



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. "57-1" means the first decision issued in 1957. "D" means definition. "R. 37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1957 Rules of Golf.

Application of Rules To Course Under Construction

USGA 56-42

R. 32-1a, 32-1b, 36-7

Q.: Our course is undergoing major revision, such as elimination of some traps, deepening and enlarging others, re-aligning water hazards, etc. The Committee has declared all this work as "under repair". (Definition 13).

1.—Sand traps from which sand has been removed and the trap dug up is marked "under repair".

Does a player now use Rule 32-1a or 32-1b? In other words, does the "under repair" rule now eliminate the hazard and follow the "through the green" Rule, or must the hazard part of the Rule still be in effect? The entire former hazard is under repair. There is no place in the former trap to place a ball that is not under repair. If a penalty is assessed as in Rule 32-1b, a player loses his right to a free lift to which he is entitled in the under repair Rule.

2.—Water hazards are being re-aligned;

i.e., some curves straightened out. Does not the "free lift" apply until we again designate it fit for play?

3.—Cannot our Committee declare an entire area unfit for play, regardless of whether a hazard or not, and use the "under repair" Rule 32-1a to cover lifting of ball?

Questions by: C. T. ROTHWEILER
San Anselmo, Cal.

A.1: The local Committee has the right to determine the matter—see Rule 36-7. If the condition of the bunkers is so extreme that it would be unfair and would interfere with proper playing of the game to continue to class them as hazards, the Committee would be justified in authorizing relief under Rule 32-1a. If the Committee does not do this, Rule 32-1b applies.

The Committee should bear in mind that Rule 32 applies not only to ground under repair but also to casual water.

Mere removal of sand does not necessarily change the classification of a bunker from being a hazard to being through the green; by Definition 14, a bunker is an area of bare ground, often a depression, which is usually covered with sand.

2: It is normal for a ball in a water hazard to be unplayable but unusual for a ball in a bunker to be unplayable. The Committee should therefore not permit application of Rule 32-1a to a ball in ground under repair in a water hazard unless conditions are extremely unfair.

3: Yes, under the principles outlined above. See Rule 36-7.

When Flagstick Is Attended

USGA 56-43

R. 34-1, 34-2

Q.: The R & A decision 56-79 page 23 of the USGA Journal of September 1956 and USGA decision 56-17 raises an important question as to when the flagstick is attended.

These decisions permit a player to instruct his caddie or partner or partner's caddie to be in a relatively close position to the flagstick with instructions not to attend the flagstick, but (a) Pull the flagstick if it appears the ball will drop in the cup, or that the flagstick will prevent it from dropping, or (b) Leave the flagstick alone to gain the obvious advantage of hitting the flagstick.

What is the definition of attending the flagstick?

Question by:

CAPTAIN T. R. KURTZ, JR., USN
Washington, D. C.

A.: The second paragraph of Rule 34-1 provides as follows:

"If a player or a caddie attend or remove the flagstick when a stroke is being played or stand near the hole for that purpose, he shall be deemed to attend the flagstick until the ball comes to rest."

If a player's ball strikes the flagstick when his caddie, his partner or his partner's caddie is standing near the hole for the purpose of attending the flagstick, the player would incur a penalty under Rule 34-2. The penalty would apply even though no attempt is made to remove the flagstick.

Triple Penalty

USGA 56-45

R. 21-3, 23-3, 29-1, 30-1 and 2

Q.: During the Sectional Qualifying Round for the USGA Amateur Championship, at Cincinnati, the following ruling was made:

A competitor, playing to an elevated and tightly trapped par-3 hole, pulled his tee shot on a hillside to the left of the green in high, matted rough. Realizing that he might lose the ball, he declared his intention to play a provisional ball, which he hit to the green.

In searching for the original ball, one was found suspended halfway in heavy rough, with enough ball showing to indicate the brand, but the number did not show. Without identifying further, he played an excellent shot to the green.

Upon reaching the green, he inquired of his caddie which was the ball he had just played. Upon being informed, he requested the caddie to pick up his provisional ball. Subsequently he discovered that the ball he had played from the rough was not his own. Concluding that his original ball was lost, he replaced his provisional ball as near to the spot as possible from which it was picked up (easily done because of ball mark on the green) and then holed in two putts.

The Tournament Committee of the Cincinnati Golfers' League, conducting the play, ruled that the player had scored a 9 on the basis of a stroke-and-distance penalty for a lost ball, two strokes for playing a wrong ball, two strokes for picking up the provisional ball and three strokes played with the provisional ball.

Was the decision correct?

Question by: JOHN W. FISCHER
Cincinnati, Ohio

A.: Yes. See Rules 30-1 and -2, 21-3, 29-1 and 23-3.

Wrong Ball In Chapman Play

USGA 57-2
R. 11-3; LR

Q.: A situation arose during a mixed foursome tournament played on the so-called "Pinehurst" or "Chapman" basis.

Mrs. A. and Mr. B. were partners, and both hit tee shots. In accordance with the system, Mrs. A. hit the second shot with Mr. B's ball to the green. Mr. B. then hit the second shot with a ball he thought to be Mrs. A's drive but which later proved to be a ball from another foursome. Regardless, since Mr. B's second shot was poor, he picked up the ball and he and Mrs. A. proceeded to play out the hole with the other ball; in other words, Mr. B's original tee shot. After the hole had been completed Mr. B. reached in his pocket for his partner's ball and discovered it to be the wrong one.

Do Mrs. A. and Mr. B. incur any penalty because Mr. B. played the wrong ball, keeping in mind that the hole was completed with the other ball which was still in play?

Question by: Howard R. Chase, Jr.
Providence, R. I.

A.: The Rules of Golf do not cover this form of play, and we regret that we cannot give a decision (see Rule 11-3). The committee in charge should establish local rules to cover.

It would seem to us that a penalty in this style of play should be incurred only if related to the ball ultimately holed out by the side. Thus, as the ball played by Mrs. A. from the tee was ultimately holed out, we would think the side should not have incurred a penalty against that ball because Mr. B. played a stroke with a wrong ball before the choice of balls was made.

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John P. English, Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 4th day of September, 1956.

(signed) Martha Detjen, Notary Public,
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(My commission expires March 31,
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