



# 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.

### *Caddie Throwing Ball May Violate Cleaning Rule*

USGA 55-44

R. 23-1, 23-3, 37-2

**Q.:** If the caddie marks the player's ball in match play and throws the ball to the player, does the player get a penalty for catching the ball? Or does he get a penalty if he makes an attempt to clean or tamper with it?

Question by AL ALVAREZ  
Wichita, Kan.

**A.:** Rule 23-1 allows a caddie to lift his player's ball. There is no prohibition of itself against throwing and catching a ball but such action could well result in cleaning a ball, which would be a violation of Rule 23-3. Whether a ball is cleaned is a question of fact. In case of doubt, the Rules of Golf Committee would be inclined to resolve the doubt against the player in a case such as this. The player is responsible for the actions of his caddie under Rule 37-2.

### *Handicaps for 36 Holes*

USGA 55-43  
Handicap

**Q.:** We held a two-day two-ball (four-some) handicap tournament. The members of a team had handicaps of 10 and 9. I gave them 10 as we were using one-half of combined handicaps. I deducted the handicap of 10 from each day's play as I have always done in this type of tournament. Example — 78-10-68; 80-10-70; total 138.

One of the contestants claimed we should take the two days' gross and deduct 19, this being the full total of the individual handicaps of the two partners who were handicapped at 10 and 9.

What is the proper method?

On the schedule the tournament was listed as follows: July 30, Medal play, Two Ball Handicap Tournament, First Round. July 31, Medal play, Two Ball Handicap Tournament, Final Round.

Question by: C. T. MACMASTER  
Pikesville, Md.

**A.:** The fairer method is to allow 50% of the combined handicaps doubled for 36

holes. Thus, the combined handicaps of the partners for 36 holes total 38, and 50% thereof is 19.

It is understood that the competition was at 36 holes and that there was no 18-hole competition.

The USGA recommends an allowance of 50% of the partners' combined handicaps in foursomes stroke play (not four-ball). Also, it is recommended that one-half or any larger fraction should count as a full stroke. These recommendations are intended to apply to 18-hole competitions. For a longer competition the recommendation concerning fractions of a stroke could produce inequities, as the present case proves. To cite an extreme example, in a 72-hole competition the side in question would be allowed 40 strokes if an allowance of 10 were given for each 18-hole round individually, whereas if the four-round handicaps of the partners were combined they would be 76, and 50% thereof would be 38. The latter, in our opinion, would be the proper handicap.

We therefore recommend that local committees take any necessary action to insure fair apportionment of handicaps, and that the decision be published in advance.

In any form of handicap competition where individual hole play is a factor (such as four-ball play), if a player or a side is entitled to an odd number of strokes for 36 holes, the odd stroke should be allowed in the first 18 holes.

### **Score On Conceded Hole**

USGA 55-31  
R. 11-2; 36-1

**Q.:** In match play, when a hole is conceded, how is it scored? For example, player B holed out in six strokes and thereupon conceded the hole to player A, who had played two strokes and whose ball lay 20 feet from the hole.

Question by: N. C. MORRIS  
Denver, Col.

**A.:** Rule 36-1 provides in part: "Certain special rules governing stroke play are so substantially different from those governing match play that combining the two

forms of play is not practicable and is not permitted. The results of matches played and the scores returned in these circumstances shall not be accepted."

The Rules do not require recording scores hole by hole in match play. The custom of the game is for the loser to report the result of the match. A score card has no official status in match play, although it may be a factor as evidence in the event of a claim.

In the case cited, technically player A's next stroke was conceded and from a literal standpoint he could be presumed to have won the hole in 3. However, the matter is one for the referee of the match to determine if a determination must be made on such a point—see Rule 11-2 as to the finality of a referee's decision. USGA Championship referees usually approximate the score which a player might reasonably have been expected to make, and in the instant case it is likely that the player would have been scored a 4; the matter, however, is a personal one with each referee. We emphasize the extract originally quoted from Rule 36-1 and the fact that scores have no significance in match play, once the result of the hole has been determined.

### **Play-off Is Separate Phase of Competition**

USGA 55-29  
D. 29; R. 3, 38-1, 2

**Q.:** An incident occurred at the Taconic Golf Club, at Williamstown, Mass., which, fortunately for the committee in charge, did not require a decision. However, in discussing it later on, we cannot find a rule to cover it and are submitting the question to you for the correct solution.

During the final round of stroke play, a boy in a fit of temper over several missed putts broke his putter on the eighth green. Under Rule 3, the willful breaking of a club means that he must continue without replacement. This he did, using his driver as a putter, and ended in a tie for last place. After all the scores were in, a play-off was necessary, and this individual played an extra hole with one opponent.

Was this a continuation of the regular round and therefore must he continue playing with thirteen clubs, or is it a separate round and is he entitled to replace the broken putter?

Question by: JAMES H. HUNTER  
North Adams, Mass.

**A.:** The play-off is a separate phase of the competition, and therefore the boy was entitled under Rule 3 to replace his broken putter before competing in it.

Competitors in a stroke competition have completed any scheduled round when their cards have been attested and returned to the committee as called for in Rules 38-1 and 38-2. See also Definition 29. Any subsequent play-off, whether on a hole-by-hole basis or at eighteen holes, is a separate phase of the competition made necessary by the fact that it has ended in a tie.

