



# 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.

### HOLE: SHOULD BE CUT ON THE VERTICAL, REGARDLESS OF SLOPE

USGA 62-16

D. 15, R. 34-3

**Q:** There has been considerable discussion regarding the proper method of sinking putting cups on greens. Should they be sunk (a) plumb with the contour of the green, or (b) vertical, allowing the flagstick to be in absolute vertical position, leaving the distance on one side of the cup a little lower or higher than the opposite side?

Question by: J. BRUCE MORFORD  
Daytona Beach, Fla.

**A:** There is no requirement in the Rules of Golf. A firm requirement would not be practical because it would not leave room for variations which inevitably arise in such a hand operation as hole-cutting.

The USGA recommends that holes be cut as nearly on the vertical as possible. This permits the flagstick to be placed "in its normal position in the center of the hole and as near-

ly upright as possible" — see Rule 34-3. It is not required that all points on the rim of a cup-liner be equidistant from the putting green surface, but they should be at least one inch below the surface — see Definition 15.

The question is not likely to arise or be of importance if the hole is cut so as to avoid sharp slopes, in accordance with USGA practice and recommendation.

### LOCAL RULE: SHRUBBERY AROUND PRACTICE PUTTING GREEN

USGA 62-17

R. 31-2, 35-1k; L.R.

**Q:** We have a practice putting green directly behind the ninth green. Shrubby is planted around the practice green, about 20 yards from the back edge of the ninth green.

A local Rule permits a free drop in a nearby drop circle if a ball overplayed on the ninth hole comes to rest beyond the center line of the shrubbery.

The center line is sometimes hard to determine; further, if a ball is just short of the center line, the player has no shot whatsoever.

Question by: **GEORGE F. SKINNER**  
Portsmouth, Va.

**A.:** Rule 36-7 provides that the committee shall make and publish local Rules for abnormal conditions, having regard to the policy of the USGA as set forth in the Appendix to the Rules.

The USGA Appendix does not include relief from shrubbery among the matters for which Local Rules may be advisable, because of the fundamental of playing the ball as it lies insofar as natural objects are concerned. In general, we oppose Local Rules providing for relief from shrubbery.

On the other hand, Rule 36-7 contemplates that the local committee shall determine whether particular conditions are sufficiently abnormal to justify Local Rules. The enumeration in the Appendix of matters considered appropriate for Local Rules implies that other matters are not regarded as appropriate. Nevertheless, the committee is not limited to the enumerated subjects, as it is in the best position to determine the particular needs of its course.

The following possible treatments of your situation occur to us:

1. Allow no relief without penalty for a ball interfered with by the shrubbery. This means that a ball on the practice green would be dropped in the shrubbery after Rule 35-1k were applied.

2. Treat the shrubbery and the practice green as out of bounds.

3. Adopt a Local Rule in terms similar to those of Rule 31-2 dealing with immovable obstructions.

In any event, we would recommend that your present scheme not be continued because of the difficulties inherent in the "center-line" aspect.

With regard to your drop area, the USGA Appendix deems such areas advisable only when it is not feasible to proceed exactly in conformity with the Rules for immovable obstructions or water hazards.

**FOUR-BALL COMPETITION: BALL OF MUTUAL PARTNER OF THREE PLAYERS LIFTED WITHOUT AUTHORITY BY ONE PLAYER'S CADDIE**

USGA 62-14

R. 11-3, 23-3, 27-1a, 41-1a, 41-8

**Q. 1:** Amateurs A, B and C were competing with D, a professional, in a four-ball stroke play competition. They comprised three sides — AD, BD and CD. A's caddie lifted D's ball on the putting green before it was holed out. It was ruled that A was penalized two strokes for breach of Rule 41-8. It was also ruled that D incurred a penalty of two strokes under 23-3 and 41-9, and that this penalty applied to all three sides — AD, BD and CD, and not just AD. Was this correct?

**A. 1:** The Rules of Golf do not contemplate a four-ball stroke play event being played in this manner, and, under Rule 11-3, the Rules of Golf Committee must decline to give an answer.

We would suggest that when such competition are played, the local committee adopt and announce in advance local Rules to cover such situations.

The following is for guidance in the present case: A should not be penalized under Rule 41-8 or otherwise, since he did not infringe any rule. D, in his capacity as A's partner should be penalized two strokes, under Rules 23-3 and 41-1a, for the lifting of his ball by the caddie of his partner. D should not be penalized as a member of side BD or CD; in each of such capacity D was entitled under Rule 27-1a to replace the ball without penalty since the ball was moved by the caddie of a fellow-competitor.

