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OTHER

THE GOLFER (magazine), San Francisco, Cal.

Identifying Ball: Lie Not Improved

No. 50-111. R. 7(3a)

Q: In match play, with USGA rules governing, Player A hits his tee shot to the left into thick rough about four inches high. Player B's tee shot goes to the right about the same distance on the fairway. The two balls are about equal distance from the tee, but about 100 feet apart.

Player A hunts for his ball in the rough and locates a ball, but because of the rough is unable to identify it. He lightly parts the grass to identify the ball without improving his lie or moving the ball. It is his ball.

Standing 100 feet away, Player B calls a penalty.

Please advise whether a penalty prevails under USGA rules. If a penalty prevails, what rule applies?

HARRY W. WRIGHT
 BINGHAMTON, N. Y.

A: On the facts presented, there is no penalty. Rule 7(3a) provides:

"The player is always entitled to find his ball and to identify it. He may move fixed or growing objects (including sand) to the extent necessary to enable him to find or to identify the ball, provided that, before addressing the ball, he restores the objects (including sand) to their original position; he is not of necessity entitled to see the ball when playing the stroke. If the ball be touched there shall be no penalty, even in a hazard; but if the ball be accidentally moved the penalty is one stroke (see Rule 12(1))."

Practice Putt After Holing Out

No. 50-114. R. 2(3), 13(5)

Q: In a 36-hole medal play tournament, in one day on an 18-hole course, is there any penalty for taking a practice putt on the first round after holing out? Play was not delayed.

SUMIO TAI
 SPOKANE, WASH.

A: No, provided play of the hole had been completed and further play was not delayed. See Rules 13(5) and 2(3).

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: Options

No. 50-69. R. 17(2)

Q: We have had discussion of the water hazard Rule. I have accepted the Rule as following; please let me know if this is right:

If a man goes into a water hazard, he has five options:

- (1) Play as is, no penalty.
- (2) Lay out of water, still in hazard, keeping spot ball entered water between him and hole, one stroke penalty.
- (3) Drop back of hazard, any distance, keeping spot ball last crossed margin of hazard between him and hole, one stroke penalty.
- (4) If ball came from tee, he may go back to tee, tee another, one stroke penalty.
- (5) He may play another ball as nearly as possible from where he played the one which went into hazard, under penalty of one stroke.

Now, under the last four options, I contend the player is losing more than just distance. If one went into hazard from tee and player accepts option (4), he is shooting three. If second shot went into hazard and he accepts option (5), he is in two, out in three and shooting four. In no instance is a player allowed to treat a water hazard the same as out of bounds, which is distance only.

AUBREY TURNER
EL RENO, OKLA.

A: Your statements regarding Rule 17(2) are generally correct.

The Rule provides three basic options under which a player may proceed when he desires relief from a water hazard.

A penalty of one stroke is attached to all three options (in contrast to the penalty of loss of distance only which is incurred in the case of a ball out of bounds).

Ball Strikes Cup Lining

No. 50-105. R. 2(1), 7(4), 7(7), 12(5), 16(2, 4), 18(9)

Q 1: A, in match play, hits his putt toward the hole at which B's caddie is tending the pin. When the ball is about two or three feet from the cup, B's caddie pulls out the pin. However, the metal cup lining pulls up with it and A's ball hits the metal lining and does not go in the hole. Does B lose the hole?

A 1: Yes. See Rule 7(7). The metal lining of the cup is deemed to be a part of the flagstick.

Striking Opponent's Ball

Q 2: A, in match play, hits his putt to the hole. It is a short putt and after it had traveled part way to the hole B says, "I give," and steps up and hits A's ball back to him with his putter. Does B lose the hole?

A 2: If B had not holed out, or if A's putt was for a win after B had holed out, B had no right to touch A's ball and in doing so he violated Rule 12(5) and the penalty was loss of hole.

If B had holed out and A's putt was for a half, Rule 2(1) applied and B thereby conceded the half.

Obstruction Covered by Turf

Q 3: The course recently had a watering system installed, and in each green is a small disc of turf covering the sprinkler head. If this disc of turf is not blended perfectly with the surface of the green, does a player have a right to move his ball so said disc is not in his line of putt?

A 3: No.

Questions by: NORMAN P. STEVENSON
ROCHESTER, N. Y.

Stymie: Abrogation Not Permitted

No. 50-106. R. 10(2), 11(3, 4), 18(7)

Q: In match play, where stymies are not being played, is it advisable, or should we say permissible, to lift and mark balls on the putting green according to Rule 11(3, 4)?

DR. ANTHONY J. STONE
ATHOL, MASS.

A: The Rules of Golf do not permit abrogation of the stymie; see Rules 10(2) and 18(7). A ruling cannot be given on the question.

Rule 11(3) applies only in stroke play, and Rule 11(4) applies only in three-ball, best-ball and four-ball matches.

"Fairway" Not in the Rules

No. 50-107. Def 3.

Q: If an immovable object — for instance a water plug—be within a foot or so of the fairway and the player has a right to drop within two club-lengths but not nearer the hole, does that mean that he has the right to drop in the fairway if his ball previously lay in the rough?

SAM W. REYNOLDS
OMAHA, NEBRASKA

A: Yes; but attention is called to the fact that the Rules of Golf do not recognize the term "fairway"—it is part of "through the green" as defined in Definition 3.

Two Balls in Play

No. 50-154. R. 1(4), 7(5)

Q: In a final league game based on stroke competition, one team member drove into an area not marked but later deemed to be ground under repair. As there was some doubt in the player's mind as to his rights, he elected to play his first ball as it lay and also to shoot a provisional ball, dropping the second ball behind the area in contention.

