

DECISIONS REVISED DUE TO RULES CHANGES AND DECISIONS WITH MINOR REVISIONS

- 1-2/0.5 Serious Breach of Rule 1-2
- 1-2/1.5 Competitor Alters Line of Play of Fellow-Competitor
- 1-2/2 Shielding Line of Putt from Wind
- 1-2/3.5 Player Repairs Hole After Holing Out But Before Opponent, Fellow-Competitor or Partner Holes Out
- 1-2/4 Player Jumps Close to Hole to Cause Ball to Fall into Hole
- 1-2/5.5 Player Purposely Stops or Deflects Ball; Where Next Stroke Must Be Played from
- 1-2/7 Player Purposely Deflects Partner's Ball in Motion on Putting Green
- 1-2/8 Player Presses Down Turf as Ball Is Rolling Towards Area
- 1-4/9 Bird's Nest Interfering with Stroke
- 1-4/10 Dangerous Situation; Rattlesnake or Bees Interfere with Play
- 2-4/15 Player Concedes Match After Winning It When Opponent Lodges Invalid Claim Regarding Strokes Taken
- 2-4/16 Valid Timely Claim Made After Concession of Match
- 2-5/2 Procedure for a Valid Claim
- 2-5/3 Player Lifts Ball Before Holing Out; Opponent Then Picks Up His Ball Claiming Player Loses Hole
- 3-3/2 Second Ball Played Despite Adverse Ruling
- 3-3/9 Second Ball Played in Match Play
- 5-3/3 Ball Not Unfit for Play Deemed Unfit
- 5-3/8 Opponent or Fellow-Competitor Disputes Player's Claim That Ball Is Unfit for Play
- 6-3a/1.5 Exceptional Circumstances Which Warrant Waiving of Disqualification Penalty Under Rule 6-3a
- 6-3a/2 Time of Starting; All Competitors Must Be Present
- 6-3a/2.5 Meaning of "Time of Starting"
- 6-3a/3 Time of Starting; Both Players in Match are Late
- 6-8a/6 Match Discontinued by Agreement Due to Rain; One Player Subsequently Wishes to Resume; Opponent Refuses on Ground Course Unplayable
- 10-2c/2 Competitors in Stroke Play Agree to Play Out of Turn But Not for Purpose of Giving One of Them an Advantage
- 12-1/3 Top of Ball in Hazard Covered by Leaves But Part of Ball Visible from Another Angle

- 12-1/5 Player Kicks Ball While Probing for It in Water in Water Hazard
- 13-2/14.5 Branch Broken on Backswing and Swing Discontinued
- 13-2/16 Stake Supporting Tree Broken in Attempt to Remove It
- 13-2/29 Worsening and Then Restoring Line of Play
- 13-2/35 Removal of Dew or Frost
- 13-4/7 Touching Casual Water in Bunker with Club
- 13-4/10 Referee Enters Bunker; Whether Player May Smooth Footprints
- 13-4/11 Smoothing Footprints Made in Search for Ball in Bunker Before Playing Stroke from Bunker
- 13-4/12 Ball Touched Accidentally with Club in Hazard But Not Moved
- 13-4/16 Removal of Loose Impediment in Water Hazard Covering Wrong Ball
- 13-4/19 Condition of Bunker Altered by First Player to Play from It
- 13-4/35.8 Player Deems Ball Unplayable in Bunker, Announces His Intention to Proceed Under Rule 28a Outside Bunker and Then Rakes Bunker on New Line of Play
- 14-2/2 Player Holds Umbrella Over Own Head When Playing Stroke
- 14-2/2.5 Player Positions Bag for Purpose of Providing Shade for Ball
- 14-2/3 Caddie Shields Player from Sun During Stroke
- 14-3/14 Electronic Instrument Used to Find Ball
- 14-6/1 Ball Moves in Water in Water Hazard After Stance Taken
- 16/4 Hole-Liner Not Sunk Deep Enough
- 16-1a/6 Damaged Hole; Procedure for Player
- 16-1a/10 Loose Impediments Brushed Along Line of Putt Rather Than to Side
- 16-1a/13 Line of Putt Damaged Accidentally by Opponent, Fellow-Competitor or Their Caddies
- 16-1a/17 Ball Lifted on Putting Green Placed Ahead of Ball-Marker and Then Moved Back to Original Position
- 16-1b/1 Ball on Putting Green Lifted Because Player Feared Ball Might Move
- 16-1b/2 Ball Lifted from Putting Green; Ball Replaced While Another Ball in Motion But Then Lifted Because Moving Ball Might Strike It
- 16-1b/3 Ball Lifted from Putting Green; Ball Replaced While Another Ball in Motion Subsequently Deflects Ball
- 17/4 Adjustment of Flagstick; Player's Rights
- 17-3/2 Opponent or Fellow-Competitor Attending Flagstick for Player Fails to Remove It; Player's Ball Strikes Flagstick

- 18-2a/9 Ball Lifted Without Authority Dropped Instead of Being Replaced
- 18-2b/3 Ball Moves After Player Has Taken Stance in Bunker
- 18-2b/4 Ball Moves After Player Grounds Club Short Distance Behind Ball But Before Grounding Club Immediately Behind Ball
- 18-2b/5.5 Placing Clubhead on Ground in Front of Ball When Addressing
- 18-2b/5.7 When Player Who Putts “Side-Saddle” Has Addressed Ball
- 18-2b/7 Ball Moves After Player Addresses It and Then Steps Away
- 18-2b/11 Ball Moved by Another Agency After Address
- 18-2b/12 Ball Moves After Address and Is Stopped by Player’s Club
- 19-1/4.1 Ball Deliberately Deflected or Stopped Through the Green by Spectator
- 19-1/5 Ball Deliberately Deflected or Stopped on Putting Green by Fellow-Competitor
- 19-2/1 Ball Stopped by Player’s Foot Moves When Foot Removed
- 19-2/1.5 Ball Moves Prior to Address and Is Accidentally Stopped by Player’s Club; Player Removes Club and Ball Moves Away
- 20-1/19 Placing Object Marking Position of Ball Other Than Behind Ball
- 20-2a/3 Ball Dropped in Improper Manner and in Wrong Place
- 20-2a/5 Caddie Holds Back Tree Branch to Prevent Branch from Deflecting Dropped Ball
- 20-2c/2 Ball Dropped Third Time When Placement Required After Second Drop
- 20-2c/4 Caddie Stops Dropped Ball Before It Comes to Rest; When Penalty Incurred
- 20-3a/0.5 Whether Player Himself Must Place or Replace Ball
- 20-3b/4 Lie of Ball Through the Green Altered; Original Lie of Ball Known But Spot Where Ball Lay Not Determinable
- 20-3b/5 Lie of Ball in Rough Altered by Outside Agency; Original Lie of Ball Not Known and Spot Where Ball Lay Not Determinable
- 20-3b/6 Lie of Ball in Bunker Altered; Original Lie of Ball Known But Spot Where Ball Lay Not Determinable
- 20-4/2 Ball Lifted from Putting Green and Placed by Caddie Behind Marker
- 22/7 Ball Assisting Fellow-Competitor on Putting Green; Procedure for Referee If Competitor Does Not Lift Ball
- 23-1/10 Removal of Loose Impediments Affecting Player’s Play
- 24-2b/17 Obstruction Interferes with Abnormal Stroke; Abnormal Stroke Reasonable in Circumstances

- 24-2b/18 Obstruction Interferes with Abnormal Stroke; Abnormal Stroke Not Reasonable in Circumstances
- 24-2b/19 Stroke at Ball Impracticable Due to Interference by Immovable Obstruction and Casual Water
- 25-1b/19 Ball Lies on Mound Made by Burrowing Animal; Impracticable to Make Stroke Due to Bush
- 25-1b/20 Stance Interfered with by Burrowing Animal Hole; Impracticable to Make Stroke Because of Other Condition
- 25-1b/25.5 Application of Exception to Rule 25-1b When Ball Lies Underground in Burrowing Animal Hole
- 26/6 Ball Assumed to Be in Water Hazard Found Outside Hazard After Another Ball Played Under Stroke-and-Distance Procedure
- 26-1/4 Ball Played Under Water Hazard Rule Without Knowledge or Virtual Certainty That Original Ball in Hazard; Original Ball Then Found in Hazard
- 30-3f/4 Wrong Information Given by Player Out of Contention in Four-Ball Match
- 30-3f/13 Partner Stands on Extension of Player's Line of Play Behind Ball
- 31-2/1 Absent Player Joins Partner After Fellow-Competitor Plays from Teeing Ground But Before Partner Plays
- 33-7/5 Play of Wrong Ball Not Rectified on Advice of Referee
- 33-8/4 Local Rule for Events in Which Motorized Golf Carts Permitted
- 34-3/1.5 Committee Error and Scoring in Stroke Play
- 34-3/2 Committee Does Not Penalize Player in Breach of Pace of Play Condition Believing Player Had Already Lost Hole
- 34-3/3 Player in Match Makes Stroke from Wrong Place Due to Incorrect Ruling; Procedure for Player When Error is Discovered
- 34-3/3.3 Competitor in Stroke Play Makes Stroke from Wrong Place Due to Incorrect Ruling; Procedure for Competitor When Error is Discovered
- 34-3/3.5 Player Lifts Ball Without Authority Due to Misunderstanding Referee's Instructions
- 34-3/3.7 Player Incorrectly Advised to Continue with Provisional Ball
- 34-3/7 Player Proceeds on Basis of Ruling; Subsequent Facts Prove Ruling to Be Incorrect
- 34-3/8 Player Proceeds on Basis of Ruling; Player's Version of Facts Subsequently Found to Be Incorrect
- 34-3/9 Resolution of Questions of Fact; Referee and Committee Responsibility

1-2/0.5

Serious Breach of Rule 1-2

Q. Should the standard for determining whether a serious breach of Rule 1-2 has occurred be the same in match play and stroke play?

A. In deciding whether a player has committed a serious breach of Rule 1-2, the Committee should consider all aspects of the incident. Given the different impact on players in match play and stroke play, it is possible for the same act to constitute a serious breach of Rule 1-2 in stroke play but not in match play. In many cases in match play (e.g., a player who intentionally stops his ball from entering a water hazard), a penalty of loss of hole is sufficient while in stroke play the player should be disqualified for a serious breach. In some cases (e.g., the purposeful act of damaging the line of putt referred to in Decision 1-2/1), a penalty of disqualification in match play may be appropriate. (Revised)

1-2/1.5

Competitor Alters Line of Play of Fellow-Competitor

Q. In stroke play, A's ball is under a partially detached tree branch from which he believes he is entitled to relief without penalty. A calls for a ruling. B, A's fellow-competitor, argues A's case to a referee and, during the conversation, lifts the branch and improves or worsens A's line of play. What is the ruling?

