

# 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.

## Two Cups in Green

No. 50-36. R. 1(3), 3, 7 (4).

**Q:** There were two cups on a green. Both were lined with tin, but naturally only one held the flag pole. Is there any question but what the cup containing flag should be played?

HORTON SMITH  
DETROIT, MICH.

**A:** It is the duty of the local committee to designate the stipulated round. It is natural to assume that the hole with the flagstick is the one to be played, in which event the other cup location is "a hole made by the greenkeeper" within the meaning of Rule 7 (4).

However, if a player inadvertently played for the wrong cup, the competition should be replayed if it were stroke play and the hole should be replayed if it were match play. See Rules 3 and 1 (3).

## Second Ball in Stroke Play

No. 50-37. R. 1(2), 3(2), 12(4d), 13(1, 2), 21(4c)

**Q 1:** Last year in the qualifying round of the city championship, a competitor's ball was moved by another competitor's caddie. The player was in doubt as to the rule and did not replace the ball. She was disqualified. Would it have been permissible, after playing the original ball, to have played a second ball as near as possible to the place where the original ball lay, under Rule 1(4), and thus avoid disqualification?

**A 1:** Yes.

As the hole was played, the player violated Rule 12 (4d). The penalty in stroke play is two strokes (see Rule 1 (2) ) unless the ball had been moved nearer the hole and had not been replaced, in which case the player did not play the stipulated round (see Rule 3(2) ) and thereby disqualified herself. If the two-stroke penalty described above was not included in the score for the hole returned by the player, she disqualified herself for returning a wrong score. See Rule 21 (4c).

## Wrong Balls in Three-Ball Match

**Q 2:** A, B and C were playing a three-ball match. In playing the second shots to a hole A played B's ball and B played A's ball. On reaching the green A and B informed C of the mistake, and C claimed the hole from both. A and B played out the hole on equal terms. Was C right?

**A 2:** C won the hole from A and B. See Rule 13 (2). As to A and B, B cancelled A's mistake. See Rule 13 (1a).

Questions by: MRS. W. H. SEAGRAVE  
CLEVELAND, OHIO

## Point Match Interpreted

No. 50-39, Misc.

**Q:** A and B are playing against C and D in a first and second-ball match. A and B give one stroke on either ball to C and D on the 14th hole. A has a 4, B has a 5 and C and D have 6s. A and B claim that the stroke makes one of C or D's 6s become a 5, thus taking two points—4 against 5 and 5 against 6. C and D claim they only lose one point because the second ball is halved. Do A and B win one point or two points on this hole?

MRS. JOHN P. BARRON  
KENMORE, WASH.

**A:** The Rules of Golf do not cover playing for points on a first and second-ball basis.

For the hole in question, it is our understanding that C and D received only one stroke, to be applied to either ball as they chose, but not to both balls. In our opinion, A and B won two points. A won the first ball with a 4 to a 5. B won the second ball with a 5 to a 6.

USGA recommendations for handicap allowances in four-ball match play are: Reduce the stroke play handicaps of all four players by the handicap of the low handicap player, the low handicap player then to play from scratch. Allow each of the three other players two-thirds (66⅔ per cent) of the resulting difference, strokes to be taken by each player as they come on the card.

## Water Hazard: Options Available

No. 50-41. R. 17(2), L. R.

**Q 1:** I understand that the Rule concerning water hazards has been changed, but there is discussion as to its application. If a ball driven from the tee goes into a ditch or water hazard, is it mandatory that another ball be driven from the tee, adding a penalty stroke, or is a player given a choice of driving such a ball from the tee with a penalty stroke or of dropping a ball immediately behind the ditch or water hazard, not nearer the hole, adding a penalty stroke?

**A 1:** The player has the following choices under Rule 17 (2): "If a ball lie or be lost in a water hazard (whether the ball lie in water or not), the player may drop a ball, under penalty of one stroke, either (a) behind the hazard, keeping the spot at which the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard between himself and the hole, or (b) in the hazard, keeping the spot at which the ball entered the water between himself and the hole; or (c) as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was played; if the ball was played from the teeing ground, a ball may be

teed anywhere within the teeing ground." A ditch is a water hazard—see Definition in Rule 17.

**Water Hazard: Free Lift Not Recommended**

**Q 2:** Are there any circumstances, such as terrain, awkwardness of layout, the fact that it is a blind hole or any other things that make life miserable for the average golfer, that permit a club to omit the penalty for driving into a ditch or water hazard on his tee shot? This omission is for local play and for our own small tournaments.

