



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. "59-1" means the first decision issued in 1959. "D" means definition. "R. 37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1959 Rules of Golf.

Ball Not "Other Equipment"

USGA 58-44

R. 26-2, 3; 27-2, 3; 40-1,2,3; 41-4

Q: Do you consider a golf ball part of the player's equipment?

Question by: J. W. ALTMAN
Chicago, Ill.

A: No. The term "other equipment" in Rules 26-2a and b and Rule 26-3a was not meant to cover a ball. This is indicated by Rule 26-3b, where the phrase "ball and other equipment" is used.

Compare also Rule 27-2a with Rules 27-2b, 27-3 and 41-4; also Rules 40-2a and b and 40-3b, c and e with Rule 40-1c.

Mat May be Used As Tee

USGA 59-3

D. 31, R. 17-4

Q: I have for a long time been unhappy with the hard dirt tees on the course which I play. Several weeks ago I found on old tufted bath mat at home, cut it down to approximately a 15" x 30" size and have since been using it as a portable base from which to hit my tee shot. To

me, it is an immense psychological aid since it is green in color and helps to cushion my shot as grass would if there were any on the tee. My friends say that it is illegal to use such a mat.

Question by: BRUCE R. SHERMAN
Nek York, N. Y.

A: The Rules of Golf do not prohibit the use of a mat for teeing a ball. See Definition 31. However, a player would violate the provisions of Rule 17-4 if he were to stand on the mat while playing his stroke.

Provisional Ball Played After Wrong Ball

USGA 58-43

R. 21-3, 30-2

Q: A player in stroke play competition, after hitting his tee shot, elects to play a provisional ball. On his next stroke he plays what he thinks is his original ball. After playing this stroke, he discovers that he has played a wrong ball. He returns to the approximate location of his original ball and, after searching declares it a lost ball. He then plays his provisional ball. Should he:

(a) Play the provisional ball with the prescribed stroke and distance penalty?

(b) Play the provisional ball with the prescribed stroke and distance penalty plus an additional two strokes for having played a wrong ball?

(c) Or has he, by having played what he thought to be his original ball, declared his provisional ball out of play? (This would then necessitate his returning to the tee and playing his fifth stroke.)

Question by: DR. JOSE R. DAVILA
Richmond, Va.

A: Alternative (b) is correct. As the original ball was lost, the provisional ball became the ball in play; see Rule 30-2. The player must add to his score a two-stroke penalty for playing a wrong ball (assuming it was not played in a hazard); see Rule 21-3.

Ball Near Hole in Stroke Play

USGA 59-8
R. 4, 35-3b

Q: In a stroke-play competition, I am in a hazard less than 20 yards from the hole and my fellow-competitor's ball is near the hole. Can I request the fellow-competitor to leave his ball where it is under Rule 35-3 so that it may assist me in my play of the hole?

Question by: DON COLLETT
Coronado, Cal.

A: It is a basic principle of stroke play that one ball shall not assist another. When a fellow-competitor's ball might assist a competitor, as in the circumstances cited, the fellow-competitor has a moral obligation to the rest of the field to exercise the option given him in Rule 35-3b and play first.

If a competitor and fellow-competitor were to agree to violate this basic principle, we would invoke Rule 4 and disqualify both.

Honor Decided by Net Score

USGA 59-9
R. 12-1a

Q: A and B are playing match play, B to receive strokes according to handicap. A wins the toss for honor at the first tee and retains the honor at the second tee. Both A and B get 5s on the second

hole, but B gets a stroke on this hole, thereby reducing his score to a net 4.

Does B get the honor at the third?

Question by: LEE PHILLIPS
Miami Beach, Fla.

A: In any handicap match the honor is determined by the net score of the preceding hole.

This is in accordance with Rule 12-1a which provides that the side which wins the hole shall take the honor at the next teeing ground. B won the second hole according to the terms of the match.

