



# 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.

### DAMAGE TO PUTTING GREEN: PROHIBITION AGAINST STEPPING ON BALL MARKS DOES NOT APPLY OFF LINE OF PUTT

Revised USGA 60-33  
R. 35-1a, 35-1c

**Q:** Under Rule 35-1c, "The player may repair damage to the putting green caused by the impact of a ball, but he may not step on the damaged area."

Does the prohibition against stepping on the damaged area apply to damage not on the line of putt?

**A:** It does not apply to damage which is not on the line of putt of the player or of anyone with whom he is playing. The phrase "the line of putt" is considered to mean not only the line the ball might reasonably be expected to travel toward the hole but also the ground around the hole and for such a distance beyond the hole as a missed putt might reasonably be expected to travel.

Rule 35-1c is an exception to Rule 35-1a, which prohibits touching the line of putt.

**NOTE:** This supersedes Answer 2 in Decision 60-33.

Question by: JENNINGS B. GORDON,  
President, Southern Golf Association

### 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

**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.

**PENALTY: FOR HOLING OUT AFTER DRIVING FROM NEXT TEE**

USGA 60-53  
D. 29, R. 1

**Q:** In a medal play tournament, A left her putter on the tee of a par three hole. She called back to the following group to bring it up. A's fellow-competitors holed out, and then all of them including A, teed off on the next hole. A then went back to the green, got her putter from the following players, and holed out.

A's group had teed off from the next tee to avoid delaying play, but when the round was completed, a member of the group bringing up the putter advised the committee of A's actions, and A was disqualified.

Personally, I feel that rules are made so that no advantage can be taken, and A seems to have gained no advantage in this case. herefore, I am interested in knowing how you would rule.

Question by: MRS. H. JONSSON  
San Diego, Calif.

**A:** Rule 1 provides: "The Game of Golf consists in playing a ball from the teeing ground into the hole by successive strokes in accordance with the Rules." A violated this Rule by playing from the next teeing ground before holing out on the hole in question. The Committee was right in disqualifying her. See also Definition 29.

**REASONABLE EVIDENCE BALL IN WATER HAZARD: INTERPRETATION OF TERM**

USGA 61-31  
R. 33 (Note 2)

**Q:** I understand from USGA Decision 60-32 that if there is reasonable evidence that a ball is in a water hazard, procedure under Rule 33-2b is proper and there is no infraction even if the original ball is then found outside the hazard. What would constitute reasonable evidence? It seems to me I read some place that a player (and others) having seen his ball splash into a water hazard, had to "take his lumps" when, after proceeding under Rule 33-2b his first ball was found outside the hazard.

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

**A:** The term "reasonable evidence" is purposely and necessarily broad so as to permit sensible judgments to be reached on the basis of all the relevant circumstances of particular cases. As applied in this context, a player may not deem his ball lost in a water hazard simply because the ball may be in the hazard. The evidence must be preponderantly in favor of its being in the hazard or the ball must be considered lost and the player must proceed under Rule 29-1. Physical conditions in the area, of course, have a great deal to do with it. For example, if a water hazard is surrounded by a fairway on which a ball could hardly be lost, the existence of reasonable evidence that the ball is in the hazard would be more likely than if there were deep rough all about. Referring to the particular case you mention, it is quite true that a splash would not necessarily provide the reasonable evidence. We all know that splashing balls sometimes skip out of hazards.

**BALL LOST: ACT OF RETURNING TO SPOT FROM WHERE PLAYED AFTER INSTRUCTING CADDIE TO CONTINUE SEARCH DOES NOT CONSTITUTE DECLARATION**

USGA 61-32  
D. 6

**Q:** A player instructs his caddie to continue the search for a lost ball and starts back to play a second ball from where he stroked the first ball. The caddie finds the player's first ball before the player strokes his second ball and before a five minute search has been made. Is the player deemed to have declared the ball lost because of his action?

Question by: FRANCIS J. LUFKIN  
Spokane, Wash.

