

KNOWING YOUR RIGHTS UNDER THE RULES OF GOLF

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(Based on an article in Sports Illustrated)

The mail brings a number of odd questions about the Rules of Golf to the United States Golf Association's headquarters in "Golf House," New York. This unusual one came in last year:

"We have lots of rainy days but we hold our tournaments regardless of the weather. When playing on a rainy and wet course, is it legal for a player to go barefooted?"

The writer was not Sam Snead or Dynamite Goodloe. His name is Al Kobata, and he lives in Hawaii.

Can there be more to the question than the question itself? Does it imply that many golfers have a rather fearful view of the Rules of Golf? Do they think the code is a jumble of don'ts and can'ts and prohibitions and technicalities?

Sadly enough, this is a fairly common estimate of the Rules. Many golfers who haven't studied them regard them as a sort of Spartan strait-jacket. Of course, there is that side to them.

But there is another side, a positive side. The Rules contain rights and privileges, just as much as they contain prohibitions. They carry many legitimate, sporting advantages for the knowing golfer.

Jack Nicklaus was talking about this during the National Amateur Championship last September at Colorado Springs. In the midst of a tight match near the end of the tournament, Jack asked an official a series of questions about Rules which proved Jack's intimate knowledge of them; and he wound up by remarking "It certainly pays to know the Rules." That is the testimony of the precocious 20-year-old Ohio State student who is now the National Champion.

Do you know all your rights under the Rules? There are surprisingly many. In a cursory exploration of the Rules book I found more than 75 examples of rights, of positive privileges, as distinguished

from negative can't-do-thats. And there are more.

Now you can't hit a ball with a Rules book, but you can add to your golfing pleasures if you have a sense of the true idea of the Rules. As some one said about sports codes in general, "What's the use of playing the game if you don't know where the goal posts are?"

The Boundary that Wasn't There

Let's start on the teeing ground. Suppose you are the National Amateur Champion. Suppose you find yourself matched in the first round against a tenacious opponent. It is a 36-hole match, and your opponent holds you all square after 36 holes, and again after 37 holes, and still square after 38 holes.

You go to the 39th. And there you win the match without hitting a single stroke. No, your opponent does not expire—he is just so keen and eager that he overlooks a point in the Rules and customs of the game.

This happened in the 1920 National Amateur at the Engineers' Country Club at Roslyn on Long Island. The defending Champion was S. Davidson Herron, of Pittsburgh, who the year before had defeated Bob Jones in the final.

At Engineers', Herron was drawn in the first round of match play against young Peter Harmon, of the Scottish-American Golf Club, Van Cortlandt Park, New York City. (Peter is now a member of Claude Harmon's professional staff at Winged Foot but is not a relative of Claude's.) Herron and Harmon were all even after 38 holes.

The third extra hole was a dog-leg to the left, with out of bounds near by. Harmon had the honor. He drove deep into woods at the angle of the hole. Thinking the ball was probably out of bounds, he immediately teed up another, and drove it also far into the angle.

Again he teed a ball—his third—and



S. Davidson Herron

once more he drove it into the woods.

That was enough for Mr. Harmon. He extended his hand in congratulation and conceded the match to Dave Herron.

Herron had not played a stroke on the 39th hole.

The next morning Harmon went searching for the three balls he struck off the 39th tee. He found all three—and they all were in bounds.

The Rule today (12-2), and the custom then, provides that if a player has to play a second ball from the tee, he shall do so after the opponent or the fellow-competitor has played his first stroke. Harmon didn't do this, and Herron politely didn't interrupt him.

Ground Under Repair

Now suppose you get one safely off the tee right down the middle of the fairway. But the night before some young hot-rodders had taken their souped-up auto on that fairway and tested its brakes. Your drive comes to rest in a deeply rutted bare patch made overnight right in the fairway, and the ball is practically unplayable. Do you get any free relief?