A. As B did not alter physical conditions with the intent of affecting A's playing of the hole, B is not in breach of Rule 1-2. A incurs no penalty. A may replace the branch, but he is not required to do so. (Revised)

1-2/2

Shielding Line of Putt from Wind

Q. May a player lay his golf bag parallel to the line of putt to shield the line from the wind?

A. No. Such an action taken with the intent to influence the movement of the ball would be a breach of Rule 1-2, even if the golf bag were removed prior to the stroke being made. (Revised)

1-2/3.5

Player Repairs Hole After Holing Out But Before Opponent, Fellow-Competitor or Partner Holes Out

Q. After holing out, a player observes that the edge of the hole is ragged. He pats the ragged edge with his hand and smoothes it. Does the player incur a

penalty under Rule 1-2 if his opponent, fellow-competitor or partner has not holed out?

A. If the player smoothed the edge of the hole solely for the purpose of caring for the course, he was not in breach of Rule 1-2. However, if the smoothing of the ragged edge was in any way intended to influence the movement of his opponent's, fellow-competitor's or partner's ball, or alter physical conditions with the intent of affecting the playing of the hole, he was in breach of Rule 1-2. It is recommended that a player should only smooth the ragged edge of a hole after all players in the group or match have completed play of the hole.

As the player had holed out, he is not subject to penalty under Rule 16-1a or Rule 13-2.

In a four-ball competition, if the player's partner had not completed play of the hole, the partner incurs the penalty for a breach of Rule 16-1a – see Definition of "Partner." (Revised)

1-2/4

Player Jumps Close to Hole to Cause Ball to Fall into Hole

Q. A player whose ball overhangs the lip of the hole jumps close to the hole in the hope of jarring the ground and causing the ball to fall into the hole. Is the player penalized under Rule 1-2 for trying to exert influence on the movement of his ball in play?

A. If the player's ball was at rest (or deemed to be at rest under Rule 16-2) and does not move, Rule 1-2 does not apply because the player was attempting to move a ball at rest and this is specifically covered by Rule 18-2a (see Exception 1 to Rule 1-2). As the ball did not move, there was no penalty under Rule 18-2a.

If the player's ball was at rest (or deemed to be at rest under Rule 16-2) and the ball moves, Rule 1-2 does not apply because Rule 18-2a specifically covers a ball at rest moved by the player – see Exception 1 to Rule 1-2. The player is deemed to have caused his ball to move and incurs a penalty of one stroke in both match play and stroke play under Rule 18-2a and the ball must be replaced.

If the player's ball was still moving when the player jumped, Rule 1-2 was the applicable Rule because the player took an action with the intent to influence the movement of the ball. In match play, he lost the hole. In stroke play, he incurred a penalty of two strokes and must play the ball from where it came to rest; if the ball was holed, the player completed play of the hole with his last stroke and must apply the two-stroke penalty under Rule 1-2. (Revised)

1-2/5.5

Player Purposely Stops or Deflects Ball; Where Next Stroke Must Be Played from

Q. A player's ball lies through the green. After playing a pitch shot up a slope, the player sees his ball start to roll back towards him. He places his club in front of the ball and stops it. The ball would have rolled only a few yards more and remained through the green. What is the ruling?

A. Since the player purposely stopped the ball, he is in breach of Rule 1-2. As the breach was not serious, the player incurs a penalty of loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play. In stroke play, he must play the ball from the point where he stopped it with his club – see Note 2 to Rule 1-2.

If the player had purposely deflected the ball but not stopped it, in match play, he would lose the hole. In stroke play, if a serious breach has not occurred, he would incur a two-stroke penalty and must then play the ball from its new position – see Note 2 to Rule 1-2. In stroke play, if a serious breach has occurred, the player is disqualified.

Rule 19-2 is not applicable since it only covers situations when a player accidentally deflects or stops his ball. (Revised)

1-2/7

Player Purposely Deflects Partner's Ball in Motion on Putting Green

Q. In four-ball match play, A and B are playing C and D. All four balls lie on the putting green in five strokes. A lies four feet from the hole and B lies 30 feet from the hole. Player A is standing near and behind the hole with respect to B's line of putt while B putts. B's ball goes past the hole and is rolling towards where A is standing. Without waiting for B's ball to come to rest, A knocks B's ball back to B. What is the ruling?

A. A's intentional interference with the movement of B's ball is a breach of Rule 1-2. However, the penalty for that breach is incurred by B – the partner whose ball was in motion – and results in disqualification from the hole for B. A may continue to represent the side without penalty as the breach of Rule 1-2 did not assist him. (Revised)

1-2/8

Player Presses Down Turf as Ball Is Rolling Towards Area

Q. A player's ball lies through the green at the bottom of a slope. The player makes a stroke and sees that his ball is rolling back down the slope towards the spot from which he just played. Before the ball reaches that spot, the player presses down a raised piece of turf in that area with the intent of ensuring that his ball will not come to rest against the raised piece of turf or

in the divot hole. Is the player in breach of Rule 1-2?

A. Yes, as he acted with the intent to influence the movement of his ball in play and with the intent to alter the physical conditions affecting playing of the hole. As the pressing down of the raised piece of turf was not for the sole purpose of caring for the course, Exception 2 to Rule 1-2 does not apply.

If the player had not realized his ball was returning to the area, there would be no breach of Rule 1-2. (Revised)

1-4/9

Bird's Nest Interfering with Stroke

Q. A player's ball comes to rest in a bird's nest or so close to the nest that he could not make a stroke without damaging it. In equity (Rule 1-4), does the player have any options in addition to playing the ball as it lies or, if applicable, proceeding under Rule 26 or 28?

A. Yes. It is unreasonable to expect the player to play from such a situation and unfair to require the player to incur a penalty stroke under Rule 26 (Water Hazards) or Rule 28 (Ball Unplayable).

If the ball lay through the green, the player may, without penalty, drop a ball within one club-length of and not nearer the hole than the nearest spot not nearer the hole that would allow him to make his stroke without damaging the nest and that is not in a hazard and not on a putting green. The ball when dropped must first strike a part of the course through the green.

If the ball lay in a hazard, the player may drop a ball, without penalty, within one club-length of and not nearer the hole than the nearest spot not nearer the hole that would allow him to make his stroke without damaging the nest. If possible, the ball must be dropped in the same hazard and, if not possible, in a similar nearby hazard, but in either case not nearer the hole. If it is not possible for the player to drop the ball in a hazard, he may drop it, under penalty of one stroke, outside the hazard, keeping the point where the original ball lay between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped.

If the ball lay on the putting green, the player may, without penalty, place a ball at the nearest spot not nearer the hole and not in a hazard that would allow him to make his stroke without damaging the nest.

If interference by anything other than the bird's nest makes the stroke clearly impracticable or if damage to the bird's nest would occur only through the use of a clearly unreasonable stroke or an unnecessarily abnormal stance, swing, or direction of play, the player may not take relief as prescribed above, but he is not precluded from proceeding under Rule 26 or 28 if applicable. (Revised)

1-4/10

Dangerous Situation; Rattlesnake or Bees Interfere with Play

Q. A player's ball comes to rest in a situation dangerous to the player, e.g., near a live rattlesnake or a bees' nest. In equity (Rule 1-4), does the player have any options in addition to playing the ball as it lies or, if applicable, proceeding under Rule 26 or 28?

A. Yes. It is unreasonable to expect the player to play from such a dangerous situation and unfair to require the player to incur a penalty under Rule 26 (Water Hazards) or Rule 28 (Ball Unplayable).

If the ball lay through the green, the player may, without penalty, drop a ball within one club-length of and not nearer the hole than the nearest spot not nearer the hole that is not dangerous and is not in a hazard and not on a putting green.

If the ball lay in a hazard, the player may drop a ball, without penalty, within one club-length of and not nearer the hole than the nearest spot not nearer the hole that is not dangerous. If possible, the ball must be dropped in the same hazard and, if not possible, in a similar nearby hazard, but in either case not nearer the hole. If it is not possible for the player to drop the ball in a hazard, he may drop it, under penalty of one stroke, outside the hazard, keeping the point where the original ball lay between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped.

If the ball lay on the putting green, the player may, without penalty, place a ball at the nearest spot not nearer the hole that is not dangerous and that is not in a hazard.

If interference by anything other than the dangerous situation makes the stroke clearly impracticable or if the situation would be dangerous only through the use of a clearly unreasonable stroke or an unnecessarily abnormal stance, swing, or direction of play, the player may not take relief as prescribed above, but he is not precluded from proceeding under Rule 26 or 28 if applicable. (Revised)

2-4/15

Player Concedes Match After Winning It When Opponent Lodges Invalid Claim Regarding Strokes Taken

Q. In a match, A and B were all square playing the last hole. A incurred a penalty without knowing it, and accordingly did not advise B of the penalty. B was aware of what had happened but did not realize it was a breach of the Rules either.

A won the hole and the match, and the result was posted.

Subsequently, a spectator informed B that A had incurred a penalty at the 18th hole. B then claimed the hole and the match, and A conceded the match to B.

Who was the rightful winner?

A. A won the match because a match can only be conceded prior to its conclusion (Rule 2-4).

A gave wrong information when he did not advise B that he had incurred a penalty and would have lost the hole had a claim been made in a timely manner – Rule 9-2b(i). However, a belated claim by B was not valid for two reasons:

- (1) it was not based on facts previously unknown to B, and
- (2) the claim was made after the result of the match was announced – see Rule 2-5. (Revised)

2-4/16

Valid Timely Claim Made After Concession of Match

Q. In a match, A and B are playing the last hole. B is 1 up. A holes out for a 4. B putts from a wrong place and holes the putt for a 4. A congratulates B and concedes the match. Before leaving the putting green, A asks B if he (B) had putted from a wrong place. B acknowledges that he did so. A claims that B loses the hole under Rule 20-7b. Is the claim valid?

A. Yes. Concession of a match is not binding if subsequently a valid claim is made in a timely manner. A's valid claim was made within the time limit in Rule 2-5. (Revised)

2-5/2

Procedure for a Valid Claim

For a claim to be valid, the claimant must notify his opponent (i) that he is making a claim or wants a ruling and, (ii) the facts of the situation. He must do so within the time required by Rule 2-5. For example, Rule 16-1e prohibits putting from a stance astride an extension of the line of putt behind the ball. In a match between A and B, if A putts from a stance astride an extension of the line and B states “that is not allowed, you are penalized” or “I’m making a claim because of that stroke,” the Committee should consider the claim.

Statements by B such as “I’m not sure that’s allowed” or “I don’t think you can do that” do not by themselves constitute a valid claim because each statement does not contain the notice of a claim or that he wants a ruling and the facts of the situation. (Revised)

2-5/3

Player Lifts Ball Before Holing Out; Opponent Then Picks Up His Ball Claiming Player Loses Hole

Q. In match play, A's ball was resting against the flagstick but it was not holed. A, believing he had holed out, lifted his ball without first marking its position. In doing so, A incurred a penalty stroke under Rule 20-1. Since A was not aware that he had incurred a penalty, he did not inform B. B, who had not witnessed A's actions, made his next stroke. A's actions were then brought to the attention of B and he picked up his ball, claiming that A's lifting of his ball entailed a penalty of loss of hole. A and B agreed to continue the match and refer B's claim to the Committee later. How should the Committee have ruled?

