

THE REFEREE

Decisions by the USGA Rules of Golf Committee

Example of symbols: "No. 51-1" means the first decision issued in 1951. "R 7(3)" means Section 3 of Rule 7 in the 1951 Rules of Golf.

Player Judge of Unplayable Ball

No. 51-21. R. 8(Def.), 19

Q.: A player drives from the tee on a par 3 hole. His ball goes toward out of bounds, so he hits a provisional ball, which lands on the green. He finds his first ball is not out of bounds, but declares it an unplayable lie and elects to play the ball on the green (his provisional ball). Can he play the provisional ball, or must he go back to the tee after declaring his ball unplayable and shoot another?

Question by: MISS CAROL McCUE

CHICAGO DISTRICT GOLF ASS'N.
CHICAGO, ILL.

A.: He may play the provisional ball as the ball now in play. Rule 19(a) provides that the player is not obliged to state the reason for which he plays a provisional ball—it may be played for any one of the several possibilities provided for in the Rule.

Under Rule 8-Definitions, the player is the sole judge as to when his ball is unplayable.

Removing Flagstick

No. 51-22. R. 1(3), 7(7, 8)

Q. 1: In match play, A sends his caddie to attend the flagstick when B is 75 feet from the hole. B states that he has the right to have the flagstick unattended, as he is outside of 60 feet. A states that he may have the flagstick attended at any time when B is playing a stroke.

I feel that the interpretation is very clear. Rule 7(7) states in part: "The flagstick may be removed by either side at any time." Is it correct to assume that if it may be removed it has to be attended?

A. 1: Under Rule 7(7), A is entitled to remove the flagstick at any time, regardless of how far from the hole B's ball lies. If B then desires to have the position of the hole indicated to him, he may have his own caddie attend the flagstick while he plays his stroke.

The subject is covered fully in Rule 7(7). The 20-yard provision in Rule 7(8) is for stroke play and does not apply to match play.

Use of Equity

Q. 2: Does one need a supplement, or are the Rules of Golf booklets sufficient in making a decision?

A. 2: It is often necessary to decide questions by interpretations of the Rules of Golf

when the Rules do not cover explicitly. In such cases it is well to have in mind Rule 1(3): "If a point in question be not covered by the Rules of Golf or local rules, it shall be decided by equity."

There is no known up-to-date book of interpretations. The best source for supplementary information is the decisions published in each issue of the USGA JOURNAL under "The Referee."

Questions by: FRED A. WELCH
UNIONTOWN, PA.

Dropping Off Wrong Putting Surface

No. 51-23. R. 18(10)

Q.: A's ball comes to rest on alternate green to the one being played, with a bunker between ball and hole of green being played. A brings it to near side of green, which is the nearest distance from his ball to any part of fairway, but this automatically gives him a clear shot to the pin. Had he dropped it on the far side he would have another bunker intervening, but the distance was greater than to the near side.

A claims that the bunkers have no bearing upon where the ball must be dropped. It's a case of taking the ball to the nearest point off the green and which is not nearer the hole.

B contends that A should drop either on the far side or behind where his ball lay in order to keep the hazard between his ball and green; he contends that A cannot better his position. On the other hand, if A had followed B's rule he would have made it worse.

Question by: DR. C. M. BARNWELL
ATLANTA, GA.

A.: A's contention is correct. Rule 18(10) provides: "A ball lying on any surface especially prepared for putting other than the one being played to must be lifted and dropped off the preput surface at the nearest available point not nearer the hole and not in a hazard, without penalty."

From the facts and the diagram presented, A proceeded properly.

Influencing Position of Ball

No. 51-27. R. 18(5, 7)

Q.: In a two-ball foursomes match, team A had team B 1 down at the beginning of the 18th hole. Both reached the green in 2. A putted first and missed by a few inches. B conceded the putt.

