 75 and 76. For instance, if the play of a ball in a hazard (not a water hazard), say a sand trap, is interfered with by a drain cover, it can be dealt with in accordance with Rule 7(4b or 4c). The hazard was not mentioned in the 1947 Rules. Am I correct ?

**A. 1: Yes.**

### Re-Playing from Tee, Stroke Play

**Q. 2:** I am puzzled by what I read on page 75 under Rule 5 (4). Turning to Rule 5(4), I do not find that they are related to each other. Where am I wrong?

**A. 2:** Rule 5(4) prohibits re-playing a stroke played out of turn from the tee in stroke play. Violation of that provision results in a two-stroke penalty-see Rule 2(1).

Questions by **JAMES D. DYER**  
PITTSBURGH, P.A.



### Ball Striking Opponent

**No. 48-32. R. 12(5)**

**Q:** In a match Tommy Tailer's opponent teed off on the first hole and the ball struck a tree and bounded back across the tee, hitting the bench and the starter table and almost hit Tommy. I told Tommy that if the ball had hit him, he would have lost the hole. He claims he wouldn't have because he hadn't hit a shot yet and hence he hadn't actually started the match.

**BOB GOLDWATER**  
PHOENIX, ARIZ.

**A:** Mr. Tailer would have lost the hole if the ball had struck him. See Rule 12(5).

### Fence Is Not Obstruction

**No. 48-34. R. 7(4)**

**Q:** Kindly let us know if the new ruling in regard to-artificial obstructions would apply in the case of a ball resting against or near enough to a wire fence to interfere with the swing. Our entire course is enclosed by a wire fence.

**WILLIAM MILLER**  
RUMFORD, R. I.

**A:** Rule 7(4) specifically excludes fences and fence posts from classification as artificial obstructions, hence no relief is given.

### Sand

**No. 48-35. R. 7(1),17(Def.)**

**Q. 1:** Sand is defined as a hazard in Rule 17. Every fairway is bordered by orange groves growing in sand. If you are a foot off the fairway, you're in plenty of sand. Is this sand a hazard?

**A. 1: Yes.**

**Q. 2:** The rule only exempts "sand blown on to the grass or sprinkled on the course for its preservation, bare patches," etc. Does this

mean that sand in the fairway not blown on the grass or sprinkled on the course for its preservation is a hazard, or would this come under "bare patches?"

**A. 2:** Ordinarily sand in such circumstances should not be considered a hazard, but the local committee should settle the matter in the light of conditions and fair play. If such sand is not considered a hazard, a player is still subject to the restrictions in Rule 7(1).

Questions by **FRED L. RIGGIN, SR.**  
PORT HURON, MICH.

### Lifting for Identification in Hazard

**No. 48-36. R. 11(1),17(1e),13(3a)**

**Q:** If a competitor wishes to identify his ball, may he lift it from a hazard if he replaces it in a comparable lie before playing his stroke? I contend that the rules governing hazards cover this question-Rule 13 (3a).

**MRS. P. A. FARKER**  
LAKELAND, FLA.

**A:** A ball may be lifted for identification at any place, and replaced as provided in Rule 11(1). Also see Rule 17 (1e).

However, it is not the intent of the Rules to allow lifting for identification when identification may be established by other circumstances, as, for instance, by a caddie, or where it is known full well where the ball came to rest. When a buried ball is lifted and replaced, the stroke to be played is apt to be altered; therefore, sportsmanship indicates that the ball be played as it lies whenever possible. Rule 13(3a) gives ample protection if a wrong ball should be played from a hazard in stroke play.

### When Obstruction Is Not Obstruction

**No. 48-41. R. 7(4)**

**Q:** A and B playing match. B hooks to left of 18th green 1.5 feet away from sign reading "No Practicing on 18th Green." Sign is in line of shot but is fixed solid in ground. Referee rules ball must be played as it lies because ball is more than two club-lengths from fixed sign. Is that ruling correct?