A. The Committee should have ruled that B won the hole. B's claim was valid since he notified his opponent that he was making a claim or wanted a ruling (A and B agreed to refer B's claim to the Committee), and the facts that gave rise to the claim (A's lifting of the ball). Although the penalty for A's lifting of the ball without first marking its position is one stroke, he lost the hole for giving wrong information (Rule 9-2b) when he failed to inform B before he (B) made his next stroke that he (A) had incurred the penalty stroke. (Revised)

3-3/2

Second Ball Played Despite Adverse Ruling

Q. In stroke play, a competitor believes he is entitled to relief under a Rule, but a referee disagrees. In spite of the ruling by the referee, the competitor invokes Rule 3-3 and opts to score with the second ball. He plays his original ball as it lies and the second ball under the Rule he believes is applicable.

May a competitor invoke Rule 3-3 in such circumstances?

A. The answer depends upon whether or not the Committee has given authority to make final decisions to its individual referees.

If the referee concerned has not been given authority to make final decisions, the competitor is entitled to invoke Rule 3-3.

If, on the other hand, the referee has been given authority to make final decisions, he may, despite his own view that the competitor is not entitled to relief, permit the competitor to invoke Rule 3-3. However, if the referee exercises his authority and gives the competitor a final decision that he is not entitled to the relief he claims, there is then no justification for the competitor invoking Rule 3-3, and he will incur a penalty of two strokes for undue delay (Rule 6-7) if he, nevertheless, goes ahead and invokes Rule 3-3. The score with his original ball, including this two-stroke penalty, must count. (Revised)

3-3/9

Second Ball Played in Match Play

Q. In a match between A and B, A was unsure of his rights at a hole. Neither A nor B was aware that Rule 3-3 applies only in stroke play, so A played a second ball and holed out with both balls. At the end of the round, the matter was referred to the Committee. What is the ruling?

A. A second ball played in match play is a wrong ball – see Note 2 under Rule 2-5 and Definition of “Wrong Ball.” Accordingly, A would have lost the hole had B claimed it under Rule 2-5 before either player had played from the next tee. However, B made no claim. Therefore, the score with A’s original ball counts. (Revised)

5-3/3

Ball Not Unfit for Play Deemed Unfit

Q. In stroke play, a competitor, after announcing his intention of doing so, lifted his ball to check for damage, showed it to his marker and claimed that it was unfit for play. The marker disputed this claim, but the competitor insisted on substituting and playing another ball. Before completion of the hole, however, a referee was consulted and ruled that the ball taken out of play by the competitor was not, after all, unfit for play. What is the ruling?

A. The competitor should be penalized two strokes for a breach of Rule 5-3 and must hole out with the substituted ball.

In similar circumstances in match play, the player would lose the hole for a breach of Rule 5-3. (Revised)

5-3/8

Opponent or Fellow-Competitor Disputes Player’s Claim That Ball Is Unfit for Play

Q. A player considers his ball unfit for play. His opponent or fellow-competitor disagrees. There is no referee available for a ruling. In spite of the opponent’s or fellow-competitor’s disagreement, may the player substitute another ball?

A. Yes, subject to the following considerations:

In match play, if the opponent then makes a claim (Rule 2-5) and the Committee, after examination of the original ball, upholds the opponent’s claim, the player would lose the hole. Otherwise, the result of the hole would stand as played.

In stroke play, the player may also play a second ball in accordance with Rule 3-3.

In either form of play, the player must ensure that the condition of the ball he considered unfit for play is preserved until the Committee examines it. Otherwise, the Committee should rule against the player and in match play the player would lose the hole and in stroke play the player incurs a penalty of two strokes. (Revised)

6-3a/1.5

Exceptional Circumstances Which Warrant Waiving of Disqualification Penalty Under Rule 6-3a

Q. The Exception to Rule 6-3a states that if the Committee determines that exceptional circumstances have prevented a player from starting on time, there is no penalty. With reference to the following examples, what circumstances are considered exceptional such that there would be no penalty if the player failed to start at the time established:

1. The player gets lost on the way to the course.
2. Heavy traffic results in the journey to the course taking longer than expected.
3. A major accident results in the journey to the course taking longer than expected.
4. The player's car breaks down on the way to the course.
5. The player was present at the scene of an accident and provided medical assistance or was required to give a statement as a witness and otherwise would not have failed to start on time.

A. There is no hard-and-fast Rule. The proper action depends on the circumstances in each case and must be left to the determination of the Committee.

Generally, only example 5 constitutes an exceptional circumstance under the Exception to Rule 6-3a.

It is the player's responsibility to ensure that he allows enough time to reach the course and he must make allowances for possible delays. (Revised)

6-3a/2

Time of Starting; All Competitors Must Be Present

Q. In a stroke-play competition, A, B and C were drawn by the Committee to play together starting at 9 am. A and B were present at the appointed time. C arrived at 9:02 am after A and B had played from the teeing ground, but just in time to play in the correct order.

What is the ruling?

A. As C arrived and was ready to play within five minutes after his starting time, he incurred a penalty of two strokes for failure to start at the time established by the Committee (Rule 6-3a). If C had arrived more than five

minutes after his starting time, the penalty would be disqualification. In either case if the Committee determines that exceptional circumstances had prevented C from starting on time, there is no penalty.

All competitors in a group must be present and ready to play at the time established by the Committee, in this case 9:00 am. The order of play is not relevant. (Revised)

6-3a/2.5

Meaning of “Time of Starting”

Q. A player’s starting time is listed on the official starting sheet as 9:00 am. He does not arrive at the 1st tee until 9:00:45 am and claims that, as it is still 9:00 am, he is not late for his starting time. What is the ruling?

A. When a starting time is listed as 9:00 am, the starting time is deemed to be 9:00 am and the player is subject to penalty under Rule 6-3a if he is not present and ready to play at 9:00:00 am. Therefore, the player incurred a penalty of two strokes in stroke play or loss of the first hole in match play unless the Committee determines that exceptional circumstances had prevented him from starting on time (Exception to Rule 6-3). (Revised)

6-3a/3

Time of Starting; Both Players in Match are Late

Q. In a match-play competition, A and B were to start their match at 9 am. A arrives at the 1st tee at 9:01 am, but before B, who arrives at 9:03 am. What is the ruling?

A. If neither player had exceptional circumstances that prevented him from starting on time, each player would incur a penalty of loss of the 1st hole. Therefore, in equity (Rule 1-4), the 1st hole is deemed halved and the match would commence on the 2nd hole. (Revised)

6-8a/6

Match Discontinued by Agreement Due to Rain; One Player Subsequently Wishes to Resume; Opponent Refuses on Ground Course Unplayable

Q. In accordance with the Exception under Rule 6-8a, A and B discontinue a match due to rain. Subsequently, A wishes to resume play. B refuses on the ground that the course is unplayable. What is the ruling?

A. B is entitled to refer the dispute to a member of the Committee if one is available within a reasonable time. If a member of the Committee is

not available within a reasonable time, B is obliged to continue the match without delay – Rule 2-5. If B does not do so, he is disqualified under Rule 6-8a, which allows a player to discontinue play for a decision on a disputed point, but only within the limits prescribed in Rule 2-5.

However, before continuing the match B is entitled to make a claim that the course is unplayable – Rule 2-5. If B does so, (a) the match should be resumed at the spot at which it was discontinued if the Committee subsequently upholds B's claim, or (b) the match should stand as played if the Committee subsequently rejects B's claim. (Revised)

10-2c/2

Competitors in Stroke Play Agree to Play Out of Turn But Not for Purpose of Giving One of Them an Advantage

Q. In stroke play, A and B agree to play out of turn at the 10th hole to save time. There is no penalty under Rule 10-2c because they did not do so in order to give one of them an advantage. However, are they liable to disqualification under Rule 1-3 for agreeing to exclude the operation of Rule 10-2a or 10-2b as the case may be?

A. No. Rule 10-2c specifically governs and permits the procedure in stroke play. Accordingly, Rule 1-3 does not apply. As to match play, see Decision 10-1a/3. (Revised)

12-1/3

Top of Ball in Hazard Covered by Leaves But Part of Ball Visible from Another Angle

Q. The top of the player's ball in a hazard is covered by leaves so that it is not visible when he takes his stance. However, a portion of the ball is visible from another angle. Is it permissible for the player to remove enough leaves to see the ball once he has taken his stance?

A. No. In these circumstances, a player is entitled to remove loose impediments covering a ball in a hazard only if the ball is not visible from any angle. (Revised)

12-1/5

Player Kicks Ball While Probing for It in Water in Water Hazard

Q. A player is probing for his ball in the water in a water hazard and accidentally kicks the ball which is in fact lying in long grass on the bank within the hazard. What is the ruling?

A. As the moved ball was not lying in water in a water hazard, the player

incurs a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2a for moving his ball in play (see Rule 12-1c). The player may replace the ball and play it or, under an additional penalty of one stroke, proceed under Rule 26-1. If the player proceeds under Rule 26-1, he is not required to replace the ball. (Revised)

13-2/14.5

Branch Broken on Backswing and Swing Discontinued

Q. A player's ball lies under a tree. The player fairly takes his stance and starts his backswing with the intention of making a stroke. Near the top of his backswing his club strikes a branch and breaks it. At that point he discontinues his swing. The breaking of the branch has resulted in an improvement to the area of the player's intended swing.

Rule 13-2 states in part: "... a player must not improve ... the area of his intended stance or swing ... except ... in making a stroke or the backward movement of his club for a stroke." Is the player exempt from penalty under this exception?

A. No, because the swing was discontinued, the backward movement of the club was not in fact the backward movement for a stroke. (Revised)

13-2/16

Stake Supporting Tree Broken in Attempt to Remove It

Q. A stake supporting a young tree interferes with a player's stroke. He tries to remove it, but it cannot readily be removed and it breaks. As a result of the stake being broken, it no longer interferes with the player's stroke. What is the ruling?

A. The player was in breach of Rule 13-2 for breaking the stake. As the stake was not readily removable, it was an immovable obstruction and relief could have been taken, without penalty, under Rule 24-2b. (Revised)

13-2/29

Worsening and Then Restoring Line of Play

Q. There is a bunker between a player's ball and the hole. The player walks through the bunker, for example, to remove a rake on his line of play or determine the distance to the hole. On his way back to the ball, he smoothes the footprints he made, restoring his line of play to its original condition. Is such smoothing permissible?

A. No. Although Exception 2 to Rule 13-4 permits the player to smooth sand or soil in a hazard at any time for the sole purpose of caring for the course, he may not do so if it would breach Rule 13-2 with respect to his next stroke.

If a player worsens the lie of his ball, the area of his intended stance or swing, his line of play or a reasonable extension of that line beyond the hole, or the area in which he is to drop or place a ball, he is not entitled to restore that area to its original condition. If he does so, he is in breach of Rule 13-2 and incurs a penalty of loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play (but see Decision 13-2/29.3). (Revised)

13-2/35

Removal of Dew or Frost

Except on the teeing ground, the removal of dew or frost from the area immediately behind or to the side of a player's ball, or from a player's line of play is a breach of Rule 13-2 if such removal creates a potential advantage (see Decision 13-2/0.5).

