



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. "54-1" means the first decision issued in 1954. "R.37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1954 Rules of Golf.

Defining Casual Water

USGA 53-27
D. 8

Q: I would like an interpretation of the casual water rule:

1. If a ball is buried after a heavy rain or due to a heavily sprinkled area, can you drop the ball if water is not visible?
2. Does moving your feet up and down making water ooze up constitute casual water?

Question by: JACK KOENNECKER
PRAIRIE VIEW, ILL.

A: 1. No, unless a local rule for an embedded ball allows it. According to Definition 8, "Casual water is any temporary accumulation of water which is not a hazard of itself or which is not in a water hazard". An accumulation of water is visible.

2. No, not if the player makes undue effort to cause water to become visible. It would, however, be casual water if it were a temporary accumulation which arose as the player took his normal stance. Soft, mushy earth does not in itself constitute casual water.

Replacing Ball On Green

USGA 53-29
R. 40-1b

Q: A and B are playing against C and D in a four-ball match with handicap strokes. C and D are on the ninth green in three. A is on in two and B is on in three. A putts his ball three feet from cup, marks it by

making a line on the green with a tee and walks to the side of the green. C and D putt out in 5 each, and with a stroke each they have 4s on the hole. B putts and misses by an inch. C and D concede his putt giving him a 5 on the hole. A, thinking his partner had a stroke on the hole which would have halved it with C and D, begins to leave for the next hole. B asks him if he has putted out. Then A realizes that his partner doesn't get a stroke on the hole, so he comes back, replaces his ball and makes his putt for a 4, which halved the hole with C and D.

Now, C and D protest that A cannot come back and putt after walking off the green thinking his partner B had halved the hole. They also said he had to mark his ball with coin.

Question by: MEL SHOREY
INDIAN SPRING COUNTRY CLUB
SILVER SPRING, MD.

A: There is nothing in the statement of facts to indicate that there was any undue delay in play (see Rule 37-7). Inasmuch as B had lifted his ball under Rule 40-1b and had not waived his turn to putt, he was entitled to replace it, and the hole was halved in 4s.

The rules do not specify the manner in which a ball's position shall be marked when it is lifted on the putting green. However, we recommend that players use coins or similar markers in order to preserve the putting surface. A player who does mark a green must do so in such a way as not to violate Rules 35-1b, c or d.

Professional As Marker

USGA 53-30

D. 2, 18; R. 9-1

Q: Is there any Rule of Golf or of good sportsmanship that would prevent a club member from playing a round in a handicap medal play tournament, open solely to members of the club, with the club professional as the only other player accompanying him?

There is no thought that the professional gave advice or instruction during the round. No prior application was made to the tournament committee to designate the professional or one of the caddies as scorer. There were plenty of other members available for play at the time of starting. The usual practice at the club is to have all scores in stroke competition attested by a fellow competitor. Written notices to this effect have been published, and the practice is followed almost without exception.

Would your answer be any different if two members had played the round with the club professional, each attesting the other's score?

Question by: ANDREW SCHARPS
SCARSDALE, N. Y.

A: The committee may appoint a professional or any other person to act as a marker in stroke play for amateurs; see Definition 18 and Rule 38. A player is not permitted to select his own marker unless the committee approves. A competitor may not ask for or take any action which may result in his receiving advice during his round; see Definition 2 and Rule 9-1.

We do not recommend the appointment of a professional as a marker in competitions of the nature you cite nor do we consider it good practice to permit a professional to play with certain competitors, simply as a playing companion, during a competition round.

"Preferred Lies" Disregarded

USGA 53-31

R. 11-1; LR

Q: Players A and B were scheduled to play a match in the semi-finals of men's club championship. The afternoon before the match A asked B will it be all right with you if we repair ball marks on the putting green before putting? B said no, let us abide by the Rules. On Saturday when A and B reported to No. 1 tee, A informed B inasmuch as B wanted to play by the Rules as far as repairing ball marks was con-

cerned, the Local Rule of preferred lies would not be recognized as far as A was concerned. B in turn said inasmuch as preferred lies was a Local Rule and that the tournament was being played while this Rule was in effect, B felt that A and B were not privileged to change the Rule whether Local or USGA. B then suggested the problem be decided by the professional. A refused this request. B then informed A he would play, but under protest.

