
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.

When Provisional Ball Becomes Ball in Play

USGA 52-50
R. 21-3, 30-2.

Q: A and B were playing in the club's annual championship. A's tee shot on the fourth hole appeared to be out of bounds and a provisional ball was played from the teeing ground by A. When the two players arrived at the vicinity in which A's ball was thought to have been out of bounds or lost, it was not found by any one in the match. Not consuming five minutes in which to look for the ball, A played the provisional ball to the green.

After A had played his second shot with the provisional ball from where the original was supposed to have been lost, A's original ball was found by a group following. A went back to the spot where his original ball lay and, as his second shot, played his first ball without penalty.

Question by: J. L. WELLING, SR.
COUNTRY CLUB OF NEWBERRY
NEWBERRY, S. C.

A: A incurred a penalty of loss of hole in match play. Rule 30-2 permits a player to play a provisional ball only as far as the place where the original ball is likely to be, and requires that he then elect to play either the original ball, without penalty, or the provisional ball, under the penalty provided in the Rule governing the particular case. Rule 30-2 further provides: "When the player makes his choice, the other ball shall then be retired from play."

When A abandoned his original ball, it thereupon became out of play, and the provisional ball became the ball in play. The fact that A did not look for the original ball for five minutes is not relevant; one may abandon a ball as being lost at any time.

If the competition had been at stroke play and the player, having elected to play the provisional ball, did not hole out with that ball, he would have disqualified himself if he did not proceed as provided in Rule 21-3.

Artificial Boundaries

USGA 52-51
D. 21, R. 35-5

Q1: Our course is entirely enclosed by an 8-foot fence, against which are planted various shrubs, flowers, etc. It has been proposed that, to save time and to save the flowers, we establish out-of-bounds stakes completely around the course slightly inside our boundary fence. In other words, we would have probably 2 feet of ground between our stakes and fence which would be out of bounds.

Would this seem satisfactory, or just what does the USGA recommend?

At present we play anything over the fence as out of bounds, and up against the fence as unplayable, but in many cases an unplayable lie calls for going back to the tee, which holds play up considerably.

A1: The Committee would be within its rights in establishing a boundary line placing the shrubs and flower beds out of bounds. Under Rule 36-6, it is a duty of the committee to define boundaries.

As an alternative, the committee could retain the fence as the boundary, and could protect the flowers by adopting a local rule making it mandatory that a ball in a flower bed be lifted, without penalty, and dropped as near as possible to the spot where it lay, but not nearer the hole, on ground outside the flower beds. See recommendations for local rules. Such a local rule would be proper only for the purpose of prohibiting play from an area which it is desired to protect, and not for the purpose of giving relief from the boundary fence.

Q2: We also have one hole inside the course on which we have an out-of-bounds, purely as a safety measure, to prevent players from driving into another fairway. Is there any objection to this?

A2: "Interior" boundaries are generally inadvisable except for prohibiting play in such areas as parking spaces, clubhouse and dwelling territories, tennis courts, swimming pools and the like. However, as noted above, it is a duty of the committee

to define boundaries. Knowing the local situation, the committee can best determine the matter.

Questions by: ELLSWORTH VINES
WILSHIRE COUNTRY CLUB
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

Ball Dropped in Casual Water

USGA 52-52
R. 32-1b, 32-4.

Q: Player in casual water about one inch deep in sand trap drops ball away from hole over shoulder. Ball half buried in water-soaked sand. Player contends ball is still in casual water and drops ball again in wet sand, which causes ball to bury partially. Opponent objects but player maintains ball is still in casual water and drops ball a third time. At no time did ball roll as referred to in Rule 32-4. What is penalty, if any?

Question by: ROBERT E. MORAN
FOREST PARK GOLF CLUB
BALTIMORE, MD.

A: Your statement indicates player first dropped ball on ground which afforded maximum relief from casual water as provided in Rule 32-1b. If ball when dropped did not *roll* into casual water, player was not entitled to further relief under Rule 32-4. In redropping player incurred penalty of loss of hole.

Plug in Putting Green Interferes with Play

USGA 52-53
R. 35-1b

Q: The plug in the old hole on the putting green sinks down about an inch and is between the player and the hole, in line with his putt. What relief does he have?

What relief if the plug, due to rain, pushes up about one-half inch and is in line with the player's putt? Could the player call for the greenkeeper to repair this situation before making his putt?

Question by: STEVE CREEKMORE, JR.
FORT SMITH, ARK.

A: In each case the player would be justified in discontinuing play and in requesting the Committee to have the putting green repaired. However, the player himself may not touch the line of putt—see Rule 35-1b.

