



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.

Definition of 'Hazard'

R. & A. 56-49
Def. 14

Q.: We notice that in the 1956 edition of the Rules of Golf, there has been an alteration in Definition 14, Hazards, para. (a) compared with the 1954 edition. Para. (a) now reads: "A 'bunker' is an area of bare ground, often a depression, which is usually covered with sand". In the 1954 edition Para. (a) reads: "A bunker is that part of a depression in the ground where the soil is exposed, and is usually covered with sand".

On this course there are a number of sand mounds with the sand fully exposed. These were originally regarded as hazards, in which it was not permitted to ground the club. When, however, a bunker came to be described as a "depression in the ground", the Committee decided that these sand mounds could no longer be regarded as hazards and ruled accordingly. Now, however, that the definition of a bunker has been modified to "often a depression", it appears that these sand mounds could again be regarded as hazards.

We should be grateful for a ruling on this point.

A.: It would appear from your description that the mounds could properly be classified as bunkers (Def. 14a). It is, however, a matter for your Committee, who know the conditions, to decide whether or not they should be treated as hazards.

Entering Clubhouse During Competition

R. & A. 56-51
Def. 11; R. 37

Q.: At an Open Golf Alliance Championship meeting held recently, the Committee were faced with the following problem in the competition for the Amateur Handicap Cup. The Cup was for the best net return over 36 holes medal singles. Competitors played alternately off the first tee in the morning and the tenth tee in the afternoon. Both tees are adjacent and within ten yards of the clubhouse.

Two members tied with 149 strokes and one of them reported that he had seen the other enter the clubhouse during his round. The marker and player with this second member admitted he had gone into the clubhouse for a drink, but added that at his home club it was customary even during competitions to do so. They were,

however, not the only ones to come into the clubhouse.

The Rules of their Alliance state that:

In the event of any point arising not covered by these rules (Rule of the Alliance), the decision of the Committee shall be final and binding.

A meeting of the Committee was called and three amateurs and three professionals were present—the other two members, both amateurs, were not at the club. It has long been accepted that a player entering the clubhouse during a competition in stroke play, except it be for shelter from a thunderstorm or illness, is disqualified. The Rules were examined but no mention of the clubhouse could be found, nor was there any local rule to say the clubhouse was out of bounds. Is it an unwritten rule that the interior of any clubhouse is "not within the course"?

It was confirmed by a member of the Committee, a professional who played behind this couple, that when they got to the tenth tee, two other couples were already waiting to drive off. The question of discontinuance of play for any other reason would appear to cause disqualification. The Committee were then unable to define what was actually meant by discontinuance of play. If this couple had caused any delay, they were unanimous in their minds that disqualification would have been in order. They had caused no hold up in play, which was confirmed by a member of the Committee. The weather was fine and they gained no advantage from sheltering, etc. There was also the question of how many others might or might not have entered the clubhouse, which could have been embarrassing to the Committee. The presentation of the cups was considerably delayed pending the Committee's decision, which was announced by the President of the Alliance before the presentation in the following terms:

"The Committee of this Alliance have decided that no member playing at this meeting today has caused any undue delay."

Were the Committee justified in ar-

iving at this conclusion or, if not, under which Rule should they have been disqualified?

N.B. The member who was seen to come into the clubhouse was declared the winner as he had the best return on the last round and also on the last 9 holes.

A.: As your Committee were satisfied that play was not delayed by the competitor entering the clubhouse, they were perfectly correct in not disqualifying him.

The "accepted principle" by members of your Alliance that a player entering the clubhouse during a stroke play competition should be disqualified can only affect the issue if it has been laid down by the Committee as one of the conditions of the competition.

The clubhouse is not part of the course—Def. 11.

The competitor concerned was rightly declared the winner, assuming that the better second round was the deciding factor in a tie according to the conditions of the competitions.

Burning Paper

USGA 56-21

R. 17-1, 3; 33-1e

Q.1: I have seen a photograph, taken during the Azalea Open in Wilmington, N. C., showing a competitor burning a piece of wadded paper on which his ball was resting. The legend states that the competitor then chipped on the green and sank a three-foot putt for a par 3.

I wondered if the maneuver was legal. If so, under what Rule?

A.1: The maneuver is not permissible under the Rules of Golf. Burning the area around a ball would also improve the position and lie of the ball in violation of Rules 17-1 and 17-3.

Paper is an obstruction under Definition 20. Rule 31-1 permits removal of movable obstruction without penalty.