The matter came to my attention and I felt the question was covered by USGA Rule 4. Even though USGA does not recognize winter rules or preferred lies it does recognize, however, that such adverse conditions are sometimes general throughout a golf course and that the local committee adopts Local Rules, called winter rules, to give relief. This our local committee did and the tournament is being played with the understanding that a ball may be lifted, cleaned and placed and from there on the Rules as laid down by USGA apply.

Please give us a ruling on the above problem, keeping in mind that the problem is: Can a player or players decide whether or not a Local Rule such as above explained be disregarded by any player?

Question by: D. H. FENTON, JR.
BUCKHANNON COUNTRY CLUB
BUCKHANNON, W. VA.

A: No player has right to abrogate Local Rule properly promulgated, as was your Local Rule. However, Local Rule in question is permissive, not obligatory, so there is no question of agreement to waive Local Rule under Rule 4. Had B wanted to take advantage of Local Rule, he should either have settled matter before match or else taken advantage of Local Rule during play, with attendant risk of claim by A under Rule 11-1. B apparently took neither course to assert his rights. His protest has no effect under the circumstances, since Local Rule is merely permissive. A cannot be penalized for asserting his belief that Local Rule should not apply and for failing to take advantage of Local Rule. Match stands as played.

Ball May Be Dropped in Front of Water in This Case

USGA 53-32

R. 33-2b

Q: Player's second shot came to rest at point just beyond water hazard. In playing third shot to green the ball hit a stone or rock and bounded back into pond. Accord-

ing to Rule 33-2 player may (1) drop behind water hazard, keeping last point of entry between him and hole, or (2) drop at point from which ball was struck, no closer to the hole.

Does this mean he can drop a ball in this case at point just beyond water hazard from where his second stroke was played, without having to play over the pond, shooting five of course?

Question by: DR. W. H. FREDRIX
CLEVELAND, OHIO

A: Yes; see option b of Rule 33-2.

Sighting Along Putter

USGA 53-36
D. 30; R. 17-3

Q1: Is there a Rule violation by a player who lays his putter full length behind the ball facing intended line of flight, then steps back and from a crouching position sights along putter to hole before putting?

A1: Provided the player did not violate Rules 19-1, 35-1c, 35-1d or 37-7, the Rules do not prohibit such action.

When Swing May Be Checked

Q2: Can you clarify for us when a swing may be checked after addressing the ball with intention of striking the ball without incurring a penalty? What happens if club head tangles in a tree or bush perhaps causing leaves to fall and swing is stopped?

A2: A stroke is a forward movement of the club made with the intention of moving the ball; see Definition 30. A player who voluntarily checks the swing of his club at any point before it reaches the ball and does not move the ball cannot be considered to have made a stroke.

However, if a player starts the forward movement of his club with the intention of moving the ball and thereafter the club is stopped or deflected by any agency other than the player himself, he is considered to have made a stroke, whether or not he succeeds in moving the ball.

A player whose club bends or breaks anything fixed or growing (i.e., branches, leaves or twigs) in such a way as to improve the position or lie of his ball violates Rule 17-3 unless the breaking occurs in making the stroke or the backward movement of the club for the stroke.

Questions by: MRS. JOHN TYSON
DOWNEY, CAL.

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (*Title 39, UNITED STATES CODE, SECTION 233*) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF USGA JOURNAL AND TURF MANAGEMENT, published seven times a year at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1953.

1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, United States Golf Association, 40 East 38th St., New York 16, N. Y. Editor, Joseph C. Dey, Jr., 40 East 38th St., New York 16, N. Y.; Managing Editor, none. Business manager, none.

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J. C. DEY, JR., EDITOR

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 15th day of October, 1953.

(Signed) Mary A. Freeley, Notary Public, State of New York. (My commission expires March 30, 1954).