



# 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. "55-1" means the first decision issued in 1955. "D" means definition. "R. 37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1955 Rules of Golf.

### Removing Spanish Moss

USGA 55-1

D. 17; R. 17-3; 18; 32-1

**Q.1:** Can you remove Spanish moss from trees that might be in your way? Is it considered fixed or growing?

**A.1:** We understand that trees are the natural habitat of Spanish moss. Rule 17-3 would prohibit removing it from the line of play.

We would regard such moss fallen to the ground as a loose impediment (Definition 17 and Rule 18).

### Ball In Salamander Mound

**Q.2:** Is relief given for balls that come to rest in salamander mounds? How about salamander mounds that have been raked out but still leave the residue of sand?

**A.2:** Rule 32-1 gives relief from a mound made by a salamander or from such part of a mound as has not been completely eliminated by raking.

Questions by: IRVIN E. SCHLOSS  
DUNEDIN, FLA.

### Attending the Flag

USGA 55-2  
R. 34-3

**Q:** In stroke play, if a fellow-competitor

is approaching the green within or beyond the twenty-yard distance of the hole, can the competitor demand that the flag be attended or removed?

Question by: G. PEXIE DUPUY  
LAKE CHARLES, LA.

**A:** No.

In stroke play, the competitor playing the stroke controls the flagstick at all times, and he may have his caddie attend it or leave it unattended, subject to the risk of penalty imposed by Rule 34-3.

### Error In Handicap

USGA 55-3

**Q:** In a stroke play competition, a player's handicap is posted as 17. The player wins low net by a margin of one stroke.

Several days later the Committee discovers that, through its own error, the player's handicap should have been 16. The player was not at fault.

May the Committee correct its error several days after the event and retract the prize awarded to the player?

Question by: MRS. J. JOSEPH CONNOR  
RED BANK, N. J.

**A:** Yes.

If a Committee has erred in computing or posting a handicap and a remedy is feasible, the Committee should correct its error.

In stroke play there is no time limit for the Committee to apply a Rule if the facts warrant.

The matter is up to the judgment of the Committee; its objective should be fair play for the entire field.

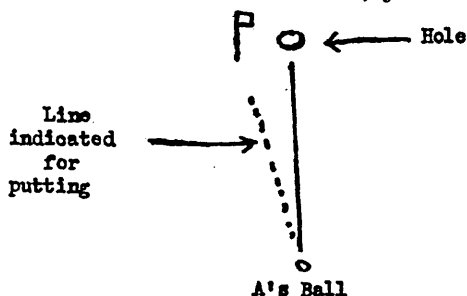
### ***Caddie Indicates Line for Putting***

USGA 55-9

Rule 35-1c

**Q:** In match play, A's caddie was attending the flagstick, and indicated the direction for putting by placing the flagstick on the green about one foot to the side of the hole. As it was a sloping green, the spot of its placement was not actually on the line of putting, but a point to indicate where to aim. The caddie lifted the flagstick immediately, and thereafter A putted. Thereupon B claimed the hole under Rule 35-1c. Was B's claim valid?

Question by: S. TAKAHATA  
KOBE, JAPAN



**A:** B's claim was valid. When A's caddie touched the flagstick to the ground, the line of putt was touched to the side of the hole, in violation of Rule 35-1c.

The line of putt is not necessarily a straight line from ball to hole. The slope of the ground and possible error in executing the stroke must be considered.

One object of Rule 35-1c is to prevent improving the putting surface, as might be done by touching any possible line of putt; it is for this reason that the Rule applies to touching any area of the putting green over which the ball might pos-

sibly travel. Another object of the Rule is to prevent making a more or less permanent mark to assist in putting.

### ***Local Rule Conflicts With Rules of Golf***

USGA 55-6

R. 11-3, 20-1, 35-2b, 35-3a, 36-7

**Q:** A question has arisen concerning the making of rules by a Green Committee. The Committee is planning to make a rule as follows . . .

It will be mandatory for a player to putt out completely. A player who is farthest away from the hole on the putting green must putt first and then no matter where he finishes must complete the hole.

