

# 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

### Play Completed when Hole Is Won

No. 49-56. R. 3(1), 18(9)

**Q:** In a match, A sank his last putt, getting a birdie 4. B's ball was about 14 inches from cup, lying 4. A, figuring that he had won the hole, intended to stroke B's ball over to him and, in so doing, accidentally stroked B's ball into the cup.

The Referee gave B a 4 for the hole and ruled the hole as being halved. Was the Referee's ruling correct?

THOMAS CHING  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

**A:** No. A won the hole as he holed his ball in fewer strokes than did B, and as soon as he did so the play of the hole was completed. See Rules 3(1) and 18(9).

### Replacing Ball Moved by Opponent's

No. 49-59. R. 12(4, 4a)

**Q:** A and B are playing a match in a tournament, the stymie rule applying. A's ball is on the green, a few feet from the pin. B's approach shot hits A's ball in a manner that sends it to the far edge of the green, B's ball remaining near the pin, but not a stymie for A's ball where it now lies nor from where it originally lay. A contends that under Rule 12(4) she may replace her ball as near as possible to the spot from which it was moved without penalty. B contends that, under the stymie rule, A may not touch her ball, except under Rule 18(7). The committee in charge upheld B's contention.

MRS. HOWARD BUTTRESS  
SAN MARINO, CAL.

**A:** Under Rule 12(4), A had the choice of replacing her ball in its original position (which must be done immediately) or of playing it from the position to which it was moved. See also Rule 12(4a).

### Ball Re-Teed: No Choice in Spot

No. 49-60. R. 9(1)

**Q:** A player plays his tee shot from the left side of the tee and the ball goes out of bounds. Can he play his second from any part of the tee or must he play from the approximate spot from which he hit his first ball?

B. WARREN CORKRAN  
BALTIMORE, MD.

**A:** He must play as nearly as possible at the spot from which he originally played. See Rule 9(1).

### Stymie Rule: No Abrogation Permitted

No. 49-62. R. 10(2), 18(7)

**Q:** In the Texas State Public Links Tournament, the board of managers and committee in charge announced that stymies would not be played.

I am somewhat surprised at such an announcement, particularly in connection with a fairly large and important event such as a state tournament.

I would appreciate a reply stating whether or not the USGA has an official connection with the above-mentioned tournament and whether or not the USGA permits the abrogation of such a basic rule as the one under discussion.

JOHN A. MOORE  
TEXAS CITY, TEXAS

**A:** The USGA has no direct connection with the tournament. The Rules of Golf do not permit abrogation of the stymie. See Rules 10(2) and 18(7).

### Play-Off Methods, Stroke Play

No. 49-63. R. 3(2)

**Q:** We held a member-guest tournament at 36 holes medal, with 18 holes played one day and 18 played another day. Two teams tied for the low gross prize.

The committee wishes to know what procedure to follow: whether there should be 18 holes played at a future date by both teams, whether there should be a sudden death play-off or whether they should match cards, starting on the first hole of the 36-hole contest on a sudden death basis.

J. JOSEPH MASON  
HASBROUCK HEIGHTS, N.J.

**A:** It is within the province of the local committee to decide; see Rule 3(2). We would recommend a play-off at stroke play at 18 holes, but it would be equitable to decide it at fewer holes, except that a one-hole play-off would not seem appropriate to the type of competition.

Matching cards is not recommended. The original test set was at stroke play; as the two teams finished on even terms, it would be unfair to revert arbitrarily, by means of artificial match play, to any portion of the total test.

**Claim Must Be Made on 18th Green**

No. 49-64. R. 1(2a)

**Q:** In a handicap match for our club championship, one player had to give the other three strokes. Ours is a nine-hole course. This called for two strokes on the first nine and one on the second. But two strokes were credited also on the second nine. This allowed the match to be won on the 18th hole with the wrongly accredited stroke; that is, without that stroke they would have been tied. The score card was approved by both parties and dropped in a box kept for that purpose but reviewed by no one else.

After coming in from the 18th hole, one player remarked that the gift of the stroke on the 18th hole turned the match. A member who heard that remark later telephoned both players, apprising them of the mistake. Of course the one who lost the match on account of the error stated that she was ready to resume the match. The other said it could not be resumed because it had not been discovered before leaving the 18th hole. The club pro agreed with this interpretation. I would like to know the Rules, not for the purpose of changing the match but for the good of the Club. Only one score card was kept and that by one of the players, but it was reviewed by the other player before turning it in.

MRS. GLADYS E. CAIN  
YUMA, ARIZ.

**A:** The match must stand as played. Claim was not entered as provided in Rule 1(2a)—in this case before leaving the putting green of the last hole of the round.

**Out-of-Bounds Line Must Be Complete**

No. 49-65. R. 9(Def.)

**Q:** No. 1 hole is a dog-leg to the right, 300 yards long. There is an out-of-bounds line extending from tee out 200 yards only, along right side of fairway. This out of bounds line for 200 yards is to force players to play the dog-leg for safety, to protect incoming players on No. 9 fairway. The out of bounds extends only 200 yards and stops. There is no out of bounds line on the last 100 yards to the green.

