

THE REFEREE

Decisions by the USGA Rules of Golf Committee

Example of symbols: "No. 50-1" means the first decision issued in 1950. "R. 7(3)" means Section 3 of Rule 7 in the 1950 Rules of Golf.

Default during Nassau Match

No. 50-1, Tourn.

Q: Player competing in team match, scoring under Nassau system, finishes 4 up first nine, then is advised that member of family ill and has to leave. Her opponent claims three points, insisting that player, by leaving, defaulted match. When I gave my opinion, I ruled that since player had already won point for first nine, the final score of match should have been one point for player who quit and two points for her opponent, who would get point for second nine and point for eighteen-hole victory.

VINCENT ELDRED
FT. PIERCE, FLA.

A: We concur in your opinion.

Ground under Repair on Green

No. 50-4. R.1(2a), 2(1), 7(5b), 16(2), 18(Def.)

Q 1: A and B are playing a par-4 hole. A hits his second shot over the green, about 4 or 6 feet into ground under repair. A picks up the ball, after first finding it was 12 steps from the pin, and paces off 12 steps from the pin in the opposite direction, which put his ball off the green about one foot. A then putted up to the pin. When the play was over, B claimed the hole because in pacing off the 12 steps in the opposite direction, A thereby eliminated the necessity of chipping to the pin. Thereupon, A, to avoid an argument, gave B the hole.

It is A's contention, backed by the local pro, that A could place that ball within 12 steps of the pin in any direction as long as it wasn't any nearer to the pin. Was A right or wrong?

A 1: Rule 18 defines the putting green as all ground, except hazards, within twenty yards of the hole being played. Since you state the ball was within twelve paces of the hole and you do not refer to a hazard, it is assumed that the ball came to rest in ground under repair which was technically on the putting green.

Rule 7(5b) provides that, on the putting green, ground under repair may be treated as if it were casual water.

Rule 16(2) provides that, if a ball on the putting green lie in casual water,

the ball "may be lifted without penalty and placed in the **nearest** position to where it lay which is not nearer to the hole . . ." etc.

Thus, A was required to place his ball in the **nearest** position to where it lay which was not nearer to the hole. It seems unlikely that the nearest available position would be in the opposite direction from the hole, and if that be so, A lost the hole for violating Rule 7(5b)—see Rule 2(1).

Q 2: B stood there all the time A was pacing off and playing the ball and didn't by any look, action or word say anything was wrong. But after A putted up, B claimed the hole. Shouldn't B have protested that A was wrong, if he were wrong, at the time A was placing the ball in the new position?

A 2: B was not obliged to enter a claim other than as provided in Rule 1(2a).

Questions by: ROBERT S. SMITH
PORTLAND, ORE.

Putting out of Turn: Match Play

No. 50-8. R. 2(2), 5, 6, 18(8)

Q: If it should be a player's turn to make a stroke but before same can be executed his opponent makes his stroke on the putting green (Rule 18(8)), **must** the player recall his opponent's stroke or does the player have an option in this matter? Does this recall of a stroke by one player against another contain an option of recall in all cases or just in those cases where recall is mandatory?

SAMUEL G. CAMPBELL, JR.
CHARLESTON, W. VA.

A: On the putting green in match play, it is mandatory to recall a stroke played out of turn, under Rule 18(8). An option does not exist because orderly play on the putting green is imperative, especially in view of possible stymies.

Rule 2(2) provides: "Players shall not agree to exclude the operation of any Rule or local rule, nor to waive any penalty incurred. Penalty—Disqualification of both sides."

Order of play on the teeing ground is governed by Rule 5, and through the green and in hazards by Rule 6. In such cases, recall is optional in match play.

Local Rules for Tree Basins

No. 50-10. R. 7(4), LR

Q: The Green Committee is preparing local rules. It is faced with a situation that may be treated under Rule 7(4) as "hole made by greenkeeper".

Young trees have been transplanted and are under cultivation. Irrigation is provided by means of filling the basin—prepared by the greenkeeper—with water. The soil from the basin is piled around the edge, thus creating a rim.

Assume that a ball has come to rest so near the obstruction that a swing could not be made without striking part of the obstruction, which could be deemed interference with the swing.

1. Under what condition may the ball that comes to rest near the obstruction be dropped?

2. Where should it be dropped or placed?

3. In the event the ball comes to rest directly on the line between the green and the obstruction—either in front of or behind the obstruction—where should it be dropped or placed?

ALBIN MARTINSON
SACRAMENTO, CAL.

A: The Rules of Golf do not provide relief without penalty. Tree basins are not "holes made by the greenkeeper" in the sense contemplated by Rule 7(4).

Whether or not relief should be given by local rule is for the local committee to determine in the light of such factors as size and character of the basins and whether they are temporary or permanent. Ordinarily, any such local rule should be temporary and should be canceled as soon as conditions permit. In any case, such local rule should not necessarily give relief from interference by trees.

The Rules of Golf Committee has approved the following various methods of allowing relief where local committees deem it necessary:

1. Adoption of a local rule as follows: "A tree basin may be treated as an obstruction under Rule 7(4) except: (1) the player in dropping the ball must keep the spot where the ball originally lay between himself and the hole; (2) this local rule does not apply when the ball lies in a hazard."

2. Adoption of a local rule similar to the above but providing a one-stroke penalty for lifting and dropping.

3. Classifying tree basins as water hazards.

If any such local rule be adopted, the margins of the tree basins should be defined either in fact or in the local rule.

Recalling Tee Shot: Match Play

No. 50-12. R. 2(2), 5(1,2)

Q 1: In regard to the honor of hitting the ball first from the tee, Rule 5(2) states an opponent may recall a ball hit out of turn from the tee. He may recall, but is it compulsory? Does he have to recall it?

