

## **2016-17 USGA Rules & Decisions**

### **Definitions/Terminology not listed under Definitions**

#### **A. Key Terminology listed in “How to Use the Rule Book” (2016-2020 Rules of Golf p.9)**

##### **Understand the Words**

The Rule book is written in a very precise and deliberate fashion. You should be aware of and understand the following differences in word use:

- may = optional
- should = recommendation
- must = instruction (and penalty if not carried out)
- a ball = you may substitute another ball (e.g., Rules 26, 27 and 28)
- the ball = you must not substitute another ball (e.g., Rules 24-2 and 25-1)

#### **B. “Terminology”, as listed in Index to 2016-17 Decisions on the Rules of Golf**

##### **1. “Added”**

4-4a/1

When Club Is Considered Added

**Q.** A player who started the stipulated round with 14 clubs is putting poorly. Between the play of two holes and without unduly delaying play, the player takes the putter out of his bag and replaces it with another putter that was in his locker. Before he makes a stroke with any club, the player is advised that he is not permitted to add or replace a club. Accordingly, he replaces the second putter with his original putter, leaves the second putter at the clubhouse and continues play. Does he incur a penalty?

**A.** No. Although the player was not entitled to add or replace a club, he is not considered to be in breach of Rule 4-4a until he makes a stroke with any club while the added putter is in his possession. The answer would be the same for a player who starts the stipulated round with fewer than 14 clubs and wants to add clubs to bring the total number to 14. This player may select from several clubs that are brought to him, provided that (1) he does not make a stroke with any club before he chooses a club to add, (2) this process does not unduly delay play (Rule 6-7), and (3) none of the clubs he ultimately adds have been selected for play by any other person playing on the course.

##### **2. Animate**

##### **19-1/7**

Ball Picked Up or Deflected by Dog After Stroke on Putting Green

**Q.** A player makes a stroke on the putting green and, while the ball is still in motion, it is picked up and carried away, or is deflected, by a dog. What is the ruling?

**A.** A dog is an animate outside agency, which is any outside agency capable of voluntary movement. Under Rule 19-1b, when a ball has been deflected or stopped by an animate outside agency (except a worm, insect or the like) and the stroke was made on the putting green, the stroke is cancelled and the ball must be replaced and replayed. If the ball is not immediately recoverable another ball may be substituted. (Revised)

**Other Decisions related to Rule 19-1: See “Ball Deflected or Stopped: by outside agency” in the Index.**

### 3. "Any Ball he has played"

18/7

Explanation of "Any Ball He Has Played"

**Q.** The Definition of "Equipment" excludes "any ball he (the player) has played at the hole being played." What does this mean?

**A.** The phrase means any ball the player has played at the hole being played except during any period when it has been lifted and has not been put back into play. Accordingly, the ball in play, a provisional ball, a second ball played under Rule 3-3 or Rule 20-7c and a ball being used for practice are not equipment.

### 4. 'Artificially Surfaced'

24/9

Artificially-Surfaced Road or Path

**Q.** An artificially-surfaced road or path is an obstruction. What constitutes artificial surfacing?

**A.** A road or path to which any foreign material, e.g., concrete, tar, gravel, wood chips, etc. has been applied is artificially surfaced and thus an obstruction.

Related Decision:

23/14 Loose Impediments Used to Surface Road

### 5. Anchor Point

#### 14-1b/2

Meaning of "Anchor Point" in Note 2 to Rule 14-1b

**Q.** Rule 14-1b provides that a player must not anchor the club during a stroke by using an "anchor point". In Note 2 to the Rule, which defines "anchor point", what does it mean "to hold a forearm in contact with any part of the body to establish a gripping hand as a stable point around which the other hand may swing the club"?

**A.** The "anchor point" provision prohibits only a very specific type of stroke in which a forearm is intentionally held against the body as an indirect means of anchoring the club. For an anchor point to exist, the following two criteria must be met: (1) the player must intentionally hold a forearm against the body; and (2) he must grip the club so that the hands are separated and work independently from one another (i.e. the top hand effectively secures the club in place as if attached to the body to establish a stable point, while the bottom hand is held down the shaft to swing the lower portion of the club around that point). (New)

### 6. "As Soon as Practicable" in Rule 9-2

9-2/1

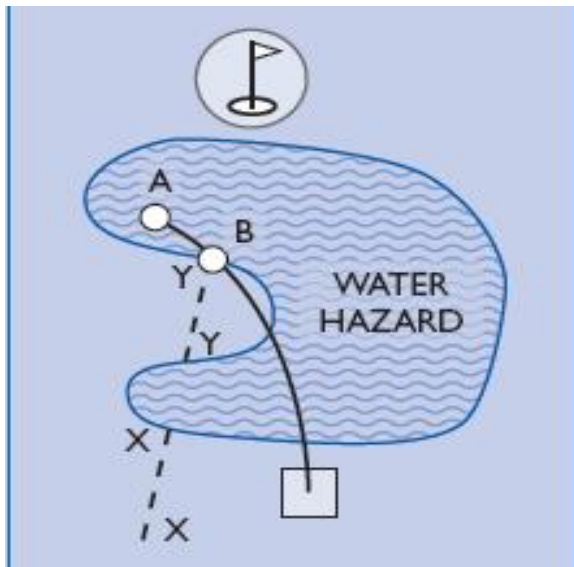
Meaning of "As Soon as Practicable" in Rule 9-2

Rule 9-2b(i) requires a player who has incurred a penalty to inform his opponent "as soon as practicable." This phrase is purposely broad so as to allow for consideration of the circumstances in each situation, especially the proximity of the player to his opponent. Thus, informing the opponent "as soon as practicable" of a penalty incurred does not, in all circumstances mean that the player must do so before the opponent plays his next stroke.

## 7. "Behind" as applied in Rule 26-1b

26-1/1.5

Meaning of "Behind" in Rule 26-1



**Q.** With regard to the diagram, a player makes a stroke from the tee and his ball comes to rest in the water hazard at Point A, having last crossed the margin of the hazard at Point B. The player wishes to proceed under Rule 26-1b, which requires that the player drop a ball behind the water hazard, keeping the point at which the original ball last crossed the margin of the water hazard directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped. May the player drop a ball on dotted line Y-Y?

**A.** Yes. The reference to "behind" in Rule 26-1b means that the ball must be dropped outside the hazard behind the point where the ball last crossed the margin of the water hazard. Therefore, the player may drop a ball on either dotted line X-X or dotted line Y-Y.

## 8. "Chipper"

4-1/3

Status of a Chipper

**Q.** What Rules apply to "chippers?"

**A.** A "chipper" is an iron club designed primarily for use off the putting green, generally with a loft greater than ten degrees. As most players adopt a "putting stroke" when using a chipper, there can be a tendency to design the club as if it was a putter. To eliminate confusion, the Rules which apply to "chippers" include:

1. The shaft must be attached to the clubhead at the heel (Appendix II, 2c);
2. The grip must be circular in cross-section (Appendix II, 3(i)) and only one grip is permitted (Appendix II, 3(v));
3. The clubhead must be generally plain in shape (Appendix II, 4a) and have only one striking face (Appendix II, 4d); and
4. The face of the club must conform to specifications with regard to hardness, surface roughness, material and markings in the impact area (Appendix II, 5).

