



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.

Handicap For 36 Holes

USGA 55-43—Revised
Handicap

(Note: This supersedes Decision 55-43 dated September 6, 1955.)

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, Maryland

A.: USGA handicaps are 18-hole handicaps and should apply to each 18 holes

played, irrespective of the number of holes played in any given competition.

In the example you cite, the team should receive a 10 handicap for each day's play.

Ball Accidentally Moved

USGA 56-24

D. 3; R. 27-1c

Q.: In a match between A and B, A's second shot enters an area marked "Ground under Repair". In searching for his ball A accidentally moves it, then lifts his ball and drops it outside the designated area, under Rule 32-1a. A claims that he lies two, whereas B claims that A has incurred a penalty under Rule 27-1c for having accidentally moved his ball. A takes the position that no penalty was incurred since it was not his intention to play the ball from the Ground Under Repair area when found.

Question by: FRED O. TILSON
Pinehurst, N. C.

A.: B is correct.

A's ball was in play (Definition 3) when he accidentally moved it. A therefore violated Rule 27-1c and incurred a penalty of one stroke.

A had the option of playing his ball as it lay after it was accidentally moved or taking relief under Rule 32-1.

An Extra Club

R. & A. Decision
(USGA 56-23)

R. 3 and Note, 11-4, 36-5, 40-3h, i.

Q.: The incident occurred during a first round match in our annual four-ball Match Play Trophy. The match, as per rule, commenced at our 9th tee and the sides were A and B versus X and Y.

After playing 13 holes, X and Y were five down and the players were standing on the 4th tee (the 14th of their match) when X discovered and announced to all of the other players that A had fifteen clubs in his bag. This fact was accepted.

The match proceeded, A and B won the 14th hole and were accepted by X and Y as the winners. A still had 15 clubs in his bag. X has now reported the foregoing facts to the Handicap Committee, which Committee is responsible for running the competition, at the same time stating his side was fairly and squarely beaten, furthermore that he does not wish to apply for a replay.

The Committee are fully conscious that the Rules of Golf have been broken but are at a loss to know how to apply Rule 3 to one of a side in a four-ball match, alternatively how to apply Rule 40-3 paragraph h and/or i. Furthermore, would like guidance as to whether the power granted under Rule 36-5 could be applied without creating a dangerous precedent.

Question by: DARTFORD GOLF CLUB, LTD.
Dartford, Kent

A.: Since A had violated Rule 3 at every hole he played, he must be treated as having lost each one. It is irrelevant that X and Y have not lodged any claim; your Committee have a duty to review the case under the Note to Rule 3.

On a strict application of Rule 40, the penalty does not extend to the partner, and the result of each hole played should be recalculated, awarding it to X and Y in every case where it cannot be established that B holed out to secure a half or a win, or that X and Y conceded the hole to B alone; the match should then

continue at the 15th hole with the state of the match revised.

This is almost certainly impossible due to the number of holes affected, apart from the lapse of time. While Rule 3 leaves the decision in the discretion of your Committee, the Rules of Golf Committee consider that they are bound to act in this case and that it would be inappropriate to invoke Rule 36-5 in a clear example of a serious breach of an important Rule.

B cannot benefit from his partner's infringement and the only practicable course is to award the match to X and Y on grounds of equity (Rule 11-4).

Penalty Is Disqualification For Quitting Course

R. & A. 56-38
R. 37

Q.: Four players playing together in an eighteen hole four-ball competition (stroke play) thought that they heard a distant rumble of thunder but saw no lightning. They were playing the second hole of the round; it was not raining. They did not take shelter and continued to play a further five holes. At this point, rain began to fall and although there was no more thunder or any lightning they took shelter. When the rain had eased off a little the players completed the round.

Questioned about the matter by the Committee in charge of the competition, the players stated that they considered it quite in order for them to take shelter, as they had heard thunder while playing the second hole and referred to Rule 37-6a. On being asked why they did not take shelter on the second hole, one of the players replied, that "it was not raining then".

The Committee in charge of the competition are divided in their opinion as to whether the players concerned should be disqualified or not.

A.: You have stated as a fact that at the time the players discontinued play there was no thunder or lightning, the last evidence of thunder having been five holes back. If your Committee is satisfied that this was so, the players should be disqualified.

ified under Rule 37-6. It is not clear from your letter whether the players reported to the Committee that they had discontinued play as required by Rule 37-6. If they did not, they should be disqualified on this ground also. It is emphasized that whether or not players were justified in discontinuing play under Rule 37-6 is a matter to be decided by your Committee after full consideration of the conditions.

Flagstick Attended by Partner

R. & A. 56-40
R. 34, 40

Q.: A and B are partners in a four-ball match. A approaches his ball to putt and B, unasked, approaches and stands near the hole. As A strikes his putt, B takes hold of the stick and is holding it when the ball strikes the stick. I take the view that B must be deemed to be attending the stick and that A loses the hole. (Rule 34-1 and 34-2.)

My opinion, however, has been challenged on the ground that A did not ask B to attend the stick and did not know that B was holding or attending the stick until after he (A) had struck his ball. It seems, however, that B is not penalized (Rule 40-3b) unless Rule 40-3h can be made to apply.

