



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 Holed Is Not Lost

USGA 54-13

R. 1

Q: On a par 3 hole, player hits ball into woods on side of the green. He then tees provisional ball and hits it onto the green. Before reaching green he goes into woods to look for original ball. After five minutes he has not found the original ball, and he then proceeds to finish hole with provisional ball. After holing out, he finds original ball in the cup.

Does he score a hole-in-one for the hole? Or does his score for the provisional ball stand?

Question by: DR. FRANK LIOTTA
CLEVELAND, OHIO

A: The player's score is 1. The play of the hole was completed when he holed the original ball. Rule 1 provides: "The Game of Golf consists in playing a ball from the teeing ground into the hole by successive strokes in accordance with the Rules."

Conditions for Applying Obstruction Rule

USGA 54-21

D. 20; R. 31-2

Q: I drove a ball into the rough, two feet off the fairway. My ball came to rest

one and one-half club-lengths from an iron pipe which was protruding 12 inches out of the ground. The pipe was in a direct line between my ball and the green to which I was shooting. The pipe did not interfere with my stance or swing. However, being inside of two club-lengths of this immovable obstruction, I cited Rule 31-2 in the 1954 Rule book. I maintained to the Committee I was entitled to drop two club-lengths away from the pipe without penalty even though I could swing freely and stand properly.

I was told to play the ball as it was. I did. I hit the pipe with the ball, which I considered a stroke.

I would certainly appreciate your opinion. I may be wrong, but I want to know definitely if the situation occurs again.

Question by: ART WALL, JR.
HONESDALE, PA.

A: Rule 31-2 did not entitle you to free relief inasmuch as the obstruction (the pipe) did not interfere with your stance or stroke or the backward movement of your club for the stroke. Interference with the so-called "line of flight" is not of itself grounds for applying the Rule.

In order to obtain relief under Rule 31-2 in a situation such as the one described, all three of the following conditions must exist:

1. The obstruction (Definition 20) must interfere with the stance or stroke or the backward movement of the club for the stroke.

2. The obstruction must be immovable.

3. The obstruction must be within two club-lengths of the ball.

Rule 31-2 also gives relief if a ball lie on or touch an immovable obstruction, regardless of any other conditions.

Mopping Green With Towels

USGA 54-16

R. 35-1b

Q: A and B balls lie in casual water surrounding hole. A tries to chip and, upon failing, B procures towels and proceeds to remove casual water with them and sinks his putt. Did not B incur a penalty under Rule 32?

Question by: R. J. FOLEY
HUNTINGTON, W. VA.

A: B violated Rule 35-1b prohibiting touching the line of putt. The penalty in match play is loss of hole; in stroke play, two strokes.

Seeking a Rules Decision in Stroke Play

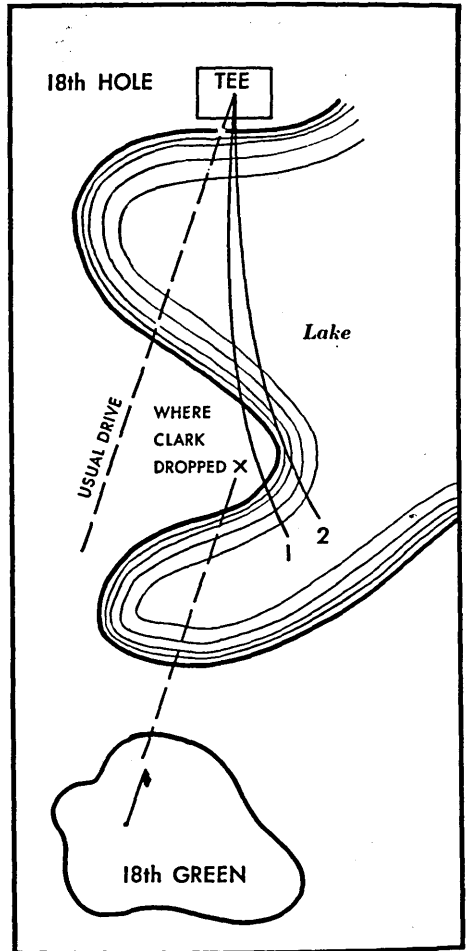
USGA 54-23

D. 29, R. 1, 7-2, 11-4, 21-3,
33-2, 36,5, 38-2

Q: During the first round of qualifying in the recent Trans-Mississippi Golf Tournament, Bob Clark came to the eighteenth hole at Cherry Hills. The drive crosses the lake at one end and then the fairway follows the lake shore for some distance. I will accompany this with a diagram to further show what happened.

A Local Rule, published on the championship scorecard, stated: "Play lake as water hazard on tee shots." For other shots the lake is a lateral water hazard.

Clark drove his first ball into the lake. He then teed another and also drove it into the lake. He then walked forward to a point about opposite where the ball was (in the lake), dropped another, played it to the green and holed out. He was playing



with Jim Jackson. Jim was keeping his card, also. They knew that Clark's play was not right, so they referred it to me as Chairman of the Rules Committee.

I disqualified Clark because I thought he had played the hole out illegally, although he did not present his card to the score board.

