
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.

Water Hazard: Ball Improperly Dropped
No. 50-23. R. 1(4), 2(1), 3(2), 10(2)
11(3c), 17(2)

Q 1: During the Lower Rio Grande Valley Open a player hit his tee shot into a water hazard on the left side of the fairway. He then dropped a ball as if it were being played as a parallel water hazard, which it was not, and played to the edge of the green. Then player went on the other side of the water hazard, where he should have dropped it in the first place, and proceeded to hit a shot to the left of the green. He played out both balls. (Sketch submitted.)

Was player entitled to carry out this procedure under Rule 1(4)—Doubt as to Rights?

A 1: In stroke play only, when the player is doubtful of his rights, Rule 1(4) permits such procedure. If the second ball were played according to the Rules, the score with that ball would be the score for the hole.

However, from the sketch and other information submitted, the second ball was not dropped so as to keep the last point at which the ball crossed the margin of the water hazard between the player and the hole—see Rule 17(2a).

If in thus dropping the second ball improperly the player did not drop it nearer the hole than the Rule allows, he sustained a double penalty—one stroke for relief from the water hazard under Rule 17(2a) and two strokes for not conforming with that Rule—see general penalty under Rule 2(1). However, if in dropping the second ball improperly the player dropped it nearer the hole than he should have, he did not play the stipulated round—see Rule 3(2)—and he thereby disqualified himself.

Caddie Picks Up Ball

Q 2: A player on the eighth hole hit a tee shot toward the green, the hole measuring 320 yards. This hole could be driven by many players. The player, thinking his ball might be lost, unplayable or out of bounds, elected to hit a provisional ball. Player's caddie, thinking player was going to play second ball, picked up first ball, which was in bounds and playable. Same caddie had

been warned by player not to touch any ball. Player was penalized two strokes.

From facts given, was player charged with extra stroke?

A 2: The diagram submitted with the question indicates that the player dropped his first ball as near as possible to the place where it originally lay and played out the hole with it, abandoning the provisional ball. On that understanding, the committee was right in penalizing the player two strokes for his caddie's action in touching the ball—see Rule 10(2) and 2(1). The principle is the same as in Rule 11 (3c). A player is responsible for his caddie.

Questions by: WARREN ORLICK
MONROE, MICH.

Replacing Ball Creates Stymie

No. 50-24. R. 1(2a, 3), 12(4)

Q: In a match, A's ball was on the putting green; B played her stroke from 50 or more yards off the putting green, and her ball struck A's ball. Upon reaching the green, A claimed the right to replace her ball. From the distance it would be impossible for A to know where the ball should be placed—that is, the position from which it was moved. A placed her ball so that B had a direct stymie.

Rule 12 covers this, and I guess B had the right to replace the ball.

MISS VIRGINIA LINDBLAD
LOS ANGELES 7, CAL.

A: Under Rule 12(4), A had the choice of replacing her ball as near as possible to the spot from which it was moved (which must have been done before either player played another stroke) or of playing it from the position to which it was moved.

The spot from which A's ball was moved is a question of fact. It would be permissible to seek the aid of any reliable witnesses. In the absence of good evidence, it hardly seems likely that A could have known the ball's original position to such accurate degree as to permit her to stymie B in replacing her ball. If B entered claim as provided in Rule 1(2a), the referee or the committee should have considered the equity of the case—see Rule 1(3).

Wrong Information Claimed

No. 50-35. R. 1(2a), 12(3), Hdcp. Q: A and B were playing a match, with handicaps, consisting of a round of 18 holes. Through Hole 17 they were tied. No stroke was given on Hole 18, where A was on the green in 3 and down in 5. B was on the green in 2. A claims that B's third stroke placed the ball several feet from the hole and that while B's ball was still in motion from B's fourth stroke B struck it a fifth time. B claimed having holed out in 5 and having tied the hole and the match with A.

A did not claim the hole, and an additional 18 holes were played to decide the tie. B won and the next day played in the final and won.

Four days later A made a written claim for the prize awarded to B, basing her claim on the fact that B had played a ball while it was in motion on Hole 18 of the semi-final and that in claiming five strokes on that hole gave wrong information inasmuch as B could not have taken five strokes, having lost the hole by playing her ball while it was in motion and that in stating that five strokes had been made in holing out gave wrong information.

