



# 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.

### **Ball Dropped In Wrong Location**

USGA 54-36

D. 29, R. 1, 7-2, 21-3, 29-1

**Q:** The tee shot on the hole in question requires a long carry over an abandoned quarry in order to reach the fairway. If the ball is hooked too much and carries over the quarry, it is apt to wind up in woods or heavy rough.

The player's drive was hooked. The player believed the ball had carried over the quarry and into the woods and rough. The ball could not be found within five minutes of searching.

The player dropped a ball in this rough, at approximately the position where he thought his original ball was lost. He added a penalty stroke to his score and played the ball out onto the fairway, claiming that his score to this point was 3. He holed out in three more and claimed a 6 for the hole.

Was the player correct?

**A:** No. Rule 29-1 provides in part: "If a ball be lost . . . , the player shall play his next stroke as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was played, adding a penalty stroke to his

score for the hole".

The player did not put his second ball in play according to this Rule. Therefore:

*Match Play:* The player lost the hole.

*Stroke Play:* The player did not play the hole (Rule 1) or the stipulated round (Definition 29 and Rule 7-2), and therefore had no score which could be accepted. He thus disqualified himself.

He could have made a score by proceeding under Rule 21-3. In such a case, his second ball improperly dropped would be deemed a wrong ball, with a penalty of two strokes for playing it, making his score 3 to that point. He then must have returned to the tee and put a ball in play according to Rule 29-1, and his score to that point would have been 5. As he did not do so, he was disqualified—see Rule 21-3, last paragraph.

Although the penalty statement under Rule 29 calls for a penalty of two strokes in stroke play for a breach of the Rule, it does not apply to cases such as this in which a ball is deliberately dropped nearer the hole and played, and a ball is not played from the tee into the hole by successive strokes. If it were otherwise, there would be nothing to prevent a player, hav-

ing a lost ball, from dropping a ball on the putting green alongside the hole with a two-stroke penalty. The two-stroke penalty applies to all violations of the Rule except where superseded by other Rules as in the present case. As examples in which the two-stroke penalty would apply in stroke play, we cite the following

(a) A second shot played from a "fair-way" becomes lost. The player drops a ball ten yards to the side of the spot from which the original ball was played, and not as nearly as possible at that spot.

(b) A second shot played from a hazard becomes lost. Instead of dropping another ball in the hazard, as the Rule provides, the player places a ball in the hazard.

### ***Lateral Water Hazard***

USGA 55-10

Def. 30, R. 11-1, 14, 33-3b

**Q 1:** In a match, both players drove into a lateral water hazard. Player A dropped his ball within two club-lengths of the margin. Player B dropped his ball four club-lengths from the margin. The hole was played out and won by B.

During the play of the next hole one of the gallery called the referee's attention to the violation of the Rule by B, which should have cost him the hole.

(a) Did the referee then have any power to correct the result of the hole? Could any action be taken by the Tournament Committee on learning of the occurrence?

(b) If the referee had observed B about to drop in violation of the Rule, would he have had a right to warn B, and thus avoid the violation?

**A 1:** (a) Even though player B violated Rule 33-3b, neither the referee nor the Tournament Committee could have changed the result of the hole after the players played from the next teeing ground—see Rule 11-1.

(b) Yes. A referee is under no obligation voluntarily to inform players of their rights or warn them when they seem about to breach the Rules (see Definition 26).

Anything a referee may do in this order is gratuitous. If he volunteers information about the Rules, he should do so uniformly to both players. There is no prohibition in the Rules against this, since "information on the Rules or Local Rules is not 'advice'."

When referees are assigned in USGA Championships, they attempt to inform the players uniformly of pertinent Rules in order to prevent inadvertent infractions and to educate the players.

### ***Ball Rolls Off Tee***

**Q 2:** A player having addressed his ball on the tee raises his club and begins its forward movement with the intention of hitting the ball. As he does so he sees the ball starting to fall from its tee. He stops his swing before it has progressed half way. Am I right in thinking that he has made a stroke?

May he then re-tee his ball under Rule 14, although under Definition 5 his ball is in play, or must he play the ball as it lies?

**A 2:** The player's intention to move the ball died before he was able to move it, and there was no stroke; see Definition 30.

Rule 14 applies.

### ***"Green" Committee***

**Q 3:** Am I correct in thinking that "Green Committee", and "Green fee" are correct, and that to add an "s" is an error?

**A 3:** "Green Committee and "Green fee" are correct.

Questions by: NORMAN B. BEECHER  
CLEARWATER, FLA.

### ***Unplayable Lie In Hazard***

USGA 55-11

Def. 13, 17, 20; R. 18-1, 29-2, 31

**Q 1:** Is there such a thing as an unplayable lie in a bunker? If there is, where does the player drop the ball?

**A 1:** Note to Rule 29-2 states: "The player is the sole judge as to when his ball is unplayable. It may be declared unplayable at any place on the course."

Rule 29-2 gives two options as to how a player may proceed if he deems his ball unplayable.

### **Obstructions and Impediments**

**Q 2:** From which of the following objects is the player entitled to relief if they interfere with his stance or swing in a bunker or other hazard: Bottles, newspapers, heavy branches, rakes, mound of dirt made by a gopher.

A strong wind knocked a huge branch from a tree into a bunker. Before the grounds-keeper could remove such obstacles, a member hit a ball into a bunker and because of the branch he had an unplayable lie. The members insisted that being in a bunker was a penalty of itself and that he could not have an unplayable lie in a hazard.

