

REVISED DECISIONS

- 1-3/2 **Agreement to Concede Short Putts**
Answer expanded to clarify that players must be aware that they are agreeing to waive a Rule in order to be in breach of Rule 1-3.
- 1-4/12 **Player Breaches Rules More Than Once; Whether Multiple Penalties Should Be Applied**
Principles amended for clarity and additional examples added.
- 4-1/1 **Groove and Punch Mark Specifications Effective January 1, 2010 Including Condition of Competition**
New first paragraph added for clarity.
- 4-3/2 **Meaning of “Repair”**
Expanded to clarify that the term “repair” contemplates the club being comprised of the same grip, shaft and clubhead after the repair as it had prior to the damage occurring.
- 4-4a/5 **Competitor Inadvertently Uses and Thereafter Carries Fellow-Competitor’s Club**
Expanded to address the case where the competitor continues to carry his fellow-competitor’s club after using it in error.
- 4-4a/6 **Excess Club Put in Player’s Golf Bag**
Amended to provide clarification on when a player is penalized after a club is added to his bag by mistake by another player prior to starting the round.
- 4-4a/15 **Assembly of Club Components During Stipulated Round**
Expanded for clarity.
- 8-1/2 **Exchanging Distance Information**
Second paragraph deleted in view of the introduction of new Decision 14-3/0.7.
- 9-3/1 **Competitor in Hole-by-Hole Play-Off Gives Wrong Information**
Amended so that a competitor does not incur a penalty for lifting his ball as a result of being provided wrong information by his fellow-competitor during a stroke-play hole-by-hole play-off.
- 13-2/32 **Improving Line of Play by Removing Stone from Wall**
Expanded to clarify why individual stones may not be removed from a stone wall.
- 15-3b/2 **Play of Two Different Wrong Balls Between Strokes with Ball in Play**
Amended to provide for a penalty of four strokes and to reference Decisions 1-4/12 and 1-4/13.
- 17-2/2 **Flagstick Attended by Opponent or Fellow-Competitor Without Authority While Player’s Ball in Motion**
Expanded to clarify when it is deemed that removing the flagstick “might have influenced the movement of the ball” in breach of Rule 17-2.

- 19-2/10 **Ball Stopped or Deflected by Rake Held by Player's Caddie**
Amended to provide that the player is penalized under Rule 19-2.
- 20-2b/2 **Measuring Club-Lengths**
Expanded to clarify that a player may not measure through a natural undulation of the ground.
- 20-3b/8 **Loose Impediment Affecting Lie of Ball Moved**
Answer expanded to clarify that, although loose impediments may affect the lie of the ball, they are not part of the lie.
- 20-7c/3 **Ball Believed to Be Lost in Bunker; Competitor Drops Another Ball in Bunker and Plays It; Original Ball Then Found Outside Bunker**
Answer amended to clarify that the ball was in play when it was dropped.
- 21/1 **Removing Paint from Ball**
Amended to refer to paint rather than lime.
- 26-1/1 **Meaning of "Known or Virtually Certain"**
Expanded to further clarify the term "virtual certainty."
- 27/17 **Competitor Plays Out of Turn Other Than from Teeing Ground and Puts Another Ball into Play at Spot of Previous Stroke**
Answer amended to refer to the Definition of "Lost Ball."
- 30-2/1 **Player Plays Out of Turn from Tee in Three-Ball Match**
Amended for clarity.
- 33-7/4.5 **Competitor Unaware of Penalty Returns Wrong Score; Whether Waiving or Modifying Disqualification Penalty Justified**
Amended to provide for exceptional circumstances where a Committee would be justified in waiving the penalty of disqualification under Rule 6-6d for returning a score lower than that actually taken due to failure to include a penalty that the competitor did not know he had incurred.
- 33-8/27 **Local Rule Providing Relief Without Penalty from Bunker Filled with Casual Water**
Expanded to provide recommended wording for the Local Rule.

1-3/2

Agreement to Concede Short Putts

Q. In a match, the two players agree in advance to concede all putts within a specified length. Is this agreement contrary to Rule 1-3?

