



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.

Ball Moved to Unplayable Lie

USGA 53-8
D. 1; R. 27-1, 29-2, 30-2

Q: A drives his ball into bushes, then plays a provisional ball from the tee. The original ball rests in a narrow path in the bushes, and A informs B he must make a closer inspection before he deems it playable. When A takes a trial stance and uses a club to test the feasibility of a backswing from a point twelve inches behind the ball, the ball moves to a position which is positively unplayable.

What is the status of the original ball in regard to a penalty? Must the penalty be transferred to the provisional ball?

Question by: GARLAND R. JAMES
PORTSMOUTH, VA.

A: It is assumed that the player either caused the original ball to move (see Rule 27-1c) or that it moved after he addressed it (see Definition 1 and Rule 27-1d). If that is so, in either case he incurred a penalty of one stroke.

Since the provisional ball was provisional only against his first stroke, it automatically was retired from play under Rule 30-2 when the original ball moved.

As the player then deemed the original ball to be unplayable, he could only proceed in accordance with Rule 29-2. Option (a) of that Rule would require him to drop and play a ball as nearly as possible at the spot where the original ball lay be-

fore it was moved into an unplayable position, adding a penalty stroke to his score for the hole.

On the other hand, if the ball was moved to its unplayable lie by an outside agency, except wind, Rule 27-1a governs, there is no penalty due to movement of the ball and the player may drop the ball as near as possible to the spot from which it was moved, without penalty, or he may proceed with the provisional ball under Rule 30-2b.

Caddie Puts Own Club In Player's Bag

USGA 53-10
R. 3

Q: In our last club championship, A and B were playing in the semi-finals, one caddie carrying for both players. On the first tee, clubs were checked and found O. K., but on the tenth hole A found that she had an additional (strange) club in her bag. Upon investigation, it was ascertained that the caddie had put one he was carrying (his own) into the bag.

B demanded penalty under Rule 3. Was she correct? The committee decided otherwise.

Question by: MRS. JOHN S. PHILLIPS
ARLINGTON, VA.

A: Assuming that the additional club clearly had been placed in the player's bag only temporarily by her caddie in the course of the round and that the player did not know of it or use it, the committee was correct in not invoking Rule 3.

The player had selected her clubs, not exceeding fourteen in number, before starting her round and presumably had limited herself to the clubs so selected during that round, in compliance with Rule 3.

The practice of a caddie carrying one of his own clubs during a round is not recommended.

It is not the intent of Rule 3, however, to penalize a player for a caddie's action in circumstances such as described. This applies whether or not the caddie is carrying double.

Striking Twig in Hazard On Backswing

USGA 53-11
D. 17; R. 33-1

Q: Ball is lying in a bunker. Approximately three inches behind the ball but not touching the ball is a twig approximately eight inches long and projecting in part at least one inch above the surface of the sand. Player strikes the twig in the course of his backstroke but completes the swing and the shot. Is this situation not clearly covered by Rule 33, and, therefore, does not the player incur a penalty?

Question by: JOHN J. SPEESE
PHILADELPHIA, PA.

A: Yes. A twig is a loose impediment (Definition 17). Rule 33-1 provides in part: "When a ball lies in or touches a hazard . . . nothing shall be done which may in any way improve its lie. Before making a stroke, the player shall not touch the ground . . . with a club or otherwise, nor touch or move a loose impediment lying in or touching the hazard . . ." The penalty for breach of this Rule is loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play.

Waiving Turn to Putt Constitutes Abandonment of Hole

USGA 53-12
R. 20-1, 35-2b

Q: Play is four-ball match play. All four are on the green in three strokes. (A and B are partners; C and D are partners.)

A and C are about 10 feet from the cup. B is 1½ feet from cup and D is about 2 feet from the cup. C picks up her ball, but A leaves her ball as is, approaches the pin

to attend it and says to B and D, "You two battle it out." D putts first and drops it for a 4. B putts second and misses for a 5.

A, who is attending the pin and who is B's partner, still lies 3. 10 feet from cup. She replaces pin and asks that pin be attended as she is going to putt, hoping to halve hole with a 4.

C and D protest, saying that A could not putt because she had given up hole even though A had not picked up her ball and had not definitely stated that she was taking her ball out of play.

Question by: MRS. AL. K. HALL
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

A: A abandoned her right to complete the hole when she clearly waived her turn to putt by her statement to D.

Rule 20-1 requires that the ball farther from the hole shall be played first, except as modified by Rule 40-3a for best-ball and four-ball match play. A's ball was away at the time D putted; the actions of A and B in allowing D to putt first clearly indicates A's intention to withdraw from the hole.

