

### **1-2/3.5 Player Repairs Hole After Holing Out but Before Opponent, Fellow-Competitor or Partner Holes Out**

---

**Q.** After holing out, a player observes that the edge of the hole is ragged. He pats the ragged edge with his hand and smoothes it. Does the player incur a penalty under Rule 1-2 if his opponent, fellow-competitor or partner has not holed out?

**A.** If the player smoothed the edge of the hole as a courtesy to the players in following groups or for the care of the course, he was not in breach of Rule 1-2. However, if the player's primary purpose in smoothing the ragged edge was to influence the movement of his opponent's, fellow-competitor's, or partner's ball, he was in breach of Rule 1-2.

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

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

### **1-4/9 Bird's Nest Interfering with Stroke**

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **1-4/10 Dangerous Situation; Rattlesnake or Bees Interfere with Play**

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### **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. (Revised)

### **2-1/5 Three Holes Played Out of Sequence in Match**

**Q.** In a match, the players by mistake play three holes out of sequence. The error is discovered before the match concludes. What is the ruling?

**A.** There is no penalty, and those three holes stand as played. If the players were to replay the three holes in the proper sequence, there would be no penalty, and the three holes would stand as replayed. (Revised)

### **3-4/1 Competitor Not Given Opportunity to Lift Ball Assisting Fellow-Competitor**

**Q.** In stroke play, A's ball lies near the hole in a position to assist B, whose ball lies off the putting green. A states his intention to lift his ball under Rule 22-1. B mistakenly believes that A does not have the right to lift his ball and plays before A has an opportunity to lift his ball. What is the ruling?

**A.** B is disqualified under Rule 3-4 as he intentionally denied A's right to lift his ball. It is irrelevant that B did so in ignorance of the Rules. (Revised)

### **4-1/5 Adhesive Bandage or Tape Applied to Clubhead to Reduce Glare or for Protection**

**Q.** May a player put an adhesive bandage or tape on the clubhead to reduce glare or to protect the club from being damaged?

**A.** An adhesive bandage or tape added to the clubhead is considered an external attachment, rendering the club non-conforming (see Appendix II, Rule 1a, but see also Decision 4-1/4). However, material attached to the clubhead that does not affect the performance of the club and is semi-permanent, durable, not easily removable and conforms to the shape of the clubhead may be permitted by exception, but an adhesive bandage or tape does not fall under that exception because such items are temporary in nature and easily removable. See "A Guide to the Rules on Clubs and Balls," Section 1a, for detailed criteria regarding permissible external attachments, such as alignment markings, protective coverings or decorative decals.

Additionally, adding such an attachment during the stipulated round would change the club's playing characteristics in breach of Rule 4-2. (Revised)

### **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.

(Revised)

#### **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. (Revised)

#### **5-1/1.5 Status of Ball Not on List of Conforming Golf Balls**

---

**Q.** In a competition in which the Committee has not adopted the condition of competition requiring players to use a brand and model of ball on the current List of Conforming Golf Balls, a player uses a ball that does not appear on the list. What is the status of such a ball?

**A.** Balls not appearing on the current List of Conforming Golf Balls fall into three

categories:

1. Brands and models that have never been tested,
2. Brands and models that appeared on a previous List but that have not been re-submitted for inclusion on the current List, and
3. Brands and models that have been tested and found not to conform to the Rules and specifications set forth in Appendix III.

Balls in categories 1 and 2 are presumed to conform and the onus of proof is on the person alleging that the ball does not.

All balls in category 3 are deemed to be non-conforming. (Revised — Formerly USGA/5-1/101)

#### **5-3/7 Ball Thought to Be Unfit for Play; Committee Involvement**

**Q.** A player wishes to lift his ball to determine if it is unfit for play. May a referee or a member of the Committee fulfill the responsibilities of the opponent, marker or fellow-competitor in the relief procedure under Rule 5-3?

