



# 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. "61-1" means the first decision issued in 1961. "D" means definition. "R. 37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1961 Rules of Golf.

### LOCAL RULE: PERMITTING RELIEF FOR EMBEDDED BALL IN "FAIRWAY" ONLY

Revised: USGA 60-38

D. 20, 34; R. 31-2, 32-1a, 36-7a, LR

Note: This supersedes Decision 60-38 dated July 26, 1960

**Q.1:** On relatively few occasions we post a sign permitting a free lift for "embedded" balls only in areas clearly recognized as "fairway."

In the Rules book Appendix we note the USGA suggests permission "through the green." However, we have adapted a somewhat comparable limitation as spelled out in connection with "preferred lies" or "winter rules," i.e. "fairway" but not in "rough."

Further, in connection with two short par 3 holes we have an additional limitation for purposes of this ruling that there is no "fairway."

I have checked three or four other clubs and understand that they have also seen fit to apply limiting factors. In none checked have I found that when such local rule is posted do the clubs allow a free lift "through the green."

I would appreciate your comment as to whether or not our own local rule would be considered as proper and acceptable in the eyes of the USGA.

**A.1:** Your local rule is not acceptable. The USGA Local Rule which provides relief from an embedded ball is intended to cover exceptional conditions which may make play unfairly difficult on parts of the course. It would not be equitable, in providing relief from these conditions, to exclude certain parts of the course covered by the same Rules as those parts on which relief is afforded. Hazards are not included in the relief granted by the Local Rule because of the special conditions existing in them and the fact that their play is covered by special Rules.

#### OBSTRUCTIONS:

- (1) GRAVEL PATHWAY DOES NOT CONSTITUTE
- (2) STEPS OF ARTIFICIAL MATERIAL ARE

**Q.2:** We have recently constructed gravel pathways leading away from the edge of certain greens. In some cases there are steps constructed. The question arises as to the proper framing of a local ruling to permit a free lift for a ball lying (a) on the gravel path and (b) on one of the steps. Would you let us have your suggestions?

**A.2:** (a) We do not recommend a local rule giving relief from gravel pathways. Among things not considered obstructions are "Artificially constructed roads and

pathways anywhere." See Definition 20.

(b) Steps made of artificial material are obstructions and relief is provided under Rule 31-2. Therefore, a local rule is not necessary.

**GROUND UNDER REPAIR: WHERE TO DROP BALL WHEN OBTAINING RELIEF**

**Q.3:** On the edge of one of our "fairways" we have an area of ground under repair. This area borders an out-of-bounds line. In granting a free lift in accordance with the rules, is it permissible to move the ball at right angles on to the "fairway," of course not nearer the hole? If it is necessary to move the ball to the rear, the player would possibly have to drop back as much as 50 yards and then drop in the "rough." The ground under repair bordering the out-of-bounds line is mainly in area which would normally be "rough," with a small portion extending on to what is normally "fairway."

**A.3:** Rule 32-1a provides that a ball in ground under repair through the green may be dropped without penalty as near as possible to the spot where it lay, but not nearer the hole, on ground which avoids the ground under repair. If the nearest relief spot is in a "fairway," the player is required to drop in the "fairway." The Rules do not distinguish between "rough" and "fairway."

Questions by: **RAYMOND HAPPEL**  
East Norwalk, Conn.

**HOLE MADE BY GREENKEEPER:**

- (1) **INCLUDES HOLE OF REMOVED STAKE**
- (2) **DROPPING FROM STAKE HOLE DEFINING HAZARD**

USGA 60-40  
D. 13, 14d; R. 32

**Q:** We have a lateral water hazard marked with 2" x 4" wooden stakes. Apparently one of these stakes interfered with some player's swing and he pulled it out of the ground to make his shot and forgot to replace it. Later a player drove his ball to the vicinity of this lateral water hazard. After a search his ball was found (unplayable) in the hole made by the 2" x 4" stake.

(1) Could player obtain relief under Rule 32 by calling this hole ground under repair and claiming this was a hole made by the greenkeeper (Definition 13)?

(2) If relief is allowed, could player

drop outside the hazard, because, since the ball was in this hole, all of it was not in said hazard?

Questions by: **CHARLES H. STEWART**  
Mississippi City, Miss.

**A.1:** Yes.

**A.2:** Yes. Under Definition 14d "stakes and lines defining the margins of hazards are not in the hazards." It follows that, if circumstances were normal, the hole for the removed stake was not in the hazard.

