



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.

PRACTICE: PROHIBITED ON GREEN IF HOLE TO BE PLAYED AGAIN DURING ROUND

USGA 60-26
R. 8-2

Q: In a 36-hole stroke play tournament, a player played a practice stroke on the second hole immediately after completing play on this hole. This hole is also hole number 11 on the back nine. Should a penalty be assessed under Rule 8?

Question by: W. V. BUSH
Las Cruces, N. M.

A: The player is subject to penalty under Rule 8-2 if he played a practice stroke from any hazard, or on or to the putting green of hole number 11.

OBSTRUCTIONS: CONSTRUCTION WHICH IS PART OF THE COURSE

USGA 60-28
D. 20c, R. 31-2

Q1: Under the definition of obstructions as revised for 1960, "any construction which is an integral part of the course" is not an obstruction (Definition 20c) and Rule 31 gives no relief from it. Please point out the difference between such construction and artificial objects erected on the course which are still classified as obstructions.

A1: Construction which is an integral part of the course refers primarily to such things as retaining walls used to shore up the bank of a water hazard or the side of a teeing ground. The playing problem presented by such a wall would be substantially the same whether the area were covered with turf or with masonry; the fact that it is covered with masonry does not justify relief from it under the rule for obstructions (Rule 31-2). The same is true of concrete beds of water courses which serve to prevent erosion.

Obstructions still include artificial objects such as water outlets; covers for water outlets, whether they be made of wood, concrete or metal; drain tiles; pipes; drinking fountains; and shelters. There has been no change in the classification of such items. The local committee should publish its determination of the status of doubtful obstructions.

OBSTRUCTIONS: BRIDGES, ABUTMENTS AND PIERS

Q2: Definition 20c provides that "Bridges and bridge supports which are not part of water hazards are obstructions." Consider a metal bridge that starts at the edge of a fairway and crosses a water hazard. Against each bank of the

water hazard the bridge is supported by a vertical concrete abutment which serves the additional purpose of being a retaining wall to shore up the bank of the water hazard and prevent it from caving in. Between the two abutments the bridge is supported by several wooden piers in the water hazard. Please explain whether the bridge, the abutments and the piers are obstructions.

A2: The bridge and the piers are obstructions. The abutments are not obstructions since they are integral parts of the water hazard, and free relief may not be had from them.

Questions by: MRS. POLLY ERICKSON
Madison, Wis.

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

Revised USGA 60-21
R. 35-2d, 40-3i

Note: This supersedes Decision
60-21 dated May 9, 1960

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.

A.1: 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."

A.2: A and B lose the hole. See Rules 35-2d and 40-3i.

FLAGSTICK: PLACED ON GREEN BEHIND HOLE

USGA 60-29

R. 31-1, 34-2a, 34-4a, 35-1j

Q: The player removes the flagstick and places it on the green behind the hole. He then putts firmly past the hole. His opponent, seeing that the ball is going to strike the flagstick lying on the green, picks up the flagstick, allowing the ball to roll on past. Does the opponent lose the hole under Rule 35-1j—exerting influence on the ball?

Question by: J. WALTER MCGARRY
Vero Beach, Fla.

A: Yes. The opponent would lose the hole either under Rule 35-1j or under Rule 31-1 (last paragraph). The principle is the same as in Rule 34-2a prohibiting the opponent from attending the flagstick without the knowledge and authority of the player. If the opponent had not removed the flagstick and if the player's ball had struck it, the player would have lost the hole under Rule 34-4a.

WRONG BALL

(1) PLAYED FOR SEVERAL HOLES
IN PAR COMPETITION

(2) NOT IF PLAYED FROM TEEING
GROUND INTO HOLE

USGA 60-30

D. 5, R. 1, 21-1, 21-3, 39-1, 39-3b

Q: In a par competition, when preparing for third shots on the fairway of the ninth hole, it was discovered that two of the participants were playing each other's ball. The third contestant immediately questioned whether a penalty should be imposed.