A. In order to be in breach of Rule 1-3 for agreeing to waive a Rule, players must be aware that they are doing so. Therefore, the answer depends on whether the players knew that Rule 2-4 only allows the concession of the "next stroke" and does not permit them to agree in advance to concede putts within a specified length.

If the players were unaware that the Rules prevented them from agreeing to concede putts in this manner, there is no penalty under Rule 1-3.

If the players were aware that they were excluding the operation of a Rule then they are disqualified under Rule 1-3. (Revised)

1-4/12

Player Breaches Rules More Than Once; Whether Multiple Penalties Should Be Applied

Situations arise prior to or as a result of a stroke in which a player breaches a single Rule more than once, or breaches separate Rules, in a single act or in different but sequential acts. The question arises whether it is appropriate to apply a penalty to each separate breach.

The Rules expressly provide that multiple penalties are not to be applied in certain situations (e.g., Rules 15-2, 18, 20-7 and 21). However, there are many other situations where multiple breaches of the Rules may occur and the Rules themselves do not expressly specify whether a penalty should be applied to each separate breach. In such cases, equity (Rule 1-4) applies, and the following principles should be used:

1. One Act Results in One Rule Being Breached More Than Once – Single Penalty Applied

Example: In stroke play, a competitor's ball on the putting green strikes a fellow-competitor's ball in breach of Rule 19-5a and then strikes another fellow-competitor's ball, also in breach of Rule 19-5a. The ruling would be a single two-stroke penalty.

2. One Act Results in Two Rules Being Breached – Single Penalty Applied

Example: In stroke play, a competitor is considering putting his ball from a bunker and rakes a footprint in the bunker on his line of play. Both Rule 13-2 and Rule 13-4a have been breached. The ruling would be a single two-stroke penalty.

3. Related Acts Result in One Rule Being Breached More Than Once – Single Penalty Applied

Example 1: In stroke play, a competitor takes several practice swings in a hazard, touching the ground each time. The practice swings are related acts breaching a single Rule. The ruling would be a single two-stroke penalty under Rule 13-4b (see Decision 13-4/3 but also see Principle 6 Example 3).

Example 2: A and B are fellow-competitors playing a par three hole. B is to play first and A asks B whether it is best to play for the center of the green or to play for the flagstick and B advises that it is best to play for the center of the green. A then asks what club B is going to use. B says he will hit a six iron. After B's stroke, which fell short of the green, A asks B if he had hit it well and B confirms that he did. A then hit his shot. The ruling is that both competitors incur a single two-stroke penalty under

Rule 8-1 for seeking or giving three related pieces of information all of which might assist A in his choice of club for his next stroke and the way to play it (But see also Principle 6 Example 2).

4. Related Acts Result in Two Rules Being Breached – Single Penalty Applied

Example 1: In stroke play, a competitor is considering putting his ball from a bunker and rakes several footprints in the bunker on his line of play. Both Rule 13-2 and Rule 13-4a have been breached multiple times by related acts. The ruling would be a single two-stroke penalty.

Example 2: In stroke play, a competitor's ball moves prior to address and, while it is in motion, it is accidentally stopped by the competitor's club in breach of Rule 19-2 and comes to rest against it. The competitor then moves the club, as a result of which his ball moves – a breach of Rule 18-2a. These related acts would result in a single one-stroke penalty (see Decision 19-2/1.5).

5. Unrelated Acts Result in Two Rules Being Breached – Multiple Penalties Applied

Example 1: In stroke play, a competitor (1) touches the ground in a hazard with his club while taking practice swings in a hazard and (2) improves his line of play by bending a shrub with his hand. The ruling would be a two-stroke penalty under Rule 13-4 (touching the ground in a hazard with his club) and a further penalty of two strokes under Rule 13-2 (for the unrelated act of improving his line of play by moving something growing), giving a total penalty of four strokes (see Decision 13-4/28).

Example 2: Under Example 2 in Principle 4 above, if the ball is not replaced before the competitor makes his next stroke, the failure to replace the ball is an unrelated act and the competitor incurs an additional penalty of two strokes under Rule 18-2a.