**A.** Yes.

The same ruling applies if a player wishes to lift his ball for identification (Rule 12-2) or to determine whether he is entitled to relief under a Rule (see Decision 20-1/0.7). (Revised)

#### **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. (Revised — Formerly USGA/6-2/100)

#### **6-2b/2 Wrong Handicap Knowingly Used in Stroke Play; Error Discovered After Competition Closed**

**Q.** In late June, A submitted an entry form for a handicap stroke-play competition to be held on July 10 and stated therein that his handicap was seven strokes, which was his correct handicap. On July 1, A’s handicap was reduced to six strokes and he was aware of the reduction.

On July 10, he played in the stroke-play competition and returned his score card with a handicap of seven strokes recorded thereon, and this affected the number of strokes

received. Under the conditions for the event he should have recorded his up-to-date handicap of six strokes. After the competition was closed, it was discovered that A had played off seven, instead of six.

The Committee questioned A, and A stated either that he knew he should have played off his up-to-date handicap or that he was uncertain at the time. What should the Committee do?

**A.** In either case, he should be deemed to have knowingly played off a higher handicap than that to which he was entitled and is disqualified under Rule 34-1b, Exception (ii).

Had A believed players were required to use their handicaps at the time of entry, there would have been no penalty as the competition had closed (Rule 34-1b). (Revised)

### **6-4/5.3 Status of Additional Persons and Items Carried by Such Persons for Player**

---

**Q.** May a player have a caddie carry his clubs and also have additional persons carry items other than clubs (e.g., a rainsuit, umbrella, food and drink) for the player?

**A.** Yes. The additional persons would be outside agencies, and any items carried by them would also be considered outside agencies while in their possession. However, the Committee may prohibit the use of such persons in the conditions of the competition. (Revised)

### **8-2b/1 Caddie Casts Shadow to Indicate Line for Putting**

---

**Q.** A caddie casts his shadow on the putting green for the purpose of indicating to the player a line for putting. Is this permissible?

**A.** Yes, but only if the shadow is removed prior to the stroke. (Revised)

### **10-1a/2 Determination of Honor at Hole Following Claim**

---

**Q.** A dispute arises in a match between A and B, and A lodges a claim. A and B agree to continue the match and get a ruling later. If the claim could have an effect on determining who has the honor at the next hole, how is the honor decided?

**A.** In equity (Rule 1-4), the honor is decided by lot. (Revised)

### **13-3/2 Making Stroke While Kneeling on Towel**

---

**Q.** A player's ball was under a tree in such a position that he found it expedient to make his next stroke while on his knees. Because the ground was wet, the player placed a towel on the ground at the spot where his knees would be situated so that the knees of his trousers would not get wet. He then knelt on the towel and made the stroke. Was the player subject to penalty under Rule 13-3 for building a stance?

**A.** Yes. The same answer would apply if he had wrapped the towel around his knees and knelt on it to make the stroke.

It would have been permissible for the player to have put on waterproof trousers.  
(Revised)

### **13-4/38 Sand Smoothed After Ball Played Out of Bunker; Ball Later Returns to Smoothed Area**

---

**Q.** After playing his ball out of a greenside bunker, the player smooths his footprints. He then discovers that his ball is in another bunker on the other side of the green. He plays out of the second bunker and the ball comes to rest in the smoothed area of the first bunker. What is the ruling?

**A.** No penalty was incurred. The player did not smooth his footprints in the first bunker while his ball still lay in that bunker - see Exception 2 to Rule 13-4.

If, however, the player failed to extricate his ball from the first bunker with his first stroke and had smoothed his footprints while his ball still lay in that bunker, he would have incurred a penalty if the act of smoothing his footprints had caused a breach of Rule 13-2 with respect to his next stroke. (Revised)

### **14-3/16 Use of Electronic Devices**

---

As provided in the Etiquette Section, players should ensure that any electronic device taken onto the course does not distract other players.

The use of an electronic device such as a mobile phone, hand-held computer, calculator, television or radio is not of itself a breach of Rule 14-3. For example, the following uses of an electronic device during a stipulated round are not a breach of the Rules:

- Using the device for matters unrelated to golf (e.g., to call home);
- Using the device to access information on advice-related matters that was produced prior to the start of the player's round (e.g., an electronic yardage book, swing tips);
- Using the device to access (but not interpret or process) playing information from previous rounds (e.g., driving distances, individual club yardages, etc); or
- Using the device to obtain information related to the competition being played (e.g., the leader board or projected "cut").

