

THE REFEREE

Decisions by the USGA Rules of Golf Committee

Example of symbols: "No. 49-1" means the first decision issued in 1949. "R. 7 (3)" means Section 3 of Rule 7 in the current Rules of Golf.

Ball Striking Two Others

No. 49-28. R. 12(4c)

Q: In a stroke play tournament, on the green a player's ball struck another player's ball, then caromed off and struck a second player's ball. Is the penalty two strokes, or is there two strokes penalty for each ball struck?

MARJORIE C. PACE
LACANADA, CAL.

A: There is one penalty of two strokes, under Rule 12(4c).

Ordering Opponent's Caddie from Flag

No. 49-30. R. 1(2a), 2(1), 7(7)

Q: In match play, A sends his caddie to attend the flagstick while B plays. Before playing, B orders A's caddie away from the hole, leaving the flagstick unattended. B's ball strikes the flagstick. A claims the hole on the ground that B refused to allow A's caddie to attend the flagstick. Should A's claim be upheld?

HAYNES WATERS
SAVANNAH, GA.

A: Under Rule 7(7), either side was entitled to have the flagstick removed at any time, but in the present case the right was not exercised. B then had a secondary right to have his own caddie attend the flagstick, but he did not exercise that right. A then was entitled to have his caddie attend flagstick. But B refused to allow this. If A condoned B's action, through either inertia or ignorance of his rights, he forfeited the right to make a subsequent claim. On the other hand, if A made a real objection before B played and entered claim under Rule 1(2a), B lost the hole. See also Rule 2(1).

Water Hazard in Drive Zone

No. 49-32. R. 17 (2); LR

Q: We have two holes on our course, No. 8 (390 yards) and No. 13 (420 yards), where a stream cuts diagonally across the fairway. From No. 8 tee (a blind tee, incidentally) it is approximately 225 yards to the stream on the right side of the fairway and 275 yards to the stream on the left side of the fairway. From No. 13 tee it is about 260 yards to the stream on the left side of the fairway and 300 yards on the right side. We

have a small group, perhaps 10, who drive into these ditches on occasion, especially during dry weather, and have to take a penalty stroke. The controversy concerns whether or not a free lift should be given for a drive into these ditches within the limits of the fairway only.

The minority group in favor of a free lift argues in this fashion:

(a) Golf is a game designed to reward a good shot and penalize a poor one. A straight drive down the middle of the fairway should not be penalized so drastically.

(b) A sand trap or bunker where the ball could be played would not be so bad, but an unplayable lie in water is too stiff a penalty.

(c) Other courses (stated to be a majority) give free lifts in similar circumstances.

(d) It is unfair to penalize a perfect drive on long par 4 holes where you should be able to get your maximum distance.

The majority group against a free lift argues in this fashion:

(a) Golf is a game principally of control, not of length. If there is danger of going in the ditch, use a shorter club.

(b) We have enough rules; let's not make any more.

(c) The rule benefits only a few golfers (not strictly pertinent; golf rules are not made to suit the preference of the majority).

(d) We have gotten along all right to this point; why change?

(e) The long hitters have enough advantage over the short hitters as it is.

(f) A number of courses do not give free lifts under such circumstances.

Unfortunately, we have difficulty arguing, as personal desires constantly creep in. The poorer golfer dislikes seeing the long hitter aided in any way, while the long hitters feel they are unfairly discriminated against.

We consulted Mr. J. Wood Platt, of the Golf Association of Philadelphia, who said that it was a matter for the Committee to decide but that he was personally against a free lift in such circumstances. After some discussion the

Committee voted and split exactly 50-50 for and against a free lift. As a consequence they asked me to write the USGA for its opinion.

The Committee wants to do what is just and fair, at the same time keeping within the spirit of the game. The consensus seemed to be that if the majority of golf clubs give free lifts in such situations, we would do likewise, but unfortunately we have no qualified authority among us who can state how the majority treat such situations.

HOMER HAGGARD
WILMINGTON, DEL.

A: From the facts submitted, we recommend that a free lift not be granted for a ball in the water hazard. On a yardage basis only, there seems to be enough opportunity on both holes for the long hitter to take advantage of his length if he controls his drive. If a free lift were allowed, there doubtless would be undue emphasis upon slugging at the expense of control, which is the basic test of golf. The arguments against a free lift as stated in the question coincide generally with the USGA view.

We know of other instances in which somewhat similar situations are treated in varying ways by club committees, but we believe that it is comparatively rare for such a free lift to be given. We would recommend a free lift only where the condition were palpably unfair to considerable numbers of players.

Striking Flag in 4-Ball Match

No. 49-33. R. 2 (5), 7 (7)

(Question embodied in answer)

A: In a four-ball match, when player A's ball strikes flagstick attended by his partner B, A is disqualified for the hole but B is not affected. This has long been USGA policy and is intention behind Rules 2 (5) and 7 (7), which in this particular case is admittedly ambiguous. Clarification now being considered.

