



# 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. "60-1" means the first decision issued in 1960. "D" means definition. "R. 37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1960 Rules of Golf.

### REINTRODUCING UNFIT BALL

USGA 59-33  
R. 2-3, 28

**Q:** A player declares a ball unfit for play on the third hole. On the sixteenth, with a tight out of bounds on the right, he plays this ball from the tee again. What is the ruling?

Question by: ARTHUR TUCKEE  
Pittsburgh, Pa.

**A:** If the ball conformed with Rule 2-3, the player was within his rights and there was no penalty. However, he could not again declare the ball (in the same condition) unfit for play under Rule 28.

### SIZE OF HOLE

USGA 59-31  
D. 15

Handicap Decision 59-8

**Q:** When golf is played on a course using oversized holes, such as the  $4\frac{3}{4}$  inch holes used this year on a few courses in the Pacific Northwest, may the scores be used as a basis for handicaps?

**A:** No. Definition 15 of the Rules of Golf provides:

"The 'hole' shall be  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter and at least 4 inches deep. If a lining be used, it shall be sunk at least

1 inch below the putting green surface unless the nature of the soil makes it impractical to do so; its outer diameter shall not exceed  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches."

Scores made on a course with holes which do not conform with Definition 15 are not acceptable scores and may not be used for handicapping under the USGA system. Handicaps based on such scores may not be used to determine eligibility for USGA Championships.

### TEE MARKER: WHEN OBSTRUCTION

USGA 59-32  
D. 20; R. 31-1

**Q:** A player plays from the tee and the ball contacts a tee marker. There is no Rule to prevent the player from removing the tee marker in playing so long as it comes within the meaning of immovable obstruction under Rule 31-2. Is this correct?

Question by: SEIICHI TAKAHATA  
Higashiku, Osaka, Japan

**A:** Tee markers must always remain in place while all members of a group are completing their play from a teeing ground.

However, after all play from a teeing ground has been completed, tee markers

may be treated as movable obstructions in accordance with Definition 20 and Rule 31-1. Tee markers of a hole other than that being played may also be treated as movable obstructions. Any tee markers moved under this interpretation should be immediately replaced after the stroke has been completed.

**NOTE:** This supersedes Decision 58-37.

### **DISPUTE AS TO BREACH**

USGA 59-36

R. 10-1, 11-4, 33-1

**Q:** Match Play: A in sand trap. B claims A touched sand when addressing his ball. A states he did not. No referee and no witnesses. Outcome of match depends on this hole.

The Committee has asked me for a decision and will abide by it. I have not been able to find any rule to cover this and believe the Equity Rule would have to be applied; if so, would throw the hole out and let them play it over.

Question by: RAY LAWRENSEN  
Adelphi, Md.

**A:** The Committee must consider all available evidence as to whether or not A infringed Rule 33-1, and must make a decision based on the weight of evidence.

It is our observation that the player of the stroke is usually in the better position to determine whether a breach of Rule occurred in a case such as this, and generally he should be given the benefit of any doubt.

The Rules assume that golfers are honest, and Rule 10-1 requires a player to take the initiative in reporting a penalty against himself.

Rule 11-4, dealing with equity, is not recommended in this instance. To require replay of the hole could be inequitable.

### **BALL LOST OR STOLEN**

USGA 59-41

D. 6, D. 22; R. 11-2, 27-1a, 29-1

**Q:** During the Classification of the Amateur Championship in a threesome consisting of Ledesma, Bertolini and a third party, when the first two players were playing the 7th hole, par 3, 157 yards, Ledesma's ball after striking the green went right on, Bertolini's seemed to stop at the far end of the green or barely passing it, while the third player's ball landed on the green. In going to hunt for the first two balls, they had dis-

appeared and there was no doubt they had been stolen: Firstly, because although one had rolled down a slope there was no long grass and the distance to the out of bounds is more than 60 meters, with trees in between; secondly, because of the coincidence that both balls should disappear. As the time of the game was 12:30 and as it was a classification, not more than 8 people were accompanying the players and there was nobody on the green.

Although Ledesma before returning to the tee to play another ball played a second one from the place where it should have been, the referee for that day considered that as there had been no evidence that the balls had been stolen, they should be considered as lost. I understand that when a ball cannot be found and then there is no logical reason for considering it could have been lost, one can play again without being penalized.