However, examples of uses of an electronic device during a stipulated round that are a breach of Rule 14-3, for which the penalty is disqualification, include:

- Using the device (e.g., a television or radio) to watch or listen to a broadcast of the competition being played;
- Using the device to ask for or give advice in breach of Rule 8-1 (e.g., calling a

swing coach);

- Using the device to access information on advice-related matters that was not produced prior to the start of his round (e.g., analysis of strokes made during that round); or
- Using the device to interpret or process any playing information obtained from current or previous rounds (e.g., driving distances, individual club yardages, etc.) or to assist in calculating the effective distance between two points (i.e., distance after considering gradient, wind speed and/or direction, temperature or other environmental factors).

(Revised)

---

**14-6/1 Ball Moves in Water in Water Hazard After Address**

---

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

**A.** There is no penalty. The player may play the ball from its new position or, under penalty of one stroke, take relief under Rule 26-1. Rule 14-6 overrides Rule 18-2b (Ball Moving After Address) in such a case.

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

---

**15/14 Ball in Bunker Deemed Unplayable, Dropped in Bunker and Played; Ball Then Discovered to Be Stray Ball**

---

**Q.** A player, believing that a ball lying very badly in a bunker is his ball, deems it unplayable, drops it in the bunker and plays it out. He then discovers that the ball he has played is not his original ball. Has he played a wrong ball?

**A.** No. The procedures in Rules 28b and 28c may not be applied except with reference to the position of the player's ball in play, and this must first be found and identified (see Decision 28/1). Before proceeding under option b or c of Rule 28, the player should ensure he is doing so with reference to his ball in play. The player was permitted to identify the ball following the procedure in Rule 12-2 or, having lifted it under Rule 28, could have inspected the ball to verify that it was his ball in play. In this case, the ball dropped and played by the player was not his original ball; it was a substituted ball. Since the location of the original ball was not known at the time the substituted ball was dropped, he was required to proceed under Rule 27-1. As the substituted ball was not dropped at the spot required by Rule 27-1, he played from a

wrong place (see Decision 28/15).

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

In stroke play, he incurred a penalty of one stroke under Rule 27-1 and an additional penalty of two strokes under Rule 20-7c for playing from a wrong place. If the breach was a serious one, he is subject to disqualification unless he corrected his error as provided in Rule 20-7c. (Revised)

#### **16-1a/9 Brushing Loose Impediments Off Line of Putt with Palm of Hand**

**Q.** A player, with about one dozen strokes with the whole palm of his hand, attempted to remove small leaves, which are difficult to remove by any method, from his line of putt. Is this permissible?

**A.** Yes, provided the player did not press anything down (Rule 16-1a(i)) and, if the surface were roughened, he did not do so with the intention of testing the surface of the putting green (Rule 16-1d). Given the nature of his acts, any doubt as to whether he pressed anything down should be resolved against the player. (Revised)

#### **18-1/3 Player Unaware Ball Moved by Outside Agency Does Not Replace Ball**

**Q.** In stroke play, a player's ball was moved by an outside agency. Neither the player nor his caddie was aware that his ball had been moved, so the player played the ball without replacing it. He then learned that his ball had been moved. What is the ruling?

**A.** As it was not known or virtually certain that the ball had been moved by an outside agency when the player played the ball, he proceeded properly and incurred no penalty — see the Note to Rule 18-1. (Revised)

#### **18-1/8 Ball Moved by Stone Dislodged by Partner's or Opponent's Stroke**

**Q.** In match play, a player made a stroke and dislodged an embedded stone. The stone struck his partner's or an opponent's ball which was lying about four yards ahead and moved it. What is the ruling?

