



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.

BALL UNPLAYABLE—PROCEDURE WHEN DROPPING BACK IS IMPOSSIBLE

USGA 60-3
R. 29-2, 30

Q: A slices a ball off the tee and the caddie signals it probably is out of bounds. A then hits a provisional ball under Rule 30-1 which comes to rest in the fairway. However, it develops that A's first ball is in an unplayable lie in a shrub which is in bounds, so the provisional ball must be abandoned in accordance with the last paragraph of Rule 30.

Because of a curvature in the boundary line, it would not be possible to drop a ball behind where the unplayable ball lay, keeping that point between the ball and the hole, without being out of bounds. Is it permissible to return to the tee, where the original ball was played, add a penalty stroke, and continue with the play of the hole under Rule 29-2b(ii) even though a provisional ball, which was played on the incorrect assumption that the original ball was out of bounds, has since been abandoned?

Question by: LYNN A. SMITH
Pasadena, Calif.

A: Yes. The player has no other recourse. Since he cannot conform with Rule 29-2b(i), he must proceed under Rule 29-2b(ii).

As the original ball was not lost or out of bounds, the provisional ball had to be abandoned as provided in Rule 30-2.

OUT OF BOUNDS

1. NO HAZARD
2. IDENTIFICATION OF
3. STAKE NOT IN POSITION

USGA 59-48
D. 20, 21; R. 11-4, 17-3 Note, 36-6

Q1: The City has landscaped the areas surrounding the golf courses and has set the out-of-bounds stakes so close that on several holes sections of the bunkers are out of bounds.

Can any part of a hazard be out of bounds?

A1: Under Rule 36-6, the local committee is responsible for defining out of bounds and may designate any boundaries desired. The Rules of Golf make no provision for what may or may not be "out of bounds." Play may be prohibited from any area (Definition 21). Once an area is declared out of bounds, there is no

other classification which can be given it. There can be no such thing as a hazard within an out-of-bounds area. It may be a hazard if within bounds, but when out of bounds it is not recognized as such.

Q2: Must out-of-bounds stakes be so marked?

A2: When out of bounds is fixed by stakes they should either be marked to show their status or a note such as the following should be printed on score cards: "Out of bounds—Defined by the inside edge, at ground level, of large white stakes."

Q3: B sliced his tee shot and the ball came to rest between the second and the third out-of-bounds stakes. The second stake had been pulled up and set against a fence about fifteen feet to the right of its original position.

B agreed that his ball would have been out of bounds with the second stake in its proper place but contended that in this instance he had the right to line up his ball between stake No. 3 and stake No. 2 in its existing position.

A claimed that the ball should be lined up with stake No. 1 and stake No. 3.

Is A or B right?

A3: This case brings two principles into conflict: (1) that out of bounds is determined by the markers in place at the time of play, and (2) that out-of-bounds changes made by unauthorized persons should generally be disregarded. It is the duty of the authorities in charge of the course to see that boundaries are properly maintained.

As everyone involved in the cited case was aware of the normal location of the displaced marker, the local committee would have been justified in restoring the marker to its proper location and in deeming the ball in question to be out of bounds, provided no other ball was treated differently at the same location in the same round.

A committee's main job is to insure fair play as far as lies within its power, and under other circumstances the committee might justifiably rule differently from the above; in stroke play, it might even be necessary to cancel the particular round. The rule of equity—Rule 11-4—is paramount.

The case emphasizes that objects defining out of bounds are things fixed and should not be removed—see Definition 20 and Note to Rule 17-3.

Questions by: BEN SEIDLER
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BALL UNPLAYABLE: PROCEDURE WHEN DROPPING BACK IS IMPOSSIBLE

USGA 60-4

D. 20, R. 29-2; 31-2; 35-1a,1c; L.R.

Q.1: Rule 29-2b(i): In 1959 and prior years, the Rule permitted the ball to be dropped as near as possible when the ruling could not be complied with for some reason. (a) Does this same privilege continue in 1960; and (b) If it does not, is the only alternative that the player must take the penalty of stroke and distance?

A.1: (a) No.

(b) Yes. If the player cannot drop a ball as specified under Rule 29-2b(i), his only alternative is to proceed under Rule 29-2b(ii).

