



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. "56-1" means the first decision issued in 1956. "D" means definition. "R. 37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1956 Rules of Golf.

Only Aggrieved Player May Recall Stroke

USGA 55-46
R. 12-2a

Q.: In a three-ball match A, B and C were scheduled to play in that order from the 18th tee. However, B inadvertently drove first, out of turn.

C requested that the stroke be recalled under Rule 12-2a (Rule 12-3a in the 1956 Rules of Golf) but A did not want to exercise this option.

Whose rights govern?

Question by: HAROLD CALLAWAY
Pinehurst, N. C.

A.: A's rights are paramount since only he was aggrieved by the fact that B played out of turn. C was to play last in any case. If A did not wish to have the stroke recalled under Rule 12-2a (Rule 12-3a in the 1956 Rules of Golf), B's stroke should stand as played and A should play second from the teeing ground. There would be no penalty.

Dropping Ball From Obstruction in "Rough"

USGA 55-38
D. 34; R. 31-2, 32-1a

Q.1: A golf course has water outlets on

practically all holes, which are placed from two to three feet in the rough. I recognize that the Rules of Golf do not distinguish between rough and fairway. It often happens that a player is entitled to relief from these obstructions under Rule 31, Section 2. A ball thus may be dropped, in most cases in the fairway, and be entirely within the Rule. Do you consider such procedure entirely ethical, as well as legal?

A.1: No. We are sympathetic with the attitude of sportsmanship implied by the question, and we believe that a conscientious player would not seek an undue advantage even though the Rule might technically permit it.

However, the object of Rule 31-2 is to relieve the player from interference by an immovable obstruction. As long as this object is attained, the Rule cannot regard any advantage or disadvantage which may incidentally result for the player. This is true generally as well as in the specific case cited because, as has been noted, the Rules of Golf do not distinguish between rough and fairway, both being covered by "through the green" in Definition 34.

This is the technical side and, to a limited degree, it must also be the ethical side, since the Rule is neutral and could well result in either a good break or a bad break for the player. Since he must accept the isolated bad break when it befalls him, he may also take the isolated good break.

It would appear, however, that the situation described could result in an excess of good breaks. We therefore recommend that the Committee do either of the following:

- (a) Adopt a Local Rule requiring that a ball be dropped in the "rough" when lifted under Rule 31-2 because of interference by a water outlet in the rough, or
- (b) If feasible, extend the rough so that a ball must always be dropped in the rough.

Dropping Ball from Casual Water in Road

Q.2: The same question is asked in connection with casual water which lies at the side of a roadway, relief from which is allowed under Rule 32, Section 1-a. In most cases, the ball would have to be dropped on the side of the water away from the hole, in order not to be nearer the hole, though in some cases this would not be necessary. Do you consider it ethical for a player to disregard any possibility of dropping in the road, but to choose instead to drop on grass?

A.2: The principles here are the same as in Answer 1.

Questions by: J. SIMPSON DEAN
Wilmington, Del.

Tractor Ruts Not Ground Under Repair

USGA 55-48

Et. 7; Def. 13; R. 32-1,-2-4;
35-1b,-1d

Q.1: During a tournament a question was raised in regard to ruts made during wet weather by a tractor while mowing fairways and rough. Although many ruts had been repaired some in the rough re-

mained and were quite deep. These ruts had been made several months prior to the tournament.

If a ball settled in one of these deep ruts, making it almost impossible to play the ball, is there any relief for the player? One rule in the Rule book gives relief for a ball lying in a hole made by the greenkeeper. Would this include ruts made by tractor tires used in maintaining the golf course?

A.1: No. Any other interpretation might create a precedent for lifting without penalty from any incidental and minor disturbance of the turf by greenkeeping equipment.

For ground under repair, see Definition 13 and Rule 32.

Marking Ground Under Repair

Q.2: I am interested in any comments you might give me on the proper way to circle ground under repair. We use lime to make the circle, and my question is how much area should be included within the circle. If the circle contains only the ground under repair, it would be quite possible for the ball to lie just outside the circle, but it would be impossible to play the ball if the stance had to be taken within the ground under repair.

A.2: The area marked as ground under repair need be only that from which relief should be given under Rule 32.

After a ball is dropped under Rule 32-1, if the ground under repair interfere with the player's stance, further relief is afforded by Sections 2 and 4 of Rule 32.

Ball Marks Not In Line of Putt

Q.3: Can ball marks be repaired on the green before putting if the ball mark is *not* in the line of the putt? Do you have any suggestions to make about a local rule to permit repairing ball marks before putting?

A.3: If a ball mark is so far removed from the line of play that it could not

possibly affect subsequent play of the hole, no penalty would result from its repair by a player before the play of the hole is completed, provided the putting green surface is not tested in violation of Rule 35-1d. We recommend, however, that players avoid the possibility of any question being raised by deferring repair until play of the hole is completed. See Etiquette, section 7.

