



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.

STROKE: CLUB BREAKING DURING DOWNSWING

USGA 61-3
D. 30, R. 2-2a, 27-1c

Q: The shaft of a player's club broke during his downswing, and the clubhead fell over his shoulder, striking and moving the ball. Since the ball was moved, he was deemed to have moved it; however, had he not moved it, would the ball be deemed to have been fairly struck at? I am inclined to think that the ruling would be that the ball had been fairly struck at. Do you agree?

Question by: S. A. GREER
Bowling Green, Ky.

A: The player appears to have made a stroke, which, by Definition 30, is "the forward movement of the club made with the intention of fairly striking at and moving the ball."

If the player stopped his swing before the club reached the point at which the ball might have been contacted, he should not be deemed to have made a stroke. Further, there would have been no stroke if the clubhead parted from the shaft on the backswing, for the forward movement of the shaft would not have been made with a club as defined in Rule 2-2a,

which provides in part that "The golf club shall be composed of a shaft and a head."

If, as it appears, the player made a stroke, he would not be penalized for accidentally moving the ball under Rule 27-1c. However, if he did not make a stroke, he must sustain a one-stroke penalty for accidentally moving the ball, which then must be played as it lies.

It is worth noting that the Rules of Golf in 1744 provided: "If you draw your club in order to strike and proceed so far in the stroke as to be bringing down your club, if then your club shall break, in any way, it is to be accounted a stroke."

STIPULATED ROUND: RECOMMENDATION THAT ALL PLAYERS START FROM NO. 1 TEE

USGA 61-29
D. 29

Q: In our State Tournament is it against the Rules to start players from every tee (Shotgun Start) or should they all start off of No. 1 tee?

Question by: MRS. KARL KEPPLER,
President
Nevada State Women's Golf Association
Elko, Nevada

A: We recommend that all players be started from No. 1 tee. Definition 29 provides: "The 'stipulated round' consists of playing eighteen holes of the course in their correct sequence, unless otherwise authorized by the Committee." Thus, the Committee has authority to alter the sequence in which the holes shall be played. However, it would be unusual in a formal competition, especially a State Championship, to start players from various tees, and we would recommend against it. Most golf courses are designed to present playing problems in a definite order, and to play the holes out of their proper order would not make a fair competition.

**BALL AT REST, DOUBT:
OWNER ENTITLED TO DETERMINE
BEFORE PLAYER KNOCKS AWAY**

USGA 61-30
R. 6-2, 26-2b, 35-1h

Q: A and B were playing a match. A hit a pitch-and-run shot which stopped on the lip of the hole. B immediately went to the hole and knocked A's ball away, conceding the putt before A got halfway to the hole. A contends that he has the right to observe the ball to determine whether or not it has come to rest, and B knocked his ball away before he had that chance. B says that since Rule 35-1h says only a momentary delay is allowed, he had the right to knock it away.

The question involved is whether or not A has the right to observe for himself if his ball has come to rest.

Question by: JACK D. SARGENT,
Professional
Peachtree Golf Club
Atlanta, Ga.

A: Rule 35-1h provides: "Whether a ball has come to rest is a question of fact. If there be reasonable doubt, the owner of the ball is not allowed more than a momentary delay to settle the doubt."

Accordingly in the present case, A had the right to ascertain for himself whether or not his ball on the lip of the hole had come to rest, and he was required to exercise the privilege immediately. B deprived A of his right.

If A's ball were moving or if there were reasonable doubt as to whether it had come to rest, B lost the hole under Rule 26-2b for deflecting A's ball, sub-

ject to the provisions of Rule 6-2.

If it were clearly established that the ball had come to rest, B was entitled by Rule 35-2d to knock it away, and there was no penalty. The uncorroborated testimony of B would not be sufficient to establish that the ball had in fact come to rest.

**GROUND UNDER REPAIR:
PROCEDURE WHEN ENTIRE BUNKER
IS UNDER REPAIR**

USGA 60-57
D. 34, R. 32-1a

Q: The trap on the second hole of the Waialae Country Club was badly damaged by a tidal wave. The whole trap is now under repair. A player hit into the trap; noticing the repair signs, he dropped his ball on the fairway, but not closer to the hole. Another player insisted that the ball should have been dropped behind the trap. What is the correct answer?

Also, if a ball was so situated in the ground under repair as to make it possible to drop no nearer the hole on the putting green, would this be permissible?

