



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.

Ball Played from Wrong Tee

USGA 54-5
D. 29; R. 7-2, 13-2, 38-3

Q: Two women were playing an eighteen-hole medal play sweepstakes. They had the option of teeing off either the first tee or the tenth tee, so they chose the tenth tee. When they got to the eighteenth tee, one of the ladies accidentally teed off the ninth tee. Her partner suddenly realized the mistake. Therefore, they decided to play off the eighteenth tee. The lady playing off the ninth tee by accident decided to mark the misplayed tee shot so she could play it when she came around to play the second nine, which she did.

Question by: AL MAUS
LOS ALTOS, CAL.

A: The lady who played from the ninth tee instead of the eighteenth actually played a ball from outside the teeing ground in violation of Rule 13-2. Since the competition was at stroke play, she was required to count the stroke and then play from within the teeing ground. If she did not so count the first stroke in her score for the hole, at the time she reported her score, she incurred a penalty of disqualification under Rule 38-3, unless the committee modified the penalty under Rule 36-5.

If she did count that stroke, she incurred no other penalty there, but the definition of a stipulated round (Definition 29) requires that the eighteen holes be played in their correct sequence and the use of the ball played inadvertently from the ninth tee when she came to that hole later would violate Rule 7-2, and the player would have no acceptable score.

The fact that the player marked and lifted the ball played inadvertently from the ninth tee is irrelevant in the circumstances.

Claim on Bye Holes

USGA 54-6
R. 3, 11-1

Q: Would you be kind enough to give me a ruling on the following:

A has 16 clubs in his bag and wins a match against B, 6 and 5. They played the remaining five holes. On the sixteenth hole B looked at A's bag and counted 16 clubs. He claimed the match from A.

Question by: PAUL SCOTT
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

A: Inasmuch as B did not enter a claim before leaving the thirteenth green, as required by Rule 11-1, the match stands as

played. A was the winner by a score of 6 and 5.

If a claim had been entered within the time limit, however, A would have been subject to disqualification for his violation of Rule 3.

Caddie Picks Up Ball

USGA 54-7
R. 16, 36-7.

Q: In the semi-final of the mixed four-some tournament played with selected drives at the Dubsread Country Club, Orlando, Florida, Clarence Doser and Mrs. Beverly Hanson Silvernail were playing George Bolesta and Mrs. Grace DeMoss Smith. The match was even on the 18th tee.

Doser hit his tee shot into the trees on the left of the fairway. Mrs. Silvernail hit her ball to the right but apparently in a good spot. The two partners went to check Doser's ball before deciding which ball to play. After they decided to play Mrs. Silvernail's ball, she picked up Doser's ball and they started back. Upon instructions from someone in the gallery the caddie picked up her ball, which he quickly dropped again in approximately its original position.

The questions raised by this action were:

1. Since the instructions to the caddie came from the gallery, could it be considered that the ball had been accidentally moved? Could it be played as it lay under penalty of one stroke under Rule 27-1c?

2. Could the advice of the gallery be considered an outside agency and could the ball be dropped again and put in play under Rule 27-1a?

3. A local rule permitted lifting the ball anywhere on the course. Could it be considered that the ball was lifted under this local rule?

The local committee's first decision was that, since the local rule permitted lifting a ball at any time, no penalty had been incurred.

After a second conference and a 15-minute delay the first decision was reaffirmed.

Then, as Doser was about to play his shot, an official announced that after another conference the committee had decided that the appropriate penalty was one stroke.

At this point the hole was played, and both teams made birdies. The committee contacted a USGA official by telephone and the USGA official advised that under the Rules of Golf a penalty of loss of hole had been incurred by Doser and Mrs. Silvernail. They had therefore lost the match 1 down.

Would you please explain the basis for the decision by the USGA official?

Also, in view of the several decisions rendered, when is a committee's decision final?

Question by: CLARENCE J. DOSER
BETHESDA, MD.

A: The decision was made on the basis of Rule 16 of the Rules of Golf which provides in part:

"A ball shall not be touched purposely and must be played as it lies except as otherwise provided for in the Rules or Local Rules . . ."

Any local rule which permits a player to lift a ball anywhere on the course is in conflict with the Rules of Golf, and specifically with Rule 36-7, and cannot be interpreted by this Association. Rules 27-1a and c do not apply.

It would appear that the committee rendered three decisions before Doser played a stroke but that the case remained open until it was finally resolved by the committee after consultation with a representative of this Association. Therefore we would not consider that any injustice was done by changing the decisions or that a "final" decisions had been altered.

Spectator Plays Test Stroke

USGA 54-8

D. 2; R. 9-1, 11-1, 37-7

Q: Loras College, of Dubuque, Iowa, was playing Loyola University. In a four-ball match A had about a 40-yard approach shot to make and a member of his

team who was not playing but just following the match took one of his clubs and a ball and, from within two feet of our opponent's ball, hit it to the green to test it in order to see if the green would hold a shot. It didn't hold the shot and consequently A played a pitch and run shot onto the green. My partner and I protested the hole, but our protest was overruled at the club house.

I would appreciate it very much if I could have your ruling on the situation.

Question by: TOM BRAAK
LORAS COLLEGE
DUBUQUE, IOWA

A: It is assumed that A was aware of and took no action to stop the irregular procedure of the other person. On that basis, A must be considered a willing party to a violation of Rule 9-1 (see Definition 2). If a claim was properly made under Rule 11-1, A was disqualified for the hole. The penalty would not have applied to A's partner in the four-ball match (Rule 40-3g).

There is also the further question whether A delayed play under Rule 37-7.

Committee May Reverse Decision

USGA 54-9
D. 4; R. 11-3, 34-3b

Q1: Can a committee reverse its decision 24 hours after score is posted?

A1: In stroke play committee may alter its decision if circumstances justify.

Ball Strikes Flagstick

Q2: Player in stroke play hits ball into hole while flagstick is in hole and attended. Ball stayed in hole. Does player take two-stroke penalty?

A2: Player incurs two-stroke penalty if ball strikes attended flagstick in stroke play. See Rule 34-3b. When flagstick is in hole, virtually impossible for ball to be holed without striking flagstick. See Definition 4.

Questions by: WAYNE CLARK
EVANSVILLE, IND.

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