



# 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.

### Flagstick Attended Without Consent

USGA 57-12

D. 10, 22; R. 5, 26-3b, 34-1, 35-1h

**Q1:** What is the penalty, in match or stroke play, if the opponent (or fellow-competitor) attend the flagstick without the authority of the player playing the stroke and under circumstances in which the player cannot prevent such action—for example, because he is playing from a bunker and cannot see the flag or because his ball is already in motion—

(a) if the opponent (or fellow-competitor) or the flagstick is struck by the player's ball?

(b) if opponent (or fellow-competitor) or the flagstick is not struck by the player's ball?

**A1:** *Match play*—(a) and (b)—The player was entitled to have the flagstick unattended and to play for it. Rule 34-1 provides that the flagstick may be attended "only on the authority of the player." The opponent breached that Rule and also Rule 35-1h, which prohibits taking "any action to influence . . . the movement of the ball."

The opponent sustains a penalty of loss of hole.

*Stroke play*—(a) and (b)—A fellow-competitor is an outside agency (Definitions 10 and 22). There is no penalty; if the ball strikes the fellow-competitor or the flagstick, it is a rub of the green and shall be played as it lies—Rule 26-3b.

**Q2:** If an opponent (or fellow-competitor) attends the flagstick, without the authority of the player playing the stroke, in match or stroke play, and the player is aware and does not register objection, is the player considered to have given his consent and thus to have exercised his authority to have the flagstick attended under Rule 34-1?

**A2:** Yes.

### Gross and Net Prizes

USGA 57-13

R. 36-1, 36-3

**Q:** In a qualifying round, two players are tied for low gross. One of the tied contestants was also low net, but she elected to play off for low gross. Having lost, she felt she retained her right to the low net

prize, challenging the committee to show her a rule prohibiting this. Our Tournament Calendar doesn't, in our opinion, adequately cover this question.

Question by: MRS. THOMAS D. GATES  
Rules Chairman, Women's Southern  
California Golf Association  
Los Angeles, Cal.

**A:** The distribution of prizes is a matter within the province of the local committee to decide.

Your committee has stipulated in its Tournament Calendar, pursuant to Rules 36-1 and 36-3, that "in a qualifying round, if one contestant wins both gross and net, she must accept gross only."

We would consider it an equitable interpretation of your stipulation to permit a player who ties for gross prize and also qualifies for a net prize to play off for the gross prize before waiving her claim to the net prize.

The play-off is an extension of the competition, and the player should not be required to waive her right to net prize until the competition has been completed.

### ***Enforcing Local Rule***

USGA 57-14  
L. R.

**Q:** There has always been an unwritten rule at my club that a ball striking the overhead power line from the eighth tee may be replayed with no penalty. It is true that a perfectly played ball from the back tee could be deflected or practically stopped. I am wondering if a player's ball hits the wire and ends up in the cup or very near to the cup whether his opponent could demand that he shoot again? Can the ball be declared dead? How shall we word this on our score card?

Question by GLENN R. JONES  
Grand Island, Neb.

**A:** We do not recommend local rules to cover situations of this kind but, if a club considers such a rule necessary, the following would be acceptable:

If a ball strike a power pole or wire, the player must disregard that stroke, abandon the ball and play another ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which

the original ball was played but not nearer the hole, without penalty. If the original stroke was played from the teeing ground, a ball may be teed anywhere within the teeing ground; if from through the green or a hazard, it shall be dropped.

### ***Checking Distance Is Seeking Advice***

USGA 57-15  
D. 2; R. 9-1

**Q:** On the 16th hole, a marker clearly indicated in figures that the green was 150 yards ahead, but my opponent, before selecting her club, asked my caddie: "Is that a true 150 yards to the green?"

I immediately called the hole on her according to Rule 9-1.