## 9. "Dangerous Situation"

1-4/11

Meaning of "Dangerous Situation"

**Q.** According to Decision 1-4/10, a ball lying near a live rattlesnake or a bees' nest is a "dangerous situation" and relief should be granted in equity.

If a player's ball comes to rest in or near an area of plants such as poison ivy, cacti or stinging nettles, should the provisions of Decision 1-4/10 apply?

**A.** No. The player must either play the ball as it lies or, if applicable, proceed under Rule 26 (Water Hazards) or Rule 28 (Ball Unplayable).

## **10. "Directly Attributable" in Rules 20-1 and 20-3a**

20-1/15

Meaning of "Directly Attributable" in Rules 20-1 and 20-3a

**Q.** What is meant by the phrase "directly attributable to the specific act" in Rules 20-1 and 20-3a?

**A.** In Rule 20-1 the phrase means the specific act of placing a ball-marker behind the ball, placing a club to the side of the ball, or lifting the ball such that the player's hand, the placement of the ball-marker or the club, or the lifting of the ball causes the ball or the ball-marker to move.

In Rule 20-3a the phrase means the specific act of placing or replacing a ball in front of a ball-marker, placing a club to the side of a ball-marker or lifting the ball-marker such that the player's hand, the placement of the ball or club, or the lifting of the ball-marker causes the ball or the ball-marker to move.

Under either Rule, any accidental movement of the ball or the ball-marker which occurs before or after this specific act, such as dropping the ball or ball-marker, regardless of the height from which it was dropped, is not considered to be "directly attributable" and would result in the player incurring a penalty stroke.

## **11. Discontinuance of Play**

6-8b/1

What Constitutes Discontinuance of Play

**Q.** In stroke play, a group was playing a hole when the Committee announced that play was suspended for a non-dangerous situation (e.g. darkness). Before deciding how to proceed, the players took approximately 1–2 minutes to discuss the available options. Are the players considered to have discontinued play?

**A.** No. Rule 6-8b allows a player to continue play of a hole after the Committee has suspended play if he does so "without delay". Under Rule 6-8b, "without delay" should be interpreted to allow a player a brief amount of time to consider the available options or to confer with other players in the group before deciding whether to continue. This might include situations where the player begins to proceed towards the clubhouse or to take some other action that suggests that he will discontinue; such initial actions do not preclude the player from deciding to continue play, as long as he does so within the permissible brief period. If a player:

1. takes more than a brief amount of time (e.g. in normal circumstances more than 2 minutes) to determine whether or not to continue play, or

2. marks and lifts his ball through the green or in a hazard under Rule 6-8c when authority to do so only exists if the player has discontinued play he is considered to have discontinued play and may only resume play when ordered by the Committee. (Revised)

## **12. "Elements" as applied in Rule 14-2a**

14-2/0.5

Meaning of "Elements"

**Q.** What are considered "elements" under Rule 14-2a?

**A.** Elements include sunlight, rain, wind, snow and other weather conditions

## **13. Embedded", when ball considered embedded in ground**

25-2/0.5

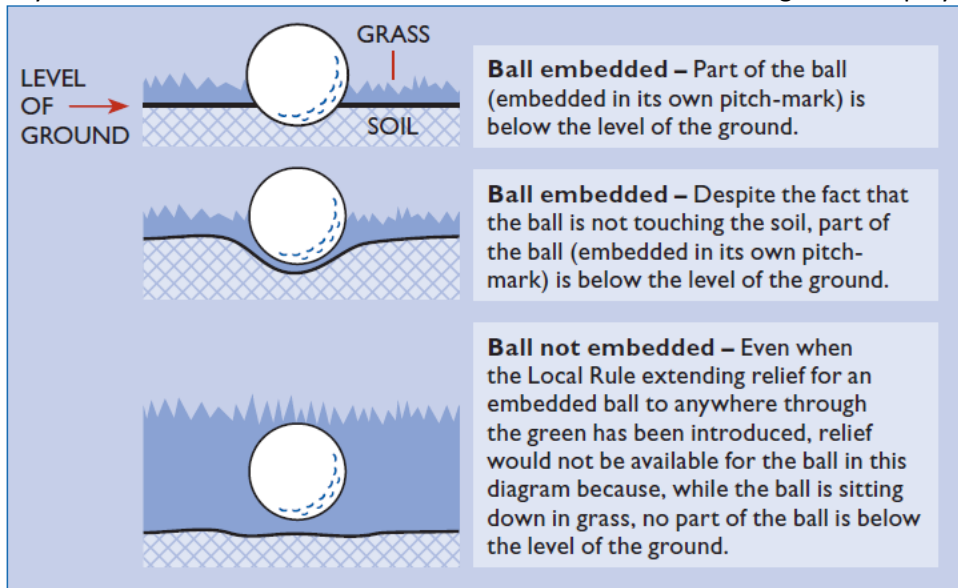
When Ball Embedded in Ground

A ball is deemed to be embedded in the ground only if:

- the impact of the ball landing has created a pitch-mark in the ground,

- the ball is in its own pitch-mark, and
- part of the ball is below the level of the ground.

Provided that these three requirements are met, a ball does not necessarily have to touch the soil to be considered embedded (e.g., grass, loose impediments or the like may intervene between the ball and the soil). Any doubt as to whether a ball is embedded should be resolved against the player.



#### 14. “Estimated Spot”: Explanation of how to determine

20-2c/1.5

Ball Rolls Towards Hole When Dropped at Spot from Which Previous Stroke Played—Meaning of “Estimated Spot”

**Q.** A player is required or elects to play his next stroke at the spot from which his previous stroke was played. He is able to identify that specific spot by reference to the divot hole which his previous stroke made. He drops a ball immediately behind that divot hole. The ball rolls nearer the hole than the spot from which the previous stroke was played, but not more than two club-lengths from where it first struck the ground. What is the ruling?

**A.** Rule 20-2c(vii)(a) requires a ball to be re-dropped if it rolls and comes to rest nearer the hole than "its original position or estimated position unless otherwise permitted by the Rules." The original position is the spot from which the previous stroke was played. Since the dropped ball rolled nearer the hole than that spot, it must be re-dropped.

However, **in many such cases the player cannot determine exactly the spot from which his previous stroke was played. In those cases, the player has satisfied the requirements of the Rule if he uses his best endeavours to estimate the spot. The estimated spot is treated as the specific spot (see Rule 20-2b) and the ball must be re-dropped if it rolls nearer the hole than the estimated spot.**

#### 15. “Fairly Taking His Stance”

--explanation of “Fairly taking his Stance”

13-2/1

Explanation of "Fairly Taking His Stance"

**Q.** Rule 13-2 states that a player must not improve the position or lie of his ball, the area of his intended stance or swing or his line of play or a reasonable extension of that line beyond the hole by moving, bending or breaking anything growing or fixed (including immovable obstructions and objects defining out of bounds). An exception permits a player to do so in "fairly taking his stance." What is the significance of "fairly"?