Additionally, the removal of dew or frost from the player's line of putt is not permitted. Such action is a breach of Rule 16-1a, unless it occurs incidentally to some other action permitted under the Rules, such as in removing loose impediments, repairing ball marks on the putting green or addressing the ball. (Revised)

13-4/7

Touching Casual Water in Bunker with Club

Q. A player's ball lies in casual water in a bunker. The player elects to play his ball as it lies and touches the casual water with his club prior to making the stroke. The player's club does not touch the sand in the bunker except in making the stroke. What is the ruling?

A. The player incurs no penalty as he did not touch the ground in the bunker with his club prior to making his stroke – see Rule 13-4b. (Revised)

13-4/10

Referee Enters Bunker; Whether Player May Smooth Footprints

Q. A player whose ball lies in a bunker asks for a ruling from a referee, who enters the bunker to make the ruling. After the ruling, may the footprints of the referee be smoothed?

A. Yes. Exception 2 to Rule 13-4 allows the player to smooth the bunker provided it is for the sole purpose of caring for the course and nothing is done to breach Rule 13-2 with respect to his next stroke. However, even if the area disturbed by the referee is an area covered by Rule 13-2 with respect to his next stroke, in equity (Rule 1-4), the player would be entitled to restore this area of the bunker to its original condition by raking or other means. The bunker may be restored by anyone. (Revised)

13-4/11

Smoothing Footprints Made in Search for Ball in Bunker Before Playing Stroke from Bunker

Q. A player searches for his ball in a bunker and in the process makes numerous footprints. He subsequently finds his ball in the bunker. Before playing his stroke, may the player or his caddie smooth the footprints?

A. Exception 2 to Rule 13-4 would allow the player to smooth the footprints provided it is done for the sole purpose of caring for the course and nothing is done to improve any area covered by Rule 13-2 with respect to his next stroke. Therefore, any footprints made that have worsened any area covered by Rule 13-2 with respect to his next stroke must not be smoothed. (Revised)

13-4/12

Ball Touched Accidentally with Club in Hazard But Not Moved

Q. A player, in preparing to make a stroke at his ball that was lying in a bunker or was partially submerged in water in a water hazard, accidentally touches the ball with his club, but without moving it. Does this constitute touching the ground in a hazard or water in a water hazard in breach of Rule 13-4?

A. No. (Revised)

13-4/16

Removal of Loose Impediment in Water Hazard Covering Wrong Ball

Q. A player plays his ball into a water hazard. He finds a ball in the hazard and, in order to identify the ball, removes a loose impediment partially covering it. He discovers that the ball is not his ball. He searches for his ball but does not find it. He proceeds under Rule 26-1. Is the player subject to penalty under Rule 13-4 for removing the loose impediment?

A. No. Rule 12-1b permits the player to touch or remove loose impediments in a hazard in order to find or identify his ball that is believed to be covered by loose impediments. (Revised)

13-4/19

Condition of Bunker Altered by First Player to Play from It

Q. The balls of A and B lie in the same bunker, with B's ball farther from the hole. B plays and his ball comes to rest nearer the hole than A's ball. Is A entitled to have the bunker restored to its original condition?

A. Yes. In addition to Exception 2 to Rule 13-4, which allows the player to smooth sand or soil in a hazard at any time for the sole purpose of caring for the course, A would be entitled, in equity (Rule 1-4), to restore the bunker to its original condition by raking or other means, even if this involves an area covered by Rule 13-2 with respect to his next stroke. The bunker may be restored by anyone. (Revised)

13-4/35.8

Player Deems Ball Unplayable in Bunker, Announces His Intention to Proceed Under Rule 28a Outside Bunker and Then Rakes Bunker on New Line of Play

Q. A player's tee shot comes to rest in a bunker in front of the putting green. He lifts the ball after deeming it unplayable and announces his intention to proceed under Rule 28a. Before walking back to play from the teeing ground again, the player smoothes his footprints in the bunker, which are on his line of play from the teeing ground. He then plays from the teeing ground. What is the ruling?

A. In equity (Rule 1-4), and by analogy to Exception 2 to Rule 13-4, once a player has indicated he will proceed under a Rule that requires him to make his next stroke from outside the hazard, he may smooth sand or soil in the hazard without restriction.

The fact that the smoothing improved the player's line of play for his next stroke from the teeing ground is irrelevant as the right to smooth in these circumstances overrides any conflicting provisions in Rule 13-2.

However, if the player changed his mind and proceeded under Rule 28b or c, he would be in breach of Rule 13-4 if the smoothing of the bunker was not done for the sole purpose of caring for the course or resulted in any area covered by Rule 13-2 with respect to the next stroke being improved. (Revised)

14-2/2

Player Holds Umbrella Over Own Head When Playing Stroke

Q. A player playing in the rain holds an umbrella over his head with one hand while holing a very short putt, gripping the putter with the other hand. Is this permissible?

A. Yes. Rule 14-2a prohibits a player, while making a stroke, from accepting protection from the elements from someone other than himself. However, it does not prohibit him from protecting himself. (Revised)

14-2/2.5

Player Positions Bag for Purpose of Providing Shade for Ball

Q. A player positions his golf bag near the teeing ground for the purpose of blocking the sunlight from the position where he tees his ball. He then makes a stroke. Is he in breach of Rule 14-2?

A. Yes. As the player was not in contact with the golf bag, he accepted protection from the elements in breach of Rule 14-2a. This answer differs from that in Decision 14-2/2 as, in that case, the player was in contact with the umbrella.

While a player may not place an object or position a person for the purpose of blocking the sunlight from his ball, he may ask a person (e.g., a spectator) who is already in position not to move, so that a shadow remains over the ball, or to move, so that his shadow is not over the ball. (Revised)

14-2/3

Caddie Shields Player from Sun During Stroke

Q. May a player's caddie purposely stand between the player and the setting sun so that the sun's glare is not in the player's face while he is playing a stroke?

A. No. Such procedure is a breach of Rule 14-2a. (Revised)

14-3/14

Electronic Instrument Used to Find Ball

Q. A radio-frequency identification chip has been embedded in a golf ball. When used with a special radio receiver, a player may find such a ball readily because the receiver emits a signal that grows louder as the person holding the receiver moves closer to the ball. Is the use of such a ball and receiver permissible?

A. No. Use of such a ball in conjunction with the receiver is a breach of Rule 14-3.

However, use of such a ball without the receiver is permissible, provided the ball conforms to the Rules, the embedded chip has no capability other than identifying the ball and its use is in accordance with any conditions of competition that may have been adopted (e.g., the List of Conforming Golf Balls Condition). (Revised)

14-6/1

Ball Moves in Water in Water Hazard After Stance Taken

Q. A ball was at rest in shallow, rapidly-running water in a water hazard. After the player had carefully entered the water, walked to the ball and taken his stance, the ball moved, presumably due to the current. What is the ruling?

A. When a ball is in water in a water hazard and it is not clear whether the player's actions caused the ball to move, he should be given the benefit of the doubt and no penalty should be applied. However, if the player's actions clearly caused the ball to move, he would be subject to a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2a and required to replace the ball. For example, if a player jumped into the water close to the ball and in so doing created a splash that moved the ball, he would be subject to penalty under Rule 18-2a. (Revised)

16/4

Hole-Liner Not Sunk Deep Enough

Q. Players discover that a hole-liner is not sunk at least one inch below the putting green surface as prescribed in the Definition of "Hole." What should they do?

A. The players should call the matter to the attention of a member of the Committee if one is present. If feasible, the member of the Committee should attempt to have the fault corrected.

However, the players must not discontinue play in the meantime, because correction might not be possible and, if possible, might take considerable time. (Revised)

16-1a/6

Damaged Hole; Procedure for Player

Q. Prior to putting, a player discovers that the hole has been damaged. What is the proper procedure?

A. If the damage is not clearly identifiable as a ball mark, then:

- (a) If the damage is such that the proper dimensions of the hole have not been changed materially, the player should continue play without repairing the hole. If he touches the hole in such circumstances, a breach of Rule 16-1a occurs.
- (b) If the proper dimensions of the hole have been changed materially, the player should request the Committee to have the hole repaired. If a member of the Committee is not readily available, the player may repair the damage, without penalty.

If a player repairs a materially damaged hole when a member of the Committee is readily available, he incurs a penalty for a breach of Rule 16-1a. (Revised)

16-1a/10

Loose Impediments Brushed Along Line of Putt Rather Than to Side

Q. In removing loose impediments from his line of putt by brushing with a putter, a player brushed along the line for about one foot before brushing the impediments to the side. Did the player infringe Rule 16-1?

A. Under Rule 16-1a, a player is allowed to brush aside loose impediments on his line of putt. The casual movement of the putter along the line of putt would not be a breach of the Rules unless in the process the player did something to the putting green that improved his line of putt, (e.g., pressed down a raised tuft of grass), in which case he would be in breach of Rule 13-2. (Revised)

16-1a/13

Line of Putt Damaged Accidentally by Opponent, Fellow-Competitor or Their Caddies

Q. An opponent, fellow-competitor or one of their caddies accidentally steps on and damages the player's line of putt. What is the ruling?

A. There is no penalty. Rule 1-2 is not applicable as the physical conditions were not altered with the intent of affecting the playing of the hole.

In equity (Rule 1-4), the player may have the line of putt restored to its original condition. The player is entitled to the lie and line of putt he had when his ball came to rest. The line of putt may be restored by anyone.

If it is not possible to restore the line of putt, the player would be justified in requesting the Committee to grant relief. If the damage is severe enough, the Committee may declare the area to be ground under repair, in which case the competitor may take relief under Rule 25-1b(iii). (Revised)

16-1a/17

Ball Lifted on Putting Green Placed Ahead of Ball-Marker and Then Moved Back to Original Position

Q. When replacing his ball on the putting green, a player has a habit of placing the ball ahead of his ball-marker and then rolling or sliding the ball to its original position. Is such a procedure permissible?

A. Such a procedure is not recommended but is not a breach of Rule 16-1a,

which permits touching the line of putt in lifting (or replacing) the ball. However, if in the process the player does something to the putting green that improves his line of putt (e.g., presses down a raised tuft of grass), he is in breach of Rule 13-2. (Revised)

16-1b/1

Ball on Putting Green Lifted Because Player Feared Ball Might Move

Q. A player lifted his ball on the putting green under Rule 16-1b, cleaned it and replaced it. As the player approached the ball to make his next stroke, he feared the ball might move. So he lifted the ball again, replaced it and played. What is the ruling?

A. There is no penalty, provided the player marked the position of his ball both times. Rule 16-1b permits the lifting of a ball on the putting green in these circumstances. (Revised)

16-1b/2

Ball Lifted from Putting Green; Ball Replaced While Another Ball in Motion But Then Lifted Because Moving Ball Might Strike It

Q. A's ball comes to rest on the putting green 20 feet from the hole. He marks the position of and lifts his ball so that B, whose ball is also on the putting green, but farther from the hole, can play first. While B's ball is in motion, A replaces his ball. He then realizes that B's ball might strike his ball. A re-marks the position of and lifts his ball to ensure the balls will not collide. What is the ruling?