A 1: In match play, when a ball is played out of turn from the teeing ground, the opponent may recall the ball but it is not compulsory that he do so.

Honor on Tee Is Mandatory

Q 2: In match play, if I have just won a hole, I have the honor on the next tee. If I wanted to drive off the tee last, could I allow my opponent to play first? What penalty could be used against me if I wanted to play last from the tee?

A 2: Rule 5(1) provides: "The side which wins a hole shall take the honor at the next teeing ground." An agreement to waive the Rule would subject both players to disqualification under Rule 2(2).

Questions by: HORACE LAMBDEN
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

Player Unable to Continue

No. 50-13. R. 1(2), 20

Q: During our Invitation Mixed Foursomes Tournament, Miss Mary Ann Downey and Peter P. Prudden were playing against Mrs. Talbot Shelton and Edward C. Alvord. On the 15th tee, with Miss Downey and Mr. Prudden 2 up and four holes to go, Mr. Prudden took a practice swing on the tee and accidentally struck Mr. Alvord squarely on the forehead, knocking him out.

Mr. Alvord was assisted off the course. The committee at that time ruled that anyone leaving the course had to default the match, but the rules were strained by the committee afterward to permit the foursome to finish the last four holes the following morning. However, when I telephoned to Mr. Prudden to arrange the play-off time, I found Mr. Prudden in the hands of a doctor with an attack of diabetes. The committee then ruled the match a tie and permitted the able team of Mrs. Shelton and Mr. Alvord to continue in play.

It would be appreciated if you would let us have your official ruling and opinion on this incident.

JACK ROSS
EVERGLADES, FLA.

A: The local committee had authority to decide the matter under Rule 1(2), and its decision was final.

The committee had satisfactory reason to approve discontinuance of the match and to provide for its resumption the following morning—see Rule 20.

When one player was unable to resume play at the scheduled time, it was within the committee's power to declare the match defaulted, for the orderly progress of the tournament, and the effect of the committee's decision was to register such a default.

The committee's actions appear equitable.

Claims of Undue Delay

No. 50-14. R. 1(2a), 2(3)

Q: Having been requested to define "undue delay" under Rule 2(3), I advised that an opponent, in the absence of a referee, would be the sole judge, but will appreciate your advising if the Rules Committee has placed any limitation as to time.

While I realize that no two players exercise the same speed, it appears impossible to conscientiously invoke a penalty in the absence of a more specific ruling as to what constitutes undue delay.

R. J. FOLEY
HUNTINGTON, W. VA.

A: The Rules of Golf Committee has specified no time limit which can be used in applying Rule 2(3).

Application of the rule depends on judgment and a sense of fair play. A referee or a committee should be able to discern readily whether an individual is proceeding promptly, as the custom of the game and good manners dictate. In the absence of a referee, a player who believes that another is unfairly delaying play may appeal to the committee in stroke play or should enter claim under Rule 1(2a) in match play. He is not the sole judge, however.

Provisional Ball also in Water

No. 50-15. R. 17(2), 19

Q: Regarding Rule 19 (2), if A plays a ball from the tee into a water hazard in a doubtful lie and then plays a provisional ball and finds when she reaches the hazard that both the original and the provisional ball are unplayable, what is the procedure and how is it scored?

MRS. THEO. J. MEINDL
CHICAGO, ILL.

A: It is understood that the provisional ball (as well as the original ball) is in a water hazard. The player may proceed with a third ball under any one of the three options provided in Rule 17 (2), treating the second (provisional) ball now as having been the last ball in play; the score after proceeding with a third ball would be 5.

The status of the provisional ball played under Rule 19 is uncertain until the status of the original ball is deter-

mined. The player ultimately decides to abandon the original ball in the water hazard. The provisional ball then becomes the ball in play, and the player's score up to that point is 3.

But the player decides to abandon the second ball also. Her only recourse is to play a third ball under Rule 17(2). If she proceeds under Rule 17(2a), the spot at which the **second** ball last crossed the margin of the hazard determines the line on which the third ball must be dropped. If she proceeds under Rule 17(2b), the place at which the **second** ball entered the water determines the line of dropping the third ball.

Ball Stuck on Club-Face

No. 50-18. R. 1(3), 15(2)

Q: When the player finished his follow-through, the ball and some mud were stuck to the face of his club. He shook his club in the air, but the mud and the ball still stayed on the face of the club. What is the ruling?

W. H. ROETTER
FORT KNOX, KY.

A: The Rules of Golf do not specifically cover the case of a ball sticking or adhering to a club after a stroke, and so the Rules of Golf Committee has ruled that in equity (see Rule 1(3)) Rule 15 (2) applies. Thus, the ball should be dropped as near as possible to the spot where it originally lay, without penalty. Of course, the stroke on which the ball stuck to the club is counted.

Hole-in-One Defined

No. 50-21 R. 12(4b,d,e)

Q: If a drive lands near the cup and another player's drive hits the first ball and knocks it into the cup, is it a hole in one? What constitutes a hole in one?

CAROL McCUE
CHICAGO, ILL.

A: **Match play** (except as noted below)—Rule 12(4b) provides: "If the player's ball knock the opponent's ball into the hole, the opponent shall be deemed to have holed out at his last stroke."

Stroke play—Rule 12(4d) provides: "If a competitor's ball which is at rest be moved by another competitor or his caddie or forecaddie or his clubs or his ball, the ball shall be replaced."

Three-ball, best-ball and four-ball matches—Rule 12(4e) provides: "If a player's ball move any other ball in the match, the moved ball must be replaced as near as possible to the spot where it lay, without penalty."

If a player's first stroke is holed out in accordance with the Rules of Golf, the player is deemed to have made a hole-in-one.