

THE REFEREE

Decisions by the USGA and the R. and A. Rules of Golf Committees

Example of symbols: "USGA" indicates decision by the United States Golf Association. "R & A" indicates decision by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland. "52-1" means the first decision issued in 1952. "R. 37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1952 Rules of Golf.

Claim in Foursome Match

R & A 52-18
R. 11-1, 15-2

Q: In a foursome competition A and B were partners against C and D. The short fourteenth hole was halved in 4. The sides said "a half" and went to the fifteenth tee. A drove off and C of the opposing side remembered that it was not A's turn to drive off. It then transpired that B had driven off out of turn at the 14th tee. What is the penalty for the infringement?

A: A and B lost both the fourteenth and fifteenth holes as Rule 15-2 was violated in each case, and the claim in respect of the fourteenth hole was made before the players (plural), i.e., both sides, drove off at the fifteenth hole. See Rule 11-1.

Ball "Lost" in Hole

R & A 52-19
R. 6-1, 11-1

Q: A and B were playing a match. At a certain hole both played their second shots. A's ball lay on the green, but B, being unable to find his ball, gave up the hole. The couple following them found B's ball in the hole, so B had holed out in two strokes. Who won the hole, A or B?

A: Under the basic principle enunciated in Rule 6-1: "Except as provided for in the Rules, a hole is won by the side which holes its ball in the fewer strokes," B's claim to have won the hole is established, provided this claim was made before the players played from the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole, before they left the putting green; see Rule 11-1. Any extension of the period during which B's claim might be considered valid, beyond that permitted by Rule 11-1, would neglect the effect which a two-hole difference in the score might have or have had on A's play and would be unfair to A.

Ball Striking Flagstick in Entering Hole

USGA 52-54
D.4; R.34-3a

Q: In stroke play, if a ball lying within twenty yards of the hole is struck and goes into the hole, with the pin in place, does the two-stroke penalty apply, even though evidence may tend to indicate that contact with the pin did not come until the ball had actually entered the hole?

Question by THOMAS G. McMAHON
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

A: It is a question of fact as to whether the ball strikes the flagstick before it is holed. However, tests have shown that it is practically impossible for a ball to be holed without striking the flagstick when the flagstick is in the hole, and so there would ordinarily be a penalty of two strokes under Rule 34-3a.

Under Definition 4, "A ball is 'holed' when it lies within the circumference of the hole and all of it is below the level of the lip of the hole."

Ball Rolling More than Two Club-Lengths Away when Dropped

USGA 52-57
Def. 5, 14c, 29; R.1, 7-2, 27-1c, 21-3,
22-1b, 29-1, 30-3, 31-2, 33-1,2,3; LR

Q1: In the case of the option of dropping ball within two club-lengths, either under the obstruction Rule or the lateral water hazard Rule, if the ball is dropped within the two club-lengths limitation and does not come to rest nearer the hole, but does come to rest within five or six club-lengths from the obstruction or the lateral water hazard, is the ball properly in play?

A1: Yes. See Rule 22-1b.

Measuring through Obstruction Not Permitted

Q2: A decision was made by you in 1950 to the effect that measurement may not be

made through an obstruction. Then in the 1951 issue of Rules of Golf the phrase "but in no case shall relief be obtained by measuring through the obstruction" was a part of the Rule. The incorporation of the quoted phrase limitation was quite clear, but the 1952 issue does not carry it. Does this mean that the obstruction Rule is to be literally applied, that is, two club-lengths in any desired direction, but not nearer the hole?

A2: In proceeding under Rule 31-2, the player may not measure *through* an immovable obstruction in determining where to drop within two club-lengths of that point of the obstruction nearest which the ball originally lay.

"Interference" Must Be Actual

Q3: The obstruction Rule provides relief if the obstruction be within two club-lengths of the ball and if obstruction interferes with stance or backward or forward swing. If ball came to rest against an obstruction, the player may drop within two club-lengths of the obstruction. There is thus implied that interference is recognized if the obstruction be within two club-lengths and be in line of backward or forward swing. Is this correct?

A3: Interference must be actual in order for Rule 31-2 to operate.

Ball in Tree "Moved" by Player

Q4: If player starts to climb a tree to knock his ball down and while the player is in the tree the ball drops to the ground, is he deemed to have caused the ball to move or is it a question of fact as to whether the player's activities caused the ball to move? It seems to me that there should be a penalty stroke, for, had the ball not dropped to the ground, the player could have done little more than tap the ball to the ground.

A4: The player sustains a penalty of one stroke under Rule 27-1c, as the ball must be deemed to have been moved accidentally.