B putted, with the ball stopping on the rim. B then threw his putter to the ground opposite the side where the ball was, and the ball rolled into the cup. Would that mean that B held out on his last stroke, or should that hole have been a tie?

Question by: DR. ANNE S. NEWSOME, PRES.
SEBRING WOMEN'S GOLF ASS'N.
SEBRING, FLA.

A.: B's action apparently was designed to influence or actually did influence the position or the movement of the ball. B therefore violated Rule 18(5), and the penalty is loss of hole—see Rule 2(1).

It should be noted that A's putt could not have been conceded unless it were within six inches of the hole—see Rule 18(7).

Damp Areas in Rough

Q.: On certain holes, there are wet or damp areas resulting from inadequate drainage or to proximity to a brook. The question has come up as to whether damp areas of this sort should be regarded as casual water and played accordingly. In your USGA Rules, is there such a thing as casual water in the rough?

If it is a rule that a damp area of this sort in the rough is to be regarded as casual water, a player playing his ball in the rough and landing in such a damp area may face less of a penalty than the player who also drives into the rough but lands in a dry spot with a bad lie. I would appreciate your advice.

Question by: WILLIAM A. KIMBEL
CHAIRMAN, GOLF COMMITTEE
THE DUNES GOLF & BEACH CLUB
MYRTLE BEACH, SO. CAROLINA

A.: Rule 16—Definition provides: "Casual water" is any temporary accumulation of water which is not a hazard of itself or which is not in a water hazard." Any other water is a hazard: see Rule 17—Definitions. An area which

is merely damp or muddy is not casual water unless it fits the above Definition in Rule 16.

Casual water in the rough is covered by Rule 16(1). The Rules do not distinguish between "rough" and "fairway"—both are covered by the term "through the green"; see Definition 3.

If the areas in question usually contain water, they could hardly be classified as casual water, which is a temporary accumulation of water. Rather, they probably should be classified as water hazards, in which case their margins should be defined clearly and completely.

If they do not usually contain water, they probably should be regarded as through the green, in which case no special treatment would be necessary and casual water would be dealt with as it occurred.

No Measuring Through Obstruction

No. 51-30. R. 7(4), 8(2b)

Q. 1: Please clarify the following portion of Rule 7(4) dealing with relief from an artificial obstruction:—"but in no case shall relief be obtained by measuring through the obstruction."

A. 1: This means that the measurement shall be taken in a direction away from the obstruction, beginning at the point of the obstruction nearest where the ball originally lay. The player is not permitted to measure through the obstruction to another side. Thus, a player who is entitled to relief because his ball stops close to a protective screen cannot measure through the screen to play from the other side. If his ball should lie directly under this screen he may measure in either direction.

Q. 2: Rule 8(2b) provides in part: "keeping the point from which the ball was lifted between him and the hole." Is there any limit to how far back a player can go to accomplish this?

A. 2: No.

Questions by: THOMAS G. McMAHON
LOS ANGELES 25, CAL.

WHY NOT THE "SMALL" BALL?

(Continued from Page 18)

a golf ball can produce surprising results.

Some recent tests made for us on an outdoor driving machine, with no appreciable wind and the temperature 77 degrees, produced the following comparisons:

	Carry	Carry
	Only	and run
U.S. "large" ball (1)	first	third
U.S. "large" ball (3)	third	fourth
British "small" ball (4)	second	first
British "small" ball (2)	fourth	second

In total overall performance of carry and run, the two "small" balls each had a run about 50 percent greater than the two other balls. This was despite the

fact that, in another test, "small" ball (2) was well within the USGA velocity specification. Against the wind, the "small" ball is admittedly superior in distance qualities.

The above tests are considered to be quite preliminary and by no means conclusive. But they help to explain why the USGA is continuing its investigations and is not ready to depart from its present specifications.

However, the USGA Executive Committee has approved a proposal that, in international team play here, either size ball may be used. British rules have always permitted either size ball to be used at any time.