



THE REFEREE

Decisions by the
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.

Croquet Stroke Approved

USGA 52-94

R. 2-2; 19-1

Q: Is it permissible, according to the Rules of Golf:

1. To use a putter so constructed that the shaft is mounted in a fixed position in the center of the head and at a 90 degree angle in any direction to the upper surface of the head?

2. To address the ball on the putting green in such a manner that the player faces the hole with ball resting between his feet and in the process of making the stroke swings putter head between legs?

Question by: REV. HOWARD G. WELCH
BRIMFIELD, ILLINOIS

A 1: Yes. Rule 2-2b permits the shaft of a putter to be fixed at any point in the head and does not restrict the angle at which it is fixed. The putter, of course, must be of traditional form and make and must conform to all requirements of Rule 2-2, such as those governing the shape of the head.

2. Yes, provided the ball is fairly struck at with the head of the club in accordance with Rule 19-1 and not pushed, scraped or spooned. The Rules do not restrict a player's stance.

Ball Dropped Nearer Hole

USGA 52-95

Def. 29; R. 1, 7-2, 33-3b

Q 1: In stroke play, a ball comes to rest slightly nearer the hole after being

dropped outside a lateral water hazard in accordance with Rule 33-3b. The player plays the ball where it comes to rest. Is the player penalized two strokes for violating Rule 33 or is he disqualified for failing to play the stipulated round?

A 1: Two strokes for violating Rule 33.

Q 2: In stroke play, after a ball has been lost in a lateral water hazard, the player purposely drops another ball 50 yards nearer the hole than Rule 33-3b permits, and plays it there. Is he penalized two strokes for violating Rule 33 or is he disqualified to play the stipulated round?

A 2: The player has not played the ball from the teeing ground into the hole by successive strokes, as required by Rule 1. He therefore has not played the stipulated round—see Definition 29 and Rule 7-2—and so he has no score which can be accepted.

Ball Putted From Wrong Location

USGA 52-97

D. 22; R. 22-2, 23-1 27-3

Q: In a medal tournament player A marked the ball of player B with a coin on the green. Player B subsequently played his ball from the wrong location on the green where it had been placed by A. After B had holed out in two strokes, another player pointed out that B had putted from the wrong location. B then replaced his ball at the proper location and played the hole out.

Did B incur any penalty for putting from the wrong place? If he does incur a penalty, how many strokes should he be penalized?

Question by: DEAN E. SCHMIDT
VIRGINIA BEACH, VA.

A: If B knew that A had moved his ball, the score made when the ball was played from the wrong location would stand; and B was penalized two strokes for failing to comply with Rule 27-3, which required him to replace the ball when moved by a fellow-competitor. (See also Rule 22-2.)

If B did not know that A had moved his ball until after the ball had been played, B could not be penalized for playing the ball from the wrong location. If he were correctly informed before striking off from the next tee, he would be obliged to replace the ball in the correct location, without penalty; however, if he learned of the mistake after playing from the next tee the score with the ball played from the wrong location must stand, and there would be no penalty.

Rule 23-1 requires that a ball must be lifted by the player, his partner or either of their caddies. A was an outside agency—see Definition 22—so he cannot be penalized under Rule 23-1 for lifting B's ball. See Rule 27-3.

**Ball Found Within Five Minutes
After Another Ball Had Been Played**
USGA 52-100

D. 6; R. 21-2, 3, 29-1

Q: A's tee shot was hit toward a ditch crossing the fairway. A and B and both caddies thought the ball went into the ditch. After an unfruitful search in the ditch, A dropped a ball back of the ditch (Rule 33-2a) and played it. After crossing the water hazard, the first ball was spied in the rough. Please tell us how the above situation should be treated in match play and stroke competition with a short search for ball in ditch and with a five minute search for ball in ditch.

Question by: MRS. FRANK D. BISBEE
JACKSONVILLE, FLA.

A: A played a wrong ball when he dropped and played a ball under the water hazard Rule (33-2a); it was not properly substituted for the player's original ball under the Rules.

The penalty in match play is loss of hole. See Rule 21-2.

In stroke play:

(a) If the player's side searched for the original ball for less than five minutes, the penalty was two strokes, and the player was obliged to resume play with his original ball—see Rule 21-3.

(b) If the player's side searched for the original ball for five minutes or more, (and became a lost ball see Definition 6.) For playing the wrong ball (the ball improperly dropped), the player sustained a two-stroke penalty, and was obliged to proceed under Rule 29-1 with the additional penalty prescribed therein.

A "Hit" and A "Push"
USGA 52-101
R. 19-1

Q: Rule 19-1 provides for the *method of using* the club, without regard to the form of the club, as I understand it.