Relief from Obstruction When Provisional Ball Has Been Played

Q5: Rule 30-3 provides that, if the original ball be in a water hazard or lateral water hazard, the *original ball may be played as it lies*; otherwise further play must be with the provisional. Does *as it lies* mean that the player is not allowed the relief from an interfering obstruction as is

covered under Rule 33-1c in connection with further play of original ball?

A5: No; it means he may not drop a ball outside the hazard under a one-stroke penalty as provided for in Rule 33-2 and -3. To permit that would be to give him a third alternative method of procedure.

Lateral Water Hazard Rule

Q6: (a) The lateral water hazard Rule provides the option of dropping 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 margin of the hazard*. However, in Def. 14c there appears "****" and so placed that when a ball is dropped within two club-lengths of *where the ball entered the water hazard*****. There is implied here that the distance allowed is where the ball entered the hazard, whereas the Rule itself allows such distance as where the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard. Does the Rule govern (disregarding the Definition)?

(b) We have one hole in San Antonio where the tee is only a foot or so from a canal (lateral water hazard). A ball that is slightly "pushed" actually crosses the margin of the hazard less than ten yards off the tee and remains skyward over the hazard for 175 to 225 yards, when it actually enters the hazard.

My thought as to Rules is to follow them to the letter. Accordingly, would you say that the local committee would be deviating from the prescribed Rules of Golf by adopting a local rule to the effect that a ball in the lateral water hazard referred to above may be dropped on either side of the hazard *opposite the point where the ball entered the hazard*? Such would be more workable.

A6: (a) The Rule governs; however, these two ways of describing the place where the ball last crossed the hazard margin are intended to mean the same thing. The Definition is a guide for the committee in defining a lateral water hazard; a water hazard is not a lateral water hazard unless the committee so designates it.

(b) The local rule would be wrong if it meant that the control point for dropping was the point where the ball physically made contact with the hazard. Such a point would be almost impossible to determine in many cases, especially where the point of contact is in water.

It is considered that the most practical control point for dropping is the point where the ball last crosses the hazard margin, as specified in Rule 33-3b.

Playing Ball which Lies**Out of Bounds**

Q7: Until 1952 the play of an out-of-bounds ball was loss of hole in match and disqualification in stroke. The 1952 issue, as to stroke play, merely imposes the general penalty: two strokes. The "changes since 1951" in the back of the book make no reference to the change in penalty from disqualification to two strokes. Was it intended that playing an out-of-bounds ball in stroke play incurred only a two-stroke penalty?

If so, if in stroke play a player's ball is out of bounds and the player lifts and drops his ball due to interference from an obstruction or casual water and then plays the ball from out of bounds, would he incur a two-stroke penalty under the out-of-bounds Rule and an additional two-stroke penalty for lifting his ball? The obstruction Rule definitely treats with objects that are within the course, and my thought is that all Rules governing play are for situations that are within the course. Accordingly, what Rule would cover the case of an out of bounds ball that is lifted and dropped and then played from out of bounds in stroke play?

Rule 1, stroking the ball the entire distance, is similar to the out-of-bounds situation, in that penalty is only two strokes in stroke play now, whereas the Preamble heretofore provided disqualification. Is this the way that it was intended?

A7: A ball which lies out of bounds is not in play; see Definition 5.

In stroke play, if a stroke he played with such a ball, the player is penalized two strokes under Rule 21-3 dealing with playing a wrong ball.

If the player then completely fails to put another ball into play as required by Rule 29-1, he has not played the hole (Rule 1) or the stipulated round (Definition 29 and Rule 7-2), and he therefore has no score which can be accepted. See also Rule 21-3.

The underlying principles were the same in 1951, when USGA Rule 21(5) provided that the competitor must hole out with his own ball (in play) at every hole under penalty of disqualification. However, the disqualification penalty for violation of USGA Rule 9(1) of 1951 was also applicable to any failure to proceed properly when a ball lay out of bounds; for example, if another ball were dropped at a place not as near as possible to the spot from which the first ball was played, the penalty was disqualification. Under Rule 29-1 of

1952, the penalty is two strokes; but if the ball be deliberately dropped nearer the hole the player has failed to play the hole and the stipulated round and has no score which can be accepted.

Questions by: F. A. BURTTSCHELL
SAN ANTONIO, TEX.

Ball on Bridge in Hazard

USGA 52-58

D.14-a, 20; R.31, 33-1, 33-2

Q: Player's ball has come to rest on top of a foot bridge and over a water hazard.

Q1: If the player is able to take his normal stance and strike the ball in the direction of his choice without interference from the bridge,

- (a) May he play the ball from the bridge without penalty?
- (b) If so, may he ground his club on the bridge?