Could you very kindly give us your opinion on this matter?

Question by: CESAR S. VASQUEZ  
Buenos Aires, Argentina

**A:** It is a question of fact whether a ball has been lost (Definition 6) or moved by an outside agency (Definition 22). In order to treat it as moved by an outside agency under Rule 27-1a, there must be reasonable evidence to that effect; all available testimony and facts should be considered. In the absence of such evidence, the ball must be treated as lost, and Rule 29-1 applies.

In the present case, the referee doubtless was intimately aware of the details and in position to evaluate them. His decision would appear to be correct; in any case, it was final—see Rule 11-2.

- 1. PROVISIONAL BALL—ANNOUNCEMENT**
- 2. BALL ABANDONED—PLAYING ANOTHER BALL**

USGA 59-47

R. 11-3; 30-1a, 2

**Q:** Our No. 3 hole is bounded on the right by a public highway, and for the most part this highway is from ten to twenty feet below the fairway level. A ball coming to rest on or beyond this highway is out of bounds.

A player had driven to within 100 yards of the green and his fellow competitors

had all driven to approximately the same spot. When playing his second stroke, the player hit the ball in the shank of his club which caused the ball to travel radically to the right of the intended line of flight and over the hill toward the highway, which was less than 30 yards from the spot the player's stroke was made. All of the player's fellow competitors were standing quite near when the stroke was played and saw the ball travel toward the highway with sufficient speed to go over the hill and down onto the highway some 20 feet below. All tournament officials present also saw the line of flight of the ball. Everyone, including the player, assumed that the ball was probably out of bounds.

The player immediately played a provisional ball, without announcing his intention to do so, feeling that in this case such an announcement would be superfluous, as his fellow competitors (one of whom was the marker) were standing quite near and saw what had happened. The player then walked the short distance to the point where his ball was seen to go over the hill toward the highway. There being an almost vertical drop of about 20 feet directly to the highway at this point, the player made a brief search of about one minute and then walked to the green, where his provisional ball had landed.

Two tournament officials lingered behind to look for the ball and within one more minute one of the officials saw a ball lying in the middle of the fairway about 50 yards short of the green. This official called to the player to identify the ball so found and the player returned to the spot and identified the ball as the ball which had been presumed to be out of bounds. A large truck had been seen on the highway in the line of flight of the ball which was thought to have gone out of bounds and it now appeared that the ball has struck this truck and had been deflected back to the spot where it was found. No player in the group had played a subsequent stroke before the ball was found.

The officials allowed the player to play this original ball without penalty even though there probably was a purely technical violation of Rule 30-1a. It was felt that a strict interpretation of Rule 30-1a in this instance would be contrary to the

interests of fair play, as it was so obvious to all concerned what had happened and that a provisional ball was being played and why it was being played. There was no disagreement with the officials over this ruling.

However, the point was brought up after the tournament that this player might have been deemed to have "abandoned" his original ball and therefore not have been entitled to place this ball in play again.

1. Was the official ruling correct?

2. If the player had not "abandoned" the original ball, what constitutes an "abandoned" ball and which rule covers this situation?

Questions by: WARREN V. BUSH  
Las Cruces, N. M.

A1: Technically, the competitor violated Rule 30-1a. However, the Committee has discretion to determine whether the competitor's actions constituted an announcement of a provisional ball in the particular circumstances. The Committee's decision is final—see Rule 11-3.

A2: Under Rule 30-2, when the player reaches the place where the original ball is likely to be, he is deemed to have abandoned a ball when he plays a stroke with the other ball.

#### REPAIR OF MARKS BY ANY BALL

USGA 59-49  
R. 35-1c for 1960

Q: The changes in Rules approved for 1960 allow the repair of ball marks anywhere on the green. Is that intended to mean that any ball mark may be repaired, or only marks left by the balls in play?

Question by: GERMAN EDWARDS  
Santiago, Chile

A: The 1960 Rule permitting repair of ball marks on the putting green will apply to all ball marks, without regard to the balls that make them. Rule 35-1c in 1960 will provide:

"c. Repair of Ball Marks. The player may repair damage to the putting green caused by the impact of a ball, but he may not step on the damaged area. The ball may be lifted to permit repair and shall be replaced on the spot from which it was lifted.

"If a ball be moved during such repair, it shall be replaced, without penalty."