



# Carolin's Golf Association

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## Officiating Four-Ball Stroke Play

**General:** Officiating four-ball stroke play is really not much different than officiating individual stroke play from the Committee's perspective. Still have to protect the interests of the field.

**Four-Ball Definition:** A competition in which two competitors play as partners, each playing his own ball. The lower score of the partners is the score for the hole. If one partner fails to complete the play of a hole, there is no penalty.

**Definition of Side:** A "side" is a player, or two or more players who are partners. In stroke play, members of all sides are competitors and members of different sides playing together are fellow-competitors.

**Holing Out (Rule 3-2):** In four-ball stroke play, only one of the partners must hole out at each hole.

**Scoring (Rule 31-3):** The marker is required to record for each hole only the gross score of whichever partner's score is to count. The gross scores to count must be individually identifiable; otherwise, the side is disqualified. Only one of the partners need be responsible for complying with Rule 6-6b.

Sample Score card Displaying Individually Identifiable Hole Scores

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	Out	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	In	Total
Player A	4			4		4	3			37			4	4			5		4	36	73
Player B		3	5		6			3	5		5	3			4	4		3			

**Time of Starting (Dec. 31-2/1):** A side may be represented by only one partner to start a round. If the absent partner arrives at the starting tee within 5 minutes of the starting time and his partner has yet to play then he may play the first hole with a two stroke penalty. Otherwise he may join his partner and play at the start of the next hole.

**Order of Play (Rule 31-4):** The side may play in any order that it considers best with some constraints placed via Decisions 31-4/1 and 31-4/2.

### *31-4/1 Player Waives Turn to Play; Circumstances Under Which He May Complete Hole*

Q. A and B are partners in four-ball stroke play. A's tee shot at a par-3 entirely over water comes to rest in the water hazard. As B's tee shot comes to rest on the putting green, A elects not to play a ball under Rule 26-1 and proceeds to the green. B four putts and scores 5 for the hole. May A return to the tee and put another ball into play under Rule 26-1?

A. Yes. However, he may be subject to penalty under Rule 6-7 for unduly delaying play.

### *31-4/2 Extent to Which Side May Play in Order It Considers Best*

Rule 31-4, which is an exception to Rule 10-2 (Order of Play), permits a side to play in the order it considers best. Generally, a side will exercise its right under Rule 31-4 for strategic reasons. However, in doing so, the side must not unduly delay play (Rule 6-7).

The following are examples of a side (competitors A and B) playing in an order other than that set forth in Rule 10-2b and whether a penalty under Rule 6-7 would be appropriate:

- (a) A's ball is on the putting green five feet from the hole and he plays before B, whose ball is on the putting green 20 feet from the hole – no penalty.
- (b) A's ball is in an awkward lie in a hazard 30 yards from the hole and he plays before B, whose ball is in the fairway 50 yards from the hole – no penalty.
- (c) A's ball is 220 yards from the hole on a par-5 hole and he plays his second stroke before B, whose ball is 240 yards from the hole, plays – no penalty.
- (d) In situation (c) above, A's ball comes to rest 30 yards from the green. The side then elects to have A play his third stroke before B plays his second stroke – B is penalized two strokes for a breach of Rule 6-7.

**Wrong Ball (Rule 31-5):** Provisions of Rule 15-3 (Wrong Ball) still apply. Penalty is applied to the player who played the wrong ball not to the side or his partner. The wrong ball played could belong to his partner. If the wrong ball belongs to another competitor then its owner must place a ball on the spot from which the wrong ball was first played unless the provisions of Rule 20-3 (Placing and Replacing) apply (i.e. spot not determinable, lie altered).

**Penalties (Rules 31-6, 31-7, 31-8):** In most cases, when a player incurs a penalty (wrong ball, playing from wrong place) the penalty only applies to that player and not to his partner. Below are the various situations in which a side is penalized.

A side is penalized for a breach of any of the following by any partner:

- Rule 4 Clubs
- Rule 6-4 Caddie
- Any Local Rule or Condition of Competition for which there is a maximum penalty per round.

A side is disqualified from the competition if either partner incurs a penalty of disqualification under any of the following:

- Rule 1-3 Agreement to Waive Rules
- Rule 3-4 Refusal to Comply with a Rule
- Rule 4 Clubs
- Rule 5-1 or 5-2 The Ball
- Rule 6-2b Handicap
- Rule 6-4 Caddie
- Rule 6-6b Signing and Returning Score Card
- Rule 6-6d Wrong Score for Hole
- Rule 6-7 Undue Delay; Slow Play
- Rule 7-1 Practice Before or Between Rounds
- Rule 10-2c Sides Agree to Play Out of Turn
- Rule 11-1 Teeing
- Rule 14-3 Artificial Devices, Unusual Equipment and Unusual Use of Equipment
- Rule 22-1 Ball Assisting Play
- Rule 31-3 Gross Scores to Count Not Individually Identifiable
- Rule 33-7 Disqualification Penalty Imposed by Committee

A side is disqualified from the competition if both partners incur a penalty of disqualification under any of the following:

- if each partner incurs a penalty of disqualification for a breach of Rule 6-3 (Time of Starting and Groups) or Rule 6-8 (Discontinuance of Play), or
- if, at the same hole, each partner is in breach of a Rule the penalty for which is disqualification from the competition or for a hole.

Player Disqualified for the Hole Only:

- In all other cases where a breach of a Rule would result in disqualification, the competitor is disqualified only for the hole at which the breach occurred.

Effect of Other Penalties:

- If a competitor's breach of a Rule assists his partner's play, the partner incurs the applicable penalty in addition to any penalty incurred by the competitor.
- In all other cases where a competitor incurs a penalty for breach of a Rule, the penalty does not apply to his partner.

**Advice (Rule 8-1):** Partners are permitted to give advice to each other and ask advice from each other including either of their caddies.

**Caddies (Rule 6-4):** A side may employ one caddie for the side or each partner may employ a caddie. But each partner is still limited to only one caddie at a time.

**Positioning of Caddie or Partner Behind Ball (Rule 14-2b):** A player must not make a stroke with his caddie, his partner or his partner's caddie positioned on or close to an extension of the line of play or line of putt behind the ball.

*Exception:* There is no penalty if the player's caddie, his partner or his partner's caddie is inadvertently located on or close to an extension of the line of play or line of putt behind the ball.

**Doubt as to Procedure (Rule 3-3):** Player may still play two balls in four-ball with the final result only applying to that player's score.

**Lifting, Dropping, Placing (Rules 20-1, 20-2, 20-3):**

- A ball to be lifted under the Rules may be lifted by the (1) player, (2) his partner or (3) another person authorized by the player. In any such case, the player is responsible for any breach of the Rules.
- A ball to be dropped under the Rules must be dropped by the (1) player himself.
- A ball to be placed under the Rules must be placed by the (1) player or (2) his partner.
- A ball to be replaced under the Rules must be replaced by any one of the following: (1) the person who lifted or moved the ball, (2) the player, or (3) the player's partner.

***Also read all Four-Ball Stroke Play Decisions on pages I-54 & I-55 in the 2014-15 Decisions book.***