We rule that any ball going out of bounds and not recrossing an out-of-bounds line must be considered as out (it cannot recross a line as there is no further line to cross), regardless of where the ball comes to rest. We are familiar with the fact that a ball can cross an out-of-bounds line and then recross that line before coming to rest, and still be in bounds. But in our case the ball crosses out and goes beyond

our end marker and cannot recross the out-of-bounds line to bring it back in bounds as there is no line to cross.

DR. C. RAY STURM  
FAIRMONT, W. VA.

**A:** Your local rule conflicts with Definition of ball out of bounds in Rule 9 and appears impossible to administer fairly. Place where ball comes to rest must be determining factor. Suggest that you complete boundary to prevent any possible question.

**Handicaps Province of Local Committee**

No. 49-66. Hdcp., Tourn.

**Q:** Handicap match-play tournament extending over a whole month: Should 16 low be paired on low gross or net scores? With one match a week played, should handicap at time of qualifying be used all month or new handicap as it is lowered each week?

MRS. BROWN TREXLER  
LEXINGTON, KY.

**A:** Local committee must decide whether net or gross scores determine qualifiers and pairings for handicap match play. There is no rule or established custom. Handicaps should not be changed during tournament unless committee deems advisable to so provide in advance.

**Artificial Drains Defined**

No. 49-67. R. 7(4-Def.); 17(Def.)

**Q:** In reviewing the Rules of Golf for 1949, I note that Rule 7(4) includes artificial drains, the definition of which I will appreciate your clarifying due to the fact that Rule 17 discontinues classifying roads as hazards.

As the contour of most of the clubs in this State is sufficiently severe to necessitate maintenance of roads through certain portions of the course, it is necessary to maintain open ditches paralleling the road to carry off excess rainfall, and as these are not artificial, question has already arisen regarding conflict between artificial drains under Rule 7.

As the roads in question are necessary, many clubs will no doubt continue to classify them as a hazard under their local rules, as the presence of the road naturally reduces the number of sand traps and other hazards.

ROBERT J. FOLEY  
HUNTINGTON, W. VA.

**A:** As used in Rule 7(4), the term "artificial drains" means drains of such materials as metal, tile, or concrete which are manufactured, even though they may not be exposed. If any at-

tached or surrounding depressions or runways or bulkheads are to be considered locally as artificial obstructions under Rule 7(4), their margins must be defined exactly.

The term "artificial drains" does not apply to ditches. A ditch is a hazard, under Rule 17(Definition), and the fact that it may be a drainage ditch does not necessarily remove it from the hazard classification; in fact, all ditches doubtless have drainage value. It should be further noted that a dry ditch, although a hazard, is not necessarily a water hazard unless it so classified specifically.

It is within the spirit of the Rules for a club, by local rule, to classify roads as hazards.

#### **Rocks Embedded: Definition**

No. 49-68. R. 2(1), 7(2, 3)

**Q:** How deep does a boulder have to be in the ground to be embedded? Discussion here varies and I can find no definition on this part of Rule 7. If embedded rock is moved by player believing it not embedded, what is penalty?

W. F. FOX, JR.

INDIANAPOLIS, IND.

**A:** Fact of being embedded at all, and not depth embedded, determines whether a rock is a thing fixed as mentioned in Rule 7, Sections 2 and 3. Even loose, pulverized dirt lying through the green comes within this category if it is not piled for removal or is not a burrowing animal cast. Penalty for violating Rule 7, Section 3, is loss of hole in match play, or two strokes in stroke play—see Rule 2, Section 1.

#### **Flagstick Removed by Either Side**

No. 49-69. R. 7(7)

**Q:** Rule 7(7) provides in part that, "the flagstick may be removed by either side at any time." In match play A, who is shooting, is five yards off the green and he wishes to leave the flagstick in the hole; B contends that he may remove it so that A will not have the advantage of the flagstick being in the position to stop the ball. B's contention is that the rule book says that *either* side may remove the flagstick at *any time*. My contention is that when A is shooting, B may not touch the flagstick unless A asks him to.

A. F. DECREMÉR

PEORIA, ILL.

**A:** B's understanding of Rule 7(7) is correct.

The flagstick may be removed by either side at any time. If this were not so, the player might have the advantage of striking an unattended flagstick, and the Rule gives the opponent the right to obviate that possibility.

The Rule further provides, however, that a player may always have the position of the hole indicated to him.

#### **Protective Screens: Relief Limited**

No. 49-70. R. 7(4c)

**Q:** We have erected some protective screens on our course, and there have been a number of questions as to what relief from them is afforded by the Rules. My answer has been that the player may drop his ball, not nearer the hole, two club-lengths from the screen.

The question that arises in my mind is whether the two club-lengths is measured from where the ball lies or whether it can be two club-lengths from any part of the screen. If it is from any part of the screen, the player could follow the Rule and drop not nearer the hole but still obtain a clear shot toward the green by going to the end of the screen and measuring from there.

