
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. "53-1" means the first decision issued in 1953. "R. 37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1953 Rules of Golf.

Medalist Defaults First Match

USGA 52-68
R. 36-1.

Q: A woman played in the qualifying round. She had no intention of continuing to play her matches in the tournament. She tied for medalist honors and won the medal on the basis of low handicap. She was not seeded and did not play in the tournament other than in the qualifying round. Is she entitled to the medal?

Question by: MRS. LAURENCE HARRIS
BUFFALO, N. Y.

A: The question is one for the committee to decide; see Rule 36-1. A player who does not continue in the match play rounds of a tournament may be obliged, at the discretion of the committee, to forfeit any prize won in the qualifying round.

Provisional Ball Knocks Original Ball Out of Bounds

USGA 52-70
R. 27-1c, 29-1, 30-1d

Q: A player's drive from No. 10 tee of the East Lake Country Club, Atlanta, Ga., was thought by the player to be out of bounds. He then played another ball provisionally from the tee. It was determined by the players in front of the match that the player's original ball came to rest in bounds and that the provisional ball struck and knocked the original ball out of bounds. The provisional ball came to rest in bounds.

What would be your ruling in this case in the event the player's provisional ball struck the original ball and knocked the original ball in the hole being played?

Question by: KEITH CONWAY
ATLANTA, GA.

A: (a) A provisional ball played under Rule 30 is an agency of the player or side and the player is responsible for it; it is never an outside agency; see Rule 30-1d. Therefore, assuming there was completely clear evidence in the case you cite, the original ball is considered to have been moved accidentally by the player and Rule 27-1c governs. The player incurred a penalty of

one stroke against his original ball, and the original ball was out of bounds, lying 2 at that point.

As the original ball actually lay in bounds when the player played the provisional ball, the provisional ball could not be continued in play on the basis that it was provisional for a ball out of bounds. The original ball thus was in play (see Definition 5) until it was accidentally moved out of bounds. The player therefore was required to drop another ball as nearly as possible at the spot where the original ball lay before it was moved out of bounds, under an additional penalty of one stroke; see Rule 29-1a. His next stroke with that ball would be his fourth. The ball hit provisionally had to be retired from play.

(b) If the player's provisional ball knocked his original ball into the hole, the same basic principles would apply. The player would incur a penalty of one stroke against his original ball (Rule 27-1c), the ball would be considered holed and his score for the hole would be 2.

Ownership of Ball in Dispute

USGA 52-71
R. 11-4, 21

Q: In match play, tee shots are hit over a hill and cannot be seen from the tee. A pushed his tee shot to what he deemed to be the right side of the fairway. B hit a similar shot but elected to play a provisional ball in case the first shot was out of bounds. Arriving at the place where it was assumed would be three balls, only one could be found and it was in the fairway.

A maintained that the found ball was the one he had hit from the tee. B maintained that it was the first ball he had hit from the tee. Neither player had his ball marked for identification and neither had declared to his opponent the kind or number of the ball in play.

There being no referee, gallery or caddies, it was decided to have the players return to the tee and replay the hole. I should like to know if the decision was:

correct and what the ruling would be if a like situation were to arise in a medal-play round.

Question by: HAROLD A. DAWSON
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

A: As there was no way to determine which player owned the ball which was found, the decision was appropriate in the light of the rule of equity (Rule 11-4) for either match or stroke play.

Attention is invited, however, to the note which precedes Rule 21 and which states in part: "Each player should put an identification mark on his ball."

Handicaps in Extended Competitions
USGA 52-72
R. 36-1

Q: In a ladies' handicap tournament in which 32 have qualified on the basis of their current handicaps at the beginning of the qualifying round and whose pairings for match play over a period of four or five weeks have been drawn in accordance with their stroke play round, should the entire tournament be played with each competitor using the same handicap that had been used in qualifying or, as this competition is over a four or five weeks period, should the surviving player use her then current handicap (assuming her handicap may have changed since playing the qualifying round) in effect at the time of each round of match play?

Question by: MRS. ANITA MORRIS
ROCKVILLE CENTRE, N. Y.

A: The matter is one for the committee in charge to determine and publish prior to the competition. Rule 36-1 provides in part: "The Committee shall lay down the conditions under which a competition is to be played."

Generally, a handicap should not be changed during the progress of a competition unless the competition extends over a considerable period and the rules provide for an adjustment of handicaps during the period.