GEORGE A. HEAP
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

Touching Sand on Backswing

No. 49-34 R. 17 (1,1f)

Q. 1: What penalty, if any, is incurred by a player if he touches the sand in a trap as he pulls his club away from his ball on his backswing?

A. 1: Two strokes in stroke play and loss of hole in match play; see Rule 17(1).

Smoothing Irregularities in Hazard

Q. 2: Is there any penalty if a player, after missing a sand trap shot, smooths out the divot of that shot before she moves ahead to the new ball location (still in the trap but several feet away from its first location)?

A. 2: Rule 17(1f) provides: "There is no penalty for the player smoothing irregularities in the hazard made by his footprints or the soil displaced by his stroke, provided nothing is done that improves the lie of the ball or assists the player in his subsequent play of the hole."

Questions by: HARRY WINTERS
INGLEWOOD, CAL.

Failure to Alternate in Foursome

No. 49-35. R. 2(1), 6(5)

Q: In a two-ball mixed foursome, the lady of one pair put a ball in a sand trap. The gentleman playing the alternate shot failed to get the ball out of trap, and without thinking hit it again. What rule covers?

A. D. V. BURR
BRADENTON, FLA.

A: As the partners did not strike alternately, they violated Rule 6(5). If the incident occurred in match play, the side lost the hole—see Rule 2(1). If the competition was stroke play, the stroke played in incorrect order should have been cancelled and the side penalized two strokes; the side then should have put a ball in play by dropping it as nearly as possible at the spot from which the side played in incorrect order—see Rule 6(5a).



Unplayable Ball Procedure

No. 49-25. D. 3; R. 8 (2)

Q: A ball in stroke competition was driven from the tee, landed in the "rough" and was declared unplayable.

Some said the player could go back to tee and play three and others said he could move his ball out into the "fairway", put it on an artificial tee and play four.

Can a ball be moved into the "fairway" from the "rough"?

Does Rule 8, Section 2b, mean that a wood or plastic tee may be used?

D. H. BOYD,
SAVANNAH, GA.

A: In stroke play a competitor who declares his ball unplayable may proceed under Rule 8(2a) or 8(2b).

Under Rule 8(2a), the player in question could have returned to the tee and played three.

Under Rule 8(2b), a ball is teed under penalty of two strokes in such a way as to keep the point from which the ball was lifted between the player and the hole. This may occasionally permit teeing in a "fairway" even though the ball may originally have come to rest in the "rough", but that can be done

only if the Rule is observed and is merely incidental. In teeing a ball, an artificial tee may be used.

The terms "rough" and "fairway" are not used in the Rules of Golf—they are both "through the green"; see Definition 3.



Marker May Be Spouse

No. 49-39. R. 21(2,4)

Q: Should the signature of a husband or a wife be accepted for a card for monthly medal or monthly par, or should the signature of a male member for men and a lady member for women be required?

Will the signature of a member of the Ladies Branch for all tournaments. Is this the accepted practice in the U.S.?

CATHERINE F. CHALMERS
MANILA, P. I.

A: The matter is one for decision by the local committee. In club competition it is not unusual for a spouse to serve as marker. However, it is the duty of the committee to provide a single competitor with a marker (see Rule 21 (2)).

If during the competition the committee be not represented and a player be not provided with a marker, she should be permitted to make her own arrangements, and scores certified by anyone other than a caddie (see Rule 21(4)) should be allowed to stand. By special approval, a caddie may serve as marker.

Ball Moving or at Rest?

No. 49-45. R. 12(3), 18(9)

Q: With regard to the rule about a ball on the lip of the cup, who has the say-so as to whether the ball is moving? Many times when a ball hangs on the lip of the cup, the movement is imperceptible. I have seen a great many balls hang on the lip of the cup and then fall in, and the movement is not readily seen. For example, if I say my ball is rolling and my opponent says it is not rolling, who gets the say-so?

S. W. CREEKMORE, JR.
FORT SMITH, ARK.

A: Whether a ball is moving or not is a question of fact. In the absence of a referee, if a player and his opponent cannot agree on the question of fact, there is no way of applying the Rules.

In case of reasonable doubt, the player should be given the benefit of the doubt, inasmuch as under Rule 12(3) if he plays a moving ball, he is subject to a penalty of loss of hole in match play or of two strokes in stroke play, with certain exceptions.

Ball Moved by Opponent's

No. 49-46. R. 7(4), 12(4), 17(1b,1e)

Q. 1: In a hazard or through the green (match play, singles), if player's ball hit the opponent's ball that is within a club-length of player's ball, is there a penalty? If so, who is penalized?

A. 1: Rule 12 (4) provides in part: "In match play if the player's ball move the opponent's ball, the opponent, if he choose, may drop, or in a hazard or on the putting green may place, the ball as near as possible to the spot from which the original ball was moved, without penalty, but this must be done before another stroke is played by either side."