6. Unrelated Acts Result in One Rule Being Breached More Than Once – Multiple Penalties Applied

Example 1: In stroke play, a competitor (1) purposely steps on another player's line of putt with the intention of improving the line, and then (2) purposely stops his own ball in motion after it began moving without apparent cause before address. As the two acts were unrelated, the ruling would be two separate penalties, each of two strokes, for breaches of Rule 1-2, giving a total penalty of four strokes.

Example 2: A and B are fellow-competitors waiting for the green to clear at a par three hole. A, who has been hitting all his iron shots right of target, asks B if his (A's) alignment has been wrong. B confirms that A's alignment has been wrong. After the green clears A asks B what club B is going to play. B does not answer. The ruling would be that A and B both incur a two-stroke penalty for asking for and giving advice about A's alignment (advice on the method of making a stroke). A incurs an additional two-stroke penalty for asking for information from B, which

might assist A with his choice of club. Although both requests by A are breaches of the same Rule (Rule 8-1) their character is sufficiently different to warrant two separate penalties.

Example 3: Under Example 1 in Principle 3 above, the competitor then makes a stroke and fails to get the ball out of the hazard. He makes two more practice swings in the hazard, again touching the ground each time. The ruling would be two separate two-stroke penalties under Rule 13-4b. The link between the acts was broken by the competitor's intervening stroke (see also Decision 1-4/14).

For the purposes of this Decision:

- in making the judgment whether two acts are related or unrelated, the Committee should consider, among other things, the similarity of the acts, how close to one another they are in terms of time and location and whether there were any intervening events;
- each principal subsection of a Rule is considered a separate Rule (e.g., Rules 1-2, 1-3 and 1-4 are considered separate Rules); and
- the following sub-subsections (but only these ones) are also considered separate Rules: 4-3a, 4-3b, 13-4a, 13-4b, 13-4c, 14-2a, 14-2b, 16-1a, 16-1b, 16-1c, 16-1d, 16-1e, 16-1f, 17-3a, 17-3b, 17-3c, 18-2a and 18-2b.
(Revised)

4-1/1

Groove and Punch Mark Specifications Effective January 1, 2010 Including Condition of Competition

All new models of clubs manufactured on or after January 1, 2010 must conform to the groove and punch mark specifications described in Appendix II 5c. However, Ping Eye2 irons manufactured before March 31, 1990 with a groove spacing to groove width ratio of 2.3 to 1 are permitted for play under the Rules of Golf, even in certain competitions when the Condition Requiring Clubs Conforming with Groove and Punch Mark Specifications Effective January 1, 2010 is in effect (see below).

A Committee that wishes to limit players to clubs manufactured with grooves and/or punch marks that conform to all aspects of the Rules of Golf, including those that are effective from January 1, 2010, may adopt the condition of competition detailed below.

Between January 1, 2010 and January 1, 2014, it is recommended that this condition of competition be adopted only for competitions involving the highest level of expert player. After January 1, 2014, this condition of competition may be adopted more widely (e.g., at the highest level of amateur golf), but it is recommended only for competitions involving expert players.

“The player’s clubs must conform to the groove and punch mark specifications in the Rules of Golf that are effective from January 1, 2010.

***PENALTY FOR CARRYING, BUT NOT MAKING STROKE WITH, CLUB OR CLUBS IN BREACH OF CONDITION:**

Match play – At the conclusion of the hole at which the breach is discovered, the state of the match is 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.

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.

Bogey and par competitions – See Note 1 to Rule 32-1a.

Stableford competitions – See Note 1 to Rule 32-1b.

*Any club or clubs carried in breach of this condition must be declared out of play by the player to his opponent in match play or his marker or a fellow-competitor in stroke play immediately upon discovery that a breach has occurred. If the player fails to do so, he is disqualified.

PENALTY FOR MAKING STROKE WITH CLUB IN BREACH OF CONDITION:

Disqualification.

Exception: Ping Eye2 irons manufactured before March 31, 1990 with a groove spacing to groove width ratio of 2.3 to 1 are permitted for play under the Rules of Golf, even in certain competitions when the Condition Requiring Clubs Conforming with Groove and Punch Mark Specifications Effective January 1, 2010 is in effect. It is the player's responsibility to refer to the condition of competition posted for the specific competition in which the player is playing to ensure compliance with the above exception and to provide proof of the date on which the club was manufactured. If the player cannot provide such proof, the club must conform with specifications described in Appendix II 5c(i)."

