



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.

DISQUALIFICATION OF FINALISTS: COMMITTEE MUST DECIDE HOW EVENT TO BE DECIDED

USGA 61-16
Misc.

Q: Without mentioning any names I would like to cite a situation which occurred in a recent tournament. I am waiting at the 18th green for the finalists to come up. A, who was the final winner, was just short of the green and B was also just short of the green. They both chipped up close and A reached down and put the ball he was playing with in his pocket and laid down a new ball and putted it in the hole. B walked over and congratulated him. I remarked at the time that this was against the rules but I didn't raise any question about it because there was no referee. However, in discussing it later, one of the ladies told me that on the 12th hole A had said to B: "Do you care if I put down a new ball to putt with?" Player B said: "No, go ahead." Now under that circumstance they were both agreeing to violate the rules. As I understand the rule on this, they were both disqualified. Now, if the finalist and runner-up are disqualified in a tournament of this kind, who then becomes the champion? Do the two semi-finalists who

were beaten play off for the championship or do the winners of the beaten eight win it?

Question by: FRED L. RIGGIN, SR.
Port Huron, Mich.

A: Since the Rules of Golf do not make specific provision for this contingency, the Committee would be authorized to decide how the outcome of a match play tournament is to be determined when both the finalists are disqualified. The only known precedent is Decision 53-48 which held that if both finalists default, the tournament must conclude without there being an outright winner. A committee would have discretion to decide otherwise to meet particular conditions.

NASSAU MATCH: IS CONSIDERED THREE SEPARATE MATCHES NASSAU MATCH, PLAYER UNABLE TO FINISH: IS ENTITLED TO ANY POINTS WON BEFORE WITHDRAWAL

USGA 61-25
R. 6-3

Q: During the play off of our annual Inter-Club Team Match series just completed we had the following situation arise with respect to the Nassau System of scoring:

In a singles match the competitors played to a tie on the first nine, earning $\frac{1}{2}$ point each; after the turn, one competitor became ill and had to withdraw from the match. The question then arose on correct scoring of points in this match. Did the competitor who had to withdraw retain her $\frac{1}{2}$ point, relinquishing $2\frac{1}{2}$ points by default to her competitor? Or did her withdrawal from the match preclude her taking any points?

Question by: MRS. WILLIAM VERHAGE
Needham, Mass.

A: The Rules of Golf do not specifically cover the question you raise. However, inasmuch as a Nassau match is in effect three separate matches—first nine holes, second nine holes and eighteen holes—it would seem to us that the player who became ill would be entitled to the one-half point won on the first nine, unless the Committee had published a rule to the contrary. Such a ruling would be in accord with Rule 6-3.

DIVOT: NOT LOOSE IMPEDIMENT IF NOT DETACHED

USGA 61-12
D. 17, R. 17-1, 18

Q.1: If a player's ball comes to rest in front of a divot which is folded over but not completely detached, may the player replace or remove the divot before playing?

A.1: Not if the lie of the ball could be affected—see Rule 17-1. A divot not completely detached is not a loose impediment under Definition 17.

DIVOT: IS LOOSE IMPEDIMENT IF DETACHED AND NOT REPLACED

Q.2: If a player's ball comes to rest in front of a divot which is completely detached, may the player replace or remove the divot before playing?

A.2: A detached divot may be a loose impediment (Definition 17) depending upon the circumstances indicated below.

(a) A detached divot which has not been placed in position is a loose impediment (Definition 17) and, except in a hazard, it may be replaced or removed as provided in Rule 18-1. However, there is a one-stroke penalty if the ball move after a loose impediment lying within a club-length of the ball has been touched—Rule 18-2.

(b) A divot which has been placed in position is an irregularity of surface (Rule 17-1), and may not be removed if it could in any way affect a player's lie. Note: Etiquette 7 provides: "Through the green, a player should ensure that any turf cut or displaced by him is replaced at once and pressed down."

Questions by:
JIMMY E. THOMPSON, Professional
Rancho Golf Club
Los Angeles, Calif.

LOCAL RULE: FOR RELIEF FROM PROTECTIVE FENCE LOCATED DIRECTLY BEHIND GREEN

USGA 61-18
R. 31-2, LR

Q: There is a protective fence about 18 feet long directly behind a green on our course. A player cannot get relief from this fence under Rule 31-2 because, in order to get relief, he must, in most cases, drop nearer the hole than the spot where the ball originally lay.

