



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.

All of Tree Being Sawed Is Ground Under Repair

USGA 55-50
D. 13; R. 32-1

Q.: About two weeks before the tournament, a large tree was blown down in the rough and was not attached to its roots. In the meantime the greenkeeper had been in the process of sawing up the tree and stacking up the wood. My ball came to rest under the remainder of the log that had not been cut but was in the process. The log was too heavy to move, but could have been moved without moving the ball.

Question by: CHARLES E. BOUCHER
Jacksonville, Fla.

A.: In the circumstance you cite, the tree in its entirety had become ground under repair by Definition 13 because it was clearly in the process of being removed. You were entitled to proceed under Rule 32-1a, which permits a player to lift and drop the ball without penalty as near as possible to the spot where it lay, but not nearer the hole, on ground which avoids the condition.

Ordinarily, a loose limb or tree is a loose impediment by Definition 17 and a player,

except in a hazard, is entitled only to remove the loose impediment, not the ball, under Rule 18.

Putting From Wrong Location

USGA 55-53
R. 22-4, 40-3g

Q.: A, B, C and D are playing a four-ball match. A and B are playing C and D two points a hole (high ball, low ball). All players are playing each other individual Nassau matches.

A, B and D are on the green. C requires A's ball to be marked. In playing to the green, C's ball comes to rest six feet nearer the hole than A's. C then marks his ball legally. B and D putt. A replaces his ball, putts and is short of the hole. As C goes to replace his ball, it is noticed that A putted from C's marker, which was approximately six feet inside A's correct position.

What rule covers this action?

What is the ruling on the individual matches?

What is the ruling on the four-ball match?

Question by: COL. O. C. KREUGER
Fort Benning, Ga.

A.: A violated Rule 22-4 (Rule 22-5 in the 1956 Rules of Golf). He thereby disqualified himself from the hole in the four-ball match, but the penalty did not apply to his partner (see Rule 40-3g) (Rule 40-3i in 1956 Rules of Golf).

While the Rules do not contemplate combination matches, a player who putts from the wrong place in a single match also violates Rule 22-4 (Rule 22-5 in the 1956 Rules of Golf) and loses the hole.

Intentional "Whiff" Is Not a Stroke

USGA 55-54

D. 30; R. 15-1, 3

Q.: In a mixed foursome medal competition A, the gentleman, played the tee shot some yards short of a bad water hazard. The ball was in an excellent lie with only poor lies round about and the hazard in front. He advised his lady partner B to take a "stroke" or swing but not touch or disturb the ball and promised to put the next shot on the green. This was done.

The captain ruled the pair was disqualified, as they did not strike alternately.

Later when some of the poorer players making a sincere "stroke" failed to strike the ball, some played another stroke or strokes until they did strike the ball, while others allowed the partner to take the next stroke, with the result that considerable argument developed.

Was the captain's ruling correct? If not, what should the procedure be and why?

Question by: NORMAN FALKNER
Weston, Toronto, Can.

A.: B's swing was not made with the intention of moving the ball and did not constitute a stroke; see Definition 30. Therefore, her partner A played out of turn.

Rule 15-3 governs order of play in a stroke-play foursome and provides in part: "If the partners play a stroke or strokes in incorrect order, such stroke or strokes shall be cancelled, and the side shall be penalized two strokes. A ball shall then be put in play as nearly as possible at the spot from which the side first played in incorrect order. This must be done before

a stroke has been played from the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole of the round, before the side has left the putting green. If they fail to do so they shall be disqualified . . ."

When, in fact, a stroke has been made by the player, whether he succeeds in moving the ball or not, the player's partner must play the next stroke, in accordance with Rule 15-1.

Course Must Be Same For All in Stroke Play

USGA 55-57

R. 36-4a

Q.: Our golf association had an eighteen-hole medal tournament. After sixteen players had played their eighteen holes and their scores were posted, all of the pins were moved and all of the tees were moved back five to ten yards.

As an officer in the association and chairman of the tournament committee, I protested the entire tournament and claim that all scores turned in should be thrown out and the tournament played over.

Would you please send me a ruling on this issue, as we are holding up all prizes.

Question by: J. C. ROUBISON
Indio, Cal.

A.: Your position is correct. It is understood that a number of competitors played the altered course.

It is a basic principle of stroke play that the course should be the same for the entire field, except for changes caused by nature and by normal play. Your attention is invited to Rule 36-4a.

Ball at Rest on Green?

USGA 56-1

R. 6-2, 25-1, 26-2b,

35-1f, 35-2d, 37-7, 40-3

Q.: A question has come up regarding Rule 35-2d. A putt hung on the lip of the cup. The player as well as one of the opponents, and his partner, thought the ball was still moving, and yet another member of the foursome, his opponent, stepped up quickly and tapped the ball back to him. There was some question as to whether the ball had come to rest or not.

What Rule would prevail? We understand it is within the option of the opponent to concede the next stroke and tap the ball back to the player; however, the question of whether the ball had come to rest or not is to be settled by someone, but who? How long, if any, time should elapse? Has the opponent the right to tap the ball back to the player, conceding the next stroke?

Question by: WILLIAM L. GOODLOE
Valdosta, Ga.

A.: Whether a ball has come to rest is a question of fact, and without agreement on the facts there is no way to interpret the Rules. Rule 35-1f entitles the owner to only a momentary delay to determine whether or not his ball is at rest. There is no specified time limit other than "momentary."

The owner of the ball should be given the benefit of any doubt. If he plays while his ball is moving he incurs a penalty under Rule 25-1 (with certain exceptions which do not apply to this case). However, he must not delay play in contravention of Rule 37-7.

