

# THE REFEREE

## Decisions by the USGA Rules of Golf Committee

Example of symbols: "No. 52-1" means the first decision issued in 1951. "R. 37-7" means Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1952 Rules of Golf.

### Practice after Holing Out

No. 52-1. R.8, 37-7

**Q:** Please wire if player may practice putts after holing out, also if permissible practice chips around tee and away from any hole.

**Question by:** HORTON SMITH, PRESIDENT  
PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS' ASS'N.  
OF AMERICA  
SANTA MONICA, CAL.

**A:** Between play of two holes practice putts and chip shots around tee are not prohibited by Rule 8, which deals with practice during play of hole. However, such practice might constitute delay in play under Rule 37-7.

### Boundary Marker: No Relief

No. 52-2. D.20

**Q:** Am I to understand that, following Definition 20 regarding obstructions, should a ball come to rest on the playing grounds near a boundary stake, one is *not* allowed to remove the stake to make his shot?

**Question by:** JAMES FRASER  
WILMINGTON, DEL.

**A:** Your understanding is right.

### Placing Clubs in Hazard

No. 52-3. R.33-1, f.

**Q:** This refers to the Rules of Golf, 1952. Rule 33-1. Page 37: "Before making a stroke, the player shall not touch the ground or the water with a club or otherwise," etc.

Rule 33-1f. Page 38: "The player may, without penalty, place his clubs in the hazard prior to making a stroke, provided nothing is done which may improve the lie," etc.

Will you please explain?

**Question by:** JAMES D. DYER  
PITTSBURGH, PA.

**A:** Clause f in Rule 33-1 is for the practical purpose of permitting one's clubs to lie in a hazard without penalty while the player is making his stroke. It is a matter of convenience and time-saving, especially when the player is carrying his own clubs and the hazard is large or awkward to enter and leave.

Clause f in no way abrogates the fundamental principle of Rule 33-1 that the lie of a ball in a hazard may not be improved and that the player may not touch the hazard with anything which could conceivably affect his lie or could be used to test the hazard's condition.

### Lateral Water Hazard: Where to Drop

No. 52-5. R.33-3b

**Q:** Your attention is directed to Rule 33-3b: "Drop a ball within two club-lengths of the margin of either side of the lateral water hazard, opposite the point where the ball last crossed

the hazard margin."

Has the player the option of dropping the ball on either side he prefers, of the hazard?

**Question by:** GIBSON B. WITHERSPOON  
MERIDIAN, MISS.

**A:** Yes, the choice is up to the player.

### Need for Uniform Penalty

(NOTE: *The following case is based on the 1951 Rules of Golf, and all references are to the 1951 Rules. In the 1952 Rules, there is a uniform penalty of stroke and distance for a ball lost, unplayable or out of bounds. The case illustrates the need for such uniformity in penalty.*)

No. 51-68.

**Q:** Competitor's original (tee shot) ball on par-3 hole is thought to have ricocheted off slope at side of green out of bounds. Provisional ball was played from tee and eventually holed out by player for a 5, including the one-stroke out-of-bounds penalty.

Player took caddie's word that original ball was out of bounds and did not search for it. Upon leaving green for next tee, original ball was found at spot on mezzanine slope at side of green, within bounds, and *beyond the hole*. Player had not reached this point in playing hole with provisional ball, as he did not go beyond the pin with this ball.

Player played original ball and holed it for a deuce.

Which ball counts? Is there a difference in your ruling for stroke play and match play?

**Question by:** W. P. DUTTON  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

**A:** Rule 9(1) provides in part:

"When a ball has been struck toward out of bounds, it is a question of fact whether the ball is out of bounds or lost in bounds. For the player to treat the ball as being out of bounds, there must be reasonable evidence to that effect; in the absence of such reasonable evidence, after a search of five minutes, the ball must be considered lost."

The player, in effect, made an election to proceed with the provisional ball, under Rule 19(2). He must be considered to have abandoned the original ball as being lost; it could not be considered out of bounds, and subsequent facts showed it was not out of bounds. Therefore, the player's score for the hole was 6 — see Rule 8(1) for penalty for lost ball.

**MATCH PLAY** — If the player did not give his opponent proper information relating to his penalty, he lost the hole for violating Rule 4(3).

**STROKE PLAY** — The player's score for the hole was 6.