In a tournament you could appeal to the committee to declare the rutted area to be ground under repair. Ideally, ground under repair should be marked in advance; but here is an emergency case. The definition of ground under repair covers it—it is any portion of the course so marked by the committee or "so declared by its authorized representative." A referee in a match or a committee may classify serious fresh damage to the course as ground under repair—such as a chopped-up muddy area developing

from an overnight leak in a water system. But note that an official must make the decision—if every player decided it for himself, things could be chaotic.

Five Minutes, or 255 Seconds?

A commonplace but important point about rights in the Rules arose in the 1956 National Amateur Championship at Knollwood, near Chicago. It involved the five-minute time limit for looking for a lost ball. It arose in a fourth-round match between two former Southern Amateur Champions from Georgia—Arnold Blum, a Walker Cup player, three years ago, and Charlie Harrison. They were all even after 17 holes when darkness stopped the match.

Next morning when they resumed, on the 18th, Arnold Blum cut his tee shot toward a boundary, and played a provisional ball. He looked and looked in the rough on both sides of the boundary. At last, after what he thought was a reasonable length of time, he was ready to give up the first ball as either out of bounds or lost, because of the five-minute limit on searching. "I guess my time is about up," he said to a USGA official, Clarence W. Benedict. But Arnold did not know that Benedict had been timing the search with a watch, and he was told he had 45 more seconds to look. Believe it or not, but Arnold's ball was found in bounds by a spectator a few seconds later. Arnold won the hole and the match. He went on to the quarter-finals, and the next year was a member of the Walker Cup Team.

So five minutes means 300 seconds, not 255, and you're entitled to use all 300 in looking for a lost ball; as a matter of fact, it's obligatory under the 1960 trial rule.

Protection from Officials

You can't always rely on officials to be as efficient as Mr. Benedict was. In point of fact, sometimes you have to know the Rules just to protect yourself from officials.

Take the case of Bill Wright in the 1959 USGA Amateur Public Links Championship in Denver. In one of his matches Bill putted to the lip of the hole and then knocked the ball into the hole. Technically, he played out of turn. But the referee called the hole against him, probably in the belief that Bill should have been penalized for purposely touch-

ing his ball before it was holed. Wright accepted the decision without protest.

But the referee was wrong. There is no penalty for putting out of turn. In match play the opponent has the right to recall the stroke, though he isn't obliged to do so. In stroke play the ball is played as it lies.

Arnold Palmer in the Masters

Arnold Palmer's knowledge of his rights was a key point in his victory in the 1958 Masters tournament at Augusta National.

Wet conditions in the final round brought about a local rule allowing a free lift for a ball embedded "through the green"—which means the whole course except teeing ground and putting green of the hole being played and all hazards on the course.

Playing the twelfth hole, a par 3, Palmer's ball came to rest in the side of a mound near a bunker, above the green. As the ball was embedded "through the green," Palmer knew that he was entitled to a free lift. A nearby committee-man thought the special permission to lift an embedded ball applied in the fairway only. (The word "fairway" does not appear in the Rules of Golf).

Palmer quite properly decided to invoke another Rule which applies in stroke play only, not match play—a Rule (11-5) which enables a player, when there is doubt about his rights or procedure, to play two balls and keep going so as to be sure to have a legal score: he may play out the hole with the ball as it lies and, at the same time, complete the hole with a second ball, provided he announces to his marker which ball he wants to score with if the Rules permit.

Palmer played his ball as it lay, and took 5 on the par 3 hole. Then, under the temporary rule for an embedded ball, he played another ball near the place where the first one had lain, and scored 3. He immediately submitted the case to the tournament committee.

When Palmer was playing the fifteenth hole he was told that the committee had decided he had been within his rights and that his 3 had been accepted as his score for the twelfth hole.

Here was a difference of two strokes—a 3 or a 5. Palmer won the Masters by one stroke over Doug Ford.

A Sequence of Rulings for Boros

The Masters tournament several years ago was the occasion for an unusual sequence of rulings involving Julius Boros.