**BALL DROPPED AND PLAYED UNDER INAPPLICABLE RULE (A) SEARCH LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES**

USGA 60-32  
Def. 5, 6; R. 1, 5, 11-1b, 11-4, 21-3,  
R. 33-3b, 33-3 Note 2,38-3

**Q.1:** In stroke play, a player believed his ball entered a lateral water hazard. After a search of less than five minutes, he dropped another ball under Rule 33-3b governing lateral water hazards and played this ball onto the green. The player then found his original ball outside the hazard. Is the original ball still the ball in play?

**A.1:** Yes. See Definitions 5 and 6.

**Q.2:** If the original ball was in play, what was the penalty for playing the second ball?

**A.2:** Two strokes. The Rules do not permit play of a ball under a Rule which does not govern the particular case. By applying the Rule of equity (11-4) and the General Penalty (Rule 5), the principle established in Rule 21-3 concerning play of a ball other than the player's own ball is followed.

**Q.3:** If the player failed to resume play with the first ball but completed the hole with the second ball, what would be the penalty?

**A.3:** Disqualification for violation of Rule 1 except if there had been rectification following the principle of Rule 21-3.

**(B) SEARCH FOR FIVE MINUTES**

**Q.4:** Suppose the player's side had searched fruitlessly for the original ball for five minutes and that it was found outside the lateral water hazard after the player erroneously dropped and played a ball under Rule 33-3b for a lateral water hazard. What then should the player have done?

**A.4:** It is assumed that there was not reasonable evidence of the ball being lost in the lateral water hazard. The player should add two penalty strokes to his score (see Answer 2 above), abandon the second ball, and play another ball under Rule 29-1 for the lost ball. If he failed to do so, he would be disqualified under Rule 1.

**(C) "REASONABLE EVIDENCE"  
JUSTIFYING ERROR**

**Q.5:** The player dropped the second ball under Rule 33-3b for lateral water hazards in the belief that the original ball was in the hazard. Assume that there was ample "reasonable evidence" to that effect, and that the player acted under Note 2 to Rule 33-3; he searched five minutes for the original ball and did not find it. He would not then have been justified in proceeding under Rule 29-1 for a lost ball. He completed the hole with the second ball. Then the original ball was found outside the lateral water hazard, before the player played from the next tee. Would the player be disqualified under Rule 1 for not properly completing the hole in question?

**A.5:** No. The player proceeded properly under Rule 33-3b.

**BALL ABANDONED: OPPONENT NOT  
INFORMED BEFORE PLAYING**

USGA 60-35  
R. 22-4b, 33-3b

**Q:** In match play, A assumed his drive lost in a lateral water hazard after a search of less than five minutes. He dropped a ball in conformance with Rule 33-3b, but before he played it his caddie found his original ball outside the hazard a few yards nearer the green. A immediately lifted the dropped ball without penalty under Rule 22-4b.

The opponent, B, assisted in the search for A's ball, but when A dropped a ball B returned to play his ball, which was on the opposite side of the fairway and farther from the hole. Therefore, he was unaware that A had discovered his original ball. B played his second shot, and upon being notified thereafter of A's procedure he claimed the hole under Rule 22-4b. Was his claim valid?

**A:** Yes, assuming B played his second shot before A informed him that A had lifted the ball he wrongly dropped—see Rule 22-4b.

**PRACTICE: PERMITTED ON GREEN  
OF HOLE TO BE PLAYED AGAIN  
DURING ROUND**

Revised: USGA 60-26  
R. 8-2

Note: This supersedes Decision 60-26 dated May 16, 1960

**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 11 on the back nine. Should a penalty be assessed under Rule 8?

Question by: W. V. BUSH  
La Cruces, New Mexico

**A:** Rule 8-2 prohibits play of a practice stroke on or to the putting green of a hole not already played. In the stated case, the player is not penalized since he had already completed the play of the hole in question.

It should be noted that the prohibition against playing a practice stroke from a hazard applies to any hole whether it has been played or not.

**BALL LOST: WHEN SEARCH DEEMED  
TO HAVE BEGUN**

USGA 60-36  
D. 6

**Q:** In a four-ball match A and C are opponents and the match includes four caddies. With all eight persons standing at or near the tee, A makes a short drive to the left in heavy rough and C makes a long drive to the right also in heavy rough. It would be the logical thing for C's caddie to proceed to the location of his ball and for the remaining people to stop to search for A's ball first. This would mean that C's caddie reached the vicinity of his ball up to five minutes ahead of the others getting there. Would the search for C's ball commence when the caddie reached the vicinity? If your answer is affirmative, then would it not be both practical and ethical for C to restrain his caddie until everyone could proceed to the vicinity of his ball?

**A:** The five-minute search period for a lost ball begins when either the player or his caddie begins searching. In the case you cite, C would be within his rights to keep his caddie from searching for his ball until the search for A's ball had been completed.

Question by: J. SIMPSON DEAN  
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