Original Ball Found Outside Hazard After Second Ball Played
USGA 52-79

D. 5; R. 21-3, 33-2a, 33-4 Note 1

Q1: A player's ball in stroke competition is believed to have come to rest in a water hazard. The player drops another ball behind the hazard in a manner which he believes to accord with Rule 33-2a, and he plays the ball toward the green.

He then finds his original ball outside the water hazard.

It was ruled that he had to abandon his second ball and resume play with the first ball, as the first ball was the ball in play under Definition 5; further, he was penalized two strokes under Rule 21-3 for playing a wrong ball (his second ball which he dropped behind the water hazard). Was the decision right?

A1: Yes. Rule 21-3 covers the case. See also Note 1 to Rule 33-4.

Committee May Remove Water during Stroke Play

Q2: A hole was covered by water during a deluge in a stroke competition. The committee temporarily suspended play and mopped and otherwise removed most of the water, in order to avoid calling the course unplayable.

Was the committee within its rights in artificially removing the water from the putting green?

A2: Yes. It is a responsibility of a committee to try to have a course maintained in the best possible condition.

Questions by: HARVEY RAYNOR
PROFESSIONAL GOLFERS'
ASSOCIATION
CHICAGO, ILL.

Lost Club May Not Be Replaced
USGA 52-83
R. 3-b

Q: A player lost his putter during the first nine holes of a competition; he had started with 14 clubs. After playing nine holes, he inquired whether he might obtain another putter, on the theory that the complete disappearance of the club constituted unfitness for play within the meaning of Rule 3-b.

Question by: NORMAN B. BEECHER
CLEARWATER, FLA.

A: Loss of a club does not constitute unfitness for play. Loss does not occur in the normal course of play. To permit replacement would open the door to deliberate "loss."

Agreement to Waive Rule?

R & A 52-83
R. 4, 31-1

Q: A's ball lay in a ditch. There were loose twigs near the ball. A began to remove the twigs. B remarked, "That is not allowed, but I do not mind." The question asked was:

- (1) Is A disqualified for breach of Rule 33-1?
- (2) Is B disqualified for breach of Rule 4?

If this incident had taken place in the final, what would have been the correct procedure for the Committee to have taken?

A: Under Definition 14b the ditch is a water hazard. Rule 33-1 states "When a ball lies in or touches a hazard or a water hazard, nothing shall be done which may in any way improve its lie . . ."

If B informed A that it was not allowed, without suggesting that the penalty be waived, A would lose the hole. If B informed A that it was not allowed and both agree to waive the penalty and continue the play of that hole, both are disqualified under Rule 4.

If both finalists are disqualified, the tournament must conclude without there being an outright winner.

Question by: JAMES H. DODD
DJURSHOLMS GOLFKLUBB
SWEDEN

Competitor May Discontinue Play on Single Hole

R & A 52-93
R. 37-6

Q: A four-ball, better-ball competition, stroke play: At one hole A picks up after playing several strokes in the rough. Having abandoned play for that hole, he takes shelter under a bush from heavy rain while his partner plays out the hole.

Is A subject to disqualification for discontinuing play, at that hole only?

CROWBOROUGH BEACON
GOLF CLUB
CROWBOROUGH, SUSSEX

A: A is not subject to disqualification under Rule 37-6 in the circumstances as stated by you.

Player Penalized for Using Prop to Prevent Ball Moving

R & A 52-96
R. 16

Q: A player's ball is lying in rough pine needles with twigs over the ball. These twigs are loose and if moved might cause the ball to move. The player, therefore, gets three or four fir cones and puts them at the back of the ball to stop it in case it moves. He then removes the twigs. He then moves what fir cones he can without the ball moving and plays his shot.

Is this permissible, and if not what is the penalty, and under what Rule does it come?

ADDINGTON GOLF CLUB
ADDINGTON, SURREY

A: Dead pine needles and twigs are loose impediments and may be removed without penalty provided the ball is not moved. There is a penalty, under Rule 16, if a ball is touched purposely and not played as it lies, except as provided for in the Rules. The player suffered a penalty of two strokes under Rule 16 for touching his ball purposely with the fir cones.

*STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP,
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JOSEPH C. DEY, JR., EDITOR

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1952. (Signed) Mary A. Freeley, Notary Public, State of New York. (My commission expires March 30, 1954)