Stroked Ball Comes to Rest Against Player's Foot

USGA 53-13
R. 26-2a, 3a

Q: A's ball landed under a ledge of a bunker. She swung mightily and didn't see what happened to the ball, but it dropped back in the bunker, rolling against her left shoe. When she moved her foot, the ball rolled into her footprint in the sand.

Does Rule 26-2a cover this for match play and 26-3a for stroke play? Is there any further penalty for the ball moving when the player moved her foot in order to make the next stroke?

Question by: MISS VEDA B. YOUNGER, JR.
PORTLAND, ORE.

A: Rule 26-2a governs in match play, and Rule 26-3a governs in stroke play.

On the assumption that the player's movement of her foot was in effect a part of the action in which she stopped her own ball, there is no additional penalty. The movement of the ball after the player moved her foot in such circumstance is not a movement of the sort contemplated by Rule 27-1c.

Both Players Unaware Match Had Ended

USGA 53-15
R. 11-1

Q: Please rule on following situation: A is 1 up on last hole of match. Hole is halved. A remarked that if hole was halved, they would have to play extra hole. They played two extra holes, B winning 20th. Who won the match?

Question by: YUMA COUNTRY CLUB
YUMA, ARIZ.

A: Assume both players were under impression match was all even after 18 holes. In absence of claim by A before players played from 19th tee as provided in Rule 11-1, match must be considered even at that point and B was winner.

Position of Player Immaterial

R & A 53-10
R. 18-2; 27-1d,e; 29-2b

Q1: May a golfer sit on a boundary fence to play a ball in bounds, or does this come under the "stance-building rule"? May a player sit in a tree or lean against a tree or other obstruction to play a shot?

A1: While a player is entitled to place his feet firmly on the ground, there is nothing in the Rules which compels him to do so. Sitting on a boundary fence or leaning against an obstruction do not infringe any Rule of Golf.

Q2: May a golfer lie on the ground and play a shot? Must the ball be hit with the face of the clubhead? I can visualize a ball under a bush or leafy tree. There is a foot or two of space above the ball and then branches. Conceivably, the player could lie prone and hit the ball—not scraping or pushing—with the face, or the toe of the clubhead, and getting the ball out perhaps thirty or forty yards back on to the fairway and nearer the green.

A2: So long as the ball is fairly struck at, the attitude assumed by the player is immaterial. It has long been recognized that a player may play a left-handed shot with the back of his club, and there is no reason why the toe of the club should not equally be used under the circumstances visualized by you.

Dropping Ball from Unplayable Lie

Q3: How far back may a player drop a ball under the provisions of the first sentence of Rule 29-2b? For instance, after de-

claring the ball unplayable, he accepts the two-stroke penalty and walks back perhaps thirty yards or more out of the rough, perchance, but still keeping the point from which the ball was lifted between himself and the hole.

A3: Under Rule 29-2b, so long as the player keeps the point from which the ball was lifted between himself and the hole, he may go back as far as he likes. If this (i.e., keeping the point from which the ball was lifted between himself and the hole) is impossible and he moves to one side, then he must drop the ball as near as possible to where the ball originally lay, but not nearer the hole.

Ball Moving

Q4a: I notice what appears to be a conflicting idea between Rules 27-1e and 18-2. The first says that if your ball moves after you have removed a loose impediment but before you address it (take your stance), there is no penalty. Yet Rule 18-2 says if the ball moves after removal of a loose impediment, there is a penalty. This second Rule says nothing about before or after address. What I wonder about is this: A player approaches his ball on the fairway. It is balanced precariously on some long grass. As he nears it and before he takes his stance to address the ball, it moves several inches. **4b:** Would this call for a penalty? No loose impediments have been touched; the ball has not been touched, nor is there any wind. What is the ruling?

A4a: Rules 18-2 and 27-1d are qualified by Rule 27-1e so that if both rules are broken as part of a single incident, the player suffers only one penalty stroke.

4b: No penalty has been incurred and the ball is played as it lies.

Question by: WOJG FREDERICK A. GASS
WARRINGTON, LANCASHIRE

Striking Ball with Back of Club

R & A 53-15

Q: Does a competitor in match play or stroke play incur any penalty if he should strike the ball with the back of his club through the green or on the green?

A: There is no Rule of Golf which prohibits a player striking the ball with the back of his club, either through the green or on the green.

Question by: MACCLESFIELD GOLF CLUB
MACCLESFIELD, CHESHIRE