There were two other members of the Rules Committee not present at the time. Later on they, and others, thought that I might have been more lenient under the terms of the Rules and so we had a Rules Committee session. I was overruled by the other two, who thought that Clark should

be allowed to go back and be charged with two strokes, thus shooting 7 off the tee. That was done.

Which is right?

Question by: N. C. MORRIS, Sec'y.
TRANS-MISSISSIPPI
GOLF ASSOCIATION
DENVER, COLO.

A: It depends on whether the player immediately sought a ruling before returning his card. If he did so, he was proceeding as provided for in Rule 38-2.

In dropping a ball "about opposite where the ball was (in the lake)" the player did not conform with the Local Rule and Rule 33-2; and in playing that ball he violated Rule 21-3, which prohibits play with a wrong ball. He thus sustained a penalty of two strokes and his score at that point was 5.

Rule 21-3 provides in part: "If a competitor discovers that he has holed out with a wrong ball, he may rectify his mistake by finding and holing out with his own ball, subject to the above penalty, provided he has not made a stroke on the next teeing ground, or, in the case of the last hole of the round, left the putting green."

In such a case, the technical prohibition against leaving the putting green is superseded by the requirement of Rule 38-2 that a competitor in stroke play shall settle any doubtful points with the Committee before returning his card. See Rule 11-4 regarding equity.

If the player immediately sought a ruling, it was proper to authorize him to play out the hole correctly, in which case he was playing 7 from the tee.

Further, Rule 36-5 authorizes the Committee, in exceptional individual cases, to waive or to modify a penalty of disqualification if the Committee considers such action warranted, provided that a Rule of Golf is not waived.

However, if the player delayed seeking a ruling after holing out, he disqualified himself in failing to play the hole (Rule 1) and the stipulated round (Definition 29 and Rule 7-2).

Whereabouts of a Ball Is Not "Advice"

USGA 54-24
D. 2

Q: A hit his second shot in the direction of a ditch. B thereupon shouted to a group on top of a hill some distance away, inquiring where A's ball had gone. They didn't hear him, or at least failed to answer, whereupon A said B nevertheless forfeited the hole by asking for advice which might influence B's playing his next shot. A pointed to Definition 2 and to Rule 9, paragraph 1. The committee could not see it A's way. B won the hole instead of losing it as A insisted.

May I have your ruling?

Question by: PHILIP L. AXT
BLOOMFIELD, N. J.

A: Information concerning the whereabouts of a ball is not considered advice as defined in Definition 2. The committee's decision was correct. B incurred no penalty.

Ball Deemed to Move

USGA 54-25
D. 3

Q: If a player while addressing the ball should accidentally move the ball but it does not make a turn but returns to its original position, is a penalty incurred? This question does not pertain to the teeing ground.

Question by: WALTER J. LUTZ
HARRISBURG, PA.

A: A ball is only deemed to move under Definition 3 if it leaves its original position and comes to rest in any other place. In the case you describe the ball is not deemed to have moved, and there is no penalty under Rule 27-1d.

Caddie Lifting Ball Without Instruction

USGA 54-27
R. 23-1

Q: Under Rule 23-1 a player may ask his caddie to mark his ball under the Rules on the green in match or stroke play, without penalty.

1. If his caddie marks a ball on the green without instructions from his player, is there a penalty?

2. Is his caddie to touch the ball without instructions from his player, or the player's partner if the event is a four-ball?

Question by: MRS. M. R. DENISON
SOUTH BEND, IND.

A: 1. No, provided the ball was properly lifted and replaced under the Rules or local rules.

2. The player incurs the relative penalty for any breach of a Rule or local rule by his caddie (see Rule 37-2) except when the caddie is employed by both sides in a match (see recommendation for local rules, Caddying Double, in the appendix to the USGA Rules of Golf booklet). For this reason the players on a side should instruct their caddies.

Rule 23-1 does not prohibit a caddie from lifting a player's ball without instructions from the player and, as stated above, the player incurs no penalty when his caddie lifts his player's ball properly under the Rules or local rules.

It is good practice for a player to advise his caddie not to touch any ball in the match except upon instructions from his player.

Practice Between Rounds

R. & A 54-8

R. 37-3

Q: In the case of a 36-hole competition, is a competitor allowed to practice on the course during the lunch interval?

A: Rule 37-3 applies to practice between rounds in a stroke competition of two rounds played on the same day. The words "before starting" impliedly refer to each of the two rounds.

Round Cancelled

R. & A 54-9

R. 36-4c

Q: With reference to Rule 36-4c concerning a one-round stroke-play competition played at any time on the same day, will you please say if our committee is in order in declaring play null and void under the following circumstances:

Reasonable weather early in day, followed by snow which settled on greens and made play impracticable.

The reason for asking is that the Rule reads as if it applied mainly to a competition of more than one round. I would add that eleven players, who went out in the morning, completed the round and further players were competing in afternoon when snow started.

A: Rule 36-4c is not meant to apply mainly to competitions of more than one round. Your committee were perfectly within their rights in declaring play null and void under the circumstances described in your letter.

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