**A.** The player is not deemed to have caused the other ball to move.

In playing his ball as it lies, the player could not, through reasonable care, have avoided dislodging the stone through his stroke. Moreover, in these circumstances it was not reasonable to expect the player to ask the partner or opponent to lift his ball under Rule 22-2 because the player could not have reasonably foreseen that his stroke would dislodge the stone ultimately leading to the movement of the partner's or opponent's ball.

Accordingly, the player's actions are deemed not to have caused the movement of the other ball, and Rules 18-2a(i) and 18-3b do not apply. The stone is deemed to have caused the movement of the other ball and, as the stone is an outside agency, Rule 18-1 applies. The player incurs no penalty, and the partner or opponent must replace his ball. (Revised)

### **18-2a/20.5 Player's Practice Swing Moves Loose Impediment Which Moves Ball**

**Q.** In making a practice swing near his ball, a player moves a loose impediment (e.g., a stone), which causes his ball in play to move. What is the ruling?

**A.** The player is deemed to have caused his ball in play to move in breach of Rule 18-2a; he incurs a one-stroke penalty and must replace the ball.

This ruling differs from that in Decision 18-1/8 both because it is reasonably foreseeable that a practice swing will move loose impediments that may in turn cause a ball in play to move, and because a player can, through reasonable care, avoid taking practice swings that might produce such a result. (Revised)

### **18-2a/21 Ball Moved Accidentally by Player in Playing Wrong Ball**

**Q.** In stroke play, in a bunker, A plays a wrong ball. In so doing, he accidentally moves a nearby ball, which was not visible before he played and is, in fact, his ball. What is the ruling?

**A.** Player A incurs a two-stroke penalty for playing a wrong ball – Rule 15-3b.

As the nearby ball was not visible before A played, it was not reasonably foreseeable that the ball could be moved by the stroke at the wrong ball; therefore, A is not penalized for moving his ball. A must replace his ball in play, and if necessary, the lie must be re-created. If the ball is not replaced correctly before A makes his next stroke, the failure to replace the ball is considered a separate act and he incurs a total penalty of four strokes (Rules 15-3b and 18-2a). (Revised)

### **18-3b/1 Ball Moved Accidentally by Opponent in Playing His Own Ball**

**Q.** In singles match play, A's ball is lying close to B's. It is B's turn to play. Although B has the right under Rule 22-2 to require A to mark the position of and lift his ball, he fails to do so. In making a stroke at his ball, B causes A's ball to move. What is the procedure?

**A.** B incurs a one-stroke penalty under Rule 18-3b for having caused A's ball in play to move. A must replace his ball; if A's lie has been altered, Rule 20-3b applies.

This ruling differs from that in Decision 18-1/8, because it was reasonably foreseeable that B's stroke could cause A's ball to move, and because B could, through the exercise of reasonable care, have avoided causing A's ball to move by having A's ball lifted prior to his stroke. (Revised)

### **18-3b/2 Opponent's Stroke Disturbs Bushes Causing Player's Ball to Move**

**Q.** In playing a stroke, an opponent disturbed some bushes, causing the player's ball to move. What is the ruling?

**A.** The answer depends on whether it was reasonably foreseeable that the stroke would cause the player's ball to move.

If it was reasonably foreseeable, the opponent incurs a penalty stroke (Rule 18-3b) as

the opponent, through exercising reasonable care by having the player's ball lifted under Rule 22-2, could have avoided causing the player's ball to move. If it was not reasonably foreseeable, then the opponent incurs no penalty. In either case, the player must replace the ball. (Revised)

**18-5/3 Competitor and Fellow-Competitor Unaware Ball Moved by Fellow-Competitor's Ball Until After Completion of Hole**

---

**Q.** In stroke play, A then B play their second strokes to the green but, due to the contours of the green, they cannot see where their balls come to rest. Both competitors complete the hole from about 12 feet with two putts each. On their way to the next tee, it was established that A's ball had come to rest about one foot from the hole, but that B's ball in motion had struck A's ball and moved it. What is the ruling?