OBSTRUCTION: LOCAL RULE FOR A CONCRETE EDGING OF WATER HAZARD

Q.2: Definition 20: Indian Creek Island, on which this course is located, is a man-made island, earth from the bottom of Biscayne Bay having been pumped into a concrete bulkhead with a coping about two feet wide on its top. We have several holes of the course bordering Biscayne Bay and a ball frequently stops against this coping. Heretofore the Bay has been played as a lateral water hazard because occasionally at low tide, with the wind from a certain direction, considerable sand is exposed and it is permissible for a player to play from it. On account of this the coping has been considered an immovable obstruction.

Does the language of Definition 20 mean now that this coping is not an immovable obstruction, which would mean on frequent occasions that the ball would be in an unplayable lie?

If your answer to the first question, concerning Rule 29-2b(i), should be negative, it often would mean that a ball could not be properly dropped. If you can recognize the question that this poses, your suggestions would be appreciated.

A.2: The coping is not an immovable obstruction—Definition 20c.

Since the condition is abnormal with respect to balls lying through the green, the Club would be justified in adopting a local rule classifying the coping as an obstruction with relation to balls lying through the green. However, we would not recommend that this be applicable to a ball in the lateral water hazard. See USGA Appendix, Local Rules, item 2, on page 55 of the 1960 Rules booklet.

DAMAGE TO PUTTING GREEN.

- (1) WHY REPAIRING BALLMARKS WITH FOOT PROHIBITED**
- (2) WHY REPAIR OF SCUFF MARKS PROHIBITED**

Q.3: Rule 35-1c: It is my understanding that this Rule was made in order that the putting green would be as nearly as possible in the same condition throughout the day. The logical way to repair a ball mark is to repair it and then as a practical matter to tamp it down with the foot.

Will you please explain to me, unless there is some reason you prefer not to do so, why this prohibition? Also, does the prohibition include pressing down with a club or the hand? The point of my question is that the Rule, as I read it, makes something hard out of something easy and tends to defeat its purpose.

Why do you exclude tamping down scuff marks? My guess is you might think this was going a bit too far.

A.3: Repair of ball marks with the foot would make possible repair of areas other than the ball marks themselves. This would be undesirable and would violate Rule 35-1a. One of the basic principles of golf is to play the course as one finds it. The Rules permit the repair of ball marks only because they can cause abnormally inequitable situations.

Scuff marks can be so widely distributed over a putting green, especially around the hole, and would be so difficult to define for Rules purposes that a Rule permitting their repair could open the door for repair of any minor imperfection in the putting surface.

Questions by: J. SIMPSON DEAN
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PROVISIONAL BALL: MUST BE ABANDONED IF ORIGINAL BALL UNPLAYABLE

USGA 60-6

R. 11-1b, 11-5, 29-2b, 30-2, 38-2

Q.1: At stroke play, a competitor played a ball from the teeing ground. The ball landed in a very wooded area, and he then played a provisional ball from the tee (assuming the original ball might be lost).

The original ball was located in a crevice, and entirely unplayable. After a search, the provisional ball was also found unplayable. A discussion took place between the competitor and his fellow-competitors. Their decision was that the original ball could be dropped back under penalty of one stroke.

My contention is that the provisional ball was in fact a second ball, after the original was found unplayable. Is it correct that the competitor could have dropped the second ball, under penalty of one stroke, and be playing 5; or played a third ball from the tee and then be playing 6? This was my decision in the case.

A.1: Your decision was wrong. Rule 30-2 requires that the provisional ball be abandoned if the original ball is not lost or out-of-bounds.

The competitor was right in deciding that he could proceed under Rule 29-2b (i) with respect to the original ball. Alternatively, he could have returned to the teeing ground and put another ball into play under Rule 29-2b(ii).

Although the competitor was correct in his procedure it appears that he was doubtful. In such a case, he has the right, under Rule 11-5, to play both balls and obtain a ruling before returning his card—see Rule 38-2.

PENALTIES: TIME LIMIT FOR APPLICATION, STROKE PLAY

Q.2: This occurred in 1960, but not in tournament play. If this had occurred in a tournament, would the player have been disqualified after the competition was closed? Since there was a discussion of the Rules, it seems that the competitor could have protected himself by playing both balls.

A.2: If the competitor had been wrong in his procedure, he could not have been disqualified after the competition was closed as defined in Rule 11-1b (unless he had given wrong information).