A1: (a): Yes.
(b): Yes.

Q2: If the player is unable to take his normal stance in order to strike the ball in the direction of his choice, and if the bridge is movable, Rule 31-1 seems to apply and he may first remove the bridge and then, the ball having been moved in so doing, he must drop his ball as near as possible to the spot from which it was moved but not nearer the hole (which in this instance must be in the water hazard immediately below its original resting place on the bridge before said bridge was removed.)

- (a) Is this correct?
- (b) May he take the alternative of considering his ball in the hazard and proceeding under Rule 33-2a or b?

A2: (a): Yes.
(b): Yes.

Q3: If the player is unable to take his normal stance in order to strike the ball in the direction of his choice, and if the bridge is immovable, Rule 31-2 seems to apply, and he may lift his ball and drop it not more than two club-lengths from the spot on the bridge where it originally lay and not nearer the hole.

- (a) Is this correct?
- (b) If the bridge is so wide that dropping the ball within two club-lengths from the spot on the bridge where it originally lay will not get the ball off the bridge, may he drop it within two club-lengths from that edge of the bridge nearest to where the ball lay?

(c) If the ball lies so near the end of the bridge that the two club-lengths distance from its original position extends outside the confines of the hazard, is the player permitted to drop his ball within the two club-lengths area outside the hazard without penalty? (In 1951, Rule 7-4b(ii) stated that such a ball should be placed "in the hazard". Do the 1952 Rules give the player a "break" in this respect?)

- A3:** (a): He may drop the ball within two club-lengths of the point of the edge of the bridge nearest which the ball originally lay; the ball must be dropped in the hazard and must come to rest in the hazard.
- (b): Yes—see answer 3 (a) above.
- (c): No. The ball must be dropped in the hazard and must come to rest in the hazard. See USGA Decision 52-24.

"Wall" of Bunker

Q4: Please also clarify Rule 33-1b (this has nothing to do with the bridge questions above). Player's ball comes to rest in the sand-covered portion of a bunker near the side or back of the bunker. If the sand-covered portion extends up the side or banking of the bunker so steeply that the player cannot take a normal swing without hitting the sand with his club so a distance in back of his ball, does the term "wall" in this Rule include the above-mentioned side of the bunker and exempt the player from any penalty under Rule 33? If so, about how far back of the ball does this "wall" have to be in order to avoid having the player accused of grounding his club?

A4: Sand in a bunker is part of the hazard and is not a "wall" in the sense contemplated by Rule 33-1b. See Definition 14-a. Touching sand might improve the lie of the ball in the sense that the stroke would be facilitated, and this would violate Rule 33-1.

Questions by: WILLIAM O. BLANEY
BOSTON, MASS.

Ball Rolling out of Hazard When Dropped in Hazard

USGA 52-59.

R. 11-4, 22-1, 27-1a, 29-1.

Q1: A and B playing qualifying round.

On the eighth hole, A sliced into sand trap at right of green. The trap had very little sand in it due to recent rains. A played his next stroke out of bounds. In dropping ball in correct manner in sand, A's ball rolled out of bare sand and away from hole onto edge of fairway. Does this ball have to be redropped or replaced so that it will come to rest in the hazard?

A1: Yes. As the ball originally lay within the confines of the hazard, a ball dropped under Rule 29-1 must come to rest within the confines of the same hazard. Otherwise, the player would not be playing his next stroke "as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was played." The principle of equity (Rule 11-4) would require a player to re-drop without penalty if his ball, when first dropped, rolled out of a hazard and to place his ball if it were impossible to drop it so that it would not roll out of the hazard. Rule 22-1 is based upon the same principle.

Stroke Conceded Cannot Be Recalled

Q2: A and B are playing a match. A had a putt of about 12 inches for a half, which B gave to him. A accepted putt and then putted ball, missing the hole. B claimed that A putted the ball and missed, thereby losing the hole. A claimed that B gave him the putt and what he did after that did not matter.

A2: A was correct. When a stroke has been conceded and the Rules have not been infringed, the concession may not be recalled.

"Dropping" Ball in Tree

Q3: A and B are playing C and D in a match-play foursome. On No. 15, A drove a ball which lodged in a tree about eight feet off the ground. A spectator knocked the ball down from the tree. In complying with Rule 27-1, it is impossible to drop in the prescribed manner and have the ball stay in the tree. What is your ruling?

A3: The principle of equity (Rule 11-4) would require that the ball be replaced in the tree as near as possible to the spot from which it was moved, without penalty, in order to comply with Rule 27-1a in the situation you describe. Rule 22-1 is based upon the same principle.

Questions by: MISS ERMA A. JOHNSON
SAN GABRIEL, CAL.