**A.** B proceeded correctly by playing his ball as it lay — Rule 19-5a.

As it was not known or virtually certain that A's ball had been moved by B's ball when A made his next stroke, he proceeded properly and incurred no penalty — see the Note to Rule 18-1. (Revised)

**20/2 Borrowing Club for Measuring Purposes**

---

The Rules require that a ball to be dropped must be dropped by the player himself. For the purpose of measuring, the player who is required to drop a ball may use any club he has selected for the round (Rule 4-4). He may also borrow a club for measuring from anyone, including his partner. If he borrows a club and drops a ball and plays it, he incurs no penalty provided that the same outcome could have been achieved with one of the player's own clubs selected for the round. If he could not have achieved the same outcome by measuring with one of his own clubs, he incurs the penalty under the applicable Rule for playing from a wrong place (see Rule 20-7). (Revised)

**20-3a/2 Using Line on Ball for Alignment**

---

**Q.** May a player draw a line on his ball and, when replacing his ball, position the ball so that the line or the trademark on the ball is aimed to indicate the line of play?

**A.** Yes. (Revised)

**20-3b/3 Lie Changed by Removal of Gallery-Control Stake**

---

**Q.** A ball comes to rest adjacent to a gallery-control stake. A marshal, without the sanction of the player, removes the stake and in so doing raises the turf in front of the ball without causing the ball to move. Is the player entitled to proceed under Rule 20-3b?

**A.** No. As the ball had not moved, Rule 20-3b does not apply.

However, as the marshal acted without the sanction of the player, if the original lie could be easily restored, in equity (Rule 1-4), the raised turf may be pressed down so that the original lie is restored as nearly as possible.

If the original lie could not be easily restored, in equity (Rule 1-4), the player may place his ball, without penalty, in the nearest lie most similar to that which it originally occupied, but not more than one club-length from the original lie, not nearer the hole and not in a hazard.

Had the player sanctioned the action of the marshal or had he removed the stake himself, he would have to accept any resultant worsening of the lie. (Revised)

#### **20-4/2 Ball Lifted from Putting Green and Placed by Caddie Behind Marker**

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

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

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

If the caddie placed the ball with the intention of putting it into play, the ball is in play. If the player played the ball that was so placed, he would lose the hole in match play for playing from a wrong place (Rule 20-7b) and in stroke play would incur a total penalty of three strokes — one penalty stroke under Rule 20-3a for having a person not permitted by Rule 20-3a replace the ball and two more penalty strokes for playing from a wrong place (Rules 16-1b and 20-7c).

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

#### **23/6.5 Status of Snake**

**Q.** What is the status of a snake?

**A.** A live snake is an outside agency. A dead snake is both an outside agency and a loose impediment. It is possible for an item or person to fall under more than one Definition. (Revised)

#### **23-1/6.5 Removal of Loose Impediments from Spot Where Ball to Be Placed**

**Q.** A player taking relief under a Rule drops his ball and it rolls more than two club-lengths. He re-drops under Rule 20-2c, with the same result. He must now place the ball as near as possible to the spot where it first struck a part of the course when re-

dropped — Rule 20-2c. Before he places the ball, may he remove loose impediments on or around the spot on which the ball is to be placed?

A. Yes. (Revised)

---

**24-2b/11 Ball Lying on Elevated Part of Immovable Obstruction**

---

**Q.** A ball comes to rest on the elevated part of an immovable obstruction, such as the walkway of a bridge over a deep hollow. What is the ruling?

A. If the player elects to take relief, vertical distance is disregarded. The nearest point of relief (Point X) is deemed to be at the point on the ground directly beneath where the ball lies on the obstruction, provided the player would not have interference, as defined in Rule 24-2a, at this point. The player may proceed under Rule 24-2b by dropping the ball within one club-length of Point X.

In a situation where there would be interference with some part of the obstruction (e.g., a supporting column) for a ball positioned at Point X, the ball is deemed to lie at Point X. The player may proceed under Rule 24-2b by determining the nearest point of relief for a ball lying at Point X.