**A.** Without "fairly," the exception would permit improvement of position or lie, area of intended stance or swing or line of play by anything that could be said to be taking a stance. The use of "fairly" is intended to limit the

player to what is reasonably necessary to take a stance for the selected stroke without unduly improving the position of the ball, his lie, area of intended stance or swing or line of play. Thus, in taking his stance for the selected stroke, the player should select the least intrusive course of action which results in the minimum improvement in the position or lie of the ball, area of intended stance or swing or line of play. The player is not entitled to a normal stance or swing. He must accommodate the situation in which the ball is found and take a stance as normal as the circumstances permit. What is fair must be determined in the light of all the circumstances.

Examples of actions which do constitute fairly taking a stance are:

- backing into a branch or young sapling if that is the only way to take a stance for the selected stroke, even if this causes the branch to move out of the way or the sapling to bend or break.
- bending a branch of a tree with the hands in order to get under the tree to play a ball.

Examples of actions which do not constitute fairly taking a stance are:

- deliberately moving, bending or breaking branches with the hands, a leg or the body to get them out of the way of the backswing or stroke.
- standing on a branch to prevent it interfering with the backswing or stroke.
- hooking one branch on another or braiding two weeds for the same purpose.
- bending with a hand a branch obscuring the ball after the stance has been taken.
- bending an interfering branch with the hands, a leg or the body in taking a stance when the stance could have been taken without bending the branch.

## **16. "Forearm"**

### **14-1b/3**

Explanation of "Forearm" in Relation to Rule 14-1b

Note 1 to Rule 14-1b provides that a player may hold his club against his hand or forearm in making a stroke. For the purpose of Rule 14-1b, "forearm" is the part of the arm below the elbow joint and includes the wrist. (New)

## **17. "Goes forward to Search"**

27-2a/1.5

Meaning of "Goes Forward to Search"

**Q.** Under Rule **27-2a**, when is a player considered to have gone forward to search for the original ball such that a provisional ball cannot be played?

**A.** A player will be considered to have gone forward to search when he has proceeded more than a short distance towards the place where his original ball is likely to be. As the purpose of Rule **27-2a** is to save time, the player is permitted to go forward a short distance before determining that it would save time to return promptly to play a provisional ball. As a guideline, a player should be considered to have proceeded more than a short distance, and therefore to have gone forward to search, if he has proceeded more than approximately 50 yards. However, this guideline does not preclude a player from playing a provisional ball when he has proceeded more than a short distance for another specific purpose, such as to retrieve a ball or a different club to play a provisional ball, or to confer with a referee. (Revised)

## **18. "Good reason to lift" when play suspended**

6-8c/1

Explanation of "Good Reason to Lift"

When play has been suspended by the Committee under Rule 6-8a(i) and a player discontinues play of a hole, he is entitled to lift his ball without penalty. If a player discontinues play of a hole under Rule 6-8a(ii), (iii) or (iv) he is not entitled to lift his ball unless there is a "good reason" to lift it (Rule 6-8c). It is a matter for the Committee to decide in each case whether a "good reason" exists.

Generally, the ball should not be lifted unless the player is required to leave the area where his ball is located and it is likely that the ball may be moved or taken by an outside agency in his absence.

If the player lifts his ball without a "good reason" to do so, the player is penalized one stroke under Rule 6-8c, unless he was proceeding under another Rule which entitled him to lift the ball, such as Rule 16-1b..

## **19. "Grounded"**

13-4/8

When Club Touches Ground in Grass in Water Hazard

**Q.** If a player's ball lies in a water hazard, when is his club in tall grass considered to be touching the ground in the water hazard, in breach of Rule 13-4b?

**A.** When the grass is compressed to the point where it will support the weight of the club (i.e., when the club is grounded).

## **20. "Handicap"**

**--for purposes of Rule 6-2**

. 6-2/1

Meaning of "Handicap"

**Q.** Under a handicapping system where the player has to adjust his handicap in accordance with the rating for the course he is playing, a player's handicap before adjustment is 4.8. After applying the appropriate adjustment for the course and the tees to be used for that competition, the player's handicap is 6. Which is his "handicap" for the purposes of Rule 6-2?

**A.** 6. In a stroke-play competition the player must ensure that the handicap for the course that he is to play and the tees to be used is recorded on his score card when it is returned to the Committee.

**--when full handicap not used**

6-2b/0.5

Meaning of "Handicap" When Full Handicap Not Used

**Q.** It is the condition of a stroke-play competition (e.g., four-ball) that players will not receive their full handicap allowances. Under Rule **6-2b**, what is the player responsible for recording on his score card?

**A.** He must record his full handicap. It is the Committee's responsibility to apply the condition of competition to adjust his handicap.

Related Decision:

- **6-2/1** Meaning of "Handicap."

## **21. "Hole made by greenkeeper" in definition of ground under repair**

25/14

Explanation of "Hole Made by Greenkeeper" in Definition of "Ground Under Repair"

**Q.** What constitutes a "hole made by a greenkeeper"?

**A.** A "hole made by a greenkeeper" is usually ground temporarily dug up in connection with course maintenance, such as a hole made in removing turf or a tree stump, laying pipelines, etc.

## **22. "Immediately recoverable"**

18/11

Meaning of "Immediately Recoverable"

**Q.** With reference to Note 1 under Rule 18, when is a ball to be replaced deemed not to be "immediately recoverable?"

**A.** When it cannot be retrieved within a few seconds.

## 23. "Immediately" when player makes stroke out of order in match play and opponent wishes to immediately cancel stroke

30-1/1

Side Plays Out of Turn from Tee; Opponents Require One Member of Side to Replay But Not Other---Meaning of "Immediately"

**Q.** A and B are playing C and D in a four-ball match. At one hole A and B drive out of turn. C and D require that A abandon his ball and replay in correct order and that B continue with his original ball. A and B maintain that if A is required to drive again then B must also do so. What is the ruling?

**A.** Rule 10-1c states in part: "the opponent may immediately require the player to cancel the stroke so made." **In this context, "immediately" means before anyone else plays.**

Accordingly, if A and B played in that order, C and D could not require A to replay his stroke after B had played, but they could require B to replay.

If A and B played in the order B-A, A could be required to replay, but not B.

## 24. "Improve" as applied to Rule 13-2

13-2/1

Explanation of "Fairly Taking His Stance"

**Q.** Rule 13-2 states that a player must not improve the position or lie of his ball, the area of his intended stance or swing or his line of play or a reasonable extension of that line beyond the hole by moving, bending or breaking anything growing or fixed (including immovable obstructions and objects defining out of bounds). An exception permits a player to do so in "fairly taking his stance". What is the significance of "fairly"?