On the 13th hole he faded his second shot into a brook at the right of the green. His ball lay in the water hazard in about an inch of water, in an almost impossible cuppy position. Running across the hazard was a metal water pipe which would have interfered with Boros' backswing if he had tried to make a stroke. He probably could not have played a successful stroke even if the pipe had not been there, but no matter—the Rules entitled him to relief from the pipe, which was artificial and therefore technically known as an obstruction for Rules purposes. Even though the ball lay in a hazard, he had the right to seek such relief as he could get from the pipe.

As luck would have it, there was a flat little patch of grass nearby in the water hazard, and it was within two club-lengths of the nearest point of the obstruction. Boros asked an official whether he might drop the ball on the grass in the hazard, and was assured that it would be proper to do so.

"But what if the ball rolls into the water and becomes unplayable?" Boros wanted to know. "Where would I drop outside the hazard for a stroke penalty?" The official told him that he then could invoke the water hazard Rule and drop a ball outside the hazard, under a stroke penalty, so as to keep the spot where his second shot had last crossed the hazard margin between himself and the hole.

In other words, the free lift away from the pipe was merely an extension—the completion—of the second shot which originally sent the ball into the hazard. Boros did not have to decide whether to invoke the water hazard Rule and take its one-stroke penalty until he had seen the result of the free drop ensuing from the second shot.

So he dropped the ball successfully on the patch of grass within the water hazard, and got a playable lie as well as relief from the pipe.

But that was not all. The ball came to rest against his heel. Question then arose whether there would be a penalty if the ball should move as Boros took his foot away. The official ruled that there would be no penalty; today you'll find this point

spelled out in the Rules as a result of this case.

Boros played the ball successfully out of the hazard in 3. It pays to find out your rights.

When Is An Obstruction?

Note from the Boros case that relief may be had from an obstruction even in a hazard.

The Rule about obstructions is not fully appreciated by many golfers. The first thing to know is what an obstruc-



Julius Boros

tion is. It is anything artificial, whether erected, placed or left on the course (but not stakes and fences defining out of bounds, artificial roads and paths, and construction which is an integral part of the course, such as retaining walls of hazards). Note the distinction between obstructions and loose impediments: loose impediments are natural objects not fixed or growing, such as pebbles, loose twigs and leaves; whereas obstructions are artificial, man-made objects, such as paper, cans, water hydrants, ball-washers.

The conditions for obtaining relief from both movable and immovable obstructions are worth studying (see Rule 31). Free relief from obstructions is available everywhere on the course, including hazards.

Harry Bradshaw, of Dublin, lost a playoff for the 1949 British Open Championship to Bobby Locke at Sandwich, England, after they had tied at 283. There

might have been a different outcome but for an incident involving Bradshaw and a beer bottle in the second Championship round. The incident is recounted as follows by Brig. Eric Brickman, Secretary of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews:

"Bradshaw led the qualifiers with 67-72—139. In the first round of the Championship he did 68 and led the field.

"In his second round he started with four 4s. At the fifth hole he drove into the rough and found his ball inside a beer bottle with the neck and shoulder broken off and four sharp points sticking up. The bottle was standing and the ball had bounced into it.

"Bradshaw thought that if he had treated the ball as in an unplayable lie, he might be involved in disqualification, and he therefore decided to play it where it lay.

"With his blaster he smashed the bottle and sent the ball about 30 yards. The hole, a par 4, cost him 6. Bradshaw had taken about 15 minutes to decide what he was to do. The flying splintered glass added to his discomfiture and he said it was six more holes before he recovered his composure.

"Under the 1949 Code, which was then operative, the bottle was an obstruction, and under Rule 23 dealing with obstructions at that time, the player was entitled to move the obstruction. If the ball was moved in so doing, he was allowed to replace it without penalty."

