

# THE REFEREE

## Decisions by the USGA Rules of Golf Committee

Example of symbols: "No. 48-1" means the first decision issued in 1948. "R.7(3)" means Section 3 of Rule 7 in the 1948 Rules of Golf.

### Local Rules Should Be Clear

#### No. 48-83. LR.

Q: Playing from No. 11 tee, No. 10 fairway is on the right; and playing from No. 12 tee, No. 11 fairway is on the left. On both tees we have a sign marked that from either tee it is out of bounds. The reason was that lots of players used to go over on either fairway, as it made the 11th hole easier from 10 fairway and the 12th hole easier from 11 fairway. If a player in playing No. 11 sliced his second on to 10, or in playing No. 12 hooked his second on to 11, was he still out of bounds?

FREDDIE McLEOD  
CHEVY CHASE, Mu.

A: The signs described indicate that the boundaries applied only to tee shots.

However, the local committee should interpret its own local rule and, if necessary, should clarify the signs.

### Tree Branch in the Way

#### No. 48-86. R. 7(3)

Q: Is it permissible for a caddie to hold a tree branch out of the way if it would hinder the player's club while making a stroke?

DR. FRANK J. FARA  
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A: No. This is prohibited by Rule 7(3). The Rule contemplates that there may be some moving, bending or breaking of fixed or growing objects as an incident in the course of taking a fair stance at address and in making the backward or forward swing, and it excuses such incidental movements. However! the Rule prohibits purposeful moving, bending or breaking with the aim of improving the position of the ball. The second exception in Rule 7(3) condones only such moving, bending or breaking as may incidentally be done in making the swing, but it does not allow such action *in order to make the swing*.

### Opponents Exchanging Balls

#### No. 48-88. R. 1(2a), 13(1)(4a)

Q: A and B were playing C and D in a four-ball match. A and C both hooked into the rough; both were playing the same make

and number ball. C played A's ball, knocking it out into the fairway. A then played C's ball, thinking it was his own, and shot it into a water hazard. Upon taking the ball out of the hazard, A discovered it was C's ball. He then went back to where C played his (A's) ball and proceeded to play out the hole from there, making a par and tying D on the hole (otherwise his side would have lost the hole, B being out of it as well as C). They proceeded playing, and A and B won the match, 1 up.

D claims he protested the hole before playing the next hole. A claims he heard no protest. A claims misinformation because C announced that "this is my ball" when playing A's ball. (A's ball was in a very good lie; C's ball, which A later played, was very deep in the rough.)

If the hole was won by D as claimed, the match would have finished all even. The match was played under handicap, so D feels it should be played over.

RALPH R. ARNOLD  
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A: A was under a responsibility to identify the ball (C's) before playing it. As he did not do so but inadvertently played C's ball, the penalty against C was cancelled, and the hole should have been played out with the balls exchanged—see Rule 13(4a) and (a). C's statement cannot be regarded as misinformation under Rule 13(lb) insofar as A's play of C's ball is concerned.

A proceeded improperly in abandoning C's ball and in resuming play from the place where C played A's ball.

Whether or not D made a claim as described in Rule 1(2a) is a question of fact which cannot be determined by us. If a claim was so made, D's side won the hole. If a claim was not so made, the hole stands as played even though A completed the hole incorrectly.

### What Constitutes Casual Water

#### No. 48-91. R. 16, Def. (I), SR. 3

Q: 1: Player A drives a ball into short rough where the ground is damp. He claims that he has the right to press his foot into the ground near the ball to see if his weight will squeeze some water up out of the ground, and if so, his ball is in "casual water" and may be lifted and dropped in another part of

the short rough, without penalty, where no water will appear when his foot is pressed down into the ground. Player B claims (a) that unless local rules have been fixed Player A must play his ball out of rough, whether casual water or not, without any right of dropping without penalty; (b) that even if the ball were in the fairway and no water appears on the surface, no player has a right to push his foot into the ground near the ball in the hope that he can squeeze a couple of drops of water out of damp ground and thereby claim it is casual water. A player may only do such things in either rough or fairway to enable him to get a proper stance.

**A. 1: See** Definition of casual water under Rule 16.

If, in taking his *normal* stance, a temporary accumulation of water appeared which interfered with the play of the ball, the player would be entitled to relief as provided in Rule 16(1).

It is not material whether there were an accumulation of water originally visible. On the other hand, the presence of a temporary accumulation of water constituting casual water is a question of fact. Soft, wet ground or mud do not, of themselves, constitute casual water.

The term "rough" is not used in the Rules of Golf. So-called "rough" is part of "through the green." See Definition 3.

### Settling Ties in Stroke Play

**Q. 2:** A Scotch foursome ties at 75 for the gross prize in medal play. In "matching cards" to determine the winner of the prize (which was arranged after the match), is it a practice or rule to use the "sudden death" method so that the team or player winning the first hole in match play wins, or is it a rule or practice to figure match play over the entire 18 holes? In this case, team A would have won by 1 up in match play figuring the entire 18 holes, but on the "sudden death" method, team B would have won on the second hole with a par 4 to opponents' bogey 5.

**A. '2:** Stroke Rule 3 empowers the committee in charge to determine how a tie shall be decided, and it presupposes a playoff. The local committee should determine the extent of the playoff in the light of local conditions. This question should be determined before the tournament starts.

Where the competition *is* handicap stroke play, it is recommended that the playoff be at 18 holes with handicap. Where that is not possible for want of time or for other reasons, the playoff should be of as many holes as would enable all competitors in the playoff to use equal proportions of their handicaps fairly. If, it is not convenient to hold a playoff, the tie should be decided by lot.

This Committee considers that matching cards against each other or against the course par is not a proper way to decide a tie. If two players return scores of the same total in stroke play, they have finished the test originally set. To decide their tie, it would not seem fair to go back arbitrarily to any individual part of the original test, for that test was on a total-score basis. Any such method is artificial. Stroke play and match play are two different games. Therefore, a new test should be provided for settling a tie.

Questions by :

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### Out of Bounds in Mixed Foursome

**No. 48-95.** D. 1; R. 5(6), 9(1)

**Q:** In a mixed alternate shot tournament, man drives from odd number tees, lady from even number. On third tee man hooks drive out of bounds. Does lady hit drive from ladies' tee—some 40 yards nearer green—does she have to tee off from men's tee? Some members felt lady should hit next tee shot from men's tee from which first shot was driven out of bounds by her partner.

DAN J. CASEY  
STONY BROOK, N. Y.

**A:** The next stroke shall be played as nearly as possible at the spot from which the ball which is out of bounds was played—Rule 9(1).

Attention is called to the definition of foursome in Definition 1 and to Rule 5(6) prescribing the order of play. Only one set of tee markers should be used in foursome play.

### Agreement to Violate Rule

**No. 48-102.** R. Z(2)

**Q:** An agreement was made between two contestants before their match to lift, without penalty, a ball which came to rest in a sand trap which had casual water in it (ball had to be in the water).

Did they break any rule or be subject to disqualification if the occasion did not occur whereby this agreement could be carried out? In other words, neither player's ball came to rest in water in a sand trap during the match.

LOUIS F. GALASSO  
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**A:** Rule 2(2) is explicit that "Players shall not agree to exclude the operation of any Rule or local rule, nor to waive any penalty incurred."

In the case cited it would appear that the agreement in advance was made to exclude the operation of this rule. Hence, the penalty should be applied and the players disqualified. That the intent prevailed after play started is the predominating factor, and not that no occasion arose for violating the Rule.