Conceding that B did play her ball while it was in motion, B did not indicate to A that she had incurred a penalty, nor did A, who was in position to see what happened, claim the hole before leaving the green.

There is a third person to consider, the lady who played B in the final and was awarded the prize for runner-up.

J. E. CUMMINGS
TAMPICO, TAMPS.
MEXICO

A: Rule 1(2a) governs. It provides: "In match play if a question arise on any point, in order for a claim to be considered it must be made before the players play from the next teeing ground, or, in the case of the last hole of the round, before they leave the putting green. Any later claim based on newly discovered facts cannot be considered unless the player making the claim had been given wrong information by an opponent."

Whether B violated Rule 12(3) by playing a moving ball is a question of fact which only those present at the time could determine. It could not, in any case, be a "newly discovered" fact and a proper basis for A to claim that she had been given wrong information, in view of the circumstances described.

A did not exercise her right to enter a claim under Rule 1(2a) before leaving the 18th green; therefore, the hole must

stand as played and the match must be considered halved through that hole.

Under a recent amendment, the USGA now recommends that "A handicap match which ends all even should be played off hole by hole until one side wins a hole. The play-off should start on the hole where the match began. Strokes should be allowed as in the prescribed round."



Ball in Spectator's Pocket, Thrown by Spectator

No. 49-210. R. 7(4b)

Q: During the Goodall Tournament I was referee of a match in which Cary Middlecoff played. On a 230-yard par-3 hole, Middlecoff pushed his drive to the right of the green. A hard dirt road parallels the green, and the entire area was lined solidly with spectators. The ball bounced on the road and came to rest in a spectator's pocket. In the immediate vicinity was Donna Fox, head marshal for the tournament. Donna is a former U. S. champion bobsled driver, represented the U. S. in international competition and also a former golf champion of Wykagyl, not inclined toward getting rattled. When we arrived at the scene, Fox had thrown his megaphone over the ball, which was at rest in seven inches of thick grass, about one foot in front of a tree, making it impossible to take a backswing. Donna had seen the spectator remove the ball from his pocket and asked him to hold it in his hand, but he became excited and threw the ball into what was practically an unplayable lie. Some people said that Fox threw it there, but this was not the case; he merely protected it when some of the spectators shouted, "Kick it out."

Middlecoff asked me what his rights were, and I told him it was my opinion that he could lift the ball and drop it over his shoulder from the point closest to where the spectator had been standing. Chick Harbert, who was playing in the match, said that inasmuch as the spectator had dropped it, he would have to play it from where it lay. Middlecoff accepted this and consequently wound up with a 5 on the par-3 hole.

It would certainly seem most unfair

to the other competitors if the spectator had thrown the ball onto the green and possibly into the hole, making it an ace, instead of throwing it behind the tree into an unplayable lie. I do not have the Rule number handy but the ball was thrown into its final position by an agency outside the match, and, therefore, it would seem that the competitor should be permitted to drop the ball from the point nearest to where it came to rest, and it very definitely came to rest in the spectator's pocket, and should have been dropped from that point. What do you think?

WALTER D. PEEK
NEW YORK, N. Y.

A: The spectator's clothes were an artificial obstruction under Rule 7(4). The player should have dropped the ball (or on the putting green placed it) within two club-lengths of that point of the obstruction nearest where the ball originally lay in the spectator's pocket, and it should have come to rest not nearer the hole — see Rule 7(4b). (For definition of putting green, see Rule 18.)



Putting from Wrong Place

No. 49-226. 2(1), 10(4, 5a), 12 (4d), 13(5), 15(3)

Q: During the qualifying round of the Oregon Coast tournament, A and B reached the 18th green (a par-5 hole) in 4 each. A's ball was nearer the cup but in line with B's ball, B being away. A's ball was marked, by whom I do not know, and tapped away. B putted, missing and going past the cup. A then putted from where his ball lay on the green about five feet from the ball-marker, also missing. While the ball was in motion, B told A he putted from the wrong spot. A then put his ball at the marked spot, putted and sank it. He claimed a 5 on the hole. I as a member of the gallery claimed he should be disqualified, because a player is not permitted to play two ways and choose his score.

