

## **USGA Rules: Committee's ability to make Local Rules**

### **RULE 33-1. CONDITIONS; WAIVING Rule**

"The Committee must establish the conditions under which a competition is to be played."

"The Committee has no power to waive a Rule of Golf"

### **Definition of "RULE OR RULES"**

The term "Rule" includes:

- a. The Rules of Golf and their interpretations as contained in "Decisions on the Rules of Golf"
- b. Any Condition of Competition established by the Committee under Rule 33-1 and Appendix I.
- c. Any Local Rules established by the Committee under Rule 33-8a and Appendix I; and
- d. The specifications on:
  - (i) Clubs and the ball in Appendices II and III and their interpretations as contained in "A Guide to the Rules on Clubs and Balls"; and
  - (ii) Devices and other equipment in Appendix IV.

### **So what can the Committee do within the Conditions of Competition or the Local Rules that is at variance to the strict writing the Rules?**

1. The Committee may require, in the conditions of competition (Rule 33-1)
  - a. that any driver the player carries must have a clubhead, identified by model and loft, that is named on the current list of Conforming Driver Heads issued by the USGA. (Rule 4-1—Form and Make of clubs)
  - b. that the ball the player plays must be named on the current list of Conforming Golf Balls issued by the USGA. -(Rule 5-1—The Ball)
  - c. prohibit the use of caddies or restrict a player in his choice of caddie. (Rule 6-4—Caddie)
  - d. For purpose of preventing slow play, establish pace of play guidelines including maximum periods of time allowed to complete a stipulated round, a hole, and a stroke. In both Match Play and Stroke Play, the Committee may modify the penalty for breach of Rule 6-7 (Undue Delay; Slow Play) as set forth in Note 2 to Rule 6-7.
  - e. prohibit practice on the competition course on any day of match-play competition or permit practice on the competition course or part of the course (Rule 33-2c) on any day of or between rounds of a stroke-play competition. (Rule 7-1)
  - f. prohibit:

- i. Practice on or near the putting green of the hole last played, and
    - ii. Rolling a ball on the putting green of the hole last played. (Rule 7-2)
  - g. In a team competition permit each team to appoint one person who may give advice (including pointing out a line for putting) to members of that team. The Committee may establish conditions relating to the appointment and permitted conduct of that person, who must be identified to the Committee before giving advice. (Rule 8—Advice)
  - h. In foursomes competition, may stipulate which partner must play first from the 1<sup>st</sup> tee. (Decision 33-1/3.5)
  - i. May restrict the use of golf carts by competitors (Decision 33-1/8)
- 2. As provided under Rule 33-8a, The Committee can make and publish Local Rules for local abnormal conditions if they are consistent with the policy established in Appendix I, Part A. Within Appendix I, Part A are included:
  - I. Defining Bounds and Margins of the course, including OB, Water hazards, Lateral Water Hazards, Ground Under Repair, obstructions, and integral parts of the course.
  - II.
    - a. Clarify the status of Water Hazards that may be Lateral Water Hazards
    - b. Permit play of a ball provisionally under Rule 26-1 for a ball that may be in a water hazard of such character that.....it would be impracticable to determine whether the ball is in the hazard or to do so would unduly delay play.
  - III. Define Environmentally Sensitive Areas as Ground Under Repair from which play is prohibited and clarifying relief procedure.
  - IV.
    - a. Provide for relief from temporary conditions that might interfere with proper playing of the game including mud and extreme wetness, warranting relief for an embedded ball anywhere Through the Green, or permitting lifting, cleaning and replacing a ball anywhere Through the Green or on a closely mown area Through the Green.
    - b. Provide for “Preferred Lies” and “Winter Rules” when poor condition of the course or existence of mud, particularly during winter months warrant such Rules to either protect the course or to promote fair and pleasant play.
  - V. Obstructions:
    - a. Clarify the status of objects that may be obstructions, and/or declare any construction to be an integral part of the course, and accordingly not an obstruction.
    - b. Allow the removal of stones in bunkers by declaring them to be movable obstructions.
    - c. Clarify the status of Roads and Paths:
      - (i) Declare artificial surfaces and sides of roads and paths to be integral parts of the course, or
      - (ii) Provide relief of the type afforded under Rule 24-2b from roads and paths not having artificial surfaces and sides if they could unfairly affect play.
    - d. Provide for relief from intervention by immovable obstructions on or within

two club-lengths of the putting green when the ball lies within two club-lengths of the immovable obstruction.

e. Provide for relief for the protection of young trees.

f. Provide for relief from interference by Temporary Obstructions (TIO's)

VI. Dropping Zones: Establish special areas on which balls may or must be dropped when it is not feasible or practicable to proceed exactly in conformity with Rules 24, 25, 26 or 28.

3. The Committee can invoke a Local Rule as set forth in Notes to Rules 6, 7, 8, 14, 24, 25, and 33.

These include:

- a. Prohibiting the use of Caddies or restricting a player in his choice of Caddie (Rule 6-4, Note)
- b. Establish pace of play guidelines including maximum periods of time allowed to complete a stipulated round, a hole, or a stroke (Rule 6-7, Note 2)
- c. Prohibit practice on or near the putting green of the hole last played, and rolling a ball on the putting green of the hole last played. (Rule 7-2, Note 2)
- d. Permit each team to appoint one person who may give advice (including pointing out a line for putting) to members of that team (Rule 8, Note)
- e. Allow players to use devices that measure or gauge distance only (Rule 14-3, Note)
- f. Require that a player must determine the Nearest Point of Relief without crossing over, through, or under an obstruction (Rule 24-2, Note 3)
- g. Make a Local Rule stating that interference by an Abnormal Ground Condition with a Player's stance is deemed not to be, of itself, interference under the Rule (Rule 25-1a, Note)
- h. May provide that when a single round is to be played on more than one day, that Holes and Teeing Grounds may be differently situated on each day of the competition, provided that, on any one day, all competitors play with each Hole and each Teeing Ground in the same position (Rule 33-2c., Note)
- i. May request that each competitor record the date and his name on his scorecard (Rule 33-5, Note)
- j. May stipulate in a Foursome Competition which Partner must play from the 1<sup>st</sup> Tee (Decision 33-1/3.5)
- k. May make a Local Rule under Rule 33-2a declaring part of an adjoining hole to be OB when playing a particular hole. (Decision 33-2a/14)