**A:** No, since the ball was not declared lost by the player before the completion of a five minute search. See Definition 6.

While such declaration may be found not only in oral statement but also in action by a player leaving no doubt that abandonment of the ball is his intention, this particular player's instruction to his caddie to continue searching made clear that abandonment of the ball was not intended and negated any contrary inference from the starting back to play a second ball.

**OBSTRUCTION INTERFERING WITH ABNORMAL STROKE:**

- (1) **RELIEF PERMISSIBLE IF ABNORMAL STROKE NECESSARY**
- (2) **NORMAL STROKE MAY BE USED AFTER RELIEF OBTAINED**

USGA 61-23  
R. 31-2

**Out Of Bounds Fences, Braces Attached To: Committee Should Define As Not Obstructions**

**Q:** A ball rests against a boundary fence, but no portion projects beyond the inside line of the fence. To play the shot toward the green, a right-handed player would have to hit left-handed. However, a supporting brace (defined as an obstruction by Local Rule) interferes with a left-handed stroke. May the ball be moved two club-lengths and dropped, no nearer the hole, without penalty?

Question by:

LT. COLONEL TIMOTHY A. MORAN  
APO 67, San Francisco, Calif.

**A:** Yes. Rule 31-2 entitles a player to relief if an immovable obstruction interferes with his stance, stroke, or backward movement of the club for the stroke in the direction in which he wishes to play. The fact that the player must employ an abnormal stroke in order to play in the desired direction does not alter the situation. Once he has obtained relief from the obstruction, the Rules do not require that he use the abnormal stance, stroke or backswing made necessary by the original position of his ball.

It should be noted that the fence itself is not an obstruction (Definition 20).

The case points up the advisability of defining objects attached to out of bounds fences as not obstructions to avoid inequities (Decision 52-8).

**WRONG INFORMATION IN STROKE PLAY DEFINED. FAILURE TO INCLUDE PENALTY IN SCORE**

USGA 61-10  
R. 11-1b, 11-4, 36-5, 38-3

**Q.1:** Please explain the meaning of the term "wrong information" in Rule 11-1b with regard to a player's failure to include a penalty in his score.

**A.1:** The committee in charge of the competition must determine whether wrong information has been given, depending on the circumstances of each case.

As used in Rule 11-1b, "wrong information" does not automatically mean any omission of a penalty from a score in stroke play. For example:

- (a) "Wrong information" does not apply to a player's failure to include in his score a penalty which he did not know he had incurred, or which he knew he had incurred but unintentionally did not add to his score.
- (b) "Wrong information" does apply to a player's failure to include in his score a penalty which he knew he had incurred and intentionally did not add to his score.

**PENALTY, STROKE PLAY: APPLIED BELATEDLY IF WRONG INFORMATION GIVEN**

**Q.2:** It was found that the scorecard of a player in the qualifying round of a match play tournament did not include a penalty on a certain hole through wrong information which he had given. This player had advanced in match play before the fact was discovered. In such a case, is the player still subject to disqualification under Rule 11-1b?

**A.2:** Yes, and under Rule 38-3 the penalty of disqualification should be applied unless waived by the Committee in conformity with Rule 36-5.

**MATCH PLAY: EFFECT OF BELATED DISQUALIFICATION ON TOURNAMENT**

**Q.3:** If your answer to question 2 is affirmative and the Committee disqualifies a player who has advanced in match play, what then should the Committee do to be fair to the players beaten by the disqualified player?

**A.3:** The Committee must determine further procedure in equity (Rule 11-4). For example, the Committee might either: (a) call off the competition; (b) reinstate the player last eliminated by the player who gave wrong information, although that would be unfair to the other players eliminated by him; (c) require all players eliminated by him to play off for his forfeited position; or (d) consider the penalty applicable only from the time of its discovery by the Committee, thus giving his next opponent a default.

Based on questions submitted by:

S. TAKAHATA, President  
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