

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.

Ball Striking Competitor's Ball

No. 50-50. R. 12 (4), 18 (Def.)

Q: In stroke play, A's ball is on the green. B's ball is in the trap. B's shot comes out, lands on the green, rolls and hits A's ball.

MRS. H. D. WOLF
BALTIMORE, MD.

A: There is no penalty. 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."

If both balls had been on the putting green (see Rule 18 (Def.)) before the stroke, Rule 12 (4c) would have applied, with a penalty of two strokes against B.

Practice Swing on Putting Green

No. 50-52. R. 7(3), 18(4).

Q: If I should take a practice putting swing on the surface especially prepared for putting and my putter blade should touch the grass, is that a violation of Rule 18 (4)?

BARBARA DAWSON
PIEDMONT, CAL.

A: A practice swing of itself is permissible (see Rule 7 (3)) even though the player's club may touch the putting surface. However, it is up to the player to leave no doubt that he has not roughed or scraped or otherwise tested the putting surface, else he is subject to penalty under Rule 18 (4).

Ball Lost, Unplayable, Out of Bounds: Penalties Explained

No. 50-57. R. 8, 9, 19(b)

Q 1: In stroke play, what is your ruling in regard to (a) lost ball, (b) out-of-bounds ball, (c) unplayable ball when no provisional ball has been played?

A 1: Rule 8 governs when a ball is lost or deemed unplayable. It provides in part that "the player shall play his next stroke as nearly as possible at the spot from which the lost or unplayable ball was played, adding a penalty stroke to the score for the hole. If the stroke was played from the teeing ground, a ball may be teed anywhere within the teeing ground; if from through the green or a hazard, it shall be dropped; and if on a putting green, it shall be placed."

In stroke play only, if a ball be deemed unplayable, the competitor may proceed as above or, at his option, he may "tee and play a ball under penalty of two strokes, keeping the point from which the ball was lifted between him 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."

Rule 9 governs when a ball comes to rest out of bounds. It provides in part that "the player shall play his next stroke as nearly as possible at the spot from which the ball which is out of bounds was played." The penalty is loss of distance only.

Q 2: How does Rule 19(b) apply in the above instances?

A 2: Rule 19 permits a player to play another ball provisionally to save time in the event that his first ball may be lost, unplayable, out of bounds or in a water hazard. Rule 19(b) simply specifies that any such provisional ball must be played before the player or his partner goes forward to search for the original ball; a ball played after the player goes forward to search becomes the ball in play and constitutes abandonment of the original ball.

Questions by: S. TAI
SPOKANE, WASH.

Smoothing Hazard after Stroke

No. 50-58. R. 2(1), 17(1e)

Q: Player in hazard smoothed footprints after playing shot, failing to get out. Opponent called hole before any further shot was made. Player claims no penalty under Rule 17, Sec. F.

GENE BOTHUYNE
PASADENA, CAL.

A: If player's action improved lie of ball or could have assisted him in subsequent play of hole, he lost hole. If not, there is no penalty. See Rules 17(1e) and 2(1).

Defending Champion Qualifying

No. 50-59. Misc.

Q: The girl who has been champion for the past two years at our club has plans that will necessitate her absence on the day set for qualification for the championship matches. Would the just thing be to use her average score for position and allow her to participate in the matches without qualifying on that day, or may she play a round before she leaves town and use that score for position, or should she be omitted from the matches as she cannot qualify on the appointed day?

MRS. MARK T. KESSENIC
ROSLYN ESTATES, N. Y.

A: The Rules of Golf do not cover. It is a question for the local committee to decide. Customarily, all entrants are required to qualify for a match play tournament.

In our opinion, the local committee should require the defending champion to qualify at the same time and under the same conditions, as other entrants or should exempt her from qualifying altogether. It would not be fair to use an average of her previous scores or to permit her to play on a different day.