4. May make Local Rules under Rule 33-8 for local abnormal conditions if they are consistent with the policy set forth in Appendix I. Specifically permitted as outlined under Decisions related to Rule 33-8 are the following:

- a. Require a player to re-play a stroke when his ball is deflected by a power line (33-8/13)
- b. Deem that all stakes on the Course (i.e. stakes defining Water Hazards, G.U.R, etc) to be Immovable Obstructions (33-8/16)
- c. Allow line of sight relief from a protective fence/net that intervenes with Line of Play (33-8/18)

- d. Treat severe damage to the Course made by certain insects to be G.U.R. (33-8/21)
- e. Treat ant hills that have become large, hard, conical, and fixed as G.U.R. Also can apply for ant hills of fire ants (33-8/22)
- f. Provide relief from “edging grooves” around putting greens (33-8/24)
- g. Provide that G.U.R. adjacent to artificially surfaced cart paths be treated as part of the obstruction and relief is thus taken accordingly. (33-8/25)
- h. Permit repair of turf plugs on Putting Green that are not 4 ¼ inches in diameter (33-8/30)
- i. Declare Accumulations of Leaves Through the Green to be G.U.R. Relief without penalty stills requires Known and Virtually Certain condition (33-8/31)
- j. Declare areas severely damaged by non burrowing animals as G.U.R. without marking them as such (33-8/32.5)
- k. Prohibit dropping on putting green apron when a Ball is on a Wrong Putting Green (33-8/33)
- l. Allow a Player whose ball is in a Lateral Water Hazard to drop a ball, under penalty of one stroke, in the Nearest Dropping Zone (not nearer the hole) to avoid having to take two club length relief and drop in a Bunker adjacent to the Hazard (33-8/37.5)
- m. Treat “Stacked Turf Faces” of Bunkers as “Not Closely Mown Areas” (33-8/39)
- n. Deem grass covered walls of Bunkers with some parts worn bare to be Through the Green and not part of the Bunker (33-8/39.5)
- o. Make a Local Rule clarifying status of material similar to Sand (e.g. crushed shells). (33-8/40)
- p. Treat TIO’s as Immovable Obstructions or TIO’s, at the Player’s option.

**USGA Rules: Items that the Committee is NOT ALLOWED to do:**

- 1. The Committee has no power to waive a Rule of Golf (Rule 33-1)
- 2. Alter Conditions after Competition starts (Decision 33-1/1)
- 3. Making competitors responsible for adding scores (Decision 33-1/7)
- 4. Decree a tee to be in bounds for the Tee Shot and O.B. thereafter (Decision 33-2a/13)
- 5. Modifying DQ penalty for not holing out in Stroke Play (Decision 33-7/2)
- 6. Modifying penalty for Returning Wrong Scores ( Decision 33-7/4)
- 7. Make a local rule:
  - a. for temporary putting green waiving requirement to hole out (Decision 33-8/1)
  - b. allowing drop on green side of water hazard when ball fails to clear hazard (Decision 33-8/2)
  - c. permitting competitors to discontinue play by agreement in bad weather (Decision 33-8/5)
  - d. for breach of sportsmanship code or competition policy (e.g. cursing, use of mobile phone) (Decision 33-8/6)
  - e. requiring continuous putting (Decision 33-8/7)
  - f. providing relief from damage to bunkers caused by children (Decision 33-8/9)
  - g. prohibiting removal of flagstick (Decision 33-8/10)
  - h. waiving penalty for ball striking unattended flagstick (Decision 33-8/11)

- i. for ball deflected by sprinkler head (Decision 33-8/12)
- j. for ball deflected by power line giving player option of playing or re-playing (Decision 33-8/13)
- k. deeming interior boundary fence to be an obstruction (Decision 33-8/14)
- l. providing relief from interference by immovable water hazard stake for ball lying in water hazard (Decision 33-8/15)
- m. providing line of sight relief from irrigation control boxes (Decision 33-8/17)
- n. permitting relief on specified side of paved path (Decision 33-8/19)
- o. providing relief from unsurfaced road for tee shot (Decision 33-8/20)
- p. denying relief from G.U.R. during play of particular hole (Decision 33-8/23)
- q. altering G.U.R. relief procedure (Decision 33-8/26)
- r. providing relief without penalty from bunker filled with Casual Water (Decision 33-8/27)
- s. permitting re-dropping or placing when dropped ball embeds in bunker (Decision 33-8/28)
- t. requiring player to take relief under penalty from tree nursery or plantation (Decision 33-8/29)
- u. providing relief from divot holes (Decision 33-8/34)
- v. treating rough as a lateral water hazard (Decision 33-8/35)
- w. giving free relief for a ball in water hazard (Decision 33-8/36)
- x. allowing drop in water hazard behind point where ball lies unplayable in hazard (Decision 33-8/37)
- y. deeming out of bounds ball which crosses boundary but comes to rest on course (Decision 33-8/38)