In the present case, three of the contestants thought the ball was still moving. Thus, the weight of evidence is against the opponent who knocked the ball away; he apparently had no right to do so and violated Rule 40-3c in four-ball match play (26-2b in a single match). The opponent's side lost the hole (unless an opponent had holed out and Rule 6-2 were invoked).

When a ball is at rest, the next stroke may be conceded by knocking it away as provided for in Rule 35-2d.

Ball Holed After Carom

USGA 56-2
R. 25-2, 3

Q.: Suppose A's ball lies beside the hole and B putts and his ball strikes A's ball and falls in the hole, in a sort of billiard shot. In stroke play, of course, he is penalized two strokes if he putted from within 20 yards, but in match play he holes out on the putt. Am I right?

If such is the case, looks to me if, under the new Rule, A is getting a bad deal if he is powerless to do anything about it when he sees it and knows that it could and is likely to happen, with his ball lying there as it is.

If there is any relief for A in this situation, I would like to know the rule and if there is a penalty against B, I would like to know the Rule governing it.

According to my interpretation this new Rule is very unfair in singles match play, unless there is a penalty on B's ball for striking A's ball.

Question by: DR. ERMAL C. BAKER
Indianapolis, Ind.

A.: You are correct in your assumption that, if A's ball lies beside the hole and B putts and his ball strikes A's ball and falls into the hole, B is considered to have holed out in match play but, if B putted from within 20 yards of the hole, B is penalized two strokes in stroke play (Rules 35-2c and 35-3c).

A has no control over the lifting of his ball in match play and there is no penalty against B for hitting it in match play (Rule 35-2a and c).

We would suggest that you defer a final opinion on this Rule until you have had some experience with it over the coming year. It has compensating advantages in that it is simpler, clearer and tends to speed play.

Interference Must Be Physical

USGA 56-3
R. 35-2a, 3a

Q.: This organization would appreciate a clarification of what is to be considered interference in Rules 35-2a and 35-3a in the 1956 Rules of Golf. Does a ball have to be in a direct line to the hole to be considered interfering, is any ball catching the eye of player to be considered as interfering as a mental hazard or is the decision up to the player himself?

Question by: MRS. GILBERT R. LEVY
Chairman, Rules Committee
Women's District of Columbia
Golf Association
Cheverly, Md.

A.: Interference in the sense of Rules 35-2a and 35-3a means only possible physical interference. The possibility of such physical interference must be reasonable.

Ball Moving Before Address

USGA 56-4
R. 27-1c

Q.: The ball of a competitor stopped in the middle of a hill. The competitor reached the place for the next shot and took his stance. The ball began to move and stopped at the lower part of the hill. This competitor was only drawing near the ball and just took his stance but never addressed the ball when it started to move. He took stance again and hit.

A fellow-competitor insisted that he had violated a Rule and had incurred a one-stroke penalty. The competitor did not believe he had violated a Rule. The Committee was consulted and ruled a one-stroke penalty.

Question by: GEORGE H. SOGOH
Osaka, Japan

A.: Rule 27-1c is the basic Rule in this case, since the player had not addressed the ball (Definition 1). It provides that, when a ball is in play, if a player, his partner, or either of their caddies accidentally move it, or by touching anything cause it to move (except as otherwise provided in the Rules), the player shall incur a penalty stroke and the ball shall be played as it lies.

In the case you cite, the competitor incurred a penalty only if it was deemed that he had caused the ball to move. The question is one of fact.

Rules 27-1d and 27-1e both apply after a player has addressed his ball, but they are not pertinent to this case.

After Putt Is Conceded, Score for Hole is Complete

USGA 56-6
R. 35-2d

Q.: When you concede the putt, is it necessary to knock the ball away? You are allowed to concede the putt as soon as it comes to rest, but if you do concede it as soon as it comes to rest and do not

knock it away and it falls into the hole, is the player considered as having holed out with his last shot?

Question by: S. W. CREEKMORE
Fort Smith, Arkansas

A.: It is not necessary to knock away the ball in conceding a stroke under Rule 35-2d.

When a putt has been conceded (Rule 35-2d) and the Rules have not been infringed, the player is considered to have holed on his next stroke and neither the concession nor the acceptance of it may be recalled. The fact that the ball might subsequently fall into the hole in such a circumstance is not material to the score.

Ball Lifted by Opponent With Owner's Consent

USGA 56-7

R. 23 (Preamble); 27-2a

Q.: The preamble to Rule 23 now provides: "A ball to be lifted under the Rules or Local Rules should be lifted by the owner or his partner or either of their caddies. For ball lifted by opponent or fellow-competitor, see Rule 27-2a or 27-3." The preamble is not included in the subsequent statement of penalty "for breach of Rule 23-1 or 2."

Checking Rules 27-2a and 27-3, I note that, in match play, if a player's ball be touched or moved by an opponent, "the opponent shall incur a penalty stroke," although in stroke play, if a competitor's ball is moved by a fellow-competitor, no penalty is incurred.

If the owner of a ball consents to have it lifted and marked on the putting green by an opponent in match play, is there a penalty?

Question by: MRS. H. F. WOHLERS
San Diego 8, Cal.

A.: No. Lifting and marking a ball by any person at the request or with the consent of the owner is deemed to be the act of the owner, and the owner is subject to the appropriate penalty if a Rule is violated in the process. Rule 27-2a is not applicable. The USGA does not recommend such procedure (Preamble, Rule 23).