A. There is no penalty. The replacing and subsequent lifting of A's ball is considered to be an extension of his initial authority to lift the ball under Rule 16-1b, and accordingly the prohibition in that Rule against lifting a ball while another ball is in motion does not apply. Rule 22 does not apply in this case because the ball was initially lifted under Rule 16-1b. (Revised)

16-1b/3

Ball Lifted from Putting Green; Ball Replaced While Another Ball in Motion Subsequently Deflects Ball

Q. A's ball comes to rest on the putting green 20 feet from the hole. He marks the position of and lifts his ball so that B, whose ball is also on the putting green, but farther from the hole, can play first. While B's ball is in motion, A replaces his ball. B's ball strikes A's ball. What is the ruling?

A. If A's action was unintentional (i.e., not for the purpose of deflecting

B's ball), Rule 19-5a applies. There is no penalty to either player since A had lifted his ball and it was not lying on the putting green immediately prior to B's stroke. A must replace his ball, and B must play his ball as it lies.

If A's action was for the purpose of deflecting B's ball, A is in breach of Rule 1-2 (Exerting Influence on Movement of Ball or Altering Physical Conditions). The penalty is loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play, unless the Committee decides to impose a penalty of

disqualification – see the penalty statement under Rule 1-2. In stroke play, B must replay his stroke, without penalty – see Note under Rule 19-1. Rule 16-1b does not apply as this Rule deals with the lifting of a ball on a putting green, but not its placement. (Revised)

17/4

Adjustment of Flagstick; Player's Rights

Q. A player playing from off the putting green and wishing to leave the flagstick in the hole may find that the flagstick is leaning towards his ball (a disadvantage) or away from his ball (an advantage). What are the player's rights in such a situation?

A. The flagstick may be left as it is or centered in the hole, as contemplated by the Definition of "Flagstick."

The flagstick may not be intentionally adjusted to a more favorable position than centered. To do so would infringe Rule 1-2 (Exerting Influence on Movement of Ball or Altering Physical Conditions).

An opponent or fellow-competitor who centers the flagstick incurs no penalty, but the player may have it restored to its original position. (Revised)

17-3/2

Opponent or Fellow-Competitor Attending Flagstick for Player Fails to Remove It; Player's Ball Strikes Flagstick

Q. A's ball lies on the putting green. A requests B, his opponent or fellow-competitor, to attend the flagstick, and B complies. A putts and B fails to remove the flagstick. A's ball strikes the flagstick. What is the ruling?

A. If B failed to remove the flagstick for the purpose of causing A to incur a penalty, B is disqualified, in both match play and stroke play, under Rule 33-7 for taking an action contrary to the spirit of the game. In stroke play, in equity (Rule 1-4), A must replay the stroke without penalty.

If B's failure to remove the flagstick was with the intent to influence the movement of A's ball (e.g., for the purpose of preventing A's ball from going beyond the flagstick), B is in breach of Rule 1-2, and loses the hole in match play or incurs a two-stroke penalty in stroke play, whether the ball strikes the

flagstick or not. In stroke play, if the ball struck the flagstick and as a result A suffered significant advantage or disadvantage, then the Committee could consider B to have committed a serious breach of Rule 1-2, the penalty for which is disqualification. Whether or not B has committed a serious breach of Rule 1-2, in stroke play, if A's ball struck the flagstick, in equity (Rule 1-4), A must replay the stroke without penalty – see Note 2 to Rule 1-2.

If B's failure to remove the flagstick was not deliberate (e.g., the flagstick stuck in the hole-liner or B was distracted and did not see A putt), since B was acting on A's behalf, A incurs a penalty of loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play under Rule 17-3. A must play the ball as it lies. B incurs no penalty. (Revised)

18-2a/9

Ball Lifted Without Authority Dropped Instead of Being Replaced

Q. A player lifted his ball without being entitled to under the Rules and incurred a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2a. He then learned of his error, dropped the ball at the spot from which it was lifted instead of replacing it as required by Rule 18-2a, and played it. What is the ruling?

A. The player failed to replace his ball as required by Rule 18-2a, and therefore incurred a penalty of loss of hole in match play or a total of two strokes in stroke play – see penalty statement under Rule 18. (Revised)

18-2b/3

Ball Moves After Player Has Taken Stance in Bunker

Q. In a bunker, a player's ball moved after he had taken his stance. What is the ruling?

A. If the player's approach to the ball or the act of taking his stance caused the ball to move, the player incurred a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2a and the ball must be replaced. Otherwise, he incurs no penalty. (Revised)

18-2b/4

Ball Moves After Player Grounds Club Short Distance Behind Ball But Before Grounding Club Immediately Behind Ball

Q. A player's routine prior to making a stroke is as follows: he first grounds the club a short distance behind, but not immediately behind the ball. Then, he places the clubhead immediately behind the ball and makes the stroke.

If the ball moves after he grounds the club a short distance behind, but before he grounds it immediately behind, the ball, does he incur a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2b (Ball Moving After Address)?

A. No. A player has not addressed the ball until he has placed the clubhead immediately in front of or behind the ball – see Definition of “Addressing the Ball.”

However, it is a question of fact to be resolved by reference to all available evidence whether the player in fact caused the ball at rest to move. If the player did so, he incurs a one stroke penalty under Rule 18-2a and must replace his ball. Otherwise, the ball must be played from its new location without penalty unless another Rule applies. (Revised)

18-2b/5.5

Placing Clubhead on Ground in Front of Ball When Addressing

Q. A player places his clubhead on the ground immediately in front of the ball without pressing anything down. Before the player grounds the club behind the ball, the ball moves. Has the player “addressed the ball” so that he is subject to penalty under Rule 18-2b?

A. Yes. (Revised)

18-2b/5.7

When Player Who Putts “Side-Saddle” Has Addressed Ball

Q. A player who putts “side-saddle” usually stands directly behind the ball, places the clubhead on the ground immediately behind the ball and aligns the clubhead. The player then moves to the side so as not to infringe Rule 16-1e and makes his stroke. When is the player deemed to have addressed the ball?

A. The player has addressed the ball when he has placed the clubhead on the ground immediately behind the ball regardless of the location of his feet. (Revised)

18-2b/7

Ball Moves After Player Addresses It and Then Steps Away

Q. A player addresses his ball. Realizing that the ball is precariously balanced and may move, he steps away from the ball and starts again. This time he does not address the ball, but before he strikes the ball, it moves. What is the ruling?

A. The player incurs a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2b and the ball must be replaced, unless it is known or virtually certain that something else (e.g., wind) caused the ball to move. (Revised)

18-2b/11

Ball Moved by Another Agency After Address

Q. After a player has addressed his ball in play, some other agency (e.g., a ball played by another player) moves the player's ball. Is the player subject to penalty under Rule 18-2b?

A. No. As it is known or virtually certain that the player did not cause the ball to move, Rule 18-2b does not apply – see Exception under Rule 18-2b. In such a case where an agency directly causes a ball to move, the Rule applicable to that agency (e.g., Rule 18-1, 18-2a, 18-3, 18-4 or 18-5) applies.

The same principle applies if it is known or virtually certain that a ball in play has been moved by wind, water or some other element after the player has addressed it; there is no penalty and the ball must be played from its new location. Gravity is not in itself an element that should be considered when applying the Exception to Rule 18-2b; therefore, unless it is known or virtually certain that some agency other than gravity (e.g., outside agency or wind) caused the ball to move after address, the player is subject to a one stroke penalty under Rule 18-2b and must replace the ball. (Revised)

18-2b/12

Ball Moves After Address and Is Stopped by Player's Club

Q. After a player addresses his ball, the ball moves backward. Before the player can remove his club, the ball is stopped by the clubhead. What is the ruling?

A. The player incurs a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2b and the ball must be replaced. A further penalty under Rule 19-2 (Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped by Player) does not apply in these circumstances, as the act of his clubhead stopping the ball was related to the initial act of his ball moving after address – see Principle 4 of Decision 1-4/12.

If it is known or virtually certain that the player did not cause the ball to move, Rule 18-2b does not apply (see Exception to Rule 18-2b). In such circumstances, the player would incur a one-stroke penalty under Rule 19-2 for accidentally deflecting or stopping his ball in motion with his equipment, and must play the ball as it lies. (Revised)

19-1/4.1

Ball Deliberately Deflected or Stopped Through the Green by Spectator

Q. A player overshoots a green. A spectator (X) who is standing behind the green deliberately deflects or stops the ball. According to the Note to Rule 19-1, the spot where the ball would have come to rest must be estimated.

How does the player estimate the spot in such circumstances?

A. In a case where the ball might have come to rest where X was situated if he had not deliberately deflected or stopped it, the spot where X was situated should be the estimated spot for the purposes of dropping the ball in accordance with the Note. For example, if another spectator (Y) had been behind X, the ball might have struck Y if X had avoided it, and come to rest where X was situated.

If there is no question that the ball would have come to rest somewhere else if X had not deflected or stopped it, a judgment must be made as to where the ball would have come to rest, and the player should be given the benefit of any doubt. For example, if no person or object had been behind X and without any doubt the ball would have come to rest either in a lateral water hazard behind the green or in the rough just short of the hazard, the estimated spot for dropping the ball should be in the rough just short of the hazard. (Revised)

19-1/5

Ball Deliberately Deflected or Stopped on Putting Green by Fellow-Competitor

Q. At the last hole of a stroke-play event, A's ball lies on the putting green. A has a putt to beat B by one stroke. A putts and B, seeing that A's ball might go into the hole, deliberately deflects it. What is the ruling?

A. A must replay his stroke, without penalty – see Note under Rule 19-1. As B's act of deliberately deflecting his fellow-competitor's ball placed A at a significant disadvantage, B should be considered to have committed a serious breach of Rule 1-2 (Exerting Influence on Movement of Ball or Altering Physical Conditions) and should be disqualified. (Revised)

19-2/1

Ball Stopped by Player's Foot Moves When Foot Removed

Q. A player making a stroke on the bank of a bunker hits the ball to the top of the bank. The ball then rolls down the bank and is accidentally stopped by the player's foot. The player removes his foot and the ball rolls into the footprint. What is the ruling?

A. The player incurs a penalty of one stroke (Rule 19-2) and must replace the ball on the spot at which it came to rest against his foot. A further penalty under Rule 18-2a (Ball at Rest Moved by Player) does not apply in these circumstances provided the player replaces the ball, as related acts have resulted in two Rules being breached – see principle 4 in Decision 1-4/12. If the ball is not replaced before the player makes his next stroke,

the failure to replace the ball is considered an unrelated act – see principle 5 in Decision I-4/I12 – and he loses the hole in match play or incurs an additional penalty of two strokes in stroke play under Rule 18-2a, for a total penalty of three strokes. (Revised)

19-2/1.5

Ball Moves Prior to Address and Is Accidentally Stopped by Player's Club; Player Removes Club and Ball Moves Away

Q. A player's ball lies on a steep slope through the green. The player takes his stance but, fearing the ball might move, does not ground his club and so has not addressed the ball. The ball rolls backwards and is stopped accidentally by the player's club. The player then removes his club and the ball rolls farther down the slope. Is the player subject to the penalty of one stroke under Rule 19-2?

