



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.

Removing Sand

USGA 59-13
R. 33-1e

Q: When a ball is imbedded in soft bunker sand and out of sight, how should one go about brushing the surface or pawing about to find its location?

Question by: HARRY MAXWELL, JR.
Philadelphia 3, Pa.

A: Rule 33-1e provides specifically that, if the ball be covered by sand, the player "may remove as much thereof as will enable him to see the top of the ball; if the ball be moved in such removal, no penalty shall be incurred, and the ball shall be replaced."

In proceeding under this Rule, a player is expected to act with restraint in removing sand so that he will be unlikely to expose the entire ball or move it.

Green May Be Brushed

USGA 59-14
R. 35-1a

Q: Small watermelon-seed-like leaves lie on putting surface and are difficult to remove by any method. Palm of hand placed on putting green in line of putt and about one dozen reciprocating

strokes are taken in brushing action. The gentleman was called by his opponent for breach of Rule 35-1a.

Question by: R. W. BRATSCI
Chicago, Ill.

A: Rule 35-1a expressly provides that loose impediments on the putting green may be removed by brushing, either with the hand or a club. However, the Rule also states that nothing may be pressed down in brushing. Further, the putting green may not be tested by roughening or scraping its surface. (Rule 35-1d).

"Interference" Defined

USGA 59-15
R.31-2

Q: An out of bounds fence borders three golf holes. At the ground level from one to three inches inside of the fence is an exposed water pipe. We assume this is an immovable obstruction under the rules.

This out of bounds fence is located on the left-hand side of the fairways. The pipe would not interfere with a player's stance, stroke or backward movement of his club if he were left-handed, but would definitely interfere with his stance and stroke if he attempted to play the ball

right-handed in the direction of his choice.

The rule specifically states, "interference with the line of play is not of itself interference under this Rule." Would a right-handed golfer be obliged to play the ball backward, or, to be more explicit, in the opposite direction of the green, since the pipe would not interfere at all with a stroke in this direction?

Question by: THOMAS G. McMAHON
Los Angeles, Cal.

A: Player entitled to relief when exposed water pipe is within two club-lengths of ball and interferes with stance, stroke or backswing for stroke in direction he wishes to play.

Provision that interference with line of play is not of itself interference under Rule 31-2 does not refer to stance, stroke or backswing but to route desired for ball after stroke.

Claim Must Be Made Before Players Drive

USGA 59-16
R.11-1, 40 3f

Q: A and B are partners against C and D in a four-ball match. On the fourth hole, a par 3, A drove to the left of the green, B drove on the green, C drove to the left and declared the possibility that his ball was out of bounds, D drove to the right.

A located a ball, played his second shot onto the green and sank his putt for a 3. His partner, B, had played his second shot, but when A sank his 3, B picked up his ball. C declared his ball out of bounds and did not play the hole out. D made a 4.

The players then proceeded to the fifth tee and after driving found a ball in front of the tee which turned out to belong to A.

What was the result of the fourth hole?

Question by: DAVID H. HALLE
Eccleston, Md.

A: A and B won the hole with A's 3 even though it was made in part with a wrong ball. Rule 11-1 prevented C and D from making a valid claim under Rule 40-3f.

Penalty Not Noted; Competitor Disqualified

USGA 59-17
R. 21-3, 36-5, 38-2,3

Q: (Embodied in answer)

Question by: BILL GRESSICK
Catskill, N. Y.

A: Competitor who played wrong ball outside hazard sustained two-stroke penalty under Rule 21-3. Failure to include penalty resulted in return of score for hole lower than actually played and competitor thus disqualified himself under Rule 38-3. Failure of competitor to countersign his card also entailed disqualification under Rule 38-2. Circumstances described in telephone conversation would not warrant committee waiving or modifying disqualification penalty under Rule 36-5.

"Rough" Not Hazard

USGA 59-18
D. 14, D. 34, R. 21-2

Q: In making a decision on a controversial matter in our East-Central Wisconsin golf tournament, it was my opinion that "rough" was not a hazard, as stated in Rule 21-2.