**A.** Without "fairly", the exception would permit improvement of position or lie, area of intended stance or swing or line of play by anything that could be said to be taking a stance. The use of "fairly" is intended to limit the player to what is reasonably necessary to take a stance for the selected stroke without unduly improving the position of the ball, his lie, area of intended stance or swing or line of play. Thus, in taking his stance for the selected stroke, the player should select the least intrusive course of action which results in the minimum improvement in the position or lie of the ball, area of intended stance or swing or line of play. The player is not entitled to a normal stance or swing. He must accommodate the situation in which the ball is found and take a stance as normal as the circumstances permit. What is fair must be determined in the light of all the circumstances.

Examples of actions which do constitute fairly taking a stance are:

- backing into a branch or young sapling if that is the only way to take a stance for the selected stroke, even if this causes the branch to move out of the way or the sapling to bend or break.
- bending a branch of a tree with the hands in order to get under the tree to play a ball.

Examples of actions which do not constitute fairly taking a stance are:

- deliberately moving, bending or breaking branches with the hands, a leg or the body to get them out of the way of the backswing or stroke.
- standing on a branch to prevent it interfering with the backswing or stroke.
- hooking one branch on another or braiding two weeds for the same purpose.
- bending with a hand a branch obscuring the ball after the stance has been taken.
- bending an interfering branch with the hands, a leg or the body in taking a stance when the stance could have been taken without bending the branch.



## 25. Indicating Line of Play

### 8-2a/0.5

Meaning of “Anyone Indicating Line of Play” and “Placing of Mark for Purpose of Indicating Line of Play” in Rule 8-2a

Rule 8-2a allows a player to have the line of play indicated to him by anyone. However, any mark placed by the player or with his knowledge, for the purpose of indicating the line of play, must be removed before the stroke is made.

For example, the following actions are not a breach of Rule 8-2a:

- Prior to playing from the teeing ground on a hole where the landing zone is not visible, a player asks his fellow-competitor whether an object (e.g. a building) in the distance is in line with the middle of the fairway, and the fellow-competitor advises that it is.
- In taking relief from a water hazard, a player places a towel at the point where he estimates the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard. The player drops back on a line to the hole under Rule 26-1b and the towel is on his line of play when the player makes his stroke. As the towel was not placed for the “purpose of indicating the line of play” there is no breach of Rule 8-2a.

## 26. Line of Putt

### 8-2b/0.5

Meaning of “Indicating Line of Putt” and “Placing of Mark for Purpose of Indicating Line of Putt” in Rule 8-2b

Rule 8-2b allows a player to have the line of putt indicated to him by his partner or either of their caddies. However, the putting green must not be touched nor may a mark be placed anywhere for the purpose of indicating the line of putt.

For example, the following actions are not a breach of Rule 8-2b:

- Prior to a player playing from the putting green, his caddie points to but does not touch a repaired ball-mark on the line of putt that the player should use as an aiming point.
- As a player is preparing to play from the putting green, his partner tells him to aim at the edge of a sprinkler head (i.e. a fixed object) that is located behind the green.

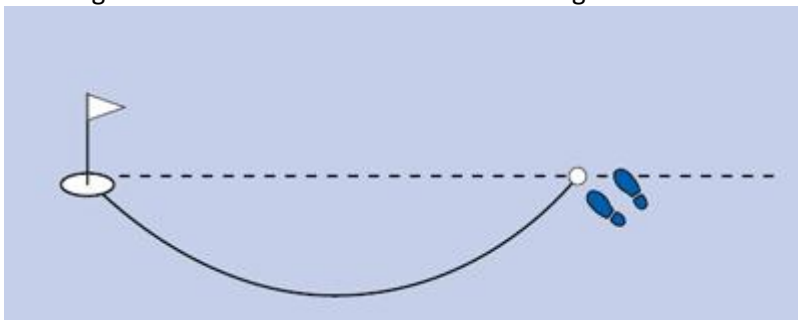
However, the following are examples of actions that would be a breach of Rule 8-2b:

- Prior to a player playing from the putting green, his caddie touches the putting green with the flagstick behind and to the right of the hole to indicate the point where the player should aim his putt.
- As a player is lining up his putt, his caddie places a water bottle on the grass behind the green to indicate the point where the player should aim his putt and removes the bottle before the player makes his stroke. (New)

## 27. “Line of Putt” in context of “standing aside or on line of putt”

16-1e/1

Meaning of "Line of Putt" in Context of "Standing Astride or on Line of Putt"



**Q.** With reference to the above illustration, the broken line is a direct line from the ball to the hole and the solid line is the line on which the player intends his ball to travel. Which line is the "line of putt" for purposes

of application of Rule 16-1e (Standing Astride or on Line of Putt)? If the broken line is the "line of putt," the player will be in breach of Rule 16-1e. If the solid line is the "line of putt," he will not be in breach of the Rule.

**A.** The solid line is the "line of putt."

## **28. "Marking position of Ball": permissible methods**

20-1/16

Method Used to Mark Position of Ball

**Q.** The Note to Rule 20-1 provides that "the position of a ball to be lifted should be marked by placing a ball-marker, a small coin or other similar object immediately behind the ball." Is a player penalized if he uses an object that is not similar to a ball-marker or small coin to mark the position of his ball?

**A.** No. The provision in the Note to Rule 20-1 is a recommendation of best practice, but there is no penalty for failing to act in accordance with the Note.

Examples of methods of marking the position of a ball that are not recommended, but are permissible, are as follows:

- placing the toe of a club at the side of, or behind, the ball;
- using a tee;
- using a loose impediment;
- scratching a line, provided the putting green is not tested (Rule 16-1d) and a line for putting is not indicated (Rule 8-2b). As this practice may cause damage to the putting green, it is discouraged.

However, under Rule 20-1 it is necessary to physically mark the position of the ball. Reference to an existing mark on the ground does not constitute marking the position of a ball. For example, it is not permissible to mark the position with reference to a blemish on the putting green.

When moving a ball or ball-marker to the side to prevent it from interfering with another player's stance or stroke, the player may measure from the side of the ball or ball-marker. In order to accurately replace the ball on the spot from which it was lifted, the steps used to move the ball or ball-marker to the side should be reversed.

## **29. "Maximum available relief" from casual water in bunker**

25-1b/5

Explanation of "Maximum Available Relief" from Casual Water in Bunker

**Q.** In a bunker completely covered by casual water, is the place providing "maximum available relief" the spot which will provide the most relief for both lie and stance or just lie?

**A.** The term applies to both lie and stance. The spot providing "maximum available relief" might be such that the ball will be in shallower water than the player's feet after he takes his stance, or vice versa.

## **30. "Might have influenced the movement of the ball" as applied in Rule 17**

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.