A case in England brought out the true sporting instincts of golfers—and golf officials, too. It went to the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews for a decision. The question was this:

"In a county championship, 36 holes stroke play, my ball came to rest in the heather touching a skylark's nest containing four young birds. To have played my stroke would have meant smashing the nest and destroying the young birds, as the nest was in front of my ball in the line of play. Human nature does not permit of such a thing, and fortunately my golf that day had bearing on ultimate results. I picked up and dropped two club-lengths behind in the heather but did not count any penalty strokes. I pointed out the circumstances to my fellow-competitor, who saw the lie.

I am fully aware of the unplayable-ball Rule but considered the circumstances as not coming within this Rule. My ball was very much playable, in fact in a good lie, far better than I got from the drop. What is the correct action in these circumstances?"

The Royal and Ancient replied as follows:

"The Rules of Golf do not legislate specifically for the circumstances you describe. The Rules of Golf Committee are of opinion that the nest should be regarded as an immovable obstruction and the ball dropped under Rule 31-2," and that means there was no penalty.

Joe Carr and the Broken Putter

In the 1959 Walker Cup Match in Scotland, Joe Carr, then the British Amateur Champion, was playing a singles match against Charlie Coe, the American Captain and Amateur Champion. As Carr walked off the 27th green carrying his putter, the head of the club became entangled in tall grass. A child in the large gallery accidentally bumped into the club and broke it. Joe finished the match putting with a No. 3 iron.

He didn't have to do this, of course. He knew his rights and knew that he could have sent back to the clubhouse for another putter, provided he did not delay play. Joe simply preferred to use the 3 iron—an old habit of his.

You may replace a club which becomes unfit for play, but the Rule carefully qualifies it by saying that the club must have become unfit "in the normal course of play." The Rules-writers, with tongue in cheek, thus took care of the boys who throw clubs or test them on trees—or is that normal for some golfers?

Addressing the Ball

A little-known right in the Rules was brought out in another international event not so long ago. In October, 1958, the first World Amateur Team Championship of the new World Amateur Golf Council, with the Eisenhower Trophy at stake, was played at St. Andrews. It was a memorable event, with teams of four players from 29 countries playing four rounds of stroke play.

It is a rare day when there is no wind at St. Andrews, and this time there was a very stiff wind, about 30 miles per

hour. Moreover, the greens were frightfully fast, not unlike glass.

Dr. Bud Taylor, of the United States Team, twice sustained a penalty stroke when his ball moved after he addressed it on the putting green. Once, the wind was so strong and the green so keen that, as he drew his putter back to start the stroke, the ball went with it and practically clung to the face of the putter.

Note that the penalties were incurred after the ball had been addressed. What is the definition of "address?" It means taking your stance and grounding your club (except that in a hazard it means taking your stance only).

On the putting green, if you have only taken your stance and have not grounded your club, you have not addressed the ball, and you cannot be penalized under the Rule which applied to Bud Taylor. Of course, if you do anything else at all to cause the ball to move, you are subject to penalty; but if you don't ground your club, you have not completed the act of addressing the ball and you cannot be deemed to have caused the ball to move under that Rule. It is worth remembering when you are playing on a fast green on a windy day—or, for that matter, when your ball is in a precarious position anywhere.

Discontinuance of Play

There is a general Rule prohibiting discontinuance of play, but when a player thinks he may be endangered by lightning he is the sole judge and may stop play. Personal safety is, of course, far more important than orderly procedure of a golf tournament. Sudden illness can be another valid reason for discontinuing play if the committee considers that you're sick enough.

Ball Resting Against Flagstick

The USGA received a question about a lady whose tee shot on a par 3 hole came to rest on the green leaning against the flagstick. In her excitement, she pulled out the flagstick, and the ball came with it. Did she have a hole in one? The answer is that her ball simply lay one and she had to replace it on the lip of the hole.

Billy Joe Patton in the Masters a few years ago showed his knowledge of the applicable Rule when, on the sixth hole, his tee shot lodged between the rim of the hole and the flagstick. He very gin-

gerly removed the stick, and the ball fell into the hole for a wonderful hole-in-one at a dramatic point in the tournament.