Would it be in accord with the Rules of Golf for our club to establish a special area on which a player entitled to relief from this fence could drop?

Question by: MRS. L. J. O'TOOLE
Chicago, Ill.

A: Yes. The Appendix of the Rules book, page 56, provides that, in such a case, the local committee would be justified in establishing a special area on which a ball could be dropped.

Further, due to the proximity of the fence to the green in the present case, the local committee would be justified in also providing relief when the screen intervenes between the ball and the hole. A local rule somewhat as follows would provide relief in all circumstances and would also eliminate the need for maintaining a special drop area:

"If the screen behind No. — green interfere with the player's stance, stroke or backward movement of the club for the stroke, or if the screen intervene between the ball and the hole, the ball may be lifted without penalty and dropped as near as possible to the end of the screen nearer which the ball originally lay, so as to avoid such interference or intervention; the ball must come to rest not nearer the hole than its original position."

**BALL DEFLECTED FROM HOLE:
INTENTIONALLY BY FELLOW-
COMPETITOR**

USGA 61-19
R. 11-4, 35-1j, 37-8

Q: In the fourth round of a stroke play tournament, A and B are in the same group. A holes out on the final hole for a total of 274. B, confronted with a sizable putt for a score of 273, hits his putt. A, seeing that B's ball has a good chance of going in the hole, deliberately deflects it.

What rule covers such an incident?

Question by: STANLEY MICHELMAN
Brookline, Mass.

A: B's predicament is not specifically provided for in the Rules. Under the Rule of Equity—Rule 11-4—he should be required to replace his ball and replay his putt.

A's deliberate deflection of B's ball constitutes a violation of Rule 35-1j, which provides that no player or caddie shall take any action to influence the position or movement of a ball, but in this case the Committee would be justified in going farther and imposing a penalty of disqualification for unsportsmanlike conduct or violation of Rule 37-8, which provides: "If a competitor in stroke play refuse to comply with a Rule affecting the rights of another competitor, he shall be disqualified."

**SEARCHING FOR BALL IN BUNKER:
RECOMMENDED METHOD FOR
REMOVING SAND**

USGA 61-24
R. 33-1e

Q: We have recently had new silica powdered sand put into the traps on our golf course. In a recent round of play, my ball landed in a trap and completely buried itself with no indication of where the ball was lying. In "removing the sand" to locate the ball, as per Rule 33-1e, what should be used to locate the ball? Is it permissible to use a clubhead, or your hand, or should the player only use a rake to try and locate his ball?

Question by: MISS ELIZABETH LAKE
Cleveland District Golf Assn.
Cleveland, Ohio

A: Although Rule 33-1e does not specify the means which may be used to find a ball covered by sand in a bunker, it

limits the amount of sand which may be removed to "as much thereof as will enable him to see the top of the ball." It is therefore recommended that the fingers be used, on the theory that their use can be controlled over a minimum area. It would be permissible to use a clubhead or rake if the spirit of the Rule is observed.

**BALL STRUCK AT FAIRLY: IF MOVED
FROM AGAINST BOARD FENCE BY
STROKE AT OPPOSITE SIDE OF
FENCE**

USGA 61-22
R. 19-1

Q: The inside face of a board at the bottom of a fence constitutes an out-of-bounds line. A ball comes to rest against the board and is virtually unplayable.

The player stands out of bounds, swings a club against the board on its out-of-bounds side, and the board comes in contact with the ball and moves it. Is this permissible?

Question by: FRED BRAND, JR.
Pittsburgh, Pa.

A: Yes. The player could justifiably contend that he was fairly striking at the ball, even though other material intervened between club and ball (as often happens in sand or heavy grass.)

**BALL RESTING AGAINST FLAGSTICK
MOVED ACCIDENTALLY WHEN
CLUB STRIKES FLAGSTICK**

Revised: USGA 60-42
R. 27-1c

Note: This supersedes original Decision 60-42 issued October 13, 1960.

Q: In stroke play the ball was leaning against the flagstick after the player's fifth stroke. Being upset over his poor play of the hole, the player struck the flagstick a sharp blow with his putter, and his ball jumped from the hole and came to rest four feet away. What is the ruling?

Question by: HARVEY RAYNOR
Professional Golfers' Assn. of America
Dunedin, Fla.

A: The player incurred a one-stroke penalty under Rule 27-1c for accidentally causing his ball to move. He was obliged to play his ball from where it came to rest.