### 31. "Nearest Point of Relief", diagrams illustrating

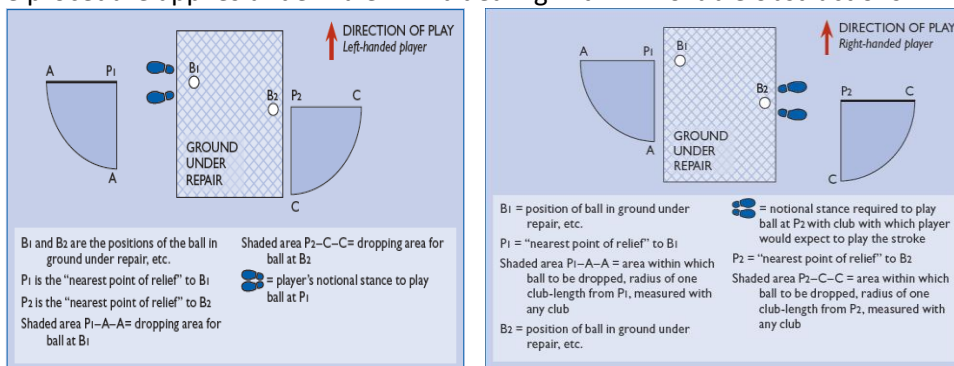
25-1b/2

Diagrams Illustrating Nearest Point of Relief

The diagrams illustrate the term "nearest point of relief" in Rule 25-1b(i) in the case of both a right-handed and left-handed player.

The "nearest point of relief" must be strictly interpreted. A player is not permitted to choose on which side of the ground under repair he will drop the ball, unless there are two equidistant "nearest points of relief." Even if one side of the ground under repair is fairway and the other is bushes, if the "nearest point of relief" is in the bushes, then the player, if taking relief, must drop the ball within one club-length of that point, even though he may have to drop the ball in a virtually unplayable lie.

The same procedure applies under Rule 24-2b dealing with immovable obstructions.



Related Decisions:

- 24-2b/1 Determining "Nearest Point of Relief."
- 24-2b/3.7 Diagram Illustrating Player Unable to Determine Nearest Point of Relief.
- 33-8/19 Local Rule Permitting Relief on Specified Side of Paved Path

### 32. "Next Teeing Ground" after competitors have played from wrong teeing ground

11-5/1

Explanation of "Next Teeing Ground" When Competitors Have Played from Wrong Teeing Ground

**Q.** In stroke play, two competitors, having completed the 11th hole, played from the 15th tee, completed the hole and played from the 16th tee. Before playing their second shots they realized their mistake, returned to the 12th tee and completed the round. On reporting the incident the competitors were each penalized two strokes, as the Committee interpreted the "next teeing ground" referred to in Rule 11-4b to be that of the 12th hole. Was this correct?

**A.** No. When the competitors played from the 16th tee, they had played from the "next teeing ground" and could not correct their error. Therefore, they should have been disqualified.

### 33. "Normal Course of Play"

4-3/1

Meaning of Damage Sustained in "Normal Course of Play"

**Q.** In Rule 4-3a, what is meant by the term "normal course of play?"

**A.** The term "normal course of play" is intended to cover all reasonable acts but specifically excludes cases of abuse.

In addition to making a stroke, practice swing or practice stroke, examples of acts that are in the "normal course of play" include the following:

- removing or replacing a club in the bag;
- using a club to search for or retrieve a ball (except by throwing the club);
- leaning on a club while waiting to play, teeing a ball or removing a ball from the hole; or
- accidentally dropping a club.

Examples of acts that are not in the "normal course of play" include the following:

- throwing a club whether in anger, in retrieving a ball, or otherwise;
- "slamming" a club into a bag; or
- intentionally striking something (e.g., the ground or a tree) with the club other than during a stroke, practice swing or practice stroke.

### 34. "Officially Announced"

2-5/14

When Match Result "Officially Announced"

**Q.** Rule 2-5 prohibits a Committee from considering a claim after the result of a match has been "officially announced," except in cases where a player knowingly gave wrong information. When is the result of a match "officially announced?"

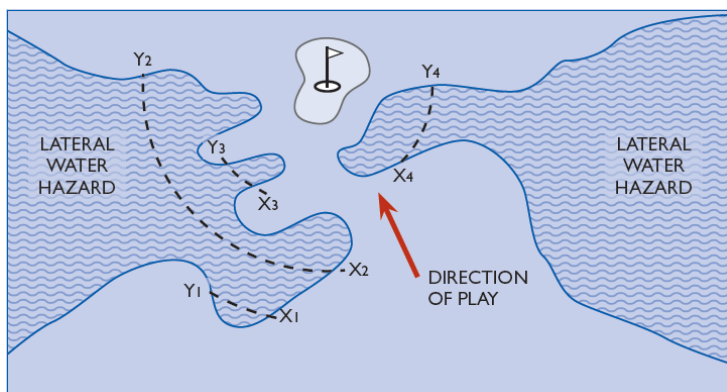
**A.** It is a matter for the Committee to decide when the result of the match has been "officially announced" and it will vary depending on the nature of the competition. When an official scoreboard exists, Rule 2-5 should be interpreted so that the recording of the winner of the match on the official scoreboard is the official announcement of the result of the match. In such cases where a referee has been assigned by the Committee to accompany a match, any announcement of the result of the match by the referee on the final putting green is not the official announcement. However, there may be cases where an official scoreboard is not used, in which case the Committee must clarify when it considers the results "officially announced."

In some cases the official scoreboard will be a prominent structure and in other cases it might be a sheet of paper in the golf shop or locker room. The Committee is generally responsible for recording the winner's name on the scoreboard, but there may be times when the Committee charges the players with this responsibility.

### 35. "Opposite Margin" as applied in Rule 26-1c

26-1/14

Clarification of "Opposite Margin" in Rule 26-1c(ii)



**Q.** Please clarify the words "opposite margin" in Rule 26-1c. With regard to the diagram, "X1" indicates where a ball in the hazard last crossed the hazard margin. May the player drop a ball within two club-lengths of "Y1"? And, may a player whose ball last crossed the hazard margin at "X2" drop a ball within two club-lengths of "Y2," and so on?

A. With respect to "X1," "Y1" is "a point on the opposite margin of the water hazard equidistant from the hole." Accordingly, the player would be entitled to drop a ball within two club-lengths of "Y1." The same applies in the cases of "X3"- "Y3" and "X4"- "Y4," but not in the case of "X2"- "Y2." A "point on the opposite margin" is a point across the hazard from "the point where the original ball last crossed the margin of the hazard." "Y2" is not across the hazard from "X2" because an imaginary straight line from "X2" to "Y2" crosses land outside the hazard.

### **36. Penalty Strokes incurred solely by played ball ruled not to count” clarified for situations where competitor plays second ball under Rule 20-7c**

20-7c/5

Competitor Plays Second Ball Under Rule 20-7c; Clarification of "Penalty Strokes Incurred Solely by Playing the Ball Ruled Not to Count"

Note 2 under Rule 20-7c permits a player who has played a second ball to disregard penalty strokes incurred solely in playing a ball ruled not to count, such as accidentally causing the ball to move (Rule 18-2a) or proceeding under the water hazard Rule (Rule 26-1). However, a player cannot disregard a breach of the Rules which might apply to either ball, such as a breach of the practice Rule (Rule 7-2), the advice Rule (Rule 8-1) or playing a wrong ball (Rule 15-3).