**A 2:** The Rules of Golf do not authorize granting relief without penalty. In the case of a cross-ditch 240 yards from the tee on a 388-yard hole, the Association stated in part: "Although a local committee may, of course, draft any local rule consonant with the Rules of Golf which it deems necessary for fair play, we would recommend that there be no local rule in the present case. If the ditch were so placed as to be palpably unfair to a considerable majority of players, the committee might well grant relief without penalty. The fact that it might affect only a few of the better players would not be reason enough."

Questions by: DOUGLAS ERWIN  
SHREVEPORT, LA.

**"Winter Rules": Ball Moves**

No. 50-45. 12(1b) L. R.

**Q:** I know there are no rules covering so-called "winter rules," but it is sometimes necessary on some courses to tee up the ball. If the ball is teed up in the fairway and moves when it is addressed, is there a penalty of one stroke?

MRS. LOUIS W. ROBEY  
BRYN MAWR, PA.

**A:** Yes. See Rule 12(1b)

The USGA does not recognize "winter rules" or "preferred lies" in the established Rules of Golf. It recognizes, however, that adverse conditions are sometimes general throughout a golf course and that local committees sometimes adopt rules called "winter rules" for such conditions. Any such local rules, like all other local rules, should be stated in detail and interpreted by the local committee.

The following local rule would seem appropriate for the conditions in question, and it is suggested simply for the purpose of standardization:

"A ball lying in a 'fairway' or on a putting surface may be lifted and cleaned, without penalty, and placed within six inches of where it originally lay, not nearer the hole, and so as to preserve as nearly as possible the stance required to play from the original lie. After the ball has been so placed, it is in play, and if it move after the player has addressed it, the penalty shall be one stroke — see Rule 12(1b)."

It is emphasized that such a local rule is in conflict with the established Rules of Golf and the fundamental principle of playing the ball as it lies, and the USGA therefore does not endorse and will not interpret it.

**Water Hazard: Penalty Explained**

No. 50-49. Def. 5. R. 2(1), 3, 8, 17(2).

**Q 1:** Water hazard: If a golfer's second stroke sends ball into water and he drops a ball at same spot second stroke was made, is he shooting three or four?

**A 1:** Four. The player counts the first two strokes, adds a penalty stroke as provided when proceeding under option (c) in Rule 17(2), and his next stroke is his fourth.

**Lost Ball: Penalty Explained**

**Q 2:** Lost ball: If you return to spot ball was shot from and lost ball was second stroke, are you shooting three? If ball is dropped near where ball was lost, are you shooting four or five?

**A 2:** Rule 8(1) provides that the player shall play his next stroke as nearly as possible at the spot from which the lost ball was played, adding a penalty stroke to the score for the hole. He is not permitted to drop another ball "near where ball was lost."

Proceeding under Rule 8(1) in the cited case, the player would count his first two strokes, add a penalty stroke and his next stroke is his fourth. A player who fails to proceed as provided in Rule 8(1) loses the hole in match play or disqualifies himself in stroke play since he does not complete the stipulated round—see Rules 2(1) and 3.

**Unplayable Ball: Penalty Explained**

**Q 3:** Unplayable ball: If the ball is unplayable on second stroke and is dropped back of hazard, is the player shooting four or five?

**A 3:** Rule 8 governs.

In match play, if a ball is deemed unplayable, the player shall play his next stroke as nearly as possible at the spot from which the unplayable ball was played, adding a penalty stroke to the score for the hole. Thus, if his second stroke results in an unplayable ball, he counts his first two strokes, adds a penalty stroke and his next stroke is his fourth.

In stroke play, if a ball is deemed unplayable, the player may proceed as above or he may, optionally, proceed under Rule 8(2b), teeing and playing a ball under penalty of two strokes, keeping the point at which the ball was lifted between himself and the hole. If this be impossible, he shall tee and play a ball under penalty of two strokes as near as possible to the place from which the ball was lifted but not nearer the hole. Thus, if a player's second stroke results in an unplayable ball in stroke play and he chooses to proceed under Rule 8(2b), he counts his first two strokes, adds two penalty strokes, and his next stroke is his fifth.

In a water hazard, Rule 17(2) takes precedence over Rule 8.

**Penalty Stroke Defined**

**Q 4:** I am under the impression that a penalty stroke is one you do not take: Just count every time you stroke the ball from tee to in-the-hole, then add your penalty stroke or strokes.

**A 4:** Definition 5 states: "A 'penalty stroke' is a stroke added to the score of a side under certain Rules, and does not affect rotation of play."

Questions by: MRS. JOE M. COOK  
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