



# 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.

### **Water Hazards Not "Through the Green"**

USGA 57-5  
Def. 14b,c,d; R. 11-3, 22-2,  
29-1a, 2; 33-2,3

**Q1:** A question arose concerning play at the 16th hole at Cypress Point Club at Pebble Beach, Cal.

For your information, all the water, rocks, sand, and banks are "through the green." There is no hazard or water hazard rule involved.

Suppose a ball is hit from the tee toward the hole and falls short into the ocean (as most of them do). The tide is high and there is no beach. The normal procedure is to proceed under Rule 29-1a.

If the player wished to proceed under 29-2b, would it or would it not be permissible to drop the ball on the top of the bank to the left of where the ball was lying in the water? There is no ground between the water and the top of the bank where a ball could be dropped without putting it in another unplayable lie, and it would obviously be impossible to drop a ball and keep the spot where the first ball came to rest between the player and the hole.

**A1:** The areas in question seem by

nature to be water hazards under Definition 14b, but it is stated that they are played as "through the green." It appears that play was conducted other than in accordance with the Rules of Golf. In view of Rule 11-3, it would be inappropriate for the Rules of Golf Committee to give a specific ruling.

In a similar situation "through the green," if the ball could not be found, it is lost and Rule 29-1a applies.

Under Rule 29-2b, if, from the standpoint of golfing reason and fair play, it is impossible to drop a ball so that the point from which the ball was lifted remains between the player and the hole, the player must drop a ball as near as possible to the spot from which it was lifted, not nearer the hole. "As near as possible" is explicit. Thus, under facts similar to those in the question, if the ball were found, a player proceeding under Rule 29-2b might be entitled to drop a ball on top of the bank to the left of the place where the ball lay.

Rule 29-2b refers to "the point from which the ball was lifted." To term a natural water hazard as "through the green" would generally prevent applying Rule 29-2b unless the ball is found and lifted.

## **Unplayable Ball Must Be Found**

**Q2:** Must a ball be found and identified in order for it to be declared unplayable?

**A2:** Yes, generally; Rule 29-2b refers to the point from which the ball "was lifted" and this presumes finding it. If this were not so, a player might have no basis to determine where to put a second ball into play under Rule 29-2b. However, we can conceive of unusual cases where the location of a ball is positively known but the ball itself is not obtainable; in such rare cases, the committee could, in equity, waive the requirement of lifting the ball; but we emphasize that such permission should be granted only rarely.

## **Player Must Accept Dropped-Ball Lie**

**Q3:** Is or is not a player who has proceeded under 29-2b and has taken a two-stroke penalty entitled to drop his ball in a playable lie?

**A3:** He is entitled to drop the ball in a reasonably playable area, but he must accept the result of the drop except as provided for in Rule 22-2.

## **No Playable Place On Beach**

**Q4:** Suppose in Question 1 above that the tide was out and there was a sand beach and the ball had come to rest here. The player decided that his ball was unplayable. He could then not find a playable lie anywhere on this beach. Could he then under 29-2b drop his ball on top of the bank?

**A4:** See Answer 1 above.

Questions by:

BRIG. GEN. STANLEY E. RIDDERHOF  
Newport Beach, Cal.

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*Comment: The United States Golf Association has been concerned over the years with proper application of the Rules of Golf to situations such as those described above, and particularly in conducting championships at the nearby Pebble Beach Course in 1940, 1947 and 1948. In 1940 the USGA classified the ocean and its arms,*

*banks and beaches as water hazards; in 1947 and 1948 the same areas were classified as "through the green."*

*Since then, however, the Rules of Golf have been amended, and provision is now made for lateral water hazards.*

*By Definition 14b, "A 'water hazard' is any sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, surface drainage ditch or other open water course (regardless of whether or not it contains water), and anything of a similar nature. All ground or water within the margin of a water hazard, whether or not it be covered with any growing substance, is part of the water hazard."*

*Therefore, after full consideration by the USGA Rules of Golf and Executive Committees, we beg to recommend that areas such as those described in the questions be defined and marked as water hazards and lateral water hazards, as may be appropriate, and that Rule 33-2 and 33-3 apply. In certain cases where it is not feasible to proceed exactly in conformity with Rule 33, special areas should be established on which a ball may be dropped, under penalty of one stroke; for instance, it might be well to establish such a "ball drop" on the 16th hole at Cypress Point. See recommendation 4 for Local Rules in USGA Appendix to 1957 Rules of Golf booklet, page 57.*

*Definition 14d obligates the Committee in charge of a course to define accurately the extent of the hazards and the water hazards where there is any doubt. For the 1940 USGA Women's Amateur Championship at Pebble Beach, the following applied, and we now suggest similar treatment:*

*"Where margins of hazards may be indefinite, they are defined either:*

*(a) by lines on ground, lines themselves not being in hazards, or (b) by places where banks of ocean and its arms break down from 'through the green' (thus, banks and beaches beyond such places are parts of water hazards; if ball lie or touch there, club shall not touch ground, etc.)."*

*The questions reveal some of the complexities which can arise under the Rules when natural water hazards are not clas-*

sified as such. Further, the present treatment of certain natural lateral water hazards as being "through the green" requires a more severe penalty of two strokes for relief from an unplayable lie under Rule 29-2b than the one-stroke penalty for relief from a lateral water hazard under Rule 33-3.

