



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. "62-1" means the first decision issued in 1962. "D" means definition. "R. 37-7" refers to Section 7 of Rule 37 in the 1962 Rules of Golf.

FAIRLY STRIKING AT BALL

USGA 61-41
R. 19-1

Q: A player found his tee shot to a par 3 hole on the side of an elevated green. The grass was quite thick and had prevented the ball from running down a steep bank. When placing his 9-iron behind the ball the grass was released and, although the ball did not move, the player realized that if the club were moved backward the ball would roll down the bank. He knew he could not shove the ball onto the green, whereupon he held the club with his left hand and struck the club a blow with his right hand, thereupon propelling the ball to the green, which enabled him to make a par. Was this in accordance with the Rules of Golf?

Question by: ALLAN BROWN
Manchester, Vt.

A: The fact that the club could not be moved backward without permitting the ball to move tends to indicate that the ball in effect rested against the club face. If so, the ball was not fairly struck at with the head of the club and this constituted a violation

of Rule 19-1. If there had been space between the club face and the ball through which the club could have moved to strike the ball, there would not have been a violation.

COMMITTEE MAY NOT REDUCE ROUNDS DURING COMPETITION

USGA 61-26
D. 29; R. 7-2, 36-1, 36-4c, 37-6b

Q: The tournament was a 72-hole medal play open scheduled to be played in four consecutive days, 18 holes each day.

In the afternoon of the third day, due to heavy rain, the course became unplayable and the Committee ordered a temporary suspension of play. By that time a good number of competitors had finished their 18 holes while many others were still playing the second 9. However, all of them had completed the first 9 holes. Bad weather continued through the rest of the afternoon, making it impossible to resume play. In view of this, the Committee decided to cancel the second 9 holes of that day and to reduce the tournament from 72 to 63 holes, thus

remaining only 18 holes to be played the last day.

The Committee based its decision on Definition 29 (Stipulated Round). However, many players were of the opinion that the applicable provision should have been Rule 36-4c and that the scores for the complete 18 holes in question should have been cancelled and the round repeated the following day, playing 36 holes the last day or extending the tournament one more day; otherwise, for those who had not finished, to resume play the following day from where they had discontinued it and then play the last 18 holes. But under no circumstance they felt that the Committee had the power to reduce the 72 holes stipulated for the tournament.

We would like to know whether the decision of the Committee was correct and, if incorrect, which should be the right procedure for such occurrence.

Question by: DARIO GALLO ZULUAGA,
Secretary

Asociacion Colombiana de Golf
Bogota, D.E., Colombia

A: The Committee's reduction of the competition from 72 to 63 holes was not in accordance with the Rules of Golf. Rule 36-1 provides that the Committee shall lay down the conditions under which a competition is to be played. Neither this nor the last clause of Definition 29 permits a Committee to change the stipulated number of rounds while a competition is in progress. See also Rule 7-2.

When the Committee considers that the course is not in a playable condition, the Committee has power in stroke play, under Rule 36-4c, to:

- (1) Suspend play temporarily, or
- (2) Declare play null and void, and cancel all scores for the round.

In this case when it was found that play could not be resumed the same day, the Committee had two alternatives:

- (1) It could have ordered resumption of play on a subsequent day from the

various places on the course where the players had discontinued, and then scheduled the last 18 holes that day or later (see Rule 37-6b); or

- (2) The Committee could have cancelled the round and ordered that it be replayed on a subsequent day, 36 holes to be played that day or the competition to be extended one more day.

The circumstances of each particular case should guide the Committee in deciding whether to order a temporary suspension of play or to cancel all scores for the round in question. There is no hard-and-fast Rule or custom, and the Committee should exercise its best judgement in making a decision as fair as possible to all concerned, consistent with the conditions prevailing, including any necessity which may exist to complete the competition within a prescribed period.

BALL MOVED: ACCIDENTALLY OR PURPOSELY BY CADDIE

USGA 62-6
R. 27-1b, 27-2a

Q: A ball is driven into rough. The players walk toward the area where it landed. In advance of them, the boy caddying for the opponent of the man who drove the ball, either deliberately or inadvertently stepped on the ball. What, if any, penalty is invoked?

Question by: DEXTER B. FARNSWORTH
Kent, Wash.

A: If an opponent's caddie accidentally moves the player's ball, the opponent is subject to a penalty of one stroke and the moved ball shall be replaced (Rule 27-2a), unless the caddie moved the ball during search, in which case there would be no penalty and the ball would be replaced (Rule 27-1b).

The Rules of Golf assume that golfers and caddies are honest and therefore they do not provide for the deliberate moving of a player's ball by the opponent or his caddie. In such circumstances, the Committee would be justified in disqualifying the op-

ponent if the facts indicate that the caddie moved the ball on the opponent's directions. If the facts indicate that the caddie did it on his own, the opponent should be penalized one stroke under Rule 27-2a.

OBSTRUCTION: MEASURING ACROSS OR UNDER PROHIBITED

Revised USGA 61-9

R. 31-2

NOTE: Answer 1 below cancels Answer 1 in original Decision 61-9, dated February 21, 1961.

Q.1: What is meant by the following provision in Rule 31-2: "The player may not measure through the obstruction?" Does this mean that a ball at rest alongside a water pipe, which runs along about two inches above the ground, must be dropped only on the side of the pipe on which it lies?

A.1: Yes. In this case it might be argued that the player was measuring across or under and not "measuring through" the obstruction, but, in all cases, the player must adhere to the principle that, in obtaining relief from such obstructions, the ball must be dropped on the side of the obstruction on which it lies.

OBSTRUCTION: PLAYER MUST MEASURE IN STRAIGHT LINE IN OBTAINING RELIEF

Q.2: A player's ball comes to rest against a side of a small enclosed shelter house three feet long on each side. He wishes to invoke Rule 31-2. If he drops two club-lengths away in a straight line, he will be dropping in an unplayable area of dense underbrush, regardless of the direction in which he measures.

The area opposite an adjacent side of the shelter house is void of underbrush. The player cannot drop around the corner into this area without measuring through the obstruction unless it be permissible for him to measure one club-length parallel to the side on which the ball lies and then measure a second club-length at

a 90-degree angle to the first. Would it be permissible for him to do this?

A.2: No. A player must always measure in a straight line when obtaining relief from an obstruction.

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

DEFINITION OF "MOMENTARY DELAY"

USGA 62-7

R. 6-2, 35-1h, 37-7, 40-3c

Q: In a singles match, A's ball stopped on the lip of the hole. After 45 to 60 seconds, B requested A to lift his ball. A declined, contending that the ball was still moving. B knocked A's ball away in concession, stating that the momentary delay period was at an end.

(a) Was B justified in knocking A's ball away?

(b) How long is a momentary delay?—is it five seconds?—20 seconds?

Questions by: SAM MANIACI
Philadelphia, Pa.

A: The decision would depend entirely on the question whether A's ball had in fact come to rest, and as to this, the opponents were in direct conflict. In such instances, an authoritative decision would be appropriate only if based on information as to all relevant circumstances.

On the basis of the limited data presented, the officials concerned would appear justified in concluding that A had been afforded the "momentary delay" permitted under Rule 35-1h and referred to on the back of the cover page of the Rules book as meaning a very short period, such as a few seconds not minutes, that since the ball had not dropped into the cup within the period it must have come to rest, and that therefore B was justified in conceding the next stroke under Rule 35-2d. This assumes the absence of overriding evidence not presented showing conclusively that the ball was still moving as A contended.