(Revised)

4-3/2

Meaning of "Repair"

Q. During a round, a player may repair a club damaged in the normal course of play, or he may have it repaired by someone else. What does the term "repair" mean within the context of Rule 4-3a(ii)?

A. The term "repair" in Rule 4-3a(ii) means to restore the club, as nearly as possible, to its condition prior to the incident that caused the damage. In doing so, the player is limited to the grip, shaft and clubhead used to comprise the club at the beginning of the stipulated round or, in the case of a club later added, when the club was selected for play.

When a club is damaged to the extent that the grip, shaft or clubhead has to be changed, this change exceeds what is meant by the term "repair." Such action constitutes replacement and is only permitted if the club was "unfit for play" – see Rule 4-3a(iii). (Revised)

4-4a/5

Competitor Inadvertently Uses and Thereafter Carries Fellow-Competitor's Club

Q. In stroke play, A and B both started with 14 clubs. They were using the same model of clubs and similar golf bags. At the 4th hole, B's caddie inadvertently took one of A's clubs from A's bag and gave it to B who made a stroke with it. B's caddie placed the club in B's bag. At the 6th hole, B's caddie discovered the error. What is the ruling?

A. Rule 4-4a states: "The player must start a stipulated round with not more than 14 clubs. He is limited to the clubs thus selected..." B complied with the first sentence of Rule 4-4a. However, when B made a stroke with A's club, he did not comply with the second sentence and was subject to penalty under Rule 4-4a for using a club selected for play by another person playing on the course. Upon discovery of the breach, B was required immediately to declare the club out of play under Rule 4-4c. He incurs a penalty of two strokes for making a stroke with that club on the 4th hole. As B did not intend to add the club to the clubs he had selected for the round, he incurs no additional penalty for having carried it until the breach was discovered on the 6th hole. A may retrieve the club to use during the remainder of the round. (Revised)

4-4a/6

Excess Club Put in Player's Golf Bag

Q. A arrives at the 1st tee. After the match or group's starting time while A is preparing to play his tee shot, B, his opponent or fellow-competitor, by mistake places his driver in A's bag, which results in A having 15 clubs. A then drives from the 1st tee. During play of the 1st hole, A discovers that B's club has been put in his (A's) golf bag. Does A incur a penalty for starting the round with more than 14 clubs?

A. No. Although A started the round with more than 14 clubs, A is not considered to have selected B's club for play for the following reasons:

- the additional club was added to his bag by B on the 1st tee,
- the club was added after the match or group's time of starting, and
- the club had already been selected for play by B.

Therefore A incurs no penalty, provided he does not make a stroke with B's club. The club may be returned to B and used by him.

The decision would be different, and A would be penalized under Rule 4-4a, if:

- the additional club had belonged to a player in another match or group,
 - the club had been added before A's match or group arrived on the tee, or
 - the club had been added before A's match or group's time of starting.
- (Revised)

4-4a/15

Assembly of Club Components During Stipulated Round

Q. Rules 4-3a(iii) and 4-4a provide that the replacement or addition of a club must not be made by assembling components carried by or for the player during the stipulated round. What is the ruling in the following situations:

1. During a stipulated round, a player carries a clubhead and a shaft (i.e., components) that are capable of being assembled into a club, but he does not assemble the components?
2. During the stipulated round, components from the clubhouse are assembled off the course and then brought to the player, who uses the assembled club as a replacement for a club that has been damaged in the normal course of play or as an additional club when the player started with fewer than 14 clubs?
3. During the stipulated round, components brought to the player from the clubhouse are assembled on the course, and the assembled club is used as a replacement for a club that has been damaged in the normal course of play or as an additional club when the player started with fewer than 14 clubs?