A. Yes, and the ball must be replaced on the spot at which it was stopped. A further penalty under Rule 18-2a (Ball at Rest Moved by Player) does not apply in the circumstances provided the player replaces the ball, as related acts have resulted in two Rules being breached – see principle 4 in Decision I-4/I12. If the ball is not replaced before the player makes his next stroke, the failure to replace the ball is considered an unrelated act (see principle 5 in Decision I-4/I12) and he loses the hole in match play or incurs an additional penalty of two strokes in stroke play under Rule 18-2a, for a total penalty of three strokes. (Revised)

20-1/19

Placing Object Marking Position of Ball Other Than Behind Ball

Q. When marking the position of a ball, must the ball-marker be placed behind the ball, or may it also be placed to the side of or in front of the ball?

A. There is no restriction. However, if a player positions his ball-marker in front of the ball on the putting green and in the process does something to the green that improves the line of putt (e.g., presses down a raised tuft of grass), he is in breach of Rule 13-2.

Placing a ball-marker in front of the ball is not recommended but it is not a breach of Rule 16-1a because this Rule permits touching the line of putt in lifting a ball, and marking the position of the ball is part of the lifting process. (Revised)

20-2a/3

Ball Dropped in Improper Manner and in Wrong Place

Q. A player obtaining relief from ground under repair dropped a ball in a manner not conforming with Rule 20-2a and in a wrong place. What is the ruling?

A. If the player corrected the errors before making his next stroke, there was no penalty – Rule 20-6.

If the player failed to correct the errors before making his next stroke:

- (a) In match play, he lost the hole for playing from a wrong place – Rule 20-7b.
- (b) In stroke play, he incurred a penalty of two strokes. Although the player breached both Rule 20-2a for dropping in an improper manner and Rule 25-1b by taking relief in the wrong place and then making a stroke from that wrong place, the player incurs only the two stroke penalty for playing from a wrong place (see Note 3 under Rule 20-7c). (Revised)

20-2a/5

Caddie Holds Back Tree Branch to Prevent Branch from Deflecting Dropped Ball

Q. May a player have his caddie hold back a tree branch that is waist high and situated at the spot at which the player wishes to drop his ball under a Rule?

If the branch is not held back, the dropped ball might lodge in the branch or, in any case, the branch will be likely to deflect the dropped ball.

A. No. Such an act would be a breach of Rule 13-2, which prohibits a player from improving the area in which he is to drop or place a ball by, among other things, moving or bending anything that is growing or fixed. The branch is part of the course in the area in which the player is to drop, and the player must accept that his ball may first strike the branch when proceeding under a Rule that requires the player to drop (see Decision 20-2c/1.3). The player would be in breach of Rule 13-2 at the moment that his caddie moves the branch. The penalty is not avoided if the branch is released prior to the player dropping the ball; the fact that the branch may return to its original location is irrelevant. (Revised)

20-2c/2

Ball Dropped Third Time When Placement Required After Second Drop

Q. A player dropped his ball twice under a Rule and each time the ball rolled nearer the hole. He then dropped the ball a third time instead of placing it as required by Rule 20-2c. What is the ruling?

A. Before making a stroke, the player may lift the ball and place it as prescribed in Rule 20-2c, without penalty (Rule 20-6). If he fails to do so and plays the ball, the player has played from a wrong place and has dropped the ball when it should have been placed. The player incurs a penalty of loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play for playing from the wrong place (Rule 20-2c and Rule 20-7), but there is no additional penalty in stroke play for dropping the ball when Rule 20-2c required it to be placed (see Note 3 to Rule 20-7c). (Revised)

20-2c/4

Caddie Stops Dropped Ball Before It Comes to Rest; When Penalty Incurred

Q. A player's caddie deliberately stops a ball dropped by the player. What is the ruling?

A. There is no penalty if the caddie stops the ball after it has rolled to a position from which the player would be required to re-drop it under Rule 20-2c, provided it is reasonable to assume that the ball would not return to a position at which Rule 20-2c would be inapplicable.

However, if a player's caddie acts prematurely and stops a dropped ball before it has reached such a position, the player incurs a penalty of loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play under Rule 1-2 (see reference to Rule 1-2 under Rule 20-2a). In stroke play, he must play the ball as it lies where it was stopped. If the ball was lifted at the time it was stopped, the ball must be replaced where it was stopped with no additional penalty. In these circumstances, the acts of stopping the ball and lifting the ball are close to one another in terms of time and there are no intervening acts. Accordingly the two acts are related acts and a single penalty (two strokes under Rule 1-2) is appropriate (see Principle 4 in Decision 1-4/12).

The same ruling would apply if the player's ball was deliberately stopped by the player, his partner, his partner's caddie or someone else authorized by the player (e.g., an opponent or fellow-competitor). (Revised)

20-3a/0.5

Whether Player Himself Must Place or Replace Ball

Q. Rule 20-3a provides that, in some instances, a person other than the player may place or replace the player's ball. On the other hand, other Rules, e.g., Rule 12-2, state that the player must place or replace the ball. Does Rule 20-3a override other Rules that imply that the player himself must place or replace the ball?

A. Yes. (Revised)

20-3b/4

Lie of Ball Through the Green Altered; Original Lie of Ball Known But Spot Where Ball Lay Not Determinable

Q. In stroke play, B plays A's ball, which was lying through the green, and in the process removes a divot. The original lie of A's ball was known and has been altered. It is impossible to determine the exact spot where A's ball originally lay. Should A proceed under Rule 20-3b or Rule 20-3c?

A. As A knew the original lie of the ball, Rule 20-3b applies (see Note to Rule 20-3b). The spot where the ball lay will need to be estimated, and a ball must be placed in the nearest lie most similar to the original lie that is not more than one club-length from the estimated spot, not nearer the hole and not in a hazard. (Revised)

20-3b/5

Lie of Ball in Rough Altered by Outside Agency; Original Lie of Ball Not Known and Spot Where Ball Lay Not Determinable

Q. An outside agency accidentally steps on A's ball in tall grass through the green and presses the ball into the ground. The original lie of A's ball was not known, but the lie has clearly been altered. It is impossible to determine the spot where A's ball originally lay. Should A proceed under Rule 20-3b or Rule 20-3c?

A. As A did not know the original lie of the ball, Rule 20-3c applies and the player must drop the ball as near as possible to where it lay but not in a hazard and not on a putting green (see Note to Rule 20-3b). (Revised)

20-3b/6

Lie of Ball in Bunker Altered; Original Lie of Ball Known But Spot Where Ball Lay Not Determinable

Q. At B's request, A has marked the position of and lifted his ball in a bunker under Rule 22-2 as it interfered with B's stroke. B makes his stroke and, in the process, accidentally moves A's ball-marker. The original lie of A's ball was known and has been altered. It is impossible to determine the exact spot where A's ball originally lay. Should A proceed under Rule 20-3b or Rule 20-3c?

A. As A knew the original lie of the ball, Rule 20-3b applies (see Note to Rule 20-3b). The original lie of the ball must be recreated as nearly as possible in its original spot (which will need to be estimated), and the ball must be placed in that lie. (Revised)

20-4/2

Ball Lifted from Putting Green and Placed by Caddie Behind Marker

Q. A player marks the position of his ball on the putting green by placing a coin immediately behind the ball. He lifts the ball and gives it to his caddie to have it cleaned. The caddie then places the ball immediately behind the coin, i.e., not in the ball's original position. Is the ball in play when the caddie places the ball?

A. The answer depends on whether the caddie intended to put the ball into play when he placed it.

If the caddie did not place the ball with the intention of putting it into play (e.g., he positioned the ball to serve as a reference point for reading the line of putt from the other side of the hole), the ball was not in play when so placed. The ball is not considered to be in play until it is repositioned with the intention of replacing the ball as required by Rule 16-1b. If the player made a stroke with his ball while it was out of play, he would be playing a wrong ball (Rule 15-3).

If the caddie placed the ball with the intention of putting it into play, the ball is in play. If the player played the ball that was so placed, he would lose the hole in match play and in stroke play would incur a penalty of two strokes for playing from a wrong place (Rules 16-1b and 20-7). In stroke play, there would be no additional penalty for the ball having been replaced by a person not permitted to do so by Rule 20-3a (see Note 3 to Rule 20-7c).

If the caddie had placed the ball on the original spot, the presumption is that he intended to put it into play unless there is strong evidence to the contrary. (Revised)

22/7

Ball Assisting Fellow-Competitor on Putting Green; Procedure for Referee If Competitor Does Not Lift Ball

Q. In stroke play, a competitor's ball is in a position to assist the play of a fellow-competitor and the competitor is in a position to lift the ball under Rule 22-1 without delaying the fellow-competitor's play. However, the competitor does not take any action to invoke the Rule. Would a referee be justified in intervening and requesting the competitor to invoke the Rule to protect himself and the rest of the field?

A. Yes. If the competitor were to object, there would be strong evidence of an agreement not to lift the ball for the purpose of assisting the fellow-competitor in breach of Rule 22-1. The referee would be justified in so advising the competitors involved and warning that failure to lift the ball would result in disqualification under Rule 22-1. (Revised)

23-1/10

Removal of Loose Impediments Affecting Player's Play

Q. A player with a downhill putt picks up loose impediments between his ball and the hole but leaves some behind the hole. An opponent or fellow-competitor removes loose impediments behind the hole that might have served as a backstop for the player's ball. What is the ruling?

A. In equity (Rule 1-4), the player is entitled, but not required, to replace the loose impediments.

The opponent or fellow-competitor is permitted to remove the loose impediments by Rule 23-1, and accordingly he is not in breach of Rule 1-2 (see Exception 1 to Rule 1-2). However, if the opponent or fellow-competitor has refused to comply with a request from the player not to remove the loose impediments, the opponent loses the hole (see Decision 2/3) or the fellow-competitor is disqualified (Rule 3-4) for intentionally denying the player's right to have the loose impediments left in position.

The same principles apply to the removal of a movable obstruction in similar circumstances. (Revised)

24-2b/17

Obstruction Interferes with Abnormal Stroke; Abnormal Stroke Reasonable in Circumstances

Q. A right-handed player's ball is so close to a boundary fence on the left of a hole that the player, in order to play towards the hole, must play left-handed. In making a left-handed stroke, the player's backswing would be interfered with by an immovable obstruction. Is the player entitled to relief from the obstruction?

A. The player is entitled to relief since use of an abnormal (left-handed) stroke is reasonable in the circumstances – see Exception under Rule 24-2b.

The proper procedure is for the player to take relief for a left-handed stroke in accordance with Rule 24-2b(i).

The player may then use a normal right-handed swing for his next stroke. If the obstruction interferes with the swing or stance for the right-handed stroke, the player may take relief for the right-handed stroke in accordance with Rule 24-2b(i). (Revised)

24-2b/18

Obstruction Interferes with Abnormal Stroke; Abnormal Stroke Not Reasonable in Circumstances

Q. A right-handed player's ball is in a poor lie. A nearby immovable obstruction would not interfere with a normal right-handed swing but it

would interfere with a left-handed swing. The player says he wishes to make his next stroke left-handed and, since the obstruction would interfere with such a stroke, he is entitled to proceed under Rule 24-2b. May the player invoke Rule 24-2b?

