THE REFEREE

Decisions by the USGA Rules of Golf Committee

Example of symbols: "No. 48-1" means the first decision issued in 1948. "R.7(3)" means Section 3 of Rule 7 in the 1948 Rules of Golf.

Local Rules Should Be Clear
No. 48-83. L.R.

Q: Playing from No. 11 tee, No. 10 fairway is on the right, and playing from No. 12 tee, No. 11 fairway is on the left. On both tees we have a sign marked that from either tee it is out of bounds. The reason was that lots of players used to go over on either fairway, as it made the 11th hole easier from 10 fairway and the 12th hole easier from 11 fairway. If a player in playing No. 11 sliced his second on to 10, or in playing No. 12 hooked his second on to 11, was he still out of bounds?

FREDDIE McLEOD CHEVY CHASE, MD.

A: The signs described indicate that the boundaries applied only to tee shots.
However, the local committee should interpret its own local rule and, if necessary, should clarify the signs.

Tree Branch in the Way
No. 48-86. R. 7(3)

Q: Is it permissible for a caddie to hold a tree branch out of the way if it would hinder the player's club while making a stroke?

DR. FRANK T. FARA CICERO, ILL.

A: No. This is prohibited by Rule 7(3). The Rule contemplates that there may be some moving, bending or breaking of fixed or growing objects as an incident in the course of taking a fair stance at address and in making the backward or forward swing, and it excuses such incidental movements. However, the Rule prohibits purposeful moving, bending or breaking as may incidentally be done in making the swing, but it does not allow such action in order to make the swing.

Opponents Exchanging Balls
No. 48-88. R. 1(2a), 13(1)(4a)

Q: A and B were playing C and D in a four-ball match. A and C both hooked into the rough, both were playing the same make and number ball. C played A's ball, knocking it out into the fairway. A then played C's ball, thinking it was his own, and shot it into a water hazard. Upon taking the ball out of the hazard, A discovered it was C's ball. He then went back to where C played his (A's) ball and proceeded to play out the hole from there, making a par and tying D on the hole (otherwise his side would have lost the hole, B being out of it as well as C). They proceeded playing, and A and B won the match, 1 up.

D claims he protested the hole before playing the next hole. A claims he heard no protest. A claims misinformation because C announced that "this is my ball" when playing A's ball. (A's ball was in a very good lie; C's ball, which A later played, was very deep in the rough.)

If the hole was won by D as claimed, the match would have finished all even. The match was played under handicap, so D feels it should be played over.

RALPH R. ARNOLD ENGLEWOOD, COLO.

A: A was under a responsibility to identify the ball (C's) before playing it. As he did not do so but inadvertently played C's ball, the penalty against C was cancelled, and the hole should have been played out with the balls exchanged—see Rule 13(4a) and la). C's statement cannot be regarded as misinformation under Rule 13(1b) insofar as A's play of C's ball is concerned.

A proceeded improperly in abandoning C's ball and in resuming play from the place where C played A's ball.

Whether or not D made a claim as described in Rule 1(2a) is a question of fact which cannot be determined by us. If a claim was so made, D's side won the hole. If a claim was not so made, the hole stands as played even though A completed the hole incorrectly.

What Constitutes Casual Water
No. 48-91. R. 16, Def. (1), SR. 3

Q: 1: Player A drives a ball into short rough where the ground is damp. He claims that he has the right to press his foot into the ground near the ball to see if his weight will squeeze some water up out of the ground, and if so, his ball is in "casual water" and may be lifted and dropped in another part of
This Committee considers that matching cards against each other or against the course par is not a proper way to decide a tie. If two players return scores of the same total in stroke play, they have finished the test originally set. To decide their tie, it would not seem fair to go back arbitrarily to any individual part of the original test, for that test was on a total-score basis. Any such method is artificial. Stroke play and match play are two different games. Therefore, a new test should be provided for settling a tie.

Questions by:
ROBERT M. NELSON
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Out of Bounds in Mixed Foursome
No. 48-95. D. 1: R. 5(6), 9(1)

Q: A Scotch foursome ties at 75 for the gross prize in medal play. In "matching cards" to determine the winner of the prize (which was arranged after the match), is it a practice or rule to use the "sudden death" method so that the team or player winning the first hole in match play wins, or is it a rule or practice to figure match play over the entire 18 holes? In this case, team A would have won by 1 up in match play figuring the entire 18 holes, but on the "sudden death" method, team B would have won on the second hole with a par 4 to opponents' bogey 5.

A: Stroke Rule 3 empowers the committee in charge to determine how a tie shall be decided, and it presupposes a playoff. The local committee should determine the extent of the playoff in the light of local conditions. This question should be determined before the tournament starts.

Where the competition is handicap stroke play, it is recommended that the playoff be at 18 holes with handicap. Where that is not possible for want of time or for other reasons, the playoff should be of as many holes as would enable all competitors in the playoff to use equal proportions of their handicaps fairly. If, it is not convenient to hold a playoff, the tie should be decided by lot.