H. PFAFF
PORTLAND, ORE.

A: (a) It is assumed that A was aware of the fact that his ball had been marked and, in effect, lifted while B's ball was played; it is a custom of the game for a ball to be marked and lifted only by the player or his caddie. If A's

caddie lifted the ball, even without A's knowledge, A is not excused.

Rule 10(5a) provides in part: "When a ball is lifted and dropped or placed under the Rules, unless otherwise provided, it must be dropped or placed as near as possible to the place where it lay." In playing a stroke from the wrong position, A violated Rule 10(5a), and the penalty is two strokes—see Rule 2(1). The stroke played from the wrong position is not to be counted in A's score. In order to complete the play of the hole, A was obliged to replace his ball at the proper location, as he did. His score for the hole was 7—that is, five strokes which he played properly with his ball and two strokes penalty under Rule 10(5a).

If the local committee were to consider A's stroke from the wrong location was purposely made as a practice stroke, A should be disqualified—see Rule 13(5).

Tapping a ball away is not an approved method of lifting a ball. Under certain circumstances, the local committee might be justified in penalizing a player for so doing two strokes under Rule 18(4) for testing the putting surface, or two strokes under Rule 10(4) for cleaning the ball, or disqualification under Rule 13(5) for taking a practice stroke.

(b) If any agency other than A or his caddie lifted the ball and if A was not aware that the ball had been lifted, there was no penalty against A for playing a stroke from the wrong location—see Rules 12(4d) and 15(3). However, A was obliged to replace his ball at the proper location, as he did.



Ball Strikes Caddie Cart

No. 49-247. R. 12(6)

Q: What is the penalty for a player whose ball hit the caddie cart with her clubs attached, medal and match? Caddie carts are not covered by the Rules of Golf.

MRS. THEODORE J. MEINDL
CHICAGO, ILL.

A: Rule 12(6) applies and the penalty is loss of hole in match play and two strokes in stroke play. The Rule covers the player's clubs and caddie and is interpreted to cover also the bag in which the clubs are carried and any apparatus used to carry them.

Putting away from Hole to Assist Partner

No. 49-220. R. 1(3), 2(1)

Q: A and B are partners against C and D in a best-ball match. All four are on the green, A's ball farthest away. A seemingly deliberately putts so as to get slightly farther away than B and on a line to the cup so that when he, A, makes his second putt, it will give his partner an opportunity to see the line and the roll. In other words, A deliberately sacrifices his own score in the hope of aiding his partner on the best-ball score.

Is such procedure against the Rules? Is such procedure barred by ethics or sportsmanship? What would you suggest as the chairman's ruling on the question?

Will you visualize the same performance on an approach shot and let me have your opinion?

MILTON A. JENTES
WHITE PLAINS, N. Y.

A: The Rules of Golf have been written upon the premise that players hole out in the least number of strokes and that in order to do so the game be played towards the hole whenever possible or practicable.

A's action is so contrary to the intent of the Rules, to the customs of the game, to sportsmanship, and to the rule of equity that A and B should be declared to have lost the hole—see Rules 1(3) and 2(1).

The foregoing applies to any stroke played in the manner and for the purpose employed by A.



Conceding Player's Putt to Hinder Partner

No. 49-250. R. 2(1), 12(5d), 18(9)

Q: In a four-ball, partners A and B are on the putting green respectively three and five feet from the hole, the line to the hole being about the same. B has had four shots and A three. The opponents, wishing to prevent A from getting information, concede B his putt and knock it away from the hole. The question is: Can this be done if, first, both opponents have holed out; and second, supposing either one or neither one of them has holed out?

CLAYTON HEAFNER
CHARLOTTE, N. C.

A: The Rules do not permit either opponent to knock a player's ball away under the circumstances cited until both opponents have holed out; see Rules 2(1) and 18(9).

If the opponent knocked the player's ball away before both he and his partner had holed out, he violated Rule 12(5d) and his side lost the hole; the exceptions are not pertinent to this case.

If the opponent knocked the player's ball away after both he and his partner had holed out, no penalty was incurred. However, the concession did not have to be accepted. The player could have replaced his ball without penalty and completed his play of the hole.

The act of replacing the ball and putting under the circumstances cited would constitute, in equity, a clear rejection of the concession.

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