



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 May Be Scooped From Hole Without Penalty

USGA 57-16
R. 35-1b

Q: A heavy rainstorm started while a match was on the 14th green. The teams finished the 14th hole and then went into the shack for approximately one hour. It was then decided between the two teams to continue the match. At that time the 16th green was flooded and the approach to the 17th green was also flooded. The teams reached the 17th green. One of the players was putting a two-foot putt toward the cup and he noticed that the cup was filled almost to the brim with water. He had the caddie take a cigarette package and scoop three packagefuls of water from the cup. It cannot be said that any portion of the rim of the cup was touched.

The two foot putt was hit into the cup, after which the win of the hole was protested by the opposing team and a ruling requested.

Question by: ARNOLD H. BACHNER
Harrison, N. Y.

A: There is nothing in the Rules of Golf to prevent a player from removing water or any other foreign matter from a

hole before putting, provided the line of putt is not touched in violation of Rule 35-1b and no other Rule is infringed.

Ball Inside Orange Must Be Played or Deemed Unplayable

USGA 57-17
D. 17; R. 16, 29

Q: A player pulled his drive into the rough and hit an orange tree. The force of the ball was responsible for the latter entering an orange, which dropped to the ground and rolled along with the ball inside. What is the ruling?

A: The player would have to play the ball as it lay or deem it unplayable. The orange was not a loose impediment under Definition 17, because it adhered to the ball (or vice versa), and so the player could not invoke Rule 18. The ruling would be the same if the orange had been lying loose in the fairway when the ball struck it.

Ball Rolled On Green Incurs Penalty

USGA 57-18
R. 35-1d

Q: In stroke play, after heavy rain some

of the greens had pools of water. On the 14th green there was a pool of water between a player's ball and the cup, and a pool of water behind the ball. The player did not move his ball around the water in front of his ball, as I understand he is allowed to do providing he is no nearer the hole, but took a ball out of his pocket and, by hand, rolled it through the water which was behind his ball. Ball was rolled diagonally to path of ball he was playing. Other players claimed this an infraction of the rule and a two-stroke penalty should be invoked. The player claims he learned nothing by his action and proceeded to three-putt the green.

Will you kindly give me the ruling?

Question by: T. W. HAMILTON
So. Norwalk, Conn.

A: The player incurred a two-stroke penalty for violating Rule 35-1d, as follows: "During the play of a hole, a player shall not test the surface of the putting green; he shall not roll a ball or roughen or scrape the surface."

Bases for Fencing Posts Are Not Obstructions

USGA 57-19
R. 31-2; D. 20

Q: Fence posts were set in approximately 14-inch concrete bases for a fence which bounded the course. Is the part of the concrete base which is within the boundary of the course considered an obstruction? A ball was lying against such concrete base.

Question by: M. SANDERS
Valley Stream, N. Y.

A: A fence defining out of bounds is not an obstruction (Definition 20); posts and other means of supporting such a fence ordinarily should not be regarded as obstructions. We recommend that the local committee publish a local rule stating that the concrete bases of the fence posts are not obstructions.

If it were ruled otherwise, inequities and confusion could arise from the fact that under Rule 31-2, relief would be available from the concrete bases but would not be available from the fence and its posts.

Time Limits for Applying Stroke Play Penalties

USGA 57-20
R. 11

Q: In stroke competition, is there a time limit for applying penalties for violations of Rules? In match play time limits for claims are set forth in Rule 11-1, but there does not appear to be any counterpart for stroke play.

A: In stroke play, no penalty for a Rules violation can be applied after the competition has closed (unless wrong information had been given by the competitor). The competition is deemed to have closed:

- (a) Stroke play qualifying followed by match play—When the player has teed off in his first match.
- (b) Stroke play only—When the results are officially announced.

Flag is Attended At Putter's Risk

USGA 57-21
R. 34-2

Q: A and B are playing stroke play with a double caddie. The caddie is raking a bunker after A's shot. It is B's turn to putt. To speed play, A offers to attend the pin for B. B requests her to remove it. She does so and steps away from the cup. A sees B's ball rolling toward cup and thinks it is going to roll over cup so she rushes up and puts the pin back in, by her own admission, "to stop the ball."

Does A incur a penalty under Rule 35-1h for having taken action to influence the position or movement of the ball?

Does B incur a penalty under Rule 34-2 for hitting an attended pin?

Do both A and B incur penalties for above reasons?

Question by: MRS. C. S. BEATTIE
Oak Park, Ill.

A: B in effect requested that the flagstick be attended and therefore incurred a penalty of two strokes if the ball struck the attended flagstick; see Rule 34-2.

There was no other penalty.