Balls within Club-Length

Q. 2: Does the fact that one ball is within a club-length of another ball change the rule in any way, other than one ball can be lifted?

A. 2: No.

Opponent's Option if Ball Is Struck

Q. 3: If both players are in a trap and the opponent has neglected to lift her ball which is within a club-length of the player's ball and player's ball hits the opponent's ball and knocks it out of the trap, is not the opponent permitted to play her shot from outside of the trap? Is there any penalty involved?

A. 3: See Answer 1 above. The opponent may either play the ball as it lies or may drop it as provided in Rule 12 (4).

No Option in Stroke Play

Q. 4: Are the rules for the above the same in medal play?

A. 4: No. The competitor's ball which has been moved must be replaced. See Rule 12 (4c,4d).

Artificial Obstructions Defined

Q. 5: In a hazard, a player may not lift, or lift away from, any natural obstruction, but is permitted to remove any man-made impediment. Is that correct?

A. 5: Rules 17 (1e) and 7 (4) give relief from artificial obstructions when the ball lies in a hazard. Artificial obstructions are defined in Rule 7 (4).

Paling Defined

Q. 6: Rule 17 (1b) mentions "paling". What is paling?

A. 6: "Paling" as used in Rule 17 (1b) means planks or boards used to support the side of a hazard.

Questions by: MRS. TED DEAL
CLEVELAND, OHIO.

Ball Lost or Out of Bounds?

No. 49-48. R. 8(1), 9(1)

Q. At a golf match between the University of California and the University of Southern California played on the University home course, an incident arose. Following is the statement of player X (home team):

"A smothered hook was hit from the tee over the hill toward out of bounds bounded by rough. After a search of more than five minutes in bounds, the ball was not found. No search was made out of bounds. I (player X) went back to the tee and played a second ball which was played in the hole in four strokes. Since the ball was not found in bounds, I assumed the ball out of bounds".

Statement of Player Y (opponent):

"Player X hit a long hook which the gallery (one person) saw roll into the rough. Observer saw ball bounce into the rough and was so positive as to its whereabouts in the rough that I did not deem it necessary to mark the spot in the rough, in bounds. A search of over five minutes in the rough was made, and ball was not found. Player X returned to the tee and played a second ball into the hole in four strokes. I (player Y) felt that the penalty was stroke and distance, and declared such an opinion. My partner (player Z) stated that two people looked for the ball out of bounds and did not find it".

Would you be kind enough to render a ruling on whether the penalty should be distance only, or stroke and distance? The outcome of the match depends on the ruling.

G. F. ENGLEHARD
BERKELEY, CAL.

A. Rule 9 (1) provides in part: "When a ball has been struck toward out of bounds, it is a question of fact whether the ball is out of bounds or lost in bounds. For the player to treat the ball as being out of bounds, there must be reasonable evidence to that effect. If, on reaching the place where the ball is likely to be, the player or his opponent be in doubt, the player may not assume that the ball is out of bounds until a search of five minutes has been made."

When the fact of the ball's location cannot be positively determined, the possibility that the ball may be out of bounds is not sufficient; there must be a preponderance of evidence to that effect.

In the present case, even though player X made a search of at least five minutes, he was not entitled to presume that his ball was out of bounds

unless the weight of evidence pointed to such a conclusion.

On the facts presented, it appears to us that the ball must be considered lost in bounds, and Rule 8 (1) applies.

Soling Club outside Hazard

No. 49-54. R. 17(Def., 1)

Q: Ball is in sand in trap. Player soles his club, not in the sand, but on grassy margin of trap some 1½ inches back of where his ball lies in the sand. Does soling his club on the outside of the hazard in addressing a ball on the inside of the hazard call for a penalty? Or does fact that ball is in sand prohibit player from soling his club at all? Others contend that rule permitting "touching" of grass around hazard does not permit soling, which, they contend, is different from "touching". Club pro interprets rule that club may be soled outside of hazard if ball is in hazard.

A. GIFFORD
BALTIMORE, MD.

A: When a ball lies in a hazard, the player may sole his club outside the hazard without penalty. Further, grass in a bunker is not part of the hazard; see Rule 17, Definition.

**Wrong Ball in Match Play**

No 49-55. R. 13(2)

Q: A hits short drive. B hits longer slice in trees. A hits long shot near green. B hits a tree and bounds back, duplicates this, then plays out but is well short of green. B now discovers he has played a wrong ball (ball not in match) and returns to play his own as his second shot. Is he saved by playing ball not in match, or is he penalized for playing more than one shot with a wrong ball?

HORTON SMITH
DETROIT, MICH.

A: B is not penalized. His mistake of playing a ball outside the match was discovered and stated to his opponent before A played his next stroke. Rule 13(2) applies.

Rule 13(3) relating to playing two or more consecutive strokes with a wrong ball applies to stroke play only.