Determining whether Ball Moved

USGA 52-60
R. 10-1, 11-1,3, 27-1d.

Q: Match Play. Player claims his opponent moved ball in rough while addressing ball. Opponent claims he did not move

ball and opponent says he is sole judge of whether or not he moved ball and feels that under circumstances he should not be penalized; also, Rules Committee claims opponent should not be penalized.

Question by: GEORGE CORCORAN
GREENSBORO COUNTRY CLUB
GREENSBORO, N. C.

A: Whether ball moved is question of fact which local committee must determine, taking into account all available testimony and credibility of witnesses. Nature of golf and its code of sportsmanship make player primarily responsible for calling penalties against himself (see Rule 10-1.) However, opponent has right to enter claim under Rule 11-1. Local Committee's decision is final (see Rule 11-3). If it be determined that player accidentally moved ball in play through the green while addressing it, Rule 27-1d applies.

Asking or Giving Advice

USGA 52-61.
D. 2; R.9-1, 40-3g.

Q: I would appreciate very much an opinion as to what occurs when a competitor asks for information from a fellow-competitor with reference to the use of a club and an answer is given. The occasion arose in a friendly four-ball, where the high and low balls of two competitors were played against the high and low balls of the other two competitors, and a lawyer friend of mine asked me what club to use. I, of course, gave him an answer and then told him he had violated the rule of golf by requesting information.

Question by: L. E. MEYER
LEBANON, PA.

A: Rule 9-1 provides "A player or a competitor shall not give or ask for advice or take any action which may result in his receiving advice except from his caddie, his partner, or his partner's caddie." Information regarding a club used is "advice" under this Rule (see Definition 2).

In stroke play, if a competitor asks for such advice from a fellow-competitor, he incurs a penalty of two strokes. If the fellow-competitor gives the advice, he also incurs a penalty of two strokes.

In match play, if a player asks for such advice, he incurs a penalty of loss of hole and anything that happens thereafter is irrelevant. In other words, the opponent already has won the hole, whether he answers the question or not.

In the case cited, presumed to be four-ball match play, the player who asked advice was disqualified for the hole (see Rule 40-3g), but the disqualification did not apply to his partner.

Balls Exchanged in Match Play

USGA 52-62
R. 11-4, 21-2

Q1: In match play, A plays the ball of his opponent, B. B thereupon plays A's ball. Neither mistake occurs in a hazard. They play out the hole with the balls exchanged. It is known that A was the first to play a wrong ball. What is the ruling?

A1: A lost the hole under Rule 21-2, which provides in part: "If a player play a stroke with any wrong ball except in a hazard, he shall lose the hole." Thus, the hole had in fact already been decided when B played A's ball; what happened after A's error in first playing B's ball is irrelevant. The preamble to Rule 21 provides: "The responsibility for playing his own ball rests with the player. Each player should put an identification mark on his ball."

Q2: In match play, A and B play each other's balls, but they do not know who first played a stroke with the wrong ball. What is the ruling?

A2: Since it cannot be established who first played a wrong ball, in equity the hole stands as played, with no penalty. See Rule 11-4.

How to Concede a Putt

USGA 52-63
R. 26-2b, 27-2a, 35-2d

Q: A and B are playing a match. A concedes B a short putt to halve the hole. A then proceeds to putt for his half. B claims the hole from A after A has made the half, declaring A has no right to concede the putt to B until A is down for the half.

Was this rule abandoned after the stymie was abolished, or is B legal in claiming the hole?

Question by: MRS. ALFRED BERKMAN
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

A: In match play, since the elimination of the so-called stymie rule, there is nothing in the Rules of Golf which would prevent a player from verbally conceding an opponent's stroke at any time. Rule 35-2d well establishes the principle that a player by knocking his opponent's ball away after it has come to rest thereby concedes that the opponent has holed out with the next stroke. It should not therefore be con-

sidered a violation of the Rules for a player to concede an opponent's stroke by the act of knocking his ball away.

However, a player knocking away an opponent's ball would be subject to a penalty of loss of the hole under Rule 26-2b if it were not certain that the opponent's ball had come to rest. In any case the player could not subsequently require the opponent to replace his ball without being subject to a one-stroke penalty under Rule 27-2a.

Second Ball in Stroke Play

USGA 52-64
R. 11-5, 32-1

Q: Player's ball in qualifying round was driven into ground under repair and he played his ball from the repair area, the ball landing nicely on the green. He then dropped a ball away from the repair area and played a shot, the ball going out of bounds.