- A.**
1. A separate clubhead and shaft do not constitute a club. Therefore, the separate clubhead and shaft do not count towards the number of clubs the player may carry under Rule 4-4a. However, regardless of the number of clubs carried, it is not permissible to assemble a clubhead and shaft carried by or for the player during the stipulated round. Consequently, if the player did replace or add a club by assembling components carried by or for him during the round, the player would be penalized under Rule 4-3a(iii) or Rule 4-4a, as applicable.
 2. As the components were not carried by or for the player on the course (i.e., the components were located and assembled off the course), there is no penalty under Rule 4-3a(iii) or Rule 4-4a.
 3. Provided the components were not being carried by or for the player on the course at the time that the replacement club or additional club was requested by the player, there is no penalty under Rule 4-3a(iii) or Rule 4-4a. (Revised)

8-1/2

Exchanging Distance Information

Information regarding the distance between two objects is public information and not advice. It is therefore permissible for players to exchange information relating to the distance between two objects. For example, a player may ask anyone, including his opponent, fellow-competitor or either of their caddies, the distance between his ball and the hole. (Revised)

9-3/1

Competitor in Hole-by-Hole Play-Off Gives Wrong Information

Q. In a stroke-play hole-by-hole play-off, B has completed the hole in 5 strokes. Having no other readily available means for determining B's score at that point, A, who has a putt for a 5, inquires as to the number of strokes B has taken for the hole. B wrongly states that he (B) has holed out in 4 strokes. A picks up his ball without marking its position based on his understanding that B had won the play-off. B then corrects his error. What is the ruling?

A. If B intentionally misled A, B is disqualified under Rule 33-7.

If B simply made a mistake, B incurs no penalty. Rule 9 imposes no penalty for giving wrong information as to the number of strokes in stroke play. In these exceptional circumstances, A incurs no penalty for lifting his ball at rest without marking it. In a stroke-play hole-by-hole play-off, it is not necessary for A to complete the hole if B is the winner (see Decision 33-6/3), and since A had no other readily available means for determining B's score at that point, it was reasonable for A to rely on B's answer. Accordingly, by providing the incorrect information that induced A to lift his ball, B (not A) should be deemed to have caused the movement of A's ball. Therefore, in these limited circumstances, Rule 18-4 applies, i.e., neither player incurs a penalty and A must replace his ball – see Decision 18-1/8 and Decision 18-2a/21. This answer only applies in a stroke-play hole-by-hole play-off. In all other cases during a stroke-play competition, A would be obliged in all events to complete play of the hole and it would therefore not be reasonable for A to lift his ball without marking it. (Revised)

13-2/32

Improving Line of Play by Removing Stone from Wall

Q. A stone wall on the course is on A's line of play. A removes a stone from the top of the wall. Is this permissible?

A. No. The wall as a whole does not meet the definition of a movable obstruction and the individual stones are intended not to be moved. Therefore, the wall is an immovable obstruction and all parts of the wall are deemed to be fixed. In removing part of an immovable obstruction, A was in breach of Rule 13-2. The same ruling would apply if the wall had been declared an integral part of the course. (Revised)

15-3b/2

Play of Two Different Wrong Balls Between Strokes with Ball in Play

Q. In stroke play, a competitor plays a wrong ball to a putting green. He discovers his error and returns to the spot from which the wrong ball was played. He finds another ball and plays it to the green. He then discovers that he has played another wrong ball. Is the penalty two strokes or four strokes?

A. Four strokes. The competitor's discovery that he had played a wrong ball is an intervening event that breaks the relationship between the two strokes. The subsequent playing of another wrong ball is therefore an unrelated act. Accordingly, the player is separately penalized for play of each wrong ball, under Principle 6 of Decision 1-4/12 and Decision 1-4/13. (Revised)

17-2/2

Flagstick Attended by Opponent or Fellow-Competitor Without Authority While Player's Ball in Motion

Q. A player plays from just off the putting green with the flagstick in the hole. While the ball is in motion and still 20 yards from the hole, an opponent or fellow-competitor, without the authority of the player, removes the flagstick as he mistakenly believes that the player will be penalized if his ball strikes the flagstick in the hole. The ball comes to rest five yards short of the hole. What is the ruling?

A. Under Rule 17-2, the opponent or fellow-competitor is penalized if the removal of the flagstick might have influenced the movement of the ball. The determination as to whether there is a reasonable possibility that the removal of the flagstick might have influenced the movement of the ball is made by reference to the situation at the time the flagstick was removed.