The procedure is different where a ball lies underground (e.g., in a tunnel). In such a case, all distance, whether vertical or horizontal, is taken into account when determining the nearest point of relief. In some cases, the nearest point of relief would be near the entrance to the tunnel, and in other cases it would be above the tunnel and would need to be estimated. (Revised)

---

**25/13 Bunker Totally Under Repair**

---

If a bunker is being renovated and the Committee defines the entire bunker as ground under repair, the bunker loses its status as a hazard and is automatically classified as “through the green.” Therefore, unless a Committee specifically states otherwise, Rule 25-1b(i) applies, not Rule 25-1b(ii). (Revised)

---

**26-1/9 Caddie Lifts Ball in Water Hazard Without Player’s Authority**

---

**Q.** A player’s ball lying in a water hazard is lifted by the player’s caddie without the player’s authority. What is the ruling?

A. There is no penalty under Rule 18-2a if there was no doubt or it was reasonable to assume from the player’s actions or statements that he would make his next stroke from outside the water hazard.

In the absence of such circumstances, the player incurred a one-stroke penalty under Rule 18-2a and may either replace the ball as required by Rule 18-2a or proceed under Rule 26-1 and incur an additional one-stroke penalty under that Rule.

In such cases, any doubt should be resolved against the player. (Revised)

---

---

**26-1/19 Permissible Dropping Area Under Lateral Water Hazard Rule So Narrow Player Has Difficulty Dropping Within It**

---

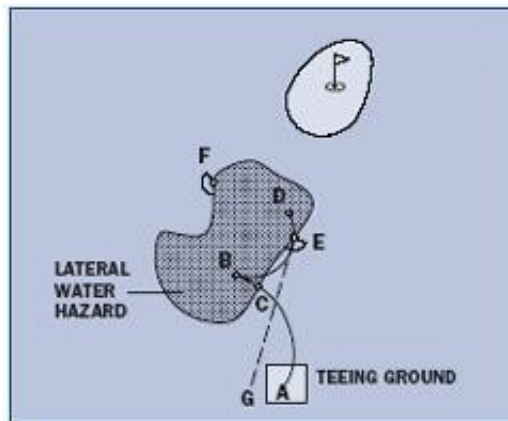
When a ball comes to rest in a lateral water hazard and relief is taken under Rule 26-1c(i), the ball must be dropped (1) outside the hazard and (2) not nearer the hole than the point where the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard (Point X). In some circumstances, the permissible dropping area may be very narrow. If the ball, when dropped, first strikes a part of the course in the hazard or nearer the hole than Point X, the drop does not count for the purpose of determining when the ball must be placed under Rule 20-2c. A ball so dropped has been dropped in a wrong place and the player must correct the error under Rule 20-6 by proceeding in accordance with any of his options under Rule 26-1 (see Decision 20-6/2). Only if the ball has been dropped in the permissible dropping area twice and, each time, rolls and comes to rest in a position listed under Rule 20-2c (e.g., into the hazard or nearer the hole than Point X) may it be placed as permitted by Rule 20-2c. If a ball is placed other than as described, and is played, a breach of Rule 26-1c occurs.

Stakes and lines defining the margins of water hazards should be placed along the natural limits of the hazard. However, minor deviation to alleviate such a dropping problem would be appropriate. Alternatively, a Dropping Zone could be established. (Revised)

---

**26-2/2 Ball Played from Within Hazard Comes to Rest in Same Hazard After Exiting Hazard**

---



**Q.** In the above illustration, a player has played a ball from Point A (the teeing ground) into the lateral water hazard at Point B. The ball last crossed the margin of the hazard at Point C. The player elects to play the ball from the hazard and he succeeds in getting his ball out of the hazard, but it re-enters the hazard at point E. The ball comes to rest at Point D and it is not playable. What are the player's options?

**A.** The player may under penalty of one stroke:

- (a) drop a ball at Point B and play again from there, playing 4 (Rule 26-2a(i)); or

(b) drop a ball anywhere on dotted line E-G and play from there, playing 4 (Rule 26-2a(ii)); or

(c) drop a ball within two club-lengths of and not nearer the hole than Point E, playing 4 (Rule 26-2a(ii)); or

(d) drop a ball within two club-lengths of and not nearer the hole than Point F, playing 4 (Rule 26-2a(ii)); or

(e) play another ball from Point A (the teeing ground), playing 4 (Rule 26-2a(iii)).