First Ball Only in Play

No. 50-60. R. 19(1)

Q: (Sketch submitted.) The player plays from the tee directly toward the green on a dog-leg hole. It is a blind shot, and the ball goes toward a water hazard. The player immediately tees and plays a second ball. He finds the first ball in the fairway, in front of the green, and the second ball in the water hazard. Which ball is in play?

JOE T. McEWEN
NASHVILLE, TENN.

A: The first ball is in play until the player indicates otherwise.

The player hit a second ball provisionally as provided in Rule 19(1). When he determined that the first ball was playable, he would have been within his rights in abandoning the provisional ball, and no penalty would have been incurred had he done so.

Water-Hazard Penalty

No. 50-61. R. 9(1), 17(2)

Q: Considerable discussion has taken place with regard to the water-hazard Rule. There is a small group who hold that a ball in a water hazard under the new Rule is the same as out of bounds. The majority contend that this is not true and that the only thing the new Rule does is to give the player an option as to how he shall play his next shot.

Will you be kind enough to give us the proper interpretation?

HERMAN C. J. PEISCH
MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.

A: The majority's contention is correct.

When a player's ball lies or is lost in a water hazard and he avails himself of relief under Rule 17(2), he counts the original stroke and also incurs a penalty stroke, regardless of the option under which he proceeds.

When a player's ball comes to rest out of bounds, he counts the original stroke, but he does not incur an artificial penalty stroke also; see Rule 9(1).

A player may play a ball from a water hazard without penalty if he finds it playable. He may not play a ball from out of bounds.

Bag Has Status of Clubs

No. 50-63 R. 1(2a, 3), 12(6), 20(1, 3a)

Q 1: Rule 12(5) states that if player's ball strike opponent's clubs, opponent shall lose hole. My ball struck my opponent's golf bag which caddie had placed by green. She maintained that I struck her bag and not her clubs; therefore no penalty.

A 1: If you entered a claim as provided in Rule 1(2a), your opponent lost the hole

(assuming that your opponent had not already holed out). Rule 12(5) covers not only the opponent's clubs and caddie but also the bag in which the clubs are carried or any other apparatus used to carry them.

Caddie Cart Has Status of Clubs

Q 2: What if ball strikes golf cart to which bag of clubs is attached? Would there be a penalty?

A 2: Yes. See answer 1 above.

Cancellation Voids Disqualification

Q 3: Three of us signed tournament sheet on Friday to play in medal tournament. Weather became so bad we quit at nine, although course was not declared unplayable. Competition for first round was to have taken place Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Subsequently, it snowed and play was cancelled over week-end. The tournament chairman said since we three signed up and did not finish round, we were disqualified for tournament in spite of fact that whole round was cancelled. What about this?

A 3: Although your group violated Rule 20(1), your disqualification was automatically cancelled if, as we understand it, Friday's play was cancelled under Rule 20(3a); and you should be allowed to start again on the same basis as all other entrants. The Rule of equity governs—see Rule 1(3).

Questions by: MRS. HENRY PAGE
DENVER, COLO.

Committee Should Correct Error

No. 50-65. R. 21(4b)

Q: In a three-day medal tournament an error was made in addition on the final day of play. The pro posted a total of 233 (instead of 232) for 78-78-76. This apparently created a tie by two contestants. The tournament committee in checking the scores the following day discovered the addition was wrong. Does the tie hold or does the contestant with the actual lower total win?

MRS. J. R. MEDART
ST. LOUIS, MO.

A: The competitor with the lower total wins.

Rule 21(4b) provides in part: "The competitor is solely responsible for the correctness of the score reported for each hole. The committee is responsible for addition of hole-by-hole scores." The committee should correct any error in addition whenever it comes to attention.

Ball Moved to Improve Lie

No. 50-66. R. 10(2)

Q: Under summer rules players inadvertently moved balls as in winter rules. Understand penalty one stroke although some question as to number of strokes if moved by hand or by clubhead. Medal tie local championship involved.

MISS MARIE G. SPATES
SILVER SPRING, MD.

A: Rule 10(2) governs. Penalty is two strokes. Inadvertence has no bearing.