In the event that the player must measure the two club-lengths from where his ball lies, rather than from the screen, am I right in my belief that the player does not necessarily need to keep the screen between him and the hole but can measure off the distance on the other side of the screen as long as he does not get nearer to the hole? This is assuming that the ball is lying right at the base of the screen.

CHARLES R. WILSON

RIVERSIDE, ILL.

**A:** Protective screens are obstructions under Rule 7(4). If such an immovable obstruction within two club-lengths of the ball interfere with the player's backward or forward swing or his stance for a stroke in the desired direction, relief is given by Rule 7(4c)—that is, assuming the ball is not in a hazard, it "may be lifted without penalty and dropped, or on the putting green placed, within two club-lengths of the point of the obstruction nearest where the ball originally lay, and must come to rest not nearer the hole."

The Rule does not necessarily give relief insofar as the desired line of flight of the ball is concerned, but it does not limit the direction in which the ball is dropped. The object of the Rule is to enable the player to have a free swing without interference by the obstruction; the Rule is not concerned with the desired line of the ball's flight.

#### **Unplayable Ball**

No. 49-71. R. 7(4), 8(1)(2b).

**Q:** 1: Rule 8(2) states that, in stroke play, a ball *may* be lifted from any place on the course except a water

hazard or casual water in a hazard. If the player so lifts a ball, he may, under Rule 8 (2a), go back to the spot from which he played his previous stroke and drop a ball (or tee it, if from teeing ground) and proceed as under Rule 8(1); or he may, under Rule 8 (2b), tee a ball under penalty of two strokes and proceed as described under Rule 8(2b).

(a) Assume player has not played a provisional ball, and he finds or declares his ball unplayable. Does the player have the option of teeing a ball at the unplayable spot with a two-stroke penalty as under Rule 8(2b), or of going back to the spot from which he played the previous stroke and proceeding under Rule 8(1)?

(b) It appears that Rule 8(2b) applies only to an unplayable ball since he obviously cannot lift a lost ball or an out-of-bounds ball. Is this true?

(c) Rule 8(1) states that the player shall play his next stroke as nearly as possible at the spot from which the ball which is lost or unplayable was played. Does the word *shall* mean that he *must* do this, or should *shall* be changed to *may*?

**A:** 1: (a) Yes, provided the competition is stroke play.

(b) Yes.

(c) The word "shall" is correctly used in expressing a mandate. In match play, Rule 8(1) prescribes the only procedure which may be followed when a ball is lost or unplayable. In stroke play, when a player elects the option provided in Rule 8(2a), he must proceed in exactly the manner described in Rule 8(1).

**Q:** 2: Under Rule 7(4) for artificial obstructions, no mention is specifically made of permanent flagpoles. On the 18th hole of our course there is a 75-foot permanent flagpole, which on occasion can be directly in line between a ball and the hole since the flagpole is located about 30 feet to the side of the green.

If the flagpole is in line with the intended shot, and the ball happens to be more than two club-lengths away from the pole, is it permissible to move the ball sideways, no nearer the hole, to avoid being stymied by the flagpole?

**A:** 2: A flagpole is an artificial obstruction of the sort contemplated by Rule 7(4). In the situation described, it is not permissible to move the ball without penalty. Rule 7(4c) gives relief when an artificial obstruction interferes with the swing or the stance, but not necessarily with the desired line of play; further, the obstruction must be immovable and within two club-lengths of the ball before relief may be had. The main object of the Rule

is to give opportunity to swing the club without interference by the obstruction.

Questions by: C. L. EIGELBACH  
SCHENECTADY, N.Y.

### Play-Off Methods: Match Play

No. 49-72. Hdcp.

**Q:** Match play: my handicap, 31; opponent's handicap, 34. Match was halved. We agreed to "sudden death" on the 19th hole.

It is the opinion of many at the club that "sudden death" is a violation even if it is agreed upon. What is your opinion?

ARTHUR MAHARAM  
NEW YORK, N.Y.

**A:** Where a handicap match is even at the end of the designated round, the fairest way to determine the winner is to replay the entire match. When this is not possible for lack of time or for other reasons, it is recommended that the winner be determined by lot or 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 determine the winner by playing those three holes; or if A gives B ten strokes, it would be equitable to play nine holes under a handicap of five strokes.

In the present case, the match should stand as played unless the players' agreement on a "sudden death" play-off violated a rule of the tournament.

The local committee should provide for such cases in advance.



### Bridge in Hazard: Lift Permitted

No. 49-75. R. 7(4b)

**Q:** May a ball lying on a bridge crossing a hazard, at the option of the player concerned, be lifted off the bridge and played from the hazard if the player so elects?

G. T. WHITMORE, JR.  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

**A:** Yes, as provided in Rule 7(4b). The ball must be placed in the hazard, not nearer the hole, as near as possible to the place where it lay on the obstruction and without interference therefrom.