Water Hazard Rights

When your ball lies in a lateral water hazard, do you know that you have three choices of procedure, besides playing the balls as it lies? Look up Rule 33-3 sometime.

Playing the Ball as it Lies

You wouldn't think that you could overdo the principle of playing the ball as it lies, for it is perhaps the fundamental Rule of Golf. But consider the case of Peter Wilding at Scarborough, England, in the spring of 1959.

Mr. Wilding swung at a ball in the rough, and it hopped into his cuff. Mr. Wilding consulted his partner, who said—play the ball as it lies. Mr. Wilding took a mighty swipe. The ball flew clear, but he let out a yell and hobbled off looking for a doctor to treat a chipped bone.

Let's draw a merciful veil over the fact that when Mr. Wilding stopped his own ball in his trousers cuff he was subject to a penalty of loss of hole in match play of two strokes in stroke play. Let's overlook, too, the fact that in stroke play he was obliged to drop the ball out of his clothes without further penalty.

Let's just remember Peter Wilding as a man who plays the ball as it lies.

Three Principles

Mr. Wilding's case is helpful in emphasizing one of the three tenets on which all Rules are founded. The three are:

1. Play the course as we find it. 2. Play the ball as it lies. 3. Fair play.

The Rules are admittedly complex. They have to cover a lot of territory in order to try to insure that everybody plays the same game, for no two courses are alike and a normal playing area covers about 125 acres. But if we try to apply the three principles we can see a clear pattern and can practically write the Rules ourselves:

Play the course as we find it. Play the ball as it lies. Play fair.

Golfers who make a habit of carrying a Rules book and of consulting it as situations arise during play are often surprised to find how many rights and privileges they have.

In time they come to find that, for the real lover of golf, the code of playing Rules is a good friend who confers many

favours. But like any other friend, we have to know him well to appreciate him best.

ANSWERS TO QUIZ GOLF QUESTIONS ON PAGE 6

1. Yes.
2. Jack Westland who was 47 in 1953.
3. British Open, Hoylake; British Amateur, the Old Course at St. Andrews; Open Championship, Interlachen; Amateur Championship, Merion.
4. The player is penalized one stroke and the ball must be played as it lies. See Rule 27-1c.
5. Under Rule 17-3, the player is penalized two strokes in stroke play; loss of hole in match play.
6. C. Ross (Sandy) Sommerville, London, Ontario, Canada, in 1932.
7. Arnold Palmer, Amateur Champion in 1954 and Open Champion in 1960.
8. Charles R. Coe, 1949-1958; E. Harvie Ward, Jr., 1955-1956; Marvin H. (Bud) Ward, 1939-1941; Willie P. Turnesa, 1938-1948; W. Lawson Little, 1934-1935; Robert T. Jones, Jr., 1924 - 1925 - 1927 - 1928 - 1930; Charles (Chick) Evans, 1916-1920; Francis Ouimet, 1914-1931; Jerome D. Travers, 1907-1908-1912-1913; Robert A. Gardner, 1909-1915; H. Chandler Egan, 1904-1905; Walter J. Travis, 1900-1901-1903; H. J. Whigham, 1896-1897.
9. Yes.
10. No. This is prohibited by Rule 37-2.
11. Yes. Robert T. Jones, Jr., and Watts Guss, both of Atlanta, at Oakmont Country Club, Oakmont, Pa., in 1925. Jones was the winner.
12. Yes. Louise Suggs and Dorothy Kirby, both of The Capitol City Country Club, Atlanta, at Franklin Hills Country Club, Franklin, Mich., in 1947. Miss Suggs won.
13. No. This violates Rule 2-2b.
14. Yes. It would be almost impossible to drop a ball without putting some spin on it.
15. There is no penalty in either form of play. However, in match play, the opponent may require the player to replay the shot.
16. Miss Dorothy Campbell of North Berwick, Scotland.
17. The Public Links Championship.
18. The Walker Cup Matches. They were begun in 1922.