



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 Lost or Removed By Outside Agency

USGA 54-20

D. 6,22,29; R.1,7-2,21-3,27-1,29-1

Q: In stroke play, a competitor pushed his ball into the adjoining open fairway and down a slight depression, then helped another member of the group look for a ball that was hooked into woods on the left. That ball found, the player returned to the adjoining fairway to look for his ball. It wasn't found, and all members of the group felt that another group playing up that fairway (No. 4) must have picked it up. Earlier such a move had been observed on another player. Because it was a league event and with groups behind waiting to tee off, the player dropped a ball near where he thought he'd lost his tee shot.

Our league plays on a handicap medal basis with two points only for low net victor of each match.

Play was held in a four-ball, and the player who lost—or had stolen—his ball on No. 4 fairway did not return to the tee. He put his approach on the green and two-putted for a four—no penalty stroke(s) counted.

Does he accept a one or two-stroke penalty, since it was medal play and not match, for failure to play his ball as nearly as pos-

sible at the spot from which he played his first shot?

Question by: VINCE SIKORA
LORAIN, OHIO

A: It is a question of fact whether the ball was lost (Definition 6) or was moved by an outside agency (Definition 22). In order to treat it as moved by an outside agency, there must be reasonable evidence to that effect; all available testimony should be considered. In the absence of such evidence, the ball must be treated as a lost ball, and Rule 29-1 applies.

If the local Committee rules that it was a lost ball, the player did not conform with Rule 29-1. In dropping and playing a ball "near where he thought he'd lost his tee shot," the player in effect played a wrong ball. He thus sustained a two-stroke penalty under Rule 21-3. As he then failed to put another ball into play in the manner required by Rule 29-1, he did not play the hole (Rule 1) or the stipulated round (Definition 29 and Rule 7-2), and he therefore had no score which could be accepted.

On the other hand, if the local Committee rules that the original ball was moved by an outside agency, Rule 27-1 applies, and there is no penalty if the player conformed with that Rule.

Ball Strikes Caddie Cart

USGA 54-18
R. 11-1, 26-2b

Q: A and B are playing a handicap match. On Hole 4 A pulled her drive behind a group of small pine trees from where the green could be reached on a pitch, but she could not aim for the pin due to a large tree at the left corner of the green. B's ball was a little short of the green. Both A and B were using carts.

B stopped directly opposite A, about 15 yards, and no way in line. The ball caromed directly at B. A called to watch out, but it wasn't possible for B to move the cart to prevent the ball from hitting her clubs.

A asked what the penalty was, and B replied she did not know in this case. B knew the penalty for hitting player, opponent, or caddie. But as a cart is an inanimate object and she had no way to get out of line, B didn't think she should take the penalty. B also was under the impression that the penalty should be A's, and said she wasn't sure what the penalty was, and would have to look it up.

Neither having the Rule book with them, A said, "It doesn't matter for I would lose the hole anyway." B won the match 6 and 5.

Later A looked up the Rule and said she felt B had been dishonest in not giving up the hole because she knew Rules excellently and always played them, and it was very strange that in this instance she wouldn't know that if the clubs were hit B lost the hole. B claims she didn't know that a ball hitting her clubs would cost the hole when they were on a cart. B offered to default the match.

What is the ruling?

Question by: MISS CLARA B. FAULK
OSHKOSH, WIS.

A: The hole stands as played, as a claim does not appear to have been entered as provided for in Rule 11-1.

Had A made a proper claim, she would have won the hole under Rule 26-2b, which provides:

"If a player's ball be stopped or deflected by an opponent, his caddie, clubs or other equipment, the opponent's side shall lose the hole."

This would apply had A's ball struck B's caddie cart, which is "other equipment" under the Rule.

It is up to each player to know the Rules and so to know his own rights, regardless of the opponent's knowledge.