A. No. If the only reason for the player to use a left-handed stroke is to escape a poor lie, use of an abnormal (left-handed) stroke is clearly unreasonable and the player is not entitled to invoke Rule 24-2b – see Exception under Rule 24-2b. (Revised)

24-2b/19

Stroke at Ball Impracticable Due to Interference by Immovable Obstruction and Casual Water

Q. A player's ball lies against an immovable obstruction in casual water. It is clearly impracticable for him to make a stroke because of interference by either of them. The Exceptions to Rule 24-2b and Rule 25-1b appear to preclude free relief from either because of interference by the other. Is this correct?

A. No. The player may take relief without penalty under either Rule 24-2b or Rule 25-1b. The purpose of the Exception to each of these Rules is to prevent the player from fortuitously obtaining free relief when it is clearly impracticable for him to make a stroke because of interference by something from which free relief is not available. (Revised)

25-1b/19

Ball Lies on Mound Made by Burrowing Animal; Impracticable to Make Stroke Due to Bush

Q. A player's ball lies under a bush and it is clearly impracticable for the player to make a stroke at it. However, the ball lies on a mound made by a burrowing animal. Is the player entitled to relief without penalty under Rule 25-1b?

A. Under the Exception to Rule 25-1b a player may not obtain relief from an abnormal ground condition if it is clearly impracticable for him to make a stroke due to interference by something other than such a condition. Therefore, in the circumstances described, the player is not entitled to relief. (Revised)

25-1b/20

Stance Interfered with by Burrowing Animal Hole; Impracticable to Make Stroke Because of Other Condition

Q. A player's ball is in an indentation at the base of a tree in such a position that it is clearly impracticable for him to make a stroke. Despite this, the player claims relief without penalty under Rule 25-1 because his stance for a stroke at the ball in the indentation would be on a burrowing animal hole. Is the player entitled to relief without penalty under Rule 25-1b?

A. Under the Exception to Rule 25-1b a player may not obtain relief from an abnormal ground condition if it is clearly impracticable for him to make a stroke due to interference by something other than such a condition. In the circumstances described above, the player's ball is unplayable as it lies in an indentation at the base of a tree. Therefore, the player is not entitled to relief under Rule 25-1 from the burrowing animal hole. (Revised)

25-1b/25.5

Application of Exception to Rule 25-1b When Ball Lies Underground in Burrowing Animal Hole

Q. Through the green, a player's ball comes to rest underground in a hole made by a burrowing animal. A large bush is immediately next to and overhanging the entrance to the hole. Given the Exception to Rule 25-1b, is the player entitled to relief without penalty from the burrowing animal hole?

A. For the purpose of applying the Exception to Rule 25-1b, a ball lying underground in a burrowing animal hole is deemed to lie at the entrance to the hole. If the nature of the area surrounding the entrance to the hole is such that it is clearly impracticable for the player to make a stroke at a ball lying at any part of the entrance to the hole (e.g., because of the overhanging bush), the player is not entitled to relief without penalty under Rule 25-1b. Otherwise, the player is entitled to relief without penalty under Rule 25-1b.

If the ball lies in a hole, but is not underground, it is the position of the ball, rather than the entrance to the hole, which is relevant in determining whether the Exception to Rule 25-1b applies. (Revised)

26/6

Ball Assumed to Be in Water Hazard Found Outside Hazard After Another Ball Played Under Stroke-and-Distance Procedure

Q. A player assumes his original ball to be in a water hazard, despite the absence of knowledge or virtual certainty to that effect. Using the option in Rule 26-1a, he plays another ball at the spot from which the original ball was played. He then finds his original ball outside the hazard. What is the ruling?

A. The original ball is lost and the other ball is in play under penalty of stroke and distance – see Rule 27-1a and the Definition of “Lost Ball.” (Revised)

26-1/4

Ball Played Under Water Hazard Rule Without Knowledge or Virtual Certainty That Original Ball in Hazard; Original Ball Then Found in Hazard

Q. A player’s ball carried over a water hazard into some trees. It could not be determined whether the ball bounced back into the hazard or came to rest in the trees. Therefore, it was neither known nor virtually certain that the ball was in the hazard.

The player did not search for his original ball. He assumed that it was in the hazard, dropped a ball behind the hazard at a spot that conformed to Rule 26-1b and played that ball onto the green. As he was walking to the green, he found his original ball in the hazard. What is the ruling?

A. The first paragraph of Rule 26-1 states in part: “In the absence of knowledge or virtual certainty that a ball struck towards a water hazard, but not found, is in the hazard, the player must proceed under Rule 27-1.” Therefore, the player was not entitled to assume that his original ball was in the hazard and the fact that it was subsequently found in the hazard is irrelevant. When the player dropped and played another ball behind the hazard, it became the ball in play and the original ball was lost. The player was required to proceed under Rule 27-1. In playing the ball dropped under Rule 26-1b, he played from a wrong place.

In match play, he incurred a penalty of loss of hole (Rule 20-7b).

In stroke play, he incurred the stroke-and-distance penalty prescribed by Rule 27-1 and an additional penalty of two strokes for a breach of that Rule (Rule 20-7c). If the breach was a serious one, he was subject to disqualification unless he corrected the error as provided in Rule 20-7c. (Revised)

30-3f/4

Wrong Information Given by Player Out of Contention in Four-Ball Match

Q. A and B are playing C and D in a four-ball match, and the situation is as follows:

- A’s ball is on the green; he lies 3.
- B’s ball is in a bunker; he lies 5 and it is his turn to play.
- C’s ball is on the green; he lies 4.
- D has picked up.

B causes his ball in the bunker to move and incurs a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2a. B does not inform anyone that he has incurred a penalty stroke. B then replaces his ball and plays onto the green.

A then holes out for a 5 and C does likewise.

B is disqualified for the hole under Rule 9-2 for failing to inform C or D, before C played his next stroke, that he (B) had incurred a penalty stroke. Is A also disqualified for the hole under Rule 30-3f on the ground that B's failure to inform C or D of his (B's) penalty stroke adversely affected C's play?

A. No. B was clearly out of contention, and the result of the hole was dependent upon A and C alone. Accordingly, B's failure to inform C or D about the penalty could not have adversely affected C's play. (Revised)

30-3f/13

Partner Stands on Extension of Player's Line of Play Behind Ball

Q. A and B are partners in a four-ball competition. A's ball is on the putting green 30 feet from the hole, and B's ball is 20 feet from the hole on a similar line. To assist him with his own putt, B stands on an extension of the line of putt behind A's ball while A putts. What is the ruling?

A. A was in breach of Rule 14-2b by putting with his partner, B, positioned on or close to an extension of the line of putt behind the ball. As A's breach assisted B, B also incurred the same penalty (Rules 30-3f and 31-8).

In match play, Side A-B loses the hole.

In stroke play, A incurs a penalty of two strokes and B incurs the same penalty. (Revised)

31-2/1

Absent Player Joins Partner After Fellow-Competitor Plays from Teeing Ground But Before Partner Plays

Q. In four-ball stroke play, A and B are playing with C and D. They have been given a starting time of 9:00 am. D arrives at 9:01 am after A has played but before B and C have played. May D play the first hole?

A. D was late for his starting time and as such, D may play the first hole, adding the penalty of two strokes prescribed by Rule 6-3a to his score for that hole. Rule 31-2 allows an absent player to join his partner before his partner has commenced play of a hole. As C had not yet played from the teeing ground, D may join him.

If D did not arrive until later in the round, he would be able to join his partner between holes without penalty, provided C had not yet played from the next tee, regardless of whether A and/or B had played. (Revised)

33-7/5

Play of Wrong Ball Not Rectified on Advice of Referee

Q. In stroke play, a competitor plays two strokes on the 14th hole and then plays a wrong ball for what he believed to be his third stroke. He plays a total of four strokes with the wrong ball, holing out with it. He then discovers the error. Before teeing off at the 15th, he asks a referee as to the procedure. The referee told the competitor to proceed and consult the Committee when the round was completed, instead of telling him to rectify the error as prescribed in Rule 15-3b.

Should the competitor be disqualified as prescribed in Rule 15-3b?

A. No. In the circumstances, the competitor should incur a penalty of two strokes for a breach of Rule 15-3b. The disqualification penalty that he also incurred under that Rule should be waived by the Committee under Rule 33-7, since the competitor's failure to correct his mistake was due to the error of the referee.

Generally, strokes played with a wrong ball do not count in the competitor's score. However, in this case such strokes must be counted. Otherwise, the competitor would not have a score for the hole. In equity (Rule 1-4), his score for the hole would be 8: the two strokes he played with his ball, the two penalty strokes for playing a wrong ball and the four strokes he played with the wrong ball. (Revised)

33-8/4

Local Rule for Events in Which Motorized Golf Carts Permitted

Q. A competition involving stroke play qualifying followed by match play is to be held. Motorized golf carts will be permitted. Play will be in couples. There are enough carts available to provide each couple with a cart. No caddies will be available. Should a Local Rule clarifying the status of the carts be made?

A. It is suggested that the following Local Rule be adopted:

"A motorized cart is part of the player's equipment:

- (1) When one cart is shared by two players, the cart and everything in it are deemed to be the equipment of the player whose ball is involved except that, when the cart is being moved by one of the players, the cart and everything in it are deemed to be the equipment of that player.
- (2) A player or players using a cart may appoint someone to drive the cart, in which case the driver is considered to be the caddie of the player or players.
- (3) Use of a cart by anyone other than the player or players using it or the appointed driver is prohibited. Any player allowing unauthorized use

of his cart is subject to penalty as follows:

Match play – At the conclusion of the hole at which the breach is discovered, the state of the match shall be adjusted by deducting one hole for each hole at which a breach occurred. Maximum deduction per round: two holes.

Stroke play – Two strokes for each hole at which any breach occurred; maximum penalty per round: four strokes (two strokes at each of the first two holes at which any breach occurred).

Match play or stroke play – If a breach is discovered between the play of two holes, it is deemed to have been discovered during play of the next hole, and the penalty must be applied accordingly.

In either form of play – Use of any unauthorized automotive vehicle must be discontinued immediately upon discovering that a breach has occurred. Otherwise, the player is disqualified.”

If some caddies are available, it is suggested that they be assigned in an equitable way and that the above suggested Local Rule be adopted with item (2) amended to read as follows:

“A player or players using a cart may appoint someone to drive the cart if no caddie is available, in which case the driver is considered to be the caddie of the player or players.” (Revised)

34-3/1.5

Committee Error and Scoring in Stroke Play

A player is responsible for knowing the Rules (Rule 6-1), but there may be situations, immediately before and during a stipulated round, when an official representative of the Committee provides the player with incorrect information on the Rules. The player is entitled to act on such information in his subsequent play. Consequently, the Committee may be required to make a judgment as to both the duration of the player’s entitlement and his proper score when, as a result of proceeding according to the incorrect information provided by the official, he is liable to a penalty under the Rules.