In this case, since the flagstick was removed before it was possible to know what the result of the stroke might be, and since the intention of the player making the stroke was to get the ball as close to the hole as possible, at the moment the flagstick was removed it was reasonably possible that its removal might have influenced the movement of the ball. Therefore, the opponent loses the hole in match play or the fellow-competitor incurs a penalty of two strokes in stroke play for a breach of Rule 17-2.

If a flagstick is removed, attended, or held up without authority by an opponent or fellow-competitor while a ball is in motion, but at the time of the action it is not reasonably possible that the ball will reach the hole or, having gone past the hole, will return to the hole (e.g., as a result of the slope of the putting green, wind, etc.), there is no breach of Rule 17-2. (Revised)

19-2/10

Ball Stopped or Deflected by Rake Held by Player's Caddie

Q. A player's ball lies in a bunker. He plays, and his ball is accidentally stopped or deflected by a rake that is being held by his caddie. What is the ruling?

A. When a ball is accidentally deflected or stopped by a rake held by or in contact with a player's caddie, the caddie has accidentally deflected or stopped the player's ball in motion in breach of Rule 19-2. The player is responsible for this breach of the Rules by his caddie (see Rule 6-1). The player incurs a penalty of one stroke and must play the ball as it lies. (Revised)

20-2b/2

Measuring Club-Lengths

In measuring a distance of one club-length or two club-lengths when proceeding under a Rule, a player is entitled to measure directly across a ditch or through a fence, a tree or a constructed wall. However, a player may not measure through a natural undulation of the ground. (Revised)

20-3b/8

Loose Impediment Affecting Lie of Ball Moved

Q. A's ball lies in a bunker, with a loose impediment immediately behind the ball. The ball of B, his opponent or fellow-competitor, lies near A's ball in the same bunker, but farther from the hole. B asks A to lift his ball under Rule 22-2, which A does. B's stroke moves the loose impediment that was behind A's ball. Is A's lie considered to have been altered as a result of the removal of the loose impediment, in which case Rule 20-3b would apply?

A. No. Although the loose impediment may have affected the lie of A's ball, loose impediments are not part of the lie of the ball as contemplated by Rule 20-3b. Therefore, A is not required to replace the loose impediment before his next stroke. If he did replace the loose impediment, there would be no penalty.

The same answer would apply on any part of the course. (Revised)

20-7c/3

Ball Believed to Be Lost in Bunker; Competitor Drops Another Ball in Bunker and Plays It; Original Ball Then Found Outside Bunker

Q. In stroke play, A played a long shot to the green and the ball appeared to have come to rest in a bunker beside the green. The ball was not found in the bunker. A dropped a ball in the bunker and played it onto the green. A then discovered his original ball behind the green. What is the ruling?

A. When A dropped another ball in the bunker, it became the ball in play under penalty of stroke and distance and the original ball was lost – see Definition of “Lost Ball.”

Since the place where the ball was dropped and played from was well in advance of the spot from which the original ball was last played, A was guilty of a serious breach of the relevant Rule (Rule 27-1) in failing to go back to that spot. He should have been disqualified unless he rectified the breach as prescribed in Rule 20-7c, in which case he would have incurred an additional penalty of two strokes. (Revised)

21/1

Removing Paint from Ball

Q. Paint has been used to mark lines on the ground for defining ground under repair. A ball lands on such a line and some paint adheres to the ball. May the player remove the paint?

A. No, unless the ball is in a position from which it may be lifted under the Rules and cleaned under Rule 21, in which case the player may attempt to remove the paint. (Revised)

26-1/1

Meaning of “Known or Virtually Certain”

When a ball has been struck towards a water hazard and cannot be found, a player may not assume that his ball is in the water hazard simply because there is a possibility that the ball may be in the water hazard. In order to proceed under Rule 26-1, it must be “known or virtually certain” that the ball is in the water hazard. In the absence of “knowledge or virtual certainty” that it lies in a water hazard, a ball that cannot be found must be considered lost somewhere other than in a water hazard and the player must proceed under Rule 27-1.