For my part, I cannot see how Rule 40-3h can possibly apply in such a case. B is certainly assisting his partner's play but not "so as to assist his partner's play". Rule 40-3h appears to me to apply only when there is an intentional infringement, e.g. when the player's ball is moved by the partner intentionally and not accidentally (see Rule 40-3d).

A.: The flagstick is always under the control of the player about to play. The player, before playing, should make it clear whether he wishes the flagstick to be attended or left alone. If, without making his wishes known, he plays his stroke when another player or caddie is standing near the flagstick, he must be assumed to have given his tacit assent to the flagstick's being attended. If his ball then strikes the flagstick, he suffers the penalty laid down

in Rule 34-2. Accordingly, A cannot come into the reckoning at this hole.

The penalty in this case does not apply to A's partner, Rule 40-3i. Since B's infringement of Rule 34 did not help his partner's play, Rule 40-3h does not apply.

Flagstick Attended

R. & A. 56-42
R. 34

Q.: The following query has been raised and an official ruling on the point at issue is requested.

In a four-ball, foursome or greensome match, can a player instruct his partner to attend the flagstick, leave the stick in while the player is playing his stroke but remove the stick if the ball looks like going down—for example, when a long putt is being played?

A.: In the circumstances described the flagstick is "attended" in accordance with the procedure laid down in Rule 34. It follows that if, due to the partner's failure to remove the flagstick, or in any other way, the ball strikes either the stick, the partner or equipment carried by him, a penalty of loss of hole will be incurred.

Wall Across Fairway

R. & A. 56-43
Def. 20, R. 31

Q.: Across the 5th and 6th fairways of our course runs a stone wall about 5 feet high. It has always been regarded as a hazard of the course, but since Rule 31 came into force this tradition has often been questioned.

On behalf of the competitions committee, I now seek rulings on these points:

1. Must we declare the wall an obstruction under Rule 31-2?
2. If the wall is not so declared, can the wooden stile be declared an obstruction in itself?
3. In Rule 31-2 last sentence—who is the judge as to whether interference exists?

A.: The wall in question is an obstruction (Def. 21) and a player is entitled to relief as stated in Rule 31-2. If such relief would, in the opinion of the Committee,

interfere with the proper playing of the game on the ground that the wall forms an integral part of the design of the course, a local rule may be introduced stating that walls within the boundary of the course are not obstructions, and that relief under Rule 31-2 is not permitted.

If necessary, the stile may be declared an obstruction in itself.

Whether or not a player's stance, stroke or backward swing for the stroke in the direction in which he wishes to play are interfered with by an obstruction is a question of fact to be decided in cases of doubt by a referee or, failing agreement between the players in the absence of a referee, by reference to the Committee.

Playing First Or Lifting

R. & A. 56-46
R. 35

Q.1: Under Rule 35-3b may the fellow-competitor lift his ball rather than putt it, if he considers that by playing first he may be assisting the competitor, e.g. by giving him a line to the hole?

A.1: No. Under Rule 35-3b—Ball Assisting Play—a fellow-competitor must play first. He has not the option of lifting.

Q.2: Under Rule 35-2a, I take it that if the player considers that the opponent's ball interferes with his play and therefore asks him to lift it, the opponent does not have the right to putt it instead of lifting it. Is this correct?

A.2: You are correct.

Caddie May Precede Player

R. & A. 56-47
Def. 7; R. 16, 32, 37

Q.: We have a problem at our Club which pertains to Rule 37-2, and we would be grateful if you would clarify the rule for us. We have on our course three holes which run parallel to each other, two hundred to two hundred and fifty yards in length. These holes have a rise in ground between them and their respective tees, and consequently they are blind holes, but have guide posts on the top of each hill to indicate the line of play.

It has been the practice for years now for players to send their caddies forward to the top of each hill to watch the flight and direction of the balls; and, assuming the balls are hit well, they go over the hill and out of sight of the player. The caddies then go over the hill, out of sight and control of the player, and proceed to find the balls which could be on the fairway or in the rough. The caddies are standing near the ball, and could have improved the lie or worsened it, if they so desired, before the player arrives at the place where his ball has stopped.

Rule 37-2 states definitely that, "The player may not employ anyone to act as a forecaddie." Quite a few members and myself interpret this rule that the player is employing his caddie to act as a forecaddie and is therefore disqualified. I would like to know what you can do with your caddie, i.e., is he just a bag carrier who stays with you, or can you send him forward at blind holes to watch the ball and indicate the position of the ball, that is, to go near the ball out of your sight and wait for you to arrive.

We also have cattle on two holes and consequently have a little trouble with manure. We have a local rule allowing the player to lift and drop behind, on the fairway, but not if on manure in the rough. Surely the player can lift and drop his ball off manure on any part of a golf course, that is, through the green without penalty.

A.: There is no reason why a player should not send his caddie forward to mark his ball at a blind hole. A player, however, is at all times responsible for the actions of his caddie, who is never an agency outside the match. If a player's caddie moves a player's ball deliberately, the player is penalized under Rule 16. It is a matter for your Committee to deal with any infringement of the Rules.

The words "rough" and "fairway" are neither used nor defined in the Rules of Golf, and it is considered that they should be omitted from your local rule dealing with cattle dung. If dung cannot be dealt with as a loose impediment, relief should be given as in Rule 32-1.