



# 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.

### **PENALTY: FOR DISCONTINUING PLAY 45 MINUTES BETWEEN NINES COMMITTEE: WHEN AUTHORIZED TO INTERVENE IN STROKE PLAY**

USGA 60-20

R. 37-6, 37-7

**Q:** Four competitors in a stroke play event stopped after the ninth hole and went into the clubhouse to watch the final round of the Masters on television. They did this without the permission of the Committee and without notifying them.

They were off the course for 45 minutes, during which time seven other groups went through them. However, they did complete the round before the deadline set by the Committee for a playoff.

Another competitor lodged a protest of their action.

**Q1:** Was their conduct a violation of the Rules?

**A1:** Yes.

**Q2:** Assuming that this was a violation, should Rule 37-6 (Discontinuance of Play) or Rule 37-7 (Undue Delay) be invoked? Our Committee invoked a two-stroke penalty for undue delay.

**A2:** The players should have been disqualified under Rule 37-6 for discontinuing play.

**Q3:** In an incident of this sort, is it necessary for another competitor to lodge a protest or may the Committee assess a penalty on its own volition if it finds there has been a breach of the Rules?

**A3:** In stroke play, the Committee has an obligation to the rest of the field to impose a penalty for any breach of the Rules of which it is aware. It is not necessary for the Committee to await a protest by a fellow-competitor.

Questions by: JAMES C. ANDERSON  
Sacramento, Calif.

### **CONCESSION OF PUTT—FOUR-BALL OPPONENT CANNOT REFUSE TO ACCEPT**

USGA 60-21

R. 35-2d, 37-8, 40-3h, 40-3i

**Q:** In a four-ball match with A and B partners against C and D, all four balls are lying on the green. A and B have almost identical putts, with A's ball being away.

A has used so many strokes in reaching the green that he is no longer in contention on the hole. Obviously, B will benefit from watching the line A's ball takes towards the cup and he is therefore very much interested in his partner's putt. Just before A putts, C walks over and knocks A's ball away and concedes

the putt, freely admitting that he does not want A to putt so that A can show B the line to the cup. A replaces his ball and says that he has a right to putt in turn and that there is nothing the opposing partners can do to prevent him from playing when it is his turn to play.

(1) Is A correct in his position that he is entitled to play if he wishes to?

(2) If A is not entitled to play, what is the penalty if he does play?

Questions by: HERBERT B. BRAND  
Washington, D. C.

**A1:** No. Rule 35-2d provides: "When the opponent's ball has come to rest, the player may concede the opponent to have holed out with his next stroke and may remove the opponent's ball with a club or otherwise."

**A2:** A and B lose the hole. See Rules 35-2d and 403i. (In stroke play, A and B would be disqualified—see Rules 37-8 and 40-3h.)

**DAMAGE TO PUTTING GREEN:  
REPAIR OF BALL MARK  
A SECOND TIME**

USGA 60-22  
R. 35-1c

**Q:** May a ball mark on the putting green which has been repaired by a player be further repaired by another player in the same group or a following group?

**A:** Such a damaged area may be repaired a second time by any player only if it is still clearly identifiable as a ball mark.

**LOCAL RULE: PERMITTING  
PROVISIONAL BALL FOR BALL IN  
WATER HAZARD**

USGA 60-23  
R. 29-3, 30-1e, 33-2, 36-7, L.R.

**Q:** The thirteenth hole at the Waterbury Country Club is a par three which requires a carry over a pond of approximately 150 yards. Frequently a shot carries the pond but ends up in weeds between the water and the water hazard stakes. A ball can often be played from the hazard but this cannot possibly be determined until the player walks around the pond. We have always played a provisional ball to eliminate the long walk back to the tee in the event the original ball cannot be played.

Since the new Rules allow play of a provisional ball only if the original ball is thought to be lost or out of bounds (but

not for a ball in a water hazard), how do you suggest we play the hole this year? Is there any reason why we should not draft a Local Rule permitting a provisional ball for a ball which may be unplayable in this water hazard?

Question by: MARTIN J. MORAGHAN, JR.  
Waterbury, Conn.

**A:** The only procedure is that authorized by Rule 33-2. Although this may occasionally result in delay in play, the overall purpose of the Rules is thereby better served than by some other contrived solution.

The Rules of Golf do not countenance the play of a provisional ball for a ball which may be in a water hazard—see Rules 29-3 and 30-1e. We would hope the local committee will not make a Local Rule in conflict with the Rules of Golf—see Rule 36-7.