Fanning Leaves in Hazard

Q.2: Would it be permissible to fan the leaves away from the ball in a bunker, using one's hat to supply the wind?

A.2: No. Such action would remove

more leaves than is permitted by Rule 33-1e, which states the player may only "remove as much thereof as will enable him to see the top of the ball."

Questions by: JOE LOONEY
Boston Herald
Boston, Mass.

Player May Require Persons At Hole to Stand Clear

R. & A. 56-50
R. 34, 35

Q.: With reference to Rule 35-1h, under which any player or caddie engaged in the Match may stand at the hole. Is it to be understood that the player about to play has the right to over-ride this Rule by requiring anyone standing at the hole to stand clear?

A.: Rule 35-1h deals with "exerting influence on the ball". The reference to a player or caddie standing at the hole is included in order to indicate that such action alone does not constitute "exerting influence". It in no way affects the right of the player about to play to require anyone standing at the hole to stand clear.

Identification of Ball

USGA 56-25
R. 11-4, 21-Pre., 21-1, 29-1

(Note: This supersedes Decision 52-71 dated August 1, 1952.)

Q.: Players A and B are playing identical balls and have not put identification marks on them, contrary to the admonition in the preamble to Rule 21.

After A and B have played their second shots, one ball is found in a playable position and the other ball is found nearby in an unplayable position. Neither player is able to make positive identification of the ball in the playable position, although both claim it.

How should the matter be settled, in both match play and stroke play?

Question by: JIMMY THOMSON
New York 13, N. Y.

A.: The identification of a player's ball is a question of fact to be determined in case of doubt, by the referee or, in the

absence of a referee, by reference to the Committee.

If from the evidence available it is impossible to identify a ball or balls and a mistake in identification might result in unfairness to other players in a match or to other competitors in stroke play, the ball or balls concerned must be regarded as lost and the players affected must put other balls in play under stroke-and-distance penalties as provided for in Rule 29-1.

Since in the case submitted it would be unfair for either player to be permitted to play the ball in the playable position, they should both be required to proceed under Rule 29-1 in either match play or stroke play.

Relief from Casual Water Granted Only on Green

USGA 56-26
R. 35-1c

Q.: A player's ball lay on the edge of the putting green. Between the ball and the hole there was a bunker which cut into the putting green. The bunker contained casual water.

Was the player authorized under Rule 32-1c to lift his ball and place it without penalty in the nearest position on the putting green to where it lay which afforded relief from the intervening hazard and the casual water therein?

Question by: C. H. STEWART
Gulfport, Miss.

A.: No. Rule 32-1c grants relief only from casual water on the putting green (Definition 25).

First and Provisional Balls Out of Bounds

USGA 56-27
R. 29-1, 30-1, 30-2

Q.: Competitor hits drive that might be out of bounds. He announces provisional ball, which goes in same general area. He then moves forward and finds both balls out of bounds. He then says he elects to "play" first ball and goes back to tee, hitting another shot. He claims he

now lies 3. B claims he lies 5. Please cite rule.

Question by: LAWRENCE H. HARRIS
Buffalo, New York

A.: B is right. When it was determined that the first ball was out of bounds, the provisional ball automatically became the ball in play, under Rule 30-1 and 30-2. Since the provisional ball was out of bounds, if the player wished to have a score for the hole, he was obliged to play another ball under Rule 29-1.

Concurrent Matches Not Covered By Rules

56-28

D. 22, 28; R. 26-1a, 27-1a, 36-1

Q.: In our Indianapolis Amateur Tourney, we send our matches out in four-somes: that is, two single matches. For example: A plays B, and C plays D.

B is on the green, one foot from the hole. D is also on the green, and C (his opponent), not on the green, plays his ball and strikes the ball belonging to B, which stops its travel very close to the hole and enables C to win the hole.

Is B's ball considered an outside agency?

This hole would change the outcome of a match.

Question by: TED DRAPER
Coffin Golf Club
Indianapolis, Ind.

A.: The Rules of Golf do not contemplate two matches being played together (Definition 28). The contest was not properly constituted, and the USGA must decline to give a ruling. A committee which authorizes such procedure should lay down specific conditions to cover—see Rule 36-1; in drafting such conditions, the committee would do well to consider Rule 40 dealing with four-ball match play and the Rules relating to an outside agency.