Point E is the reference point for proceeding under Rule 26-1b or 26-1c as it is the point where the original ball last crossed the margin of the water hazard.

If the player drops a ball at Point B 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-G, drop a ball within two club-lengths of and not nearer the hole than Points E or F, or play another ball from Point A (the teeing ground), playing 5. (Revised)

#### **28/6 Player Plays Second Shot, Deems Ball Unplayable and Returns to Tee**

**Q.** With regard to Decision 28/5, if Point A is the teeing ground and Point B is the spot from which the second shot was played, what is the penalty if the player, having deemed his ball unplayable at Point C, returns to the tee and plays out the hole from there?

**A.** The player was entitled to drop and play a ball at Point B under Rule 28a, but not Point A. When he played a ball from Point A, he played from a wrong place.

In match play, the player incurs a penalty of loss of hole for a breach of Rule 28 – see also Rule 20-7b.

In stroke play, a serious breach of Rule 28 is involved. Accordingly, the player is disqualified unless the serious breach is corrected as provided in Rule 20-7c.

Except in the special circumstances covered by Rule 26-2, the Rules do not allow a player to regress beyond the spot from which his last stroke was played, in this case Point B. Such action may constitute a serious breach, as in this case. (Revised)

#### **29/6 Signing of Score Card in Foursome Stroke Play**

**Q.** Rule 31-3 dealing with scoring in four-ball stroke play states: “Only one of the partners need be responsible for complying with Rule 6-6b.” What is the ruling in this regard in foursome stroke play?

A. Although Rule 29 is silent on the matter, in foursome stroke play only one of the partners need comply with Rule 6-6b. (Revised)

### **30-3f/9 Player's Ball Moved by Partner in Playing His Own Ball**

---

**Q.** In four-ball match play, A and B are partners. In playing his own ball, B accidentally strikes the nearby ball of A with his club and causes it to move. What is the procedure?

A. The answer depends as to whether A's ball was visible before B played.

If A's ball was visible when B made his stroke, it was reasonably foreseeable that B's stroke at his own ball could cause A's ball to move and, through exercising reasonable care by having A's ball lifted under Rule 22-2, B could have avoided causing A's ball to move. In such circumstances, A incurs a one-stroke penalty under Rule 18-2a and must replace his ball. Assuming the infringement did not assist B, B incurs no penalty (Rule 30-3f).

If A's ball was not visible when B made his stroke, it was not reasonably foreseeable that his stroke could cause A's ball to move and A is not penalized provided he replaces his ball.

If A fails to replace his ball before making his next stroke, he is disqualified from the hole for playing from a wrong place (Rules 18 and 20-7). (Revised)

### **31-3/1 Gross Score of Partner with Better Net Score Omitted from Score Card**

---

**Q.** In four-ball stroke play on a handicap basis, partners A and B both holed out in 4 at the 8th hole; partner A did not receive a handicap stroke at the hole, but partner B did. The marker, who was a fellow-competitor, recorded a gross score of 4 for A, who did not receive a stroke, and no gross score for B. However, the marker also recorded a net 3 in the better-ball column.

On completion of the round, the score card, in all other respects correct, was signed and returned to the Committee. Both the marker and the partners were interviewed, and it was established that in fact both partners had gross scores of 4 at the 8th hole. What is the ruling?

A. Under Rules 6-6b and 31-3, it was the responsibility of one of the partners to check the side's better-ball gross score for each hole before signing the score card.

When checking the score card, the partner concerned should have noticed that there was no gross score recorded for B at the 8th hole and should have corrected this mistake. As he did not do so, A's gross 4 was the side's score for the hole. It is the responsibility of the Committee – and not the competitor – to record the better-ball net score for each hole. (Revised)

### **32-1/1 Competing Simultaneously in Bogey, Par or Stableford Competition and Stroke-Play Competition**

---

**Q.** Is it permissible for a player to compete simultaneously in a bogey, par or Stableford competition and a stroke-play competition?