**PROVISIONAL BALL:**

- (1) CONTINUED IN PLAY AFTER ORIGINAL BALL FOUND UNPLAYABLE
- (2) PLAYED IN BELIEF ORIGINAL BALL IS IN WATER HAZARD

USGA 60-25  
D. 5, R. 1, 29-2b, 30

**Q1:** In stroke play on Hole 5, a competitor's drive headed towards out of bounds. The competitor played a provisional ball, under USGA trial Rule 30-1 for 1960.

The original ball was found in bounds but unplayable.

The competitor played out the hole with the provisional ball, then played from the next teeing ground.

Did the competitor properly complete the play of Hole 5?

**A1:** No. He should have abandoned the provisional ball, as required by Rule 30-2, last paragraph. He then should have played another ball under either option of Rule 29-2b for a ball unplayable.

Normally, a breach of Rule 29 entails a penalty of two strokes. However, Note 1 provides: "A serious breach of this Rule should be dealt with by the Committee under Rule 1."

The competitor's breach was serious—he did not play the hole with a ball properly in play (see Definition 5). He failed to conform with Rule 1, which requires that a ball be played from the teeing ground into the hole by successive strokes

in accordance with the Rules; the penalty is disqualification.

**Q2:** Rule 30-2 provides that a provisional ball shall be abandoned if the original ball be unplayable or in a water hazard. The penalty for violation stated under the Rule is two strokes. Would this be the proper penalty in the case cited in Question 1?

**A2:** No. Rule 30 does not deal with relief for an unplayable ball. Rule 29 governs that, and a serious breach of Rule 29 entails disqualification under Rule 1.

Rule 30 deals with a provisional ball. Its penalty applies when the player fails to conform with any part of the procedure for playing a provisional ball when permitted by the Rules.

The player had no authority to play any stroke with the provisional ball after he found his ball unplayable; in fact, he was obligated to abandon it.

**Q3:** A competitor played a provisional ball in the belief that his original ball might be unplayable or in a water hazard. He found his first ball in a water hazard. He then abandoned the provisional ball and proceeded under Rule 33-2 for water hazards. What is his penalty for playing a provisional ball when he had no right to do so?

**A3:** Two strokes—see penalty statements under Rules 29 and 30.

It should be noted that the player in this case played the hole with a ball properly in play—something he did not do in Question 1 above.

### **DROPPED BALL: ROLLING NEARER HOLE THAN SPOT WHERE DROPPED**

USGA 60-24

R. 22-2c, 22-2d

**Q:** Rule 22-2d provides that if a dropped ball come to rest nearer the hole than the point of dropping, it must be re-dropped, without penalty.

Does the phrase “point of dropping” conflict with the requirements in certain other Rules? For example, Rule 31-2 requires that, in the case of relief from an immovable obstruction, the ball be dropped within two club-lengths of a specific point of the obstruction, and come to rest not nearer the hole than its original position. Conceivably a ball could be dropped properly under Rule 31-2 but could come to rest nearer the hole than the point where it first struck

the ground. Is the point where it first strikes the ground the same as “the point of dropping” in Rule 22-2d?

Question by: KENYA GOLF UNION  
Nairobi, Kenya

**A:** Not necessarily. The “point of dropping” means the place or the area for dropping as stipulated in the Rule governing the particular case. If a dropped ball rolls forward but does not pass that place or area, the player shall play the ball as it lies.

“The point of dropping” means the same in Rule 22-2c as in Rule 22-2d.

### **IDENTIFICATION OF BALL: DISHONESTLY REFUSED**

USGA 60-27

R. 1, 11-1, 11-4, 30, 36-5, Preamble 21

**Q:** Is the player the sole judge of identifying his ball? By purposely not identifying his ball, the player could take unfair advantage of certain Rules in some circumstances. Does an opponent or a fellow-competitor have the right to identify the player's ball?

**A:** The Rules are written on the assumption that golfers are honest, and there is nothing in the Rules which specifically covers the point.

In equity (Rule 11-4), an opponent or a fellow-competitor has the right to be satisfied about the identification of a ball or the lack of identification, especially as “Each player should put an identification mark on his ball”—see Preamble to Rule 21.

An opponent or a fellow-competitor who suspects that a player has dishonestly not identified his ball should make a claim under Rule 11-1. The referee or the Committee should consider all available information bearing on the matter.

Attention is called to the Committee's authority to impose disqualification under Rules 1 and 36-5.

### **PROVISIONAL BALL: MAY NOT ALSO BE BALL IN PLAY**

**Q:** May a player play a ball which is both (a) provisional under Rule 30-1 in which case the original ball be lost or out of bounds, and (b) the ball in play in case the original ball is deemed unplayable (Rule 29-2b(ii)) or is in a water hazard (Rule 33-2b)?

**A:** No. See Rule 30-2.

Questions by: HENRY J. MEIERS  
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