Related Decisions:

- 15/7 Wrong Ball Played in Belief It Is Provisional or Second Ball.
- 27-2c/4 Original Ball and Provisional Ball Found Out of Bounds.

### **37. “Placing of mark” for purpose of Indicating Line of Play or Line of Putt**

#### **8-2a/0.5**

Meaning of “Anyone Indicating Line of Play” and “Placing of Mark for Purpose of Indicating Line of Play” in Rule 8-2a

Rule 8-2a allows a player to have the line of play indicated to him by anyone. However, any mark placed by the player or with his knowledge, for the purpose of indicating the line of play, must be removed before the stroke is made.

.....the following is an example of an action that would be a breach of Rule 8-2a:

- Prior to a player making a stroke from five yards off the green, and with the player’s knowledge, his caddie places the player’s bag at a specific position behind the green for the purpose of indicating the point where the player should aim, and leaves the bag in place while the player makes his stroke. (New)

#### **8-2b/0.5**

Meaning of “Indicating Line of Putt” and “Placing of Mark for Purpose of Indicating Line of Putt” in Rule 8-2b

Rule 8-2b allows a player to have the line of putt indicated to him by his partner or either of their caddies. However, the putting green must not be touched nor may a mark be placed anywhere for the purpose of indicating the line of putt.

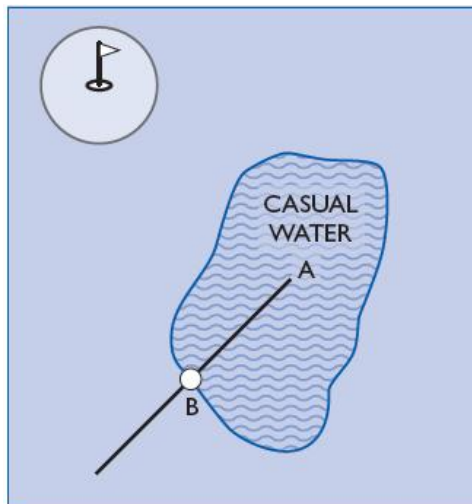
..... the following are examples of actions that would be a breach of Rule 8-2b:

- Prior to a player playing from the putting green, his caddie touches the putting green with the flagstick behind and to the right of the hole to indicate the point where the player should aim his putt.
- As a player is lining up his putt, his caddie places a water bottle on the grass behind the green to indicate the point where the player should aim his putt and removes the bottle before the player makes his stroke. (New)

### 38. Point where ball "last entered" abnormal ground condition when ball lost in condition

25-1c/1.5

Clarification of Point Where Ball "Last Crossed Outermost Limits of" Abnormal Ground Condition



**Q.** In the diagram, a ball is lost in an area of casual water, having splashed at Point A. Point B represents the point where the ball crossed over the outermost limits of the casual water. For the purposes of proceeding under Rule 25-1c, where is the ball deemed to lie?

**A.** The ball is deemed to lie at Point B.

### 39. "Repair"

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)

### 40. Serious Breach of Etiquette

33-7/8

Meaning of "Serious Breach of Etiquette"

**Q.** In Rule 33-7, what is meant by a "serious breach of etiquette"?

**A.** A serious breach of etiquette is behavior by a player that shows a significant disregard for an aspect of the Etiquette Section, such as intentionally distracting another player or intentionally offending someone. Although a Committee may disqualify a player under Rule 33-7 for a single act that it considers to be a serious breach of etiquette, in most cases it is recommended that such a penalty should be imposed only in the event of a further serious breach.

Ultimately, the application of a penalty for a serious breach of etiquette under Rule 33-7 is at the discretion of the Committee.

#### **41. "separate Rules", for purpose of determining whether multiple penalties apply**

##### **Decision 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)

#### **42. "Sole purpose of caring for the course"**

1-2/0.7

Meaning of "Sole Purpose of Caring for the Course"

**Q.** What is the meaning of the phrase "sole purpose of caring for the course" in Exception 2 to Rule 1-2?

**A.** The phrase "sole purpose of caring for the course" in the Exception refers to the performance of acts that are encouraged in the Etiquette Section of the Rules of Golf provided they are taken at the appropriate time and in a manner permitted by the Rules. The provisions of Rule 1-2 do not prevent a player from taking acts that conform with the Etiquette Section, so long as the player does so for the sole purpose of caring for the course and without intentionally influencing the movement of a ball, or the physical conditions affecting play, of a player in the player's group or match. For example, while a player may not smooth the ragged edge of a hole or tap down spike marks in order to influence the movement of a ball of an opponent, fellow-competitor or partner, the player may generally smooth the ragged edge of a hole or tap down spike marks as a courtesy to players in following groups or matches, or for care of the course (see Decision 1-2/3.5). Similarly, while a player may not press down a piece of turf in the area in which a ball in motion may come to rest or in the area in which a ball is to be dropped or placed with the intention of influencing the movement of the ball, a player generally may attempt to tidy up the course by repairing divot holes and/or replacing divots that do not affect play of the hole by a player in the player's group or match (see Decision 1-2/8). (New)

#### **43. "Solidly embedded"**

23/2

Meaning of "Solidly Embedded" in Definition of "Loose Impediments"

**Q.** The Definition of "Loose Impediments" states that a stone is a loose impediment if it is not "solidly embedded." When is a stone solidly embedded?

**A.** If a stone is partially embedded and may be picked up with ease, it is a loose impediment. When there is doubt as to whether a stone is solidly embedded or not, it should not be removed.



#### 44. "Specific Directions"

6-4/1

Meaning of "Specific Directions" in Definition of "Caddie"

**Q.** A and B are sharing a caddie. A asks the caddie to bring him a club. The caddie removes A's club from his bag, places both bags behind the green and walks towards A to give him his club. At that point B plays and his ball strikes one of the bags. What is the ruling?

**A.** B incurred a penalty stroke under Rule 19-2 (Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped by Player's Equipment).

The Definition of "Caddie" (second paragraph) provides that, when a caddie is shared by more than one player, the equipment he carries is deemed to belong to the player whose ball is involved in any incident (in this case, B). The only exception to the above provision occurs when the shared caddie is acting upon the specific directions of another player (or the partner of another player) sharing the caddie. In this case, although A asked the caddie to bring him a club, he did not instruct the caddie, when complying with his request, to place the two bags in a particular position. In placing the bags where he did, therefore, the caddie was not acting on "specific directions" of A within the meaning of that term in the Definition of "Caddie." Before playing, B could have asked the caddie to move the bags if he thought his ball might strike them.

#### 45. "Stands near the Hole"

17-1/1

Meaning of "Stands Near the Hole"

**Q.** Note 1 to Rule 17-1 states that, if anyone "stands near the hole," he is deemed to be attending the flagstick. Is such a person considered to be standing "near the hole" if he is close enough to touch the flagstick?