It was definitely established that the balls the two concerned contestants were playing were those they had hit off the ninth tee and played for their second shots. Where the mix-up had occurred prior to that point could not be determined. As they could not resolve the matter, they continued to play each other's ball to the conclusion of the hole. The balls were then exchanged.

What is the proper ruling?

Question by: E. W. BRIGGS, PRESIDENT
Rolling Hills Country Club
Dhahran, Saudi Arabia

A: We understand that the competition was a par competition as defined under Rule 39-1 of the Rules of Golf.

The Committee should try to determine at which point the exchange of balls

took place. If it occurred during the play of a hole, the players concerned apparently were in violation of Rule 21-3, and should have been disqualified for the hole in question, under Rule 39-3b.

The players cannot be penalized for playing balls owned by each other on the hole where the exchange was discovered, as a ball which is played from the teeing ground into the hole is not a wrong ball even though it may not belong to the player. See Definition 5, and Rules 1 and 21-1.

DROPPING BALL: FROM OBSTRUCTION IN APRON OF GREEN

USGA 60-31

R. 31-2

Q. A ball is lying against a sprinkler head located in the apron of the green about two inches from the putting surface. Under Rule 31-2, the ball could be dropped two club-lengths from this obstruction no nearer to the hole and wind up on the putting surface. In fact, it is conceivable that a situation could arise where the only possible place the ball could be dropped, within two club-lengths and no nearer the hole, would be on the putting surface.

May a player drop a ball on the putting green when confronted with a situation like this?

Question by: ROBERT W. GOLDWATER
Phoenix, Arizona

A. Yes. As the ball lies "through the green," (Definition 34), it may be dropped as provided in Rule 31-2. It may not be placed on the putting green in these circumstances.

**DAMAGE TO PUTTING GREEN:
(1) NOT NECESSARY TO ANNOUNCE INTENTION TO REPAIR (2) WHEN BALL MARKS MAY BE REPAIRED WITH FOOT**

USGA 60-33

R. 11-3, 35-1c

Q.1: Does a player have to announce to his fellow-competitor or opponent that he is about to fix a ball mark? This question has been asked as the result of an argument caused by a player fixing an impression on the green he claimed was made by a ball. His opponent claimed the impression was made by someone leaning too heavily on a putter. In another instance, the player used a tee to smooth a place on the green which he

said was caused by a ball scuffing the grass. His opponent claimed it was caused by shoe cleats. As I see the Rule, it is a question of fact whether or not an impression is caused by a ball.

A.1: Rule 35-1c does not require the player to announce his intention before repairing damage to the putting green caused by the impact of a ball. It is a question of fact whether damage to the putting green was caused by the impact of a ball or by some other means. Although ball marks usually are easily distinguishable from other damage, in some cases there may be doubt as to the origin of damage.

Q.2: If a ball mark is not in the line of play, may a player fix it and then step on it without penalty?

A.2: No. The provisions of Rule 35-1c, including the prohibition of stepping on the damaged area in repairing it, apply anywhere on the putting green.

Questions by: JENNINGS B. GORDON
President, Southern Golf Association
Rome, Ga.

BALL UNPLAYABLE: PROCEDURE WHEN IMPOSSIBLE TO DROP BACK AFTER SWING AND MISS

USGA 60-34

R. 11-4, 29-2b

Q: A player's ball is in a bush next to a fence defining out of bounds. He swings at the ball and misses it, and then declares it unplayable. He cannot drop back of the unplayable position under Rule 29-2b(i) as this would put the ball out of bounds. He cannot play at the spot from which the original ball was played under Rule 29-2b (ii) as the original ball was played from exactly the same place at which the ball now lies unplayable. What is the correct procedure for this player?

Question by: LEON KAPLAN
Waltham, Mass.

A: Since it is impossible for the player to drop a ball under either option of Rule 29-2b, the Rule of Equity—Rule 11-4—may be applied. The player should be permitted to play his next stroke as nearly as possible at the spot from which he played the stroke which originally sent the ball to an unplayable position, adding a penalty stroke to his score for the hole, in accordance with the principle of Rule 29-2b (ii).