Putt Deflected by Ball Marker

USGA 59-10
R. 35-1

Q: In Honolulu scholastic league matches, A requested B to lift his ball, A being away and both balls lying on the putting green. B marked his ball with a wooden tee because he didn't have a coin. A then proceeded to putt and his ball struck B's marker (the tee) and was seriously deflected. Both players played out the hole, although A attempted to dispute the hole on grounds B marked his ball with a tee.

Would a player's tee be considered "other equipment" under Rule 26-2b?

Question by: EDWARD F. CHUI
Honolulu, Hawaii

A: Not under these circumstances.

A could have asked B to move the tee farther from his line of putt, in accordance with the note under Rule 35-1. Since he did not exercise this privilege he must accept the consequences.

Play Completed When Putt Conceded

R&A 58/63/55
R. 35 2d

Q1: On the putting green A has played his third stroke and the ball stops near the hole. His opponent B concedes the next stroke and instead of lifting the ball or knocking it away strikes it and holes out.

Can A consider that he has holed out with his third stroke?

2: In the same situation, after B has conceded the next stroke, A instead of lifting the ball plays it towards the hole

and misses. Can B consider that A has completed an extra stroke?

3: In the same situation, B concedes the next stroke but after conceding it and before either of the players have reached the ball to lift it, the ball falls into the hole. Can A consider that he has holed out in three strokes?

In general, as will be seen, the gist of the question is whether the ball is to be considered out of play at the very moment that B has conceded the next stroke, so that anything that happens after that moment will not affect the game.

A: A player to whom a putt has been conceded has completed the hole and his ball is no longer in play. It is, therefore, immaterial what happens to his ball after the concession has been made.

In each of the three cases you mention, A's score for the hole was 4.

(In the third case, it is assumed that the ball had come to rest before the concession was made.)

Loose Impediment Partly in Hazard

R&A 58/71/56

R. 33-1

Q: In match play A's ball is in a sand bunker. A tree branch about two yards from the ball is partly in the bunker and partly outside and does not interfere with A's stance or play of his ball. A's caddie takes hold of that part of branch lying outside of bunker and removes the branch.

What penalty, if any, has A incurred by reason of his caddie's action?

A: The branch is a loose impediment (Definition 17). A's caddie, by removing the branch, violated Rule 33-1. A suffers the penalty of loss of hole.

Disqualification Decides Match

R&A 58/83/59

R. 37

Q: A and B and X and Y are drawn to play in the first round of the club four-ball knock-out. The times and order of play are arranged by the committee. A and B are at the starting point on time and after having waited five or six minutes for X and Y agree to play a friendly four-ball with two other mem-

bers who are looking for a game. All four players hit off the tee.

As the players walk toward their drives, X and Y arrive at the starting point. A and B and the other two players then return to the tee.

A and B and X and Y then play their four-ball knock-out without claim or protest. X and Y win the match.

This matter was drawn to the attention of the committee by a non-player in the match and the committee, prior to reaching a decision, would like to have your interpretation as to the correct solution to the situation. At this moment the following queries have come to mind.

1. It appears that X and Y are disqualified under Rule 37-5.

2. It would appear that both pairs might be disqualified under Rule 4 by agreeing to waive the Rules of Golf, i.e. agreeing to play the match after X and Y were late.

3. In the event of X and Y being disqualified under Rule 37-5, is the match thereupon at an end and the further possibilities of penalty and/or disqualification abandoned?

A: X and Y by failing to arrive at the starting point at the appointed time should be disqualified and A and B declared the winners.

The match was then decided and any agreement to play could not affect the issue. No disqualification under Rule 4 arises.

Back of Club May Be Used

R&A 58/93/64

Rule 2-1, 2; 19-1

Q: One of our members who is more or less ambidextrous has on several occasions got out of a difficult lie by playing a shot left-handed with the back of his club. The club in question is a putter with a heavy flange on the back of the head, a very useful implement for obtaining loft.

Should he suffer any penalty for using the back of a club which is quite legal as far as the correct face goes?

A: There is no Rule of Golf which prohibits a player striking the ball with the back of his club, either through the green or on the green, but the stroke must count.