Another aspect of the same principle was enunciated in Decision 55-13.

### **Player Reports Wrong Handicap**

USGA 55-37

R. 11-1, 36-5, 38-3, 41-7

**Q.:** In our departmental golf tournament we all have handicaps figured by our handicapper.

Previous to the start of a match the four participating players were asked their handicaps, and the game was played with these handicaps in mind.

The next morning it was discovered one player gave an incorrect handicap in error.

Does the score stand as played or should the score card be adjusted to the correct handicap?

Question by: ROBERT SCHAAL  
Newark, N. J.

**A.:** *Match Play:* If the player reported his handicap to be higher than it actually was, he put the opposing side at a disadvantage. The opposing side would be justified in claiming the match even after it had been completed. Although Rule 11-1 provides for a time limit for claims in match play, it further sanctions later claims based on newly discovered facts if

the player making the claim had been given wrong information by the opponent.

If the player reported his handicap to be lower than it actually was, the match stands as played. Rule 37-4 requires each player to check his handicap from the official list and, in match play, to inform himself of the holes at which strokes are given or taken. Rule 11-1 precludes him from making a claim after the match. It is a basic principle of match play that both sides are entitled at all times to know exactly how the match stands.

*Stroke Play:* If the player reported his handicap to be higher than it actually was, he should be disqualified under the principles of Rule 38-3 and 41-7 in four-ball play.

If the player reported his handicap to be lower than it actually was, the score should stand as played, under the principle of Rule 38-3.

For the Committee's right to waive or to modify a disqualification penalty in exceptional individual cases. see Rule 36-5.

### **Caddie Picks Up Opponent's Ball**

USGA 55-30

R. 27-1b, 27-2a

**Q.:** My drive landed in the rough, so I played a provisional ball. During search for the original ball, my opponent's caddie picked up a ball which I identified as mine. On being asked where he found the ball, the caddie crawled on his hands and knees under a scrub bush, reached in as far as possible, and placed the ball against the bush. I had reprimanded him for picking up the ball and he was angry. None of us saw where he actually picked the ball up, although during search he was not crawling around.

The ball was unplayable after the caddie placed it by hand. I abandoned the ball and played the provisional ball, counting myself three off the tee. I took 8 for the hole; my opponent 6.

I claimed the hole on the grounds that my opponent's caddie had picked up my ball and had illegally replaced it.

(a) Did the opponent lose the hole or should she have been penalized one stroke?

(b) Did I have to accept the penalty of strokes and distance, under Rule 29-2a, on my provisional ball?

Question by: MRS W. A. COUCH  
Altus, Okla.

**A.:** (a) The Opponent sustained a one-stroke penalty under Rule 27-2a. If her caddie had merely moved your ball during search, there would have been no penalty—see Rule 27-1b; however, this Rule does not authorize an opponent or an opponent's caddie to pick up the player's ball.

(b) Yes, as you decided to abandon the original ball and play the provisional ball. It was a question of fact as to where your original ball lay, and only those involved in the match could determine the fact.

If you had wished to play the original ball, you would have been obliged, under Rule 27-2a, to drop it as near as possible to the spot from which it had been moved by the opponent's caddie.

### ***Bunker Filled With Casual Water***

USGA 55-36  
R. 32-1b

**Q.:** A question came up regarding the intent of Rule 32-1b.

Player A's ball lies in a sand trap completely filled with casual water. At one end of the trap the water is 1 foot deep, at the other end of the trap the water is ½ inch deep.

Can Player A drop his ball, which lies in 1 foot of water, not nearer the hole in ½ inch of water so that he may avoid the penalty stroke for removing the ball from the hazard?

Player B claims unless there is ground not covered by casual water on which Player A can drop his ball in the confines of the hazard, not nearer the hole. Player A must either play from 1 foot of water or drop ball outside the hazard in keeping with Rule 32.

Question by: WARREN ORLICK  
Orchard Lake, Mich.

**A.:** Player A may lift his ball without penalty and drop it in the hazard in the shallowest casual water as near as possible to the spot where the ball first lay, but not nearer the hole. This would afford the maximum relief provided for in Rule 32-1b.

The object of the Rule is to assure as much relief as possible from casual water but not necessarily to permit changing the line or other characteristics of the stroke to be played.

### ***Wrong Hole Is Played***

USGA 55-33  
D. 28, 29; R. 13-2,  
36-5, 38-2

**Q.:** During our tournament, the leading foursome played the wrong hole. This foursome, upon holing out the sixth hole, teed off on the 12th, believing it was the seventh (unintentional, of course). The leading foursome was on the 12th green and two players on the second foursome had teed off on the 12th before discovery of their error.

The club's Rules Committee penalized the players involved in playing the wrong hole, the penalty being in accordance with Rule 13-2.

Was the Committee's action fair?

Question by: JACK OKUDA  
Chicago, Ill.

**A.:** Assuming the competition was at stroke play, each competitor who erroneously teed off on the 12th hole was required by Rule, 13-2 to count all strokes played on the 12th hole and then to play from the teeing ground of the 7th hole. Failure to do so would have entailed disqualification, unless the Committee waived or modified the penalty as provided for in Rule 36-5. See also Rule 38-2.

It is a duty of the Committee to insure that the holes of the stipulated round (Definition 29) are properly marked.

For meaning of "foursome," see Definition 28.