**FLAG: TUCKING BETWEEN  
FLAGSTICK AND FLAGHOLDER  
NOT A VIOLATION**

USGA 62-15  
D. 12; R. 34-3

**Q:** A and B are playing a match. The wind is blowing and the flag on the flagstick is waving briskly, causing the flagstick to shake and rattle in the hole. It is A's turn to putt. A goes forward and tucks the flag between the flagstick and the flagholder. This stops the waving of the flag and the wiggling of the flagstick in the hole.

I contend that this is not in accordance with the Rules, which state that the flagstick may be adjusted by placing it as upright as possible in its normal position in the center of the hole.

Question by: A. D. KIRKLAND  
Denver, Colo.

**A:** A's action is not prohibited by the Rules.

Definition 12 provides in part: "The 'flagstick' is a movable straight indicator provided by the Committee, with or without bunting attached, centered in the hole to show its position." Thus, it is not required that there be a flag attached to the flagstick, and Rule 34-3 relative to adjustment of the flagstick does not apply since the flag alone was affected.

Upon completing play of the hole, A should restore the flag to its original position.

**PENALTY: NOT APPLIED IN IN-  
DIVIDUAL EVENT WHEN BREACH  
APPLICABLE ONLY IN FOUR-BALL  
EVENT PLAYED CONCURRENTLY**

**Q. 2:** In this same competition, there were prizes awarded to the professionals returning to the lowest score. Should D be penalized two strokes for A's actions insofar as this event is concerned?

**A. 2:** The Rules of Golf do not contemplate combining individual and four-ball stroke play events. There-

fore the Rules of Golf Committee must decline to give an answer.

For guidance, in our opinion the local committee would be justified in not applying a penalty to D's score in the individual professional competition.

Questions by: WARREN ORLICK  
Tam O'Shanter Country Club  
Orchard Lake, Mich.

**PROVISIONAL BALL: MAY BE-  
COME "SECOND BALL" WHEN  
DOUBT ARISES IN STROKE PLAY.  
STROKE PLAY, DOUBT AS TO  
PROCEDURE: WHEN PROVISIONAL  
BALL BECOMES "SECOND BALL"**

USGA 62-19  
R. 11-5, 30

**Q:** In stroke play the player is in doubt as to whether his drive may be out of bounds. He plays a provisional ball under Rule 30.

After inspecting the lie of the original ball, he cannot determine whether it is out of bounds or not.

Under Rule 11-5 he can play out the hole with his original ball ("the ball in play") and also complete the play of the hole with a second ball.

Can he now consider the provisional ball played under Rule 30 as his "second ball" under Rule 11-5 and complete the play of the hole with it?

Question by: JOHN MARSHALL, JR.  
Louisville, Ky.

**A:** Yes. In invoking Rule 11-5 after playing a provisional ball under Rule 30-1, the player must treat the provisional ball as a "second ball" under Rule 11-5. The reason for playing the provisional ball — that is, doubt as to the position of the original ball and to speed play — was the same as it would have been had the player waited until he saw the position of the original ball before invoking Rule 11-5. Although Note 2 to Rule 11-5 provides: "A second ball played under Rule 11-5 is not a provisional ball under Rule 30", the reverse is not true in the present case, nor is it necessarily true.

Further, the principle in Rule 30-2 that a provisional ball always becomes the ball in play when the original ball is out of bounds supersedes any conflicting provisions of Rules 11-5 and 30.

If it were otherwise, inequities could arise. For example, suppose A and B both hit drives which may be out of bounds. Both invoke Rule 30 and play provisional balls. Both provisional balls are found out of bounds.

A finds his original ball also out of bounds. His only procedure is to return to the tee, playing 5. There is question as to whether B's original ball is out of bounds, and he elects to invoke Rule 11-5. If he were permitted to abandon the provisional ball in such circumstances, he would be avoiding the penalty for a second ball out of bounds (the provisional ball) if it were subsequently ruled that his original ball was out of bounds.

## ILLUSTRATION FROM NEW USGA BOOK

**BALL IN MOTION STOPPED OR DEFLECTED**

1. Outside agency  
No penalty  
Rule 26-1a
2. Match play  
Player's own caddie  
Player loses hole  
Rule 26-2a
3. Match play  
Opponent's caddie  
Opponent loses hole  
Rule 26-2b
4. Stroke play  
Player's own caddie  
Two-stroke penalty  
Rule 26-3a
5. Stroke play  
Fellow-competitor's caddie  
No penalty, but see Rule for exceptions  
Rule 26-3b

(Drawing from "Golf Rules in Pictures". Book may be purchased from the USGA, many book stores and golf professionals' shops for \$1.95)