Two different times contestants played wrong balls and then immediately discovered their mistakes and played their own ball.

Some claimed that "long grass" was a hazard.

Question by: R. A. ASPINWALL, SEC'Y
East-Central Wis. Golf Ass'n.
Fort Atkinson, Wis.

A: "Rough" is not a hazard. A wrong ball played from "rough" is not covered by the exception in Rule 21-2. The term "rough" is not used in the Rules of Golf. "Rough" is part of "through the green" (see Definition 34). Hazards are defined in Definition 14.

Claim Not Valid

USGA 59-21
R. 4, 11-1, 11-3, 23-1, 37-2

Q: Player A hits ball into rough. A spectator insists to A's caddie that ball which caddie has found does not belong to A.

While A knows nothing about actions

of young caddie, A's caddie (aged 14) picks up ball of A to identify same for above mentioned spectator. The caddie called out to A, asking him the name and number of his ball for purpose of confirming the ball which the caddie positively knew was A's ball. A identified same correctly, shouting, "My ball is a First Flight 90." Caddie of A replaced ball exactly where he found it. B, who like A, was about 15 yards away from A's ball at the time, yelled, "90, I never heard of 90" but grumblingly accepted the fact that said identified ball was A's ball.

A won hole from B by one stroke, thus concluding a "sudden death" play-off on the 30th green and winning the tournament.

When a photographer was about to take pictures of the presentation of the trophy to A (about 15 minutes after leaving the green), the spectator who earlier questioned the identity of A's ball informed B that there was a possibility of a Rules infraction.

B then decided to call this infraction on the grounds that when the caddie picked up the ball, A had automatically lost the match, according to Rule 23-1, which states that the ball may be lifted for purposes of identification provided he lifts and replaces it on the spot from which it was lifted in the presence of his opponent in match play.

Not wishing to further the dispute, A, ignorant of Rule 11-1, conceded the match to player B.

Who is the rightful winner?

Question by: DR. CHAS. A. SPERA
Jamestown, N. Y.

A: A won the match but then conceded it.

If the local committee made a ruling, it was final, whether right or wrong (see Rule 11-3).

B's claim that A violated Rule 23-1 was not valid, as it was not made before the players left the putting green of the last (30th) hole, as required by Rule 11-1.

Had B made the claim within the time limit specified in Rule 11-1, it would have been valid, as A was subject to a penalty of loss of hole under Rule 23-1 because his caddie, in lifting and replacing his ball, did not do so in the presence of the opponent, B (the player is responsible

for the acts of his caddie; Rule 37-2).

A purpose of Rule 23-1 is to assure the opponent of adequate protection against improper lifting and replacement of a ball. B appears to have been satisfied on this point at the time. The facts do not show any agreement between the players to waive rules and penalties, and Rule 4 therefore would not have been applicable.

Left-Handed Stroke

USGA 59-19
Def. 30, R. 19-1

Q: Is it permissible to play a left-handed stroke with the back of a right-handed club?

Question by: C. R. AULT
Birmingham, Ala.

A: There is nothing in the Rules to prohibit playing a left-handed stroke with the back of a right-handed club provided the club satisfies the requirements of Rule 2-2 and the stroke conforms with Definition 30 and Rule 19-1.

"False Handicap"

R&A 58/85/61
R. 36-1, 37-4

Q: Some time after the final of a competition was played, it was discovered that one of the finalists had been playing off a false handicap which was to her advantage.

Should we now disqualify this player as the cup has not yet been presented?

A: If the term "false handicap" means that the player gave wrong information to the committee in connection with the fixing of the handicap, she is liable to disqualification by your committee.

If, however, a correct official list of handicaps was published by the committee, and the phrase implies that the player stated her handicap incorrectly to her opponent, the result of the match should stand as played. Under Rule 37-4 each player in match play is responsible for informing himself of the hole at which strokes are given or taken. If at any hole a handicap is wrongly taken or not taken, this cannot be adjusted after any player has played from the next tee or in the case of the last hole after all players have left the putting green.