When a player’s ball cannot be found, “knowledge” may be gained that his ball is in a water hazard in a number of ways. The player or his caddie or other members of his match or group may actually observe the ball

disappear into the water hazard. Evidence provided by other reliable witnesses may also establish that the ball is in the water hazard. Such evidence could come from a referee, an observer, spectators or other outside agencies. It is important that all readily accessible information be considered because, for example, the mere fact that a ball has splashed in a water hazard would not always provide “knowledge” that the ball is in the water hazard, as there are instances when a ball may skip out of, and come to rest outside, the hazard.

In the absence of “knowledge” that the ball is in the water hazard, Rule 26-1 requires there to be “virtual certainty” that the player’s ball is in the water hazard in order to proceed under this Rule. Unlike “knowledge,” “virtual certainty” implies some small degree of doubt about the actual location of a ball that has not been found. However, “virtual certainty” also means that, although the ball has not been found, when all readily available information is considered, the conclusion that there is nowhere that the ball could be except in the water hazard would be justified.

In determining whether “virtual certainty” exists, some of the relevant factors in the area of the water hazard to be considered include topography, turf conditions, grass heights, visibility, weather conditions and the proximity of trees, bushes and abnormal ground conditions.

The same principles would apply for a ball that may have been moved by an outside agency (Rule 18-1) or a ball that has not been found and may be in an obstruction (Rule 24-3) or an abnormal ground condition (Rule 25-1c). (Revised)

27/17

Competitor Plays Out of Turn Other Than from Teeing Ground and Puts Another Ball into Play at Spot of Previous Stroke

Q. In stroke play, a competitor whose ball lay through the green played out of turn. He should have continued play with the ball played out of turn without penalty, but he mistakenly believed he needed to cancel and replay the stroke in the correct order. The competitor dropped another ball at the spot from which he made that stroke, but his action was questioned before he played the dropped ball. What is the ruling?

A. As the dropped ball was not dropped with the intention of putting it into play under penalty of stroke and distance, part c of the Definition of “Lost Ball” does not apply and, therefore, the original ball was not lost. As the competitor had put a ball into play under an inapplicable Rule but not played it, Rule 20-6 applies, and the player may correct his error by continuing play with the original ball, without penalty.

Had the competitor played the dropped ball, he would have been considered to have played under penalty of stroke and distance (Rule 27-1a) and the original ball would be lost. (Revised)

30-2/1

Player Plays Out of Turn from Tee in Three-Ball Match

The following are the rulings in a three-ball match if A, B and C are scheduled to play in that order from the teeing ground and one of them inadvertently plays out of turn:

- (a) If C plays first both A and B may require C to replay the stroke in correct order. If A and B disagree on whether C should be required to replay, C must complete the hole with two balls. He must replay his stroke in his match with the opponent who requires him to replay and continue with his original ball in his match with the other opponent.
- (b) If B plays first, A may require him to replay his stroke for their match, but C may not. As B did not play out of turn with respect to C, B must continue play of his original ball in his match with C. If B is required by A to replay his stroke, B must play the hole with a different ball in his match with A.
- (c) If C plays after A but before B, only B may require C to replay his stroke for their match. As C did not play out of turn with respect to A, C must continue play of his original ball in his match with A. If C is required by B to replay his stroke, C must play the hole with a different ball in his match with B. (Revised)

33-7/4.5

Competitor Unaware of Penalty Returns Wrong Score; Whether Waiving or Modifying Disqualification Penalty Justified

Q. A competitor returns his score card. It later transpires that the score for one hole is lower than actually taken due to his failure to include a penalty stroke(s) which he did not know he had incurred. The error is discovered before the competition has closed.

Would the Committee be justified, under Rule 33-7, in waiving or modifying the penalty of disqualification prescribed in Rule 6-6d?

A. Generally, the disqualification prescribed by Rule 6-6d must not be waived or modified.

However, if the Committee is satisfied that the competitor could not reasonably have known or discovered the facts resulting in his breach of the Rules, it would be justified under Rule 33-7 in waiving the disqualification penalty prescribed by Rule 6-6d. The penalty stroke(s) associated with the breach would, however, be applied to the hole where the breach occurred.

For example, in the following scenarios, the Committee would be justified in waiving the disqualification penalty:

- A competitor makes a short chip from the greenside rough. At the time, he and his fellow-competitors have no reason to suspect that the competitor has double-hit his ball in breach of Rule 14-4. After the

competitor has signed and returned his score card, a close-up, super-slow-motion video replay reveals that the competitor struck his ball twice during the course of the stroke. In these circumstances, it would be appropriate for the Committee to waive the disqualification penalty and apply the one-stroke penalty under Rule 14-4 to the competitor's score at the hole in question.