When we returned to the clubhouse the rules committee ruled me wrong and, of course, I abided by their decision. They said she was merely making a comment, but I maintained that she had no reason to ask my caddie anything, in view of the clear marker, and that she really wanted to know which club to select, which comes under the heading of "advice." Will you please advise me what the official USGA ruling would be under these circumstances?

Question by: MRS. JAMES WEISKOPF  
Miami Beach, Fla.

**A:** The player violated Rule 9-1 which prohibits asking for advice, except from one's own caddie, partner or partner's caddie. Definition 2 provides: "'Advice' is any counsel or suggestion which could influence a player in determining his play, the choice of a club, or the method of making a stroke."

### ***Played Wrong Ball After Holing Out***

R. & A. 56-103-44  
R. 11

**Q:** In a mixed foursome competition side A was three up on side B at the 14th tee.

Side A's ball landed in a bunker some sixty yards short of the green. Side B played to the green. Side A played a third shot from the bunker and all players were

of the opinion that the ball was on the 14th green. However, on arriving at the green the only ball on the green was that belonging to side B. A search was made round the green and a ball (identified as belonging to A) was found close to the green and this was played to the pin.

When the flag was removed for side A to putt, it was discovered that its original ball was in the hole, whereupon side B claimed the hole, stating that A had lost it by playing the wrong ball.

Side A, on reflection, realized that it had won the 14th hole and that B was out of order in claiming it on the grounds that A had played the wrong ball. Side B in fact acknowledges now that it lost the 14th hole, but claims that it would possibly have played the 15th differently for a win and not a half if it had been aware that it was four instead of two down.

By finishing the game and accepting the score of two up at the 15th (instead of being rightly four up) have side A lost the match?

**A:** Under the basic principles enunciated in Rule 6-1, except as provided for in the Rules, a hole is won by the side which holes its ball in the fewest strokes.

In this case the wrong ball was played after the completion of the hole and side B's claim should not have been accepted by side A.

Side A, however, by accepting its opponents' ruling and thus failing to establish its claim before any player in the match played from the next teeing ground, cannot subsequently claim the hole (Rule 11-1).

The match must stand as played.

The attention of players is drawn to the preamble to Rule 21, which directs that each player should put an identification mark on his ball.

### ***Retrieving Club Causes Undue Delay***

R. & A. 56-107-45

R. 37

**Q:** A competitor in a stroke competition having arrived on the 6th green found that he had left his No. 5 iron by the 5th green.

Explaining this to his fellow competitor he hurried back, retrieved the iron, and then rejoined him. In the meantime two couples had been allowed to go through.

My committee are divided in respect to this case, some are of the opinion that the Rules had not been violated and others of the opinion that the competitor should be disqualified under Rule 37-6, Discontinuance of Play.

**A:** By returning to the 5th green to collect his club the competitor concerned delayed play and contravened Rule 37-7, and should have been penalized two strokes.

Rule 37-6 is not applicable in this case.

### ***Five Minutes Search Is Optional***

R. & A. 56-34-10

D. 6

**Q:** Reference to Decision 53-12. The Rules of Golf Committee has always in the past made it clear that a player could abandon his search for a ball at any time. It was also clear that, provided the original ball was found within five minutes and provided the player had not played another ball from the spot from which he played the previous shot, he could continue to play with the original ball.

With the addition, however, of paragraph 2 to Definition 6 of the 1956 Rules of Golf, some doubt has arisen as to whether this Decision is still valid. In other words, if a player declare his ball "lost" without searching for five minutes is the ball "lost" within the meaning of paragraph 1 of Definition 6 which states that a lost ball "if subsequently found is not in play"?

**A:** The addition of paragraph 2 to Definition 6 has been made in order to make it clear that it is not essential to spend five minutes searching for a lost ball, but that the search may be abandoned by the player at any time.

If a player declare his ball lost and it is subsequently found within five minutes, provided the player has not played another ball from the spot from which he played his previous shot or played a stroke with a provisional ball beyond the point of loss, he can continue to play his original ball.