**SAN GABRIEL COUNTRY CLUB**  
SAN GABRIEL, CAL.

**A:** Referee's ruling correct. Rule 7(4) does not apply.

### Ball Striking Flagstick

**No. 48-42. R. 7(8),18(Def.)**

**Q:** Rule 7(8) provides: "In stroke play when a competitor's ball lying within twenty yards of the hole is played and strikes the flagstick or the person standing at the hole, the penalty is two strokes."

Rule 18 provides: "The 'putting green' is all ground, except hazards, within twenty yards of the hole being played."

Does a player take a penalty of two strokes under Rule 7 if the stroke is played from a hazard within twenty yards and strikes the flagstick?

W. E. STITT  
OAKMONT, PA.

**A: Yes.**

### Dew: Not Casual Water or Loose Impediment

No. 48-43. R. 2(5), 18(3)

**Q:** During a four-ball match, a heavy fog and a line mist had deposited moisture on the putting greens. It was like a heavy dew. There were no puddles of water, merely a heavy deposit on the grass blades, which slowed down putts, and so the balls picked up moisture and "kicked" up drops behind as they rolled along. One of the players insisted he had a right to use his putter to scrape aside the moisture from the line between his ball and the hole, on the theory that he had a right to remove any foreign material which was an impediment to his putt, so long as the club was not laid with more than its own weight on the ground. The other players insisted that he could not do so. Their argument was that the deposit of water was hardly "casual" water as defined by the rules, and even if it were "casual water" the player's only privilege would be to move his ball to another spot, and that would be useless because the moisture covered the entire green. They also contended that the moisture on the grass did not come within the definition of loose impediments which may be removed or scraped away.

My opinion was asked and given, to the effect that the player had no right to scrape the moisture away, but this view was not accepted. Will you please advise whether, under the conditions stated, the player had a right to clear away the moisture so as to give himself a drier path from ball to hole?

WILLIAM D. MITCHELL  
NEW YORK, N. Y.

**A:** The player had no such right. The conditions described were not loose impediments or casual water. The player therefore violated Rule 18(3) and was disqualified for the hole, but the disqualification did not apply to his partner (see Rule 2(5)).

The course should be played in the condition in which it is found.

### Face Markings on Irons

No. 48-44. R. 2(4), 7(4)

**Q. 1:** A and B are playing in a match play tournament. After A drives off the first

tee, B states that, in his opinion, one of A's clubs, an iron, has face markings that do not conform to the USGA specifications. An immediate check of this club revealed it had an illegal face marking. What is the penalty A is subject to under match play conditions?

**A. 1:** If the club were used the player was disqualified—see Rule 2(4).

### Hole Made by Greenkeeper

**Q. 2:** In a list of artificial obstructions in Rule 7(4) one example reads "a hole made by the greenkeeper." Does this mean that a ball coming to rest in a hole made by the greenkeeper when he removed a tree from the course can be lifted without penalty? (the stump hole being left open and not filled in).

**A. 2:** Yes. It is the duty of the local committee to define a hole made by the greenkeeper, just as ground under repair should be defined. Ordinarily, a stump hole should be so classified.

Questions by JIM FERRIER  
CHICAGO, ILL.

### Casual Water

No. 48-39. R. 1(4), 8(1), 16(1); LR

**Q. 1:** Kindly settle a point about casual water, Rule 16(1). A ball landed in water and mud in the fairway and was completely buried. We hunted about three or four minutes and the party gave up the ball for lost. After he hit the second ball, the original ball was found. Does the second ball void the first ball and is there a two-stroke penalty? Both balls were played out.

**A. 1:** As the player abandoned the first ball, the second ball must be continued in play. See Rule 8(1).

If the first ball lay or were lost in casual water, the player could have proceeded under Rule 16(1).

If the contest were at match play, the player had no right to hole out both balls. For stroke play, where there is doubt as to rights, see Rule 1(4).

**Q. 2:** Is heavy or loose mud surrounded by water in the fairway considered casual water? We are playing winter rules.

**A. 2:** Mud is not casual water. See Rule 16 (Definition).

The Rules of Golf do not recognize "winter rules."

Questions by MRS. FRANK L. OLMSTEAD  
SEATTLE, WASH.