For guidance of the committee in the present case, in the absence of special rules, it would seem fair to regard B's ball as an outside agency (Definition 22). Thus, Rule 26-1a would apply to C's ball, and Rule 27-1a would apply to B's ball.

The USGA points out that concurrent matches can give rise to complications which the Rules cannot solve.

Penalty Is Loss of Hole for Violating Club Limit

USGA 56-29

R. 3, 11-1, 16

Q.: Match play. After 18 holes A finished 1 up. After leaving the green B contested the match, saying A had sixteen clubs in his bag.

"Winter rules" are played on our course the year around, improve lie, change ball on green, etc., which I know the USGA does not recognize.

Who is the winner of the match?

Because we do not play USGA Rules complete, would you suggest another 18-hole match?

Question by: RENE J. LEBLANC
Huntington, Indiana

A.: Violation of Rule 3 for having more than fourteen clubs in match play entails loss of each hole in which violation occurred. In discretion of local committee, penalty can be applied after match even though claim was not made within time limit stipulated in Rule 11-1.

Decision should be made without regard to local committee's authorization to play preferred lies in violation of Rule 16. Advise not replay match as Rules do not permit.

Flagstick May Be Attended While Ball in Motion

R & A 56-79

R. 34

Q.: Is a player putting with the flag unattended in the hole allowed to recall the caddie to lift the flag after he has played his stroke and before the ball has come to rest?

A.: The player may have the flagstick removed at any time if he considers that it interferes with his play (Rule 34-1). The player is entitled to recall the caddie to lift the flagstick as indicated in your letter.

Ball Marks in Line of Putt May Not Be Repaired

R & A 56-56
R. 35

Q.: (a) A's ball is on the green of a short hole and a ball from another match lands in front of his causing a plug mark. Would it be permissible for A to level out this mark before putting?

(b) Is it permissible for a player to run his putter over a plug mark on the green that is between his ball and the hole?

A.: Players must play out the hole with the turf on the green in the state in which they find it. Plug marks may not be smoothed out before holing out. Rule 35-1a, b.

A player after holing out should ensure that any damage caused to the turf by his ball is repaired.

Player's Responsibility While Attending Flagstick

R & A 56-57
R. 4, 34

Q.: We should be very pleased to receive your advice as to what is meant by "attending the flagstick."

One of our associates has raised this point. She claims that if asked to attend the flagstick she is prepared to indicate the position of the hole, lift the flagstick if necessary to allow the ball to go into the hole, but she is not prepared to move her feet if the ball looks like striking her.

She claims that she has been asked to stand at the hole to indicate the line of play; and that it is not her responsibility to see that the player incurs no penalty. In fact, Rule 4 would disqualify both her and the player if she were to move. She is anxious to know just what her responsibility is.

A.: Rule 34-2 has been drawn up to legislate for a player deliberately striking the flagstick or person attending it in order to benefit thereby.

While it is not incumbent upon the person attending the flagstick to avoid being struck by an opponent's ball, it is reasonable to assume that, in the interests

of sportsmanship, a player will not deliberately allow herself to be struck.

By moving her feet to avoid being struck, she would not be breaking any Rule of Golf and no question of invoking Rule 4, which deals with agreement to waive the Rules, arises.

Wall Is Immovable Obstruction

R & A 56-58
R. 17, 31

Q.: The club in question is situated about 800 feet up in hills above the town. The ground at one time was used for hill farming and there are a number of dry-stone dykes at various parts of the course. No local rules apply to these.

A, playing the twelfth hole, pulled wildly into the rough. A drystone dyke was between his ball and his proposed line of play. The dyke was not interfering with his swing. A removed a stone from the top of the dyke before playing his shot. He estimated the stone was in his direct line of play. What Rule applies?

A.: The wall in question is an immovable obstruction and each stone must be regarded as part of it.

The player, by removing a stone from the wall, accordingly violated Rule 17-3, the penalty for which is loss of hole in match play and two strokes in stroke play.

Holes Played Out of Order Must Be Replayed

R & A 56-75
Def. 29

Q.: Two players in an inter-club match played on a neutral course, and omitted to play the 5th hole.

They were playing on a nine hole course and found out their mistake at the 9th hole. They returned to the clubhouse, reported their mistake and the member in charge for that day told them to return to the 5th hole and replay to the 9th, cancelling 6th and 9th holes played. Was this correct?

A.: In the circumstances described by you, the member in charge gave a correct ruling. The stipulated round consists of playing the nine (or eighteen) holes in their correct sequence. Def. 29.