**A.** Yes, as bogey, par and Stableford competitions are each forms of stroke-play competition. (Revised)

### **32-1/2 Omitting Holes in Bogey, Par or Stableford Competition**

**Q.** In a bogey, par or Stableford competition, may a player omit, for example, two holes for the round and return a score for 16 holes?

**A.** Yes. Under Rule 32-1a, any hole for which a competitor makes no return in a bogey or par competition is regarded as a loss. Under Rule 32-1b, if no score is returned on a hole in a Stableford competition, the competitor scores no points for that hole. (Revised)

### **33/3 Match-Play Finalists Both Disqualified**

If both finalists in a match-play competition are disqualified, the Committee may decide to conclude the event without a winner. Alternatively, the Committee could elect to have the defeated semi-finalists play a match to determine the winner of the competition. (Revised)

### **33-2b/1 Holes Relocated and/or Tee-Markers Moved During Stroke-Play Round**

**Q.** During a round in a stroke-play competition, one or more holes were relocated and/or tee-markers moved. What is the proper procedure?

**A.** If this was authorized by the Committee, the round should be declared null and void. In stroke play, the Committee is prohibited from relocating a hole and from moving tee-markers except as provided in the Exception and Note to Rule 33-2b or in circumstances such as those in Decisions 25-1b/4 or 33-2b/1.5.

If this was done without the authority or sanction of the Committee, generally the round should be declared null and void. However, if the course has not been altered significantly and no competitor has been given an undue advantage or disadvantage, the Committee would be justified in letting the round stand. (Revised)

### **33-8/24 Local Rule Permitting Relief from Edging Grooves Around Putting Green**

**Q.** Edging grooves are cut at the perimeters of the putting greens, or just beyond the fringes of the greens, to prevent creeping grasses (e.g., bermudagrass) from encroaching. If a ball comes to rest in or on such a groove, it is impossible to play the ball with any degree of accuracy. Would a Local Rule providing relief be authorized?

**A.** Yes. If an edging groove touches the green, the Committee may make a Local Rule giving relief if a ball lies in or on such a groove or the groove interferes with the area of intended swing, but not solely because the groove might affect the player's stance. The Local Rule should read as follows:

“If a ball lies in or on an edging groove around a putting green, or if the groove

interferes with the area of the player's intended swing, the ball may, without penalty, be lifted, cleaned and placed in the nearest position to where it lay that is not nearer the hole and avoids interference by the condition, whether on or off the putting green.”

If edging grooves do not touch the green, the Committee may declare them to be ground under repair and provide relief under Rule 25-1 as follows:

“The grooves around the fringes of the putting greens are ground under repair. However, interference by a groove with the player's stance is deemed not to be, of itself, interference under Rule 25-1. If the ball lies in or touches the groove or the groove interferes with the area of intended swing, relief is available under Rule 25-1.”  
(Revised)

### **33-8/32.5 Local Rule Treating Severe Damage by Non-Burrowing Animals as Ground Under Repair**

---

**Q.** May a Committee make a Local Rule declaring areas severely damaged by non-burrowing animals to be ground under repair without marking them as such?

**A.** Yes. Furthermore, in some instances a Committee would be justified in specifying that interference with the player's stance is not, of itself, interference from the condition — see the Note under Rule 25-1a. (Revised)

### **34-1b/4 Competitor Changes Weight of Club During Round; Breach Discovered After Competition Closed**

---

**Q.** It was reported a few days after the conclusion of a stroke-play competition that the winner had changed the weight of his putter during a stipulated round. Should he be penalized?

**A.** The Committee must determine whether the competitor knew, between the time of the breach and the close of competition, that he had incurred a penalty under the Rules for changing the weight of his putter during the stipulated round (Rule 4-2). If he knew he had incurred a penalty under the Rules, he is disqualified. Otherwise, as provided in Rule 34-1b, no penalty may be imposed. (Revised)