Questions by: RICHARD S. WATERHOUSE
Honolulu, Hawaii

A: A bunker totally under repair loses its identity as a bunker, and should be considered as through the green—Definition 34. Thus, relief should be given under Rule 32-1a, which provides: "Through the green, the player may lift and drop the ball without penalty as near as possible to the spot where it lay, but not nearer the hole, on ground which avoids these conditions."

In this case, if the nearest spot which avoids the conditions is on the putting green, the player must drop at that spot on the putting green.

**IMPROVING LINE OF PLAY OR LIE:
BREAKING LEAVES; FACTS
DETERMINE EACH CASE**

USGA 61-28
R. 17-3

Q: When a player's ball lies near a tree or a bush that might interfere with the player's swing, may the player knock down any leaf or leaves with a practice swing? Is this covered by Rule 17-3?

A player knocked down "a few leaves" while taking her practice swing. When questioned by the Rules Committee, she answered yes—she was testing to see if the tree would interfere with her intended stroke; and no—it had not improved her line of play.

The Rules Committee decided that the player by admission had not improved her line of play, therefore there was no penalty. The Committee felt that the rule should state clearly that "no leaves may be knocked down," etc.

Most players are very careful not to knock down leaves for fear of a penalty. We are most anxious to know if the proper ruling was given, for in the future no one would be inclined to admit that the line of play was improved, and how could you prove it?

Question by: MRS. H. F. WOHLERS
San Diego, Calif.

A: A player whose club bends or breaks anything fixed or growing in such a way as to improve the line of play or the position or lie of his ball violates Rule 17-3 unless the bending or breaking occurs in making the stroke or the backward movement of the club for the stroke. Whether a player who knocks leaves down with a practice swing violates the provisions of this Rule is a question of fact and can only be determined by the evidence in each case. In the case cited, the Committee erred in basing its ruling solely on evidence that the line of play was not improved. If the action improved the position of the ball, there was a violation of the Rule.

DAMAGE TO PUTTING GREEN: NOT NECESSARY TO ANNOUNCE INTENTION TO REPAIR

Note: Answer 2 below cancels Answer 2 in the original Decision 60-33

Revised USGA 60-33
R. 11-3, 35-1a, 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.

ORDER OF START: CHANGING GROUPS DURING ROUND

USGA 61-2
R. 37-5

Q: On the day of a medal tournament, I found that I had been removed from the group with which I had originally been paired, and was re-assigned to play with two post entries. The two post entries were riding in an electric cart and I, not having access to an electric cart and not having made arrangements for a caddie, was dragging my golf cart. After trying to keep up the pace for six holes, I asked the two post entries if they would mind if I joined the group in front, which happened to be the group with whom I was originally paired. It was agreeable to all, and when the round was completed both groups with whom I played attested to the scores on the holes which I played with them. However, the question has been raised as to whether or not I violated Rule 37-5 when I changed groups. Did I violate Rule 37-5?

Question by: MRS. A. U. ANDERSON
Coral Gables, Fla.

A: Yes. Rule 37-5 would prevent a player from leaving one group and joining another without permission of the Committee, as the Rule assumes that players will not only start but also finish in the groupings arranged by the Committee.

- (1) **WRONG INFORMATION:
OPPONENT PICKS UP BALL**
(2) **HALVED HOLE: CONCEDED
BECAUSE OF PENALTY**

USGA 61-27
R. 6-2, 10-2

Q: In a four-ball match, A and B vs. C and D, Players A and C both lie 4 on the green. C putts into hole.

A asks: "Is that 4 in?" C replies: "Yes;" so A picked up his ball, believing that he had lost the hole.

Then C said: "Oh, no, I was in in 5." A could not replace his ball to try for his 5 as he had picked up. My feeling was to apply Rule 10-2, and C and D lose the hole.

Question by: **BOB BODINGTON**
West Hartford, Conn.

A: It is assumed that the scores of B and D were not significant.

Under Rule 10-2, C and D would ordinarily lose the hole; however, Rule 6-2 becomes operative in this particular circumstance and the hole is automatically halved. Rule 6-2 provides in part: "When a player has holed out and his opponent has been left with a stroke for the half, nothing that the player who has holed out can do shall deprive him of the half which he has already gained; but if the player thereafter incur any penalty, he shall concede the half of the hole to his opponent."

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