In another instance, a player's ball came to rest in a bunker directly behind a large mound of dirt made by a gopher. Here again the grounds-keeper would probably have smoothed the mound in order not to add a possible penalty to a bunker. In this instance, the player insisted that the mound of dirt was ground under repair under Definition 13 and that he was entitled to drop his ball in the bunker in a manner to give relief, but no nearer the hole.

There have been a number of instances in which players have removed from bunkers prior to playing their ball such items as empty cigarette packs, bottle caps, cans and other unnatural objects. We would assume that in accordance with Definitions 17 and 29 players have a right to do so.

**A 2:** The following are among obstructions under Definition 20: bottles, newspapers and rakes. Obstructions are artificial things. Relief from obstructions, without penalty, is provided by Rule 31.

A loose branch of a tree, being a natural object, is a loose impediment under Definition 17. A loose impediment may be removed except when both the impediment and the ball lie in or touch a hazard—see Rule 18-1.

The size of a loose branch or the posi-

tion into which it has fallen does not affect its classification.

Rule 32 gives relief without penalty from a hole, cast or runway made by a burrowing animal, anywhere on the course, including hazards.

Questions by: MITCHELL N. HOTRA  
LOS ANGELES, CAL.

### **Honor After Claim**

USGA 55-12

R. 11-1, 11-4, 37-7

**Q:** A and B are playing a match for which no referee was appointed. On one of the holes a dispute arises. A makes a claim before the players play from the next teeing ground, as required by Rule 11-1. It is understood that this was done so that the matter might thereafter be referred to the Committee, and that it did not have to be resolved on the spot.

**1.** If this is correct, the match then should continue play—in which case, who has the honor?

**2.** Consider also that B refuses to continue play until a referee has been sent for to settle the claim. A wishes to continue immediately. Can A claim the next hole by virtue of Undue Delay, Rule 37-7? If so, how much time must elapse to constitute Undue Delay? What would then be the procedure? Is the match ended when B refuses to continue play? Or does A continue to play by himself if necessary, until enough holes have passed to win the match?

**A 1:** The honor should, in equity, be decided by lot—see Rule 11-4—except that if B had the honor on the disputed hole and A's claim was to gain a half B would retain the honor.

**A 2:** Rule 37-7 does not apply. If there is any doubt as to the legality of A's claim, B would not be obliged to continue play until the claim had been settled. It is generally preferable that the status of a hole be determined before play begins on the next hole. In match play each player is entitled to know how the match stands at all times.

Question by: MISS B. L. ROBERTS  
PORTLAND, OREGON

## **Modifying Penalty For Disqualification**

USGA 55-14

R. 36-5, 37-3

**Q 1:** In your Rules of Golf, it states that the penalty of disqualification may be modified or waived. In what way may it be modified?

**A 1:** In proceeding under Rule 36-5, the Committee may reduce a disqualification penalty to any lesser penalty which it considers appropriate to the violation. Only the Committee as a group may take such action; it may not be done by a referee or other individual on his own responsibility.

**Q 2:** In our state championship, a contestant, through negligence, on the day of and before the qualifying round, chipped onto one of the regular greens. She reported it to the committee as soon as she realized her mistake. The committee ruled on her question after she had completed her qualifying round, but before she posted her score.

The committee modified the disqualification penalty (Rule 37-3) by giving her a two-stroke penalty. She qualified for third flight, with or without the two-stroke penalty. Is this fair to the No. 1 player in the fourth flight, who would have had a spot in the third flight had she been disqualified?

**A 2:** The judgment of the local committee must control, as it is in possession of all the facts. The committee should be guided by the principles in Rule 36-5

**Q 3:** Do you recommend that a penalty of disqualification be modified when it is a qualifying round of a state championship?

**A 3:** It is up to the local committee. Disqualification penalties have been waived and modified in national championships and international team play.

**Q 4:** Are we setting a precedent for future years whereby it will be hard to disqualify anyone where this person was allowed to continue play?

**A 4:** Obviously, waiver or modification should be made only for substantial

cause, as Rule 36-5 provides. If a precedent is a fair one, it need not be feared.

**Q 5:** Would you recommend that the state board establish in their records something that would cover future problems such as this?

**A 5:** Yes.

Questions by: MRS. KEENE H. MORISON  
WILTON, ME.

## **Marking Ball On Putting Green**

R & A 54-68

R. 30-3, 33-2

**Q.1:** We shall be glad if you will give us a decision regarding marking the position of a ball on the putting green, i.e., ball nearer the hole in match or stroke play. How can one mark the position of a ball without testing the surface of the green, i.e., roughening or marking the surface?

**A.1:** No instruction is given in the Rules of Golf as to how the position of a ball should be marked on the putting green. A customary and satisfactory method, which avoids the difficulties you mention, is to use a small coin as a marker. This should be placed behind the ball or, if so placed it interferes with the stroke of another player, it should be moved one or more putterhead lengths to one side.

## **Original and Provisional Balls in Water Hazard**

**Q.2:** Provisional Ball.—In the event of the original and provisional balls resting in a water hazard and both being unplayable, what is the procedure?

**A.2:** When a provisional ball is played for a ball in a water hazard the original ball must be played as it lies, or retired from play so that the provisional ball then becomes the ball in play—Rule 30-3. In the case you quote the player must proceed with the provisional ball in accordance with Rule 33-2, i.e., it may be dropped behind the hazard under penalty of one stroke; if the original ball was played from the tee the player will then be playing his fifth shot.