It is my contention that the player away should putt first. The man who made the first putt may finish slightly closer to the hole than the opponent and then in completing the next putt may help and assist the competitor in showing the line, roll of the green and the way he may play. Sometimes it will make the opponent go all out for the putt because he knows he must make it, or he may play safe, as is required.

The Rules of Golf call for the man furthest away to play first. I say play the Rules and make as few changes as possible in your local rules. I know it is advocated to complete play as fast as possible, but the proposed local rule will cause many arguments.

If any arguments are started and the USGA is needed for a decision, will they make a decision when the rule is against the Rules of Golf?

Question by: MAXWELL HEYMANN  
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

**A:** The proposed local rule conflicts with Rules 20-1, 35-2b in match play and 35-3a in stroke play, and cannot be authorized under Rule 36-7. The USGA will not interpret such a local rule—see Rule 11-3. For three-ball, best-ball and four-ball match play, see Rules 40-1b, 40-1d and 40-3a. For four-ball stroke play, see Rules 41-2a and 41-5.

## ***Legitimate Hole-in-One?***

USGA 55-4

Misc.; D. 18, 29

**Q:** A question has arisen concerning a hole-in-one. One player had this good fortune while practicing, with a caddie as the only witness, and another while playing only nine holes. We wonder in cases such as this if full credit can be given.

Question by: MRS. J. B. REINHART, JR.  
WEBSTER GROVES, MO.

**A:** Each case should be determined by the local Committee as it can best ascertain the facts. Would the Committee accept the score for its own handicap purposes? We offer the following comments:

1. If the first case were a practice round in which more than one ball was in play at a time, we would not think the score acceptable. If it were a normal round played under the Rules of Golf, we see no reason not to accept the score provided the Committee permits caddies to serve as markers (Definition 8).

2. As a stipulated round of 18 holes was not played (see Definition 29), we would not consider the score acceptable.

## ***Device For Measuring Shots***

USGA 55-5

R. 37-7

**Q:** Will you please send me your ruling on meters for measuring the distance of shots that some players have attached to their golf carts?

Question by: MRS. GEORGE B. PACE  
LA CANADA, CALIF.

**A:** The Rules of Golf do not preclude the use of artificial devices to assist a player in estimating distance. However, the player would be subject to the application of Rule 37-7 if his use of a measuring device were to result in any delay of play.

## ***Ball Moving; Relief From Obstruction***

USGA 55-8

D. 1, 20, R. 25-1, 27-1d, 31-2

**Q.1:** Player takes his stance in preparation for making a stroke. During his back-

swing the ball starts moving or is moving. He does not stop the swing, but continues his swing, striking the ball and hitting it on to the green. Is there a penalty?

**A.1:** There is no penalty under Rule 25-1 as the ball began to move only after the player had begun his backswing. However, if he had addressed the ball he sustained a penalty of one stroke under Rule 27-1d. Under Definition 1, "address" comprises taking the stance and, except in a hazard, grounding the club also.

**Q.2:** A line of utility poles are on our course with cables anchored in the ground to brace the poles. Has a player any relief if these poles or cable lines interfere with his stroke?

**A.2:** Yes. Such poles and cables are obstructions (see Definition 20), and a player is entitled to relief within the limits set forth in Rule 31-2.

Questions by: LEONARD OTT  
CORAL GABLES, FLA.

## ***Clubhouse Is Obstruction***

USGA 54-29

D. 20; R. 31-1, 33-1f and g

**Q.1:** What is the ruling on a ball coming to rest against the foundation of our clubhouse, which is parallel to the 16th fairway?

**A.1:** The player is entitled to relief under Rule 31-1. See also Definition 20. However, many clubs make their clubhouses out of bounds.

## ***Player Falls, Touches Hazard***

**Q.2:** What is the ruling when a player slips and falls in a water hazard and his hand and club touch the hazard?

**A.2:** It is assumed that the ball lay in the water hazard. There is no penalty if nothing was done which might have improved the lie of the ball or constituted testing the hazard or assisted the player in his subsequent play of the hole. See the principles of Rule 33-1f and g.

Questions by: ARNOLD BROWNING  
HUNTINGTON, W. VA.