Obstruction Claimed To Be Mental Hazard

USGA 54-19
D. 27; R. 11-1, 3; 31-2

Q: A player's ball comes to rest several inches to the side of a flat sprinkler-head covering, and he declares his intention of moving the ball, stating that his ball is in the fairway and that he is entitled to a fair shot at it.

His opponent objects, stating that the covering does not interfere with either the player's stance or his forward or backswing and that under golf Rules it's a rub of the green and he is not entitled to relief.

The question then arises as to who is to decide the question of what constitutes interference, the player or his opponent.

The player maintains that the covering interferes with his swing in that it constitutes a mental hazard, even though the ball lies four or five inches from the actual covering.

Question by MITCHELL N. HOTRA
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

A: If the players cannot agree, a claim may be entered as provided in Rule 11-1 and the local committee shall decide it; see Rule 11-3.

As the covering was at least four inches to the side of the ball, we would not consider that Rule 31-2 could be invoked unless there were actual interference with the player's stance or stroke or backward movement of his club for the stroke.

"Rub of the green" pertains to a ball in motion and an outside agency; see Definition 27.

Identifying Ball in Rough

USGA 54-22

R. 11-1, 23-2, 40-3g

Q: Player A hits ball into rough. Partner B hits same numbered ball into same area in rough (deep grass).

Ball is found in rough. Opponent C tells player A to identify ball, expecting player A to move grass aside without touching ball. However, after he turns his back and starts to walk away he looks back and finds opponent standing with ball in hand. Player A made no attempt to identify ball in its lying position.

Opponent C called the hole and player A agreed. Three days later player A claims hole on ground Rule had not been quoted properly. He had a right to pick up ball and identify it.

Question by: JACK B. CHERWIN
NEWARK, N. J.

A: Player C apparently made a claim within the time limit prescribed by Rule 11-1, and player A admitted the validity of that claim. Therefore the hole stands as played. A's later claim is not valid. It is up to each player to know the Rules on his own account.

Although the matter is now academic, A did have the right to lift and identify his ball but, under Rule 23-2, he was obliged to lift and replace it in the presence of his opponent. It is a question of fact as to whether this was done.

If the match was a four-ball match, A's disqualification for the hole did not apply to his partner B; see Rule 40-3g.

Practice on the Course

R & A 54-6

R. 30-2

Q: On Sunday, September 13, 1953, an 18-hole alliance competition was held on our course. At the end of the day's play two competitors returned a net score of 64. According to the marking on the card, this was found to be correct. On Monday, September 14, they were declared the winners and a notice inserted in all the local papers stating this fact. On September 29 I received a letter dated September 28

drawing my attention to an infringement of the Rules of Golf, Rule 37-3. This letter was placed before our committee which met on October 6. I was then instructed to write for your ruling on this case. The full facts of the infringement are:

Two competitors were at the club on the morning of September 13 and having no opponents decided to proceed to the old eighth green, which is situated in the middle of the rough and has not been used for approximately five years. From evidence it appears that they were practicing from out of the old bunkers there and onto the green. This portion of the course has not been recognized as a place of practice. These two competitors, having found opponents, played in this competition during the afternoon. No complaint was lodged to any member of the Committee until the date of the letter.

The committee are now seeking guidance from you, firstly, as to whether the above offence does constitute a breach of Rule 37-3, which entails disqualification, and, secondly, having in mind the lapse of time from the date of the competition to the date of the letter, what action the committee should take. The committee's opinion is that a complaint of this nature should be lodged on the day of the competition or at least within forty-eight hours, otherwise it cannot be upheld, but it is on this latter point that we are seeking guidance from you.

A: The competitors had, in the circumstances described, committed a breach of Rule 37-3. However, a decision whether notice should be taken of an objection after the conclusion of a competition must depend on the circumstances of the case in particular, the nature of the irregularity, the conditions which gave rise to it and the time which has elapsed. In this case, the Rules of Golf Committee agree that no action should be taken and the result of the competition should stand as announced.

**Treat your caddie as you would
your son.**