Am I correct in assuming that if the ball is "pushed" the face of the club must be in contact with the ball before the ball is moved by the club, and so there is no back-swing or hit? Thus, if there is space between the face of the club and the ball through which the club must move to strike the ball, it is not a push but a hit. In an extreme case, if a ball lies close to an immovable obstacle, but there is room behind the ball to insert an iron club or a putter, perhaps, leaving a space of half an inch between the ball and the face of the club, the ball could be hit and not pushed and the rule not violated.

Question by: DEAN O. M. LELAND
MINNEAPOLIS 14, MINN.

A: Your understanding is right.

**Where Ball May Be Dropped
When Deemed Unplayable**
USGA 52-102
D. 34; R. 29-2b

Q: A ball is played from the tee and hooks into an out-jutting rough about 10 feet from the fairway. The ball is lodged under the root of a tree and is declared unplayable by the player. Assuming the player does not elect to return to the tee, where is the proper place to drop the ball for the next shot:

(a) On the fairway (about 10 feet away to the side)?

(b) In the rough (as close as possible to the spot from which the ball was lifted)?

(c) Back 20 yards, which would again put the ball into the fairway?

Are there any conditions under which a ball, having been declared unplayable while in the rough or in a hazard, may be dropped in the fairway at any point between the point from which it was originally played and a point from which it was lifted after having been declared unplayable?

Question by: B. J. WAGNER
MIAMI, FLA.

A: Rule 29-2 governs when a ball is deemed unplayable, and option b of that Rule permits a player to "Drop and play a ball under penalty of two strokes, keeping the point from which the ball was lifted between himself and the hole; if this be impossible, he shall drop and play a ball under penalty of two strokes as near as possible to the spot from which the ball was lifted but not nearer the hole."

Thus the player must, whenever possible, drop and play his ball behind the point from which it was lifted, keeping that point between himself and the hole. There is no limitation on how far back he may drop and play his ball; he may go back along this line 20 yards or as far as he desires. The Rules make no distinction between "fairway" and "rough"; both are "through the green" (Definition 34). Therefore, whether the player drops and plays his ball in fairway or rough is irrelevant, as long as he proceeds in accordance with the provisions of Rule 29-2b.

If, from the standpoint of golfing reason and fair play, it is impossible to drop and play a ball so that the point from which the ball was lifted remains between the player and the hole, the player must drop and play his ball as near as possible to the spot from which it was lifted, not nearer the hole. "As near as possible" is an explicit term. This normally would preclude him from dropping and playing his ball as much as 10 feet away from the spot where it was deemed unplayable, although the question of fairway or rough again would be irrelevant.

Ball Strikes Flagstick

R & A 53-11
R. 26-3a; 34-2d

Q: A member playing in a medal competition sent his caddie to the pin when taking a long putt. The ball was on the line but when the caddie removed the pin, the top half came away in his hand, leav-

ing the spike portion still in the hole. The ball struck this, and the player incurred a penalty of two strokes.

It has, however, been suggested that there should be no penalty, as both player and caddie had done all that could be expected of them, and the mishap was really due to a greenkeeper's fault.

Question by: LIGHTCLIFFE GOLF CLUB
LIGHTCLIFFE, YORKSHIRE

A: The player was rightly penalized two strokes. The fact that the spike portion remained in the hole when the caddie removed the flagstick does not affect Rules 26-3a and 34-2d.

Player May Enter Clubhouse

R & A 53-13
R. 3; 37-7

Q: Our course has four greens adjacent to the clubhouse. Is a player permitted, on arrival at any one of these greens, to enter the clubhouse (a) for the purpose of collecting a club, (b) to collect extra clothing.

Question by:

WHITCHURCH (CARDIFF) GOLF CLUB
WHITCHURCH, GLAMORGANSHIRE

A: A player may collect a club or clothing from the clubhouse, provided he does not delay play; see Rules 3 and 37-7.

Testing Sand in Bunker

R & A 53-14
R. 33-1

Q: During a medal round, A played his ball into a bunker. A entered the bunker to play his next stroke, and from a position nowhere near his ball displaced the sand with the toe of his shoe. He was not taking a stance.

B pointed out to A that he did not think displacing the sand with his shoe was allowed and A admitted that he had tested the sand for playing conditions.

On completion of the round, B reported the incident to the Secretary.

A decision is requested as to whether A incurred a penalty, and if so what is the penalty and Rule.

Question by: LANGLEY PARK GOLF CLUB
BECKENHAM, KENT

A: As player A admitted that he in fact tested the sand for playing conditions, he should be penalized two strokes for a breach of Rule 33-1.