### **Outside Agency Moves Ball After Address**

USGA 57-3

R. 27-1a,d

**Q.:** A player has addressed his ball in play and a stray ball played from elsewhere strikes the player's ball, which is thereby moved.

Is the innocent player penalized a stroke under Rule 27-1d on the ground that he is deemed to have caused that ball to move, even when it is so clear that an outside agency moved the ball, simply because the incident has arisen after he had addressed his ball in play?

Rule 27-1a primarily envisages cases when a ball in play is moved by an outside agency. Rule 27-1d primarily envisages cases when a ball in play moves by itself or otherwise for any reason whatsoever after the owner of the ball addressed it. Neither Rule 27-1a nor 27-1d covers a case when a player has addressed his ball in play and the ball is moved by an outside agency prior to his play.

In equity, does Rule 27-1a override Rule 27-1d in the case cited as an exception?

Question by: S. TAKAHATA, *President*

Hirono Golf Club

Kobe, Japan

**A.:** Yes.

### **Location of Ball**

#### **Not Advice**

USGA 57-4

D. 2,8,17; R. 9-1,9-2,

10-2, 29-1b, 32-1c, 35-1b, 37-7

**Q.:** In match play can a player ask spectators in general the distance his opponent's ball is from the flagstick? Is this advice under Definition 2 and Rule 9-1?

**A1:** Information concerning the whereabouts of a ball is not advice under Defi-

nition 2. A player may seek such information, without penalty. The matter of a ball's location is public knowledge; in fact, Rule 29-1b provides in part: "A person outside the match may point out the location of a ball for which search is being made". To seek the information in question is no more contrary to the spirit of the Rules than to have the line of play indicated, as is permitted by Rule 9-2.

### **"Information" Defined**

**Q2:** What is considered "information", as used in Rule 10-2?

**A2:** As used in Rule 10-2, "information" refers to the number of strokes the opponent has played.

### **Slow Play**

**Q3:** Re Rule 37-7, what is considered slow play? In our 1955 Championship the last match to come in was fully 45 minutes behind the match immediately in front. In this instance the match did not hold up any other play. Would either player be subject to penalty?

**A3:** There is no hard-and-fast test which may be applied to determine whether play is unduly delayed. Circumstances can alter cases — for example, a match can be prolonged by comparison with another match due to such factors as a lost ball, an unusual amount of ball-lifting and replacing, delay for a ruling, or various difficulties in play. Conversely, even though a match may not delay play following, one player in the match could be subject to penalty under Rule 37-7 if he unduly delayed play to the detriment of his opponent.

### **Casual Water**

#### **May Not Be Brushed**

**Q4:** Can player in match or stroke play brush across the line of putt through casual water, no loose impediments present? The player in brushing through the water was reducing the amount of water to putt through, not wishing to take advantage of Rule 32 as the position of the ball would have been affected by a slope. I ruled that

the player would lose the hole in match play and would be penalized two strokes in stroke play.

**A4:** We agree with your ruling. Casual water (Definition 8) is distinct from loose impediments (Definition 17). Rule 32-1c provides for the only relief possible from casual water on the putting green. If a player brushes casual water from the line of putt and is not brushing away loose impediments, he violates Rule 35-1b which prohibits touching the line of putt.

Questions by: WARREN ORLICK  
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Orchard Lake, Mich.

### **Attending Flagstick**

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 30-3h 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, i.e., 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.

### **Re-Trying Putt On Nine-Hole Course**

R & A 56-6-1  
R. 8

**Q:** I have been asked to write requesting clarification of the new Rule 8-2 so far as it applies to nine-hole courses.

Is it permissible for a player who has holed out on the first green to play a practice putt on that green before moving on to the second tee, in view of the fact that he will again have to play on that green as the 10th hole.

**A:** When the number of holes in a "stipulated round" exceeds the number of holes on a course the word "round" in Rule 8-2 should be read as applying to a round of the course. A player is therefore entitled to play a practice stroke on the green of a hole which he has already played during that round, even though he may play the hole again in a second or subsequent round.

### **Ball Played From Out of Bounds**

R & A. 56-55-26  
R 29, Note 1

**Q:** Having completed a medal round, a player discovers that he played a ball from an out of bounds position during the round.

The penalty for a breach of Rule 29 in stroke play is given as two strokes, but Definition 21 gives out of bounds as ground on which play is prohibited, which indicates disqualification. What is the penalty under these circumstances?

**A:** The competitor is disqualified for a serious breach of Rule 29. He did not play the stipulated round as provided for in Rule 1. (see note to Rule 29).