Now, according to the Rules, he must disregard his first ball and continue with his second ball. There would have been no penalty if the player decided not to drop ball off repair area but played from repair area as it lay.

Is this decision correct?

Question by: GUINEA KOP
ALA WAI GOLF COURSE
HONOLULU, HAWAII

A: Yes. Rule 32-1 does not require that a ball be lifted from ground under repair. It provides only that the player may lift his ball from ground under repair without penalty if he so desires. Therefore the player cited would have been within his rights in either playing his original ball as it lay or in lifting and dropping his ball without penalty as provided in Rule 32-1.

However, in playing both balls, he apparently played his second ball under Rule 11-5, which permits such a procedure in stroke play only but further provides: "If it be found that the Rules allow the procedure adopted with the second ball, the score with the second ball shall be his score for the hole. To play a second ball in these circumstances constitutes an election to score with that ball if the Rules permit."

Flagstick in Improper Place

USGA 52-65
D.12; R. 11-1, 4

Q: Our fifteenth green is in the corner of the club property and somewhat isolated. Some prankster took the flag out of the cup and stuck it in the green, some distance from the cup. Players in the semi-final

match of our women's state championship played their second shots to what they thought was the hole and then found themselves quite some distance away from the actual cup. Good sports that they were, they went ahead and played out the hole without any complaint, but I am wondering, if this had happened in medal play, would these players have had any alternative other than to just go ahead and play out the hole under this handicap?

Question by: DON MURPHY
TEXARKANA COUNTRY CLUB
TEXARKANA, ARK-TEXAS

A: It is the duty of the local committee to designate the stipulated round, and it is natural to assume that the flagstick designates the hole to be played. Definition 12 provides in part that "The flagstick is a movable indicator . . . placed in the hole to show its position."

In the case you cite, the committee would have been justified under the rule of equity (Rule 11-4) in permitting either player to replay her stroke to the green if she so desired, provided claim was made in accordance with Rule 11-1 and the matter settled before play began on the next hole.

The same ruling would apply in stroke play.

Replaying Stroke Out of Turn

R & A 52-87
R. 12

Q: During a recent four-ball competition one of the competitors put his first ball off the tee out of bounds and immediately played another ball off the tee without waiting for the other three competitors to tee off. One of the markers pointed out to him that he had committed a breach of the Rules and was therefore penalized two strokes (Rules 12-3 and 5). On receipt of this information the player, his partner and a large majority of the members of the club disagreed with this penalty ruling, and the issue is still in dispute.

Question by: HEATON GOLF CLUB
MANCHESTER, LANCASHIRE

A: The competitor committed a breach of Rule 12-3 by playing out of turn. There is, however, no penalty for playing out of turn on the teeing ground in stroke play (see Rule 12-2b).

Advice after the Fact

R & A 52-88 (ii)
R. 9

Q: A, a competitor in a stroke competition, plays a shot badly from a shallow

sand bunker. B, a competitor in the same competition says to him, "You should have played that off your right foot."

Is B penalized? If so, and assuming this was a bogey competition, how would the penalty be imposed?

Question by: P. J. MULLERY
SUTTON GOLF CLUB
SUTTON, CO. DUBLIN

A: B's action is not considered to be advice as envisaged in Rule 9, and therefore he should suffer no penalty.

When Ball Is "Lost"

R & A 52-91
R. 29

Q: If a player abandons his search for a "lost ball" within the five-minute limit and on his way back to play another ball the original ball is found within the time limit, can he play the original ball without disqualification?

Question by: G. N. COOP
WORSLEY GOLF CLUB
WORSLEY, LANCASHIRE

A: Under Definition 6, a ball is lost if it be not found within five minutes. Provided the ball is found within that period and the player has not played another ball from the spot from which he played his previous shot, he can continue play with his original ball.

Ball Unrecoverable Due to Outside Agency

R & A 52-92
R. 27-1a

Q: We have recently in this club had several instances of players' balls being picked up by crows and removed to their nests or elsewhere, and this occurrence is, we feel sure, intended to be covered by Rule 27-1a. This Rule, however, in the official copy of the Rules of Golf in our possession, reads: "If the lie of a ball at rest be altered by any outside agency except wind, the player shall, through the green or in a hazard, drop the ball . . . as near as possible to the spot from which the ball was moved, without penalty."

In cases where the ball cannot be recovered, it is clearly not possible to drop the ball as near as possible to the spot from which it was removed.

Question by: SELANGOR GOLF CLUB
MALAYAN UNION

A: Under Rule 27-1a, in the case of the ball being moved and not recoverable, a ball may be dropped.