**A.** Yes.

#### 46. "Strokes played in continuing play of a hole"

7-2/1.7

Explanation of "Strokes Played in Continuing the Play of a Hole"

**Q. Rule 7-2 states that strokes played in continuing the play of a hole, the result of which has been decided, are not practice strokes. What is meant by "continuing the play of a hole?"**

**A.** This phrase covers situations in which a player plays the remainder of the hole with one ball in play. Its interpretation is not restricted to continuing the play of the hole in accordance with the Rules and includes, for example, situations where a player plays a ball from a spot close to where his original ball went out of bounds or in the area where it was lost.

#### 47. "Test the condition of the hazard" in Rule 13-4a

13-4/0.5

Meaning of "Test the Condition of the Hazard" in Rule 13-4a

**Q.** What is meant by "test the condition of the hazard" in Rule 13-4a?

**A.** The term covers all actions by which the player could gain more information about the hazard than could be gained from taking his stance for the stroke to be made, bearing in mind that a certain amount of digging in with the feet in the sand or soil is permitted when taking the stance for a stroke.

Examples of actions that would not constitute testing the condition of the hazard include the following:

- digging in with the feet for a stance, including for a practice swing, anywhere in the hazard or in a similar hazard;
- placing an object, such as clubs or a rake, in the hazard;
- leaning on an object (other than a club) such as a rake while it is touching the ground in the hazard or water in a water hazard;

- touching the hazard with an object (other than a club) such as a towel (touching with a club would be a breach of Rule 13-4b); or

- marking the position of the ball with a tee or otherwise when proceeding under a Rule.

Examples of actions that would constitute testing the condition of the hazard in breach of Rule 13-4a include the following:

- digging in with the feet in excess of what would be done for a stance for a stroke or a practice swing;
- filling in footprints from a previous stance (e.g., when changing stance to make a different type of stroke);
- intentionally sticking an object, such as a rake, into sand or soil in the hazard or water in a water hazard (but see Rule 12-1);
- smoothing a bunker with a rake, a club or otherwise (but see Exception 2 to Rule 13-4);
- kicking the ground in the hazard or water in a water hazard; or
- touching the sand with a club when making a practice swing in the hazard or in a similar hazard (but see Exception 3 to Rule 13-4).

#### **48. "Time of Starting"**

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)

#### **49. "Valid Claim", procedure for**

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)

#### **50. "Virtually Certain"**

**--ball in abnormal ground condition**

25-1c/1

Ball Not Found Is in Casual Water or Rough

**Q.** An area of casual water preceded by high rough is in a hollow not visible from the tee. A ball driven into this area is not found. The ball may be in the casual water or it may be in the high rough. May the player treat the ball as being in the casual water?

**A.** No. In such circumstances, it is neither known nor virtually certain that the ball is in casual water. The player may not proceed under Rule **25-1c**.

## --ball in Water Hazard

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)

## --ball moved by outside agency

27-1/2.5

Lost Ball Treated as Moved by Outside Agency in Absence of Knowledge or Virtual Certainty to That Effect

**Q.** A player who is unable to find his ball treats it as moved by an outside agency, rather than lost, in the absence of knowledge or virtual certainty to that effect. Accordingly, he drops a ball where he thinks his original ball came to rest (Rule **18-1**) and plays it, rather than taking the stroke-and-distance penalty for a lost ball (Rule **27-1**). What is the ruling?

**A.** In the absence of knowledge or virtual certainty that the ball had been moved by an outside agency, the player was required to put another ball into play under Rule **27-1**. In playing the ball dropped under Rule **18-1**, the player 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**). Because the breach was a serious one, he was subject to disqualification unless he corrected the error as provided in the second paragraph of Rule **20-7c**.

Related Decision:

- **25-1c/2** Ball Dropped and Played Under Ground Under Repair Rule in Absence of Knowledge or Virtual Certainty That Original Ball in Ground Under Repair.

## **51. When Stipulated round “begins” and “ends”**

### **In Match Play**

2/2

#### **Stipulated Round in Match Play**

In all forms of match play other than threesomes and foursomes, a player has begun his stipulated round when he makes his first stroke in that round. In threesomes and foursomes match play, the side has begun its stipulated round when it makes its first stroke in that round.

The stipulated round has ended in match play when all of the players in the match have completed the final hole of the match (although a player may lodge a subsequent claim under Rule 2-5 or correct wrong information under Rule 9-2b(iii)). With the first round of a 36-hole match, the stipulated round has ended when all the players in the match have completed the final hole of that stipulated round.

### **In Stroke Play**

3/3

#### **Stipulated Round in Stroke Play**

In all forms of stroke play other than foursomes, a competitor has begun his stipulated round when he makes his first stroke in that round. In foursomes stroke play, the side has begun its stipulated round when it makes its first stroke in that round.

In individual stroke play, the competitor's stipulated round has ended when he has completed play of the final hole of that round (including correction of an error under a Rule, e.g., Rule 15-3b or Rule 20-7c). In foursomes or four-ball stroke play, the stipulated round has ended when the side has completed play of the final hole of that round (including correction of an error under a Rule).

## **C. Additional Terminology/Definitions embedded in the Decisions**

### **6-4/10**

#### **Acts Which Caddie May Perform**

While the Rules do not expressly so state, the following are examples of acts which the caddie may perform for the player without the player's authority:

1. Search for the player's ball as provided in Rule 12-1.
2. Place the player's clubs in a hazard - Exception 1 under Rule 13-4.
3. Repair old hole plugs and ball marks - Rule 16-1a(vi) and 16-1c.
4. Remove loose impediments on the line of putt or elsewhere - Rules 16-1a and 23-1.
5. Mark the position of a ball, without lifting it - Rule 20-1.
6. Clean the player's ball - Rule 21.
7. Remove movable obstructions - Rule 24-1.

### **6-6c/1**

#### **When Score Card Considered Returned**

**Q.** Rule 6-6c prohibits alterations to the score card "after the competitor has returned it to the Committee." When is a score card considered returned?

**A.** This is a matter for the Committee to decide and it will vary depending on the nature of the competition. The Committee should designate a "scoring area" where competitors are to return their score cards (e.g., in a tent, a trailer, the golf shop, by the scoreboard, etc.). When it has done so, Rule 6-6c should be interpreted in such a way that a competitor within the "scoring area" is considered to be in the process of returning his score card.

Alterations may be made on the score card even if the competitor has handed the score card to a member of the Committee. He is considered to have returned his score card when he has left the scoring area.

Alternatively, the Committee may require a competitor to return his score card by placing it in a box and thus consider it returned when it is dropped into the box, even if he has not left the scoring area.

Other Decisions related to Rule 6-6c: See "Scores and Score Cards: alteration to score card" in the Index.

## **13-2/7**

### **When Divot Replaced**

**Q.** Under Rule 13-2 a player may not remove or press down a replaced divot. When is a divot considered replaced?

**A.** When substantially all of it, with the roots downwards, lies in a divot hole. The hole need not be the one from which the divot was extracted.