In these situations, the Committee should resolve the matter in whatever manner it considers most equitable, in light of all the facts and with the objective of ensuring that no player receives an undue advantage or disadvantage. In cases where the incorrect information significantly affects the results of the competition, the Committee may have no option but to cancel the round. The following principles, in equity (Rule 1-4), are applicable:

1. General Guidance on the Rules

When a member of the Committee or a referee provides incorrect information in the nature of general guidance about the Rules, the player should not be exempt from penalty.

2. Specific Ruling

When a referee makes a specific ruling that is contrary to the Rules

in a specific situation, the player should be exempt from penalty. The Committee has the authority to extend this exemption for the duration of the round in circumstances where the player proceeds incorrectly on his own in exactly the same manner as advised by a referee earlier in the round. However, that exemption would cease if, in that round, the player becomes aware of the proper procedure or has his actions questioned.

3. Guidance on Local Rules or Conditions of Competition

When a member of the Committee or a referee gives incorrect information on whether a Local Rule or condition of the competition is in effect, the player should be exempt from penalty for acting on that information. This exemption should be for the duration of the round unless corrected earlier, in which case, the exemption should cease at that point.

4. Equipment Ruling

When a member of the Committee or a referee rules that a non-conforming club is conforming, the player should be exempt from penalty for carrying or using the club. This exemption should be for the duration of the competition unless corrected earlier, in which case, the exemption should cease at the completion of the round during which the correction was made. (Revised)

34-3/2

Committee Does Not Penalize Player in Breach of Pace of Play Condition Believing Player Had Already Lost Hole

Q. In a match between A and B, a pace of play condition was in effect. During play of the 10th hole, B was observed by a referee to breach the pace of play condition. The referee did not advise either player of the loss of hole penalty because he mistakenly believed that A had won the hole. During play of the 14th hole, another referee began to monitor the match's pace of play and informed B that he had previously breached the pace of play condition on the 10th hole. The referee also indicated that neither player was advised of the breach and the resulting loss of hole penalty because it was thought that A had already won the hole. The players indicated that A did not win the 10th hole and that the hole was halved. What is the ruling?

A. The result of the 10th hole stands as played. The first referee erred in failing to impose the loss of hole penalty for B's breach of the pace of play condition and it may not be imposed after either player has played from the 11th tee. A was not given wrong information by B and could not therefore make a later claim when the referee's error came to his attention (Rule 2-5). (Revised)

34-3/3

Player in Match Makes Stroke from Wrong Place Due to Incorrect Ruling; Procedure for Player When Error is Discovered

Q. In a match, a player obtains a ruling from a referee and proceeds on the basis of that ruling, which involves dropping a ball and playing from a wrong place. The Committee then learns of the incorrect ruling by the referee. Should the Committee require the player to disregard the stroke or strokes made after the incorrect ruling and proceed correctly?

A. Unless a serious breach is involved or the player has been seriously disadvantaged due to his playing from a wrong place, the ruling may not be reversed or corrected once the player has made the stroke from the wrong place.

If a serious breach is involved or the player has been seriously disadvantaged due to playing from a wrong place, in equity (Rule 1-4), the error must be corrected by the Committee up to the point where an opponent makes his next stroke on the hole concerned. If an opponent does not make a stroke on the hole after the ruling was given, the incorrect ruling may be corrected before either player makes a stroke from the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole of the match, before the result of the match is officially announced. Therefore, even if, for example, the player has conceded the opponent's next stroke and the opponent has lifted his ball, the Committee should direct the player to proceed correctly and the opponent to replace his ball, without penalty. If it is too late to correct the error, the strokes made after the incorrect ruling must stand with no penalty. (Revised)

34-3/3.3

Competitor in Stroke Play Makes Stroke from Wrong Place Due to Incorrect Ruling; Procedure for Competitor When Error is Discovered

Q. In stroke play, a competitor obtains a ruling from a referee and proceeds on the basis of that ruling, which involves dropping a ball and playing from a wrong place. The Committee then learns of the incorrect ruling by the referee. Should the Committee require the competitor to disregard the stroke or strokes made after the incorrect ruling and proceed correctly?

A. Unless a serious breach is involved or the competitor has been seriously disadvantaged due to his playing from a wrong place, the strokes made after the incorrect ruling must stand with no penalty.

If a serious breach is involved or the competitor has been seriously disadvantaged due to his playing from a wrong place, and the competitor has not played from the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole of the round, has not left the putting green, in equity (Rule 1-4), the Committee

must correct the error. The Committee must direct the competitor to cancel the stroke made from the wrong place and any subsequent strokes and proceed correctly. The competitor incurs no penalty for playing from a wrong place. If it is too late to correct the error, the strokes made after the incorrect ruling must stand with no penalty. (Revised)

34-3/3.5

Player Lifts Ball Without Authority Due to Misunderstanding Referee's Instructions

Q. A player's ball comes to rest against a movable obstruction and he seeks relief. A referee correctly advises him that he may remove the obstruction under Rule 24-1 and that he should mark the position of the ball in case it moves during the removal of the obstruction. The player marks the position of the ball and lifts it before the referee can stop him. The player was under the misapprehension that, having been requested to mark the position of the ball, he was entitled to lift it before the obstruction was removed. Should the player be penalized under Rule 18-2a in these circumstances?

A. No. Provided the referee is satisfied that the player misunderstood the instruction, the ball should be replaced without penalty. (Revised)

34-3/3.7

Player Incorrectly Advised to Continue with Provisional Ball

Q. In stroke play, a competitor's tee shot is struck towards an area of trees, bushes and tall grass. Believing his ball might be lost outside a water hazard, the player announces his intention to play a provisional ball and plays a ball from the tee. When he arrives at the area, he finds that his ball is in a lateral water hazard. A referee incorrectly tells the competitor that a provisional ball is not allowed in such circumstances and, therefore, the second ball has become the ball in play under penalty of stroke and distance. The competitor continues with the second ball, taking three additional strokes to finish the hole, and plays from the next tee. The Committee then learns of this incorrect ruling. What score should it assign to the player for the hole?

A. As the competitor played the second ball from the tee in the belief that his original ball might have been lost outside a water hazard, that ball was a provisional ball, and the competitor should have abandoned it and continued with the original ball (Rule 27-2c).

By directing the competitor to continue with the provisional ball, the referee had the player play a wrong ball. However, the competitor incurs no penalty under Rule 15-3b for playing a wrong ball as he did so at the instruction of a referee.

The Committee should determine that the competitor's score for the hole is 4: his tee shot with the original ball plus the three strokes made with the wrong ball after the incorrect ruling. However, if it would have been clearly unreasonable for the competitor to play the original ball as it lay in the water hazard, he must, in equity (Rule 1-4), add one penalty stroke under Rule 26-1 to his score. (Revised)

34-3/7

Player Proceeds on Basis of Ruling; Subsequent Facts Prove Ruling to Be Incorrect

Q. A player believes his ball in play may have moved after he addressed it and asks for a ruling from a referee. Based on the evidence available at the time, the referee determines that the ball did not move and instructs the player to play the ball as it lies without penalty. After the player plays, the referee becomes aware of evidence that indicates that the ball had in fact moved. What is the ruling?

A. As the ball moved after the player had addressed it, he was required to replace the ball with a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2b. When he failed to do so, he played from a wrong place. As he did so at the instruction of a referee, he does not incur the general penalty under Rule 18 for playing from a wrong place. However, he does incur the penalty stroke under Rule 18-2b as the ball had moved after address before the ruling from the referee. The player must continue with the ball played from the wrong place. (Revised)

34-3/8

Player Proceeds on Basis of Ruling; Player's Version of Facts Subsequently Found to Be Incorrect

Q. A player's ball in play moves, and the player asks for a ruling from a referee. When asked, the player informs the referee that he had not addressed the ball. As the player had done nothing else to cause the ball to move, the referee instructs the player to play the ball from its new location without penalty. After the player plays, the referee becomes aware that the player had in fact addressed the ball. What is the ruling?

A. As the ball moved after the player had addressed it, he was required to replace the ball with a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2b. When he failed to do so, he played from a wrong place and loses the hole in match play or incurs a penalty of two strokes in stroke play under Rule 18.

The player must continue with the ball played from the wrong place except that, in stroke play, if a serious breach is involved and the player has not yet played from the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole of the round, before the player leaves the putting green, the referee must

require the player to cancel the stroke made with the ball from the wrong place and any subsequent strokes and play from the original location of the ball.

The imposition of the general penalty in this situation is different from the ruling in Decision 34-3/7 in that, in this case, the player provided the incorrect information that led to the incorrect ruling. The player is responsible for providing the correct facts to the referee and is subject to penalty under the applicable Rule if his incorrect version of the facts led to his playing from a wrong place. (Revised)

34-3/9

Resolution of Questions of Fact; Referee and Committee Responsibility

Resolving questions of fact is among the most difficult actions required of a referee, or the Committee as a whole. For example, these situations include a broad array of incidents such as determining whether a player caused a ball to move (Decisions 18/10, 18-2a/30 and 18-2a/30.5), whether a player played from outside the teeing ground (Decision 34-3/4), whether a stroke was made (Decision 14/1.5), the hole at which a wrong ball was played (Decision 15-1/3) and the state of a match (Decision 34-3/5).

In all situations involving questions of fact, resolution of the doubt must be made in light of all the relevant circumstances and evaluation of the weight of the evidence, including the balance of probabilities where applicable (Decision 15-1/3). When the Committee is unable to determine the facts to its satisfaction, it must resolve the matter in the fairest way (Decision 34-3/5).

Testimony of the players involved is important and must be given due consideration. In some situations where the facts are not decisive, the doubt should be resolved in favor of the player (Decisions 15-1/2 and 19-1/4.1); in others, the doubt should be resolved against the player (Decision 13-4/35.5 and 21/3). There is no hard-and-fast rule for evaluating the testimony of the players or for assigning the weight to be given to such testimony and each situation must be treated on its own merits. The proper action depends on the circumstances in each case and must be left to the judgment of the referee, or the Committee as a whole.

Testimony of those who are not a part of the competition, including spectators, must be accepted and evaluated (Decision 27/12). It is also appropriate to use television footage and the like to assist in resolving doubt.

It is important that any questions of fact be resolved in a timely manner such that the competition may proceed in an orderly way. Thus, the referee may be limited to evaluating the evidence available to him in a timely manner. Any such ruling is always subject to further review by the referee, or Committee as a whole as additional evidence becomes available.

If a judgment is made by a referee, the player is entitled to proceed on

the basis of that ruling whether it is an interpretation of the Rules of Golf (Decision 34-3/1.5) or a resolution of a question of fact (Decision 34-3/7). In situations arising in both circumstances, if the ruling is found to be incorrect, the Committee may have the authority to make a correction (Decisions 34-3/1 and 34-3/7). However, in all circumstances, including both match play and stroke play, the referee or Committee is limited in its ability to make corrections by the guidance contained in Decisions 34-2/5, 34-2/6, 34-2/7, 34-3/3 and 34-3/3.3. (Revised)