- After a competitor has signed and returned his score card, it becomes known, through the use of a high-definition video replay, that the competitor unknowingly touched a few grains of sand with his club at the top of his backswing on a wall of the bunker. The touching of the sand was so light that, at the time, it was reasonable for the competitor to have been unaware that he had breached Rule 13-4. It would be appropriate for the Committee to waive the disqualification penalty and apply the two-stroke penalty to the competitor's score at the hole in question.
- A competitor moves his ball on the putting green with his finger in the act of removing his ball-marker. The competitor sees the ball move slightly forward but is certain that it has returned to the original spot, and he plays the ball as it lies. After the competitor signs and returns his score card, video footage is brought to the attention of the Committee that reveals that the ball did not precisely return to its original spot. When questioned by the Committee, the competitor cites the fact that the position of the logo on the ball appeared to be in exactly the same position as it was when he replaced the ball and this was the reason for him believing that the ball returned to the original spot. As it was reasonable in these circumstances for the competitor to have no doubt that the ball had returned to the original spot, and because the competitor could not himself have reasonably discovered otherwise prior to signing and returning his score card, it would be appropriate for the Committee to waive the disqualification penalty. The two-stroke penalty under Rule 20-3a for playing from a wrong place would, however, be applied to the competitor's score at the hole in question.

A Committee would not be justified under Rule 33-7 in waiving or modifying the disqualification penalty prescribed in Rule 6-6d if the competitor's failure to include the penalty stroke(s) was a result of either ignorance of the Rules or of facts that the competitor could have reasonably discovered prior to signing and returning his score card.

For example, in the following scenarios, the Committee would not be justified in waiving or modifying the disqualification penalty:

- As a competitor's ball is in motion, he moves several loose impediments in the area in which the ball will likely come to rest. Unaware that this action is a breach of Rule 23-1, the competitor fails to include the two-stroke penalty in his score for the hole. As the competitor was aware of the facts that resulted in his breaching the Rules, he should be disqualified under Rule 6-6d for failing to include the two-stroke penalty under Rule 23-1.

- A competitor's ball lies in a water hazard. In making his backswing for the stroke, the competitor is aware that his club touched a branch in the hazard. Not realising at the time that the branch was detached, the competitor did not include the two-stroke penalty for a breach of Rule 13-4 in his score for the hole. As the competitor could have reasonably determined the status of the branch prior to signing and returning his score card, the competitor should be disqualified under Rule 6-6d for failing to include the two-stroke penalty under Rule 13-4. (Revised)

33-8/27

Local Rule Providing Relief Without Penalty from Bunker Filled with Casual Water

Q. May a Committee make a Local Rule allowing a player to drop out of any bunker filled with casual water, without penalty, contrary to Rule 25-1b(ii)?

A. No. The Committee may not make a Local Rule providing generally that flooded bunkers are ground under repair through the green, as such a Local Rule waives a penalty imposed by the Rules of Golf, contrary to Rule 33-8b.

However, in exceptional circumstances, where certain specific bunkers are completely flooded and there is no reasonable likelihood of the bunkers drying up during the round, the Committee may introduce a Local Rule providing relief without penalty from specific bunkers. Prior to introducing such a Local Rule, the Committee must be convinced that such exceptional circumstances exist and that providing relief without penalty from specific bunkers is more appropriate than simply applying Rule 25-1b(ii). If the Committee elects to introduce a Local Rule, the following wording is suggested:

“The flooded bunker on [insert location of bunker; e.g., left of 5th green] is ground under repair. If a player's ball lies in that bunker or if that bunker interferes with the player's stance or the area of his intended swing and the player wishes to take relief, he must take relief outside the bunker, without penalty, in accordance with Rule 25-1b(i). All other bunkers on the course, regardless of whether they contain water, maintain their status as hazards and the Rules apply accordingly.”

In a competition played over more than one round, such a Local Rule may be introduced or rescinded between rounds. (Revised)