## **18-1/2**

### **Status of Air When Artificially Propelled**

**Q.** What is the status of air from a blower operated by an outside agency or from a fan?

**A.** Although the Definition of "Outside Agency" states that wind is not an outside agency, in this case the artificially-propelled air is considered to be an outside agency.

If such artificially-propelled air moves a ball at rest, Rule 18-1 applies.

## **26/1**

### **When Ball Is in Water Hazard**

**Q.** Is a ball in a water hazard when some part of the ball breaks the plane that extends vertically upwards from the margin of the hazard even though the ball does not touch the ground or grass inside the hazard?

**A.** Yes, since the Definition of "Water Hazard" provides that "the margin of a water hazard extends vertically upwards and downwards."

## **26-1/1.3**

### **When is it Necessary to Go Forward to Establish "Virtual Certainty"?**

**Q.** Rule 26-1 requires there to be "knowledge or virtual certainty" before proceeding under the provisions of the Rule. In the absence of "knowledge" that a ball is in a water hazard, is it possible to establish the existence of "virtual certainty" without going forward to assess the physical conditions around the water hazard?

**A.** In the majority of cases, in order for it to be reasonably concluded that the ball does not lie anywhere outside the water hazard, it is necessary to go forward to assess the physical conditions around the hazard. However, there are situations where there will be sufficient evidence that the ball is in the hazard to establish "virtual certainty" without anyone having to go forward to review the physical conditions around the hazard. In the following examples, the conclusion that it is "virtually certain" that the ball is in the water hazard would be justified without anyone going forward to the water hazard so that the player would be entitled to proceed under the provisions of Rule 26-1.

· It is a clear day, with good visibility. A player's ball is struck towards a water hazard, which has closely mown grass extending right up to its margin. The ball is observed to fall out of sight as it approaches the water hazard but is not seen actually to enter it. From a distance, it can be seen that there is no golf ball lying on the closely mown grass outside the hazard and, from both prior experience and a reasonable evaluation of current course conditions, it is known that the contour of the ground surrounding the hazard causes balls to enter the hazard. In such circumstances, it is reasonable for the conclusion to be reached from a distance that the ball must be in the water hazard.

· It is a clear day, with good visibility. A player's ball is struck towards an island putting green. The margin of the water hazard coincides with the apron of the putting green. Both from prior experience and a reasonable evaluation of current course conditions, it is understood that any ball that comes to rest on the apron or the putting green will be visible from where the stroke was made. In this instance, the ball is observed to land on the putting green and roll out of sight. It is therefore concluded that the ball has carried over the green and into the water hazard. The player drops a ball in a dropping zone in front of the hazard, which has been provided by the Committee as an additional option to those under Rule 26-1, and plays to the green. When he arrives at the putting green, he discovers his original ball on the back apron of the green lying on a sunken sprinkler head. Nonetheless, in the circumstances, it was reasonable for the conclusion to be reached from where the ball was last played that the ball must be in the water hazard.

In the following example, it cannot be established that there is "virtual certainty" that the ball is in the water hazard without going forward to assess the area surrounding the hazard.

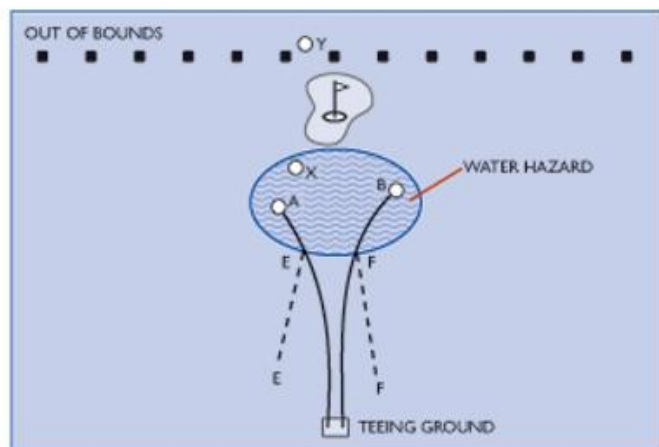
· It is a clear day, with good visibility. A player's ball is struck towards a water hazard, which has closely mown grass extending right up to its margin. The ball is observed travelling in the direction of the water hazard and it is known from prior experience that, with normal turf conditions, the ball would undoubtedly go into the water hazard. However, on this day, the fairways are wet and therefore it is possible that the ball could have embedded in the fairway and thus might not be in the water hazard. (New)

Decision related to 26-1/1 and 26-1/1.3:

· 27-2a/3 Play of Provisional Ball in Absence of Reasonable Possibility Original Ball Is Lost or Out of Bounds.

## 26-2/1

### Explanation of Options Under Rules 26-2a and 26-2b



Regarding the diagram, A and B play from the tee. A's ball comes to rest in the water hazard at Point A. B's ball comes to rest at Point B. Both A and B elect to play from the hazard. A fails to get out of the hazard. He plays to Point X, and his ball is not playable. B plays to Point Y, which is out of bounds.

Under penalty of one stroke, A may:

- (a) drop a ball at Point A and play again from there, playing 4 (Rule **26-2a(i)**); or
- (b) drop a ball anywhere on dotted line E–E and play from there, playing 4 (Rule **26-2a(ii)**); or
- (c) play another ball from the tee, playing 4 (Rule **26-2a(i)**).

If A drops a ball at Point A and the ball comes to rest at a spot from which he judges he cannot play, he may, adding an additional penalty of one stroke, either drop a ball anywhere on the dotted line E–E or play another ball from the tee, playing 5.

B, after taking the penalty stroke prescribed in Rule **27-1**, may drop a ball at Point B and play again from there, playing 4 (Rule **26-2b**).

Alternatively, B, after taking the penalty stroke prescribed in Rule **27-1**, may drop a ball at Point B and elect not to play that ball or elect not to drop a ball at Point B. In either case, he shall then:

- (a) under an additional penalty of one stroke, drop a ball anywhere on dotted line F–F and play from there, playing 5 (Rule **26-2b(ii)**); or
- (b) under an additional penalty of one stroke, play another ball from the tee, playing 5 (Rule **26-2b(i)**).

(Revised)

## 27-2a/1

### Announcement of Provisional Ball

**Q.** A player hits his ball into an area where it may be lost outside a water hazard or out of bounds. The player then drops another ball and plays it. The player intends the dropped ball to be a provisional ball, but he does not inform his opponent, marker or fellow-competitor that he is "playing a provisional ball." In such a situation, can a player's actions constitute announcement that he is playing a provisional ball?

**A.** No. Rule 27-2a specifically provides that the player must inform his opponent, marker or a fellow-competitor that he intends to play a provisional ball.

The player's statement must specifically mention the words "provisional ball" or must make it clear that he is proceeding under Rule 27-2a. Therefore, a player who says nothing has put another ball into play.

The following are examples of statements that do not satisfy the requirement of announcing a provisional ball:

- (a) "That might be lost. I am going to re-load."
- (b) "That might be out of here."
- (c) "I'd better hit another one."
- (d) "I will never find that one. I'll play another."