Rule 35-1b prohibits touching the line of putt (with certain exceptions which do not apply here).

Questions by: DELBERT H. TALLEY
Terre Haute, Ind.

Ball in Drain Pipe Under Course

USGA 55-51

R. 29-2, 31-2, 32-1a

Q.1: My partner hit a ball which apparently went out of bounds. The ball struck a bank of a roadway which was definitely out of bounds and bounced into a ditch beside the roadway which was also out of bounds. After a diligent search, the ball was found resting in a metal drain pipe leading from the aforementioned ditch underneath the golf course. Although the entrance to the drain pipe was out of bounds, the ball had traveled some two or three feet in bounds in the drain pipe, but underground some six feet. In other words, the ball was under the golf course in a metal drain pipe.

It was ruled that he was entitled to drop from the metal drain pipe without penalty even though he had to go out of bounds to retrieve the ball. The ball was dropped immediately above its resting place in the drain pipe and subsequently was holed out for a birdie 4.

Did we rule correctly on this unusual situation?

A.1: No. In obtaining relief under Rule 31-2, the player may not measure through an obstruction or through the ground.

To obtain relief under Rule 31-2 under the circumstances described, the player must drop the ball within two club-lengths of the opening of the obstruction nearest to where the ball lay, and it must come to

rest not nearer to the hole than the place where the ball lay.

Since the Rules do not give relief from obstructions which are out of bounds, the player may not use any part of an obstruction which is out of bounds as the beginning point in the application of Rule 31-2. Therefore, if the opening of the drain pipe nearest to where the ball lay is out of bounds, Rule 31-2 does not apply, and the only recourse is for the player to declare the ball unplayable and proceed under Rule 29-2.

Ball in Gopher Hole Under Course

Q.2: A player slices a drive which is temporarily out of bounds. The ball enters a gopher hole, which is out of bounds about six inches. However, the gopher hole runs underground toward the golf course, and the ball rolls through this underground passage until it is back inside the line of boundary stakes but below the ground of the golf course. Is the ball out of bounds since it is below ground level?

A.2: No. The ball is technically in bounds.

Rule 32-1a applies. However, in the application of the Rule the player may not measure through the ground in order to determine the place at which the ball is to be dropped, and must therefore measure along the underground passage of the gopher hole to the opening nearest to where the ball lay. This opening therefore becomes the nearest ground which avoids the conditions existing where the ball lay. As the opening is out of bounds, it is obvious that relief cannot be obtained under Rule 32-1a, and the only recourse is for the player to declare the ball unplayable and proceed under Rule 29-2.

Ball Unplayable in Water Hazard

USGA 55-52

R. 29-2, 33-2

Q.: This question arose on Medinah Country Club's No. 3 course, on the second hole. A player hit his tee shot across the water. The ball came to rest on the other side. The player's second shot hit a

tree and entered the water hazard and came to rest against the bank. The player chose to play the ball from the hazard on his third shot. Upon hitting the ball, it became imbedded and unplayable. The player declared the ball unplayable and proceeded to play the ball under Rule 29-2b. The player's fellow-competitors insisted this was incorrect and said he must take the ball back to the other side of the water hazard to play the ball under Rule 33-2. The player insisted he was playing under Rule 29-2 wherein it states a player may declare his ball unplayable anywhere on the course.

1. May a player declare his ball unplayable under Rule 29-2b when it is in the water hazard if he so desires, whether it is to his advantage or not?

2. Can the water-hazard rule be applied after the player has taken a stroke in the hazard, and if so from where would the next stroke be played in this particular case?

Question by: LOUIS STEIRER
Oak Park, Ill.

A.1: Yes. Rule 29-2 provides that the ball "may be declared unplayable at any place on the course". Rule 33-2a permits a lesser penalty than Rule 29-2b and is intended specifically for a ball in a water hazard, but Rule 33-2a is not a mandatory rule.

2: Yes.

In the 1956 Rules a note to Rule 33-2 provides: "If a ball has been played from within a water hazard and has not crossed any margin of the hazard, the player may drop a ball behind the hazard under Rule 33-2a"; in such a case, a ball would be dropped so as to keep the spot where the ball *last crossed* the margin of the water hazard between the player and the hole.

In the case described, after the player's second stroke rebounded into the water hazard, the player could have, under Rule 33-2b, put a ball in play, under penalty of one stroke, at the same place in front of the hazard from which the second stroke was played.

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John P. English, Editor
Sworn to and subscribed before me this 22nd day of September, 1955.

(signed) Gotfred Pearson, Notary Public
State of New York.

(My commission expires March 30, 1956)