The player holed out both balls, scoring a 4 with the first (original) ball and a 5 with the second (provisional) ball.

Player claims he shot the second ball to avoid any subsequent penalty that might be invoked against his team by his opponents, and that inasmuch as he finished out the hole with his original ball, that score should stand. Player states that nothing in the Rules prohibits him from playing out of ground under repair and that once such action is taken, the original ball remains the official ball, even though a provisional was played (Rule 7(5c)).

Opponents claim that the score made with the provisional ball should stand, quoting Rule 1 (4-2) and emphasizing: "To play a second ball in these circumstances constitutes an election to score with that ball if the Rules permit."

As the decision in this case means the championship of the league, only three-tenths of a stroke separating the teams if the 4 is recorded, or the reverse if the 5 is scored, we would greatly appreciate your ruling.

The writer is inclined to blame the course in this case for not properly marking the area "ground under repair." A suggested re-match, however, was declined, and both teams will accept your decision as final.

CARL J. AYDELOTT
LAGRANGE, ILL.

A: The player's score for the hole is 5; his score with the second ball must be counted, under Rule 1(4). This is based on the understanding that the area in question was classified as ground under repair for purposes of this case and that a ball was dropped as provided in Rule 7(5a).

Practice Swings: Clarification

No. 50-108. R. 7(3), 18(4)

Q: Could you please give me a clarification on practice swings?

Our members are taking practice swings from about two inches to three feet from the ball and in the direction of the hole. This makes it very confusing, especially if they are some distance away in the rough.

I have always been under the impression that a practice swing should be taken crosswise to the hole and at least six feet from the ball.

Also, they are taking practice swings within two inches of the ball toward the cup on the putting green.

JAY SMITH
XENIA, OHIO

A: Rule 7(3) provides in part: "A practice swing may be taken at any place on the course

provided the player does not violate the provisions of Rules 7 and 17."

The sportsmanlike player, in making a practice swing, will do it in such a way as to leave no doubt whether he has taken a stroke or infringed a Rule.

On the putting green, a player in taking a practice swing should be careful not to violate Rule 18(4) prohibiting testing the putting surface.

Unplayable Places

No. 50-110. R. 7(4), 7(6), 8

Q: Please furnish me a ruling on an unplayable lie, such as in the roots of a tree, or gopher or crab hole, or rock pile.

Is the penalty ever more than one stroke in either match or medal play? Has the Rule been changed in the past year on one- or two-stroke penalty?

HARRY A. WALLEN
MIAMI, FLA.

A: 1. If a ball be unplayable in the roots of a tree, Rule 8 applies.

2. If a ball lie in or touch a hole made by a gopher or a crab, the player is entitled to free relief as provided in Rule 7(6).

3. If a ball be unplayable on account of a rock pile, the authority in charge should determine whether it is material piled for removal within the meaning of Rule 7(4). If the player is not entitled to free relief under that Rule, his only recourse is to proceed under Rule 8.

4. The general procedures and penalties involved in the foregoing have not been altered in the last year.

Ball on Tee Moving When Hit

No. 50-117. Def. 4; R. 5(3), 8, 10(2)

Q 1: A's ball fell off the tee while she was in the act of swinging her club. She was unable to stop her swing and caught part of the ball, which caused it to go a few feet and come to rest under a bush. May she bring it back to the tee and be playing 2 or must she declare it unplayable and be playing 3 off the tee?

A 1: She would be playing 3 from the tee. A has made her first stroke and she must play the ball where it lies under the bush or declare it unplayable and proceed under Rule 8. See Rule 10(2).

The penalty in Rule 12(3) for striking a moving ball does not apply: see Rule 5(3).

Stroke Defined

Q 2: B takes a swing at the ball and misses, but the force of the club passing over it causes it to move a few inches. Must she play the ball from where it lies or may she re-tee and play her second shot?

A 2: B has made a stroke and must play the ball where it lies or declare it unplayable and proceed under Rule 8.

Definition 4 states: "A 'stroke' is the forward movement of the club made with the intention of striking the ball."

Questions by: KATHERINE WOLF
BALTIMORE, MD.

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Those desiring advisory visits should make requests soon, as schedules for the season are now being arranged. Requests for visits should be addressed to:

USGA Green Section
Room 307, South Building
Plant Industry Station
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J. C. DEY, JR.

(Signature of editor, publisher, business manager, or owner)

Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 3rd day of October, 1950.

(Signed) HARRY A. MALONE — Notary Public, State of New York. No. 432560200. Qualified in Richmond County. Cert. filed with N. Y. Co. Clerk & Register. Term expires March 30, 1951.

Bending or Breaking Branches

No. 50-135. R. 7(3)

Q: Would you please interpret the rule pertaining to playing a ball near a bush or tree? How far can a player go in touching, breaking, leaning against, or bending branches?

Some players say they can interweave branches to get them out of the way if they don't break them. Another player broke a limb off a tree because the tree was dead and considered it permissible. This is one of the most abused and least understood Rules in golf, and I would like an interpretation.

WHARTON GREEN, JR.
AUBURN, N. Y.

A: Rule 7(3) prohibits improving the position of the ball. The Rule contemplates that there may be some moving, bending, or breaking of fixed or growing objects as an incident in the course of taking a fair stance at address and in making the backward or forward swing, and it excuses such incidental movements. However, the Rule prohibits purposeful moving, bending or breaking with the aim of improving the position of the ball. The second exception in Rule 7(3) condones only such moving, bending or breaking as may incidentally be done in making the swing, but it does not allow such action in order to make the swing.

STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF CONGRESS OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233) of USGA JOURNAL AND TURF MANAGEMENT, published seven times a year at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1950.

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