

Some U. S. Golf Association Decisions on the Rules of Golf

In tournament play, if the match is all-square at the end of the eighteen holes and one stroke handicap is given by one of the contestants to the other player, is it necessary to play nine holes to decide the match, or eighteen holes? Does the fact that the stroke falls in the first nine affect this in any way?

Decision.—It is customary to play the entire eighteen holes over again when a tie occurs in match-play handicap.

In tournament match play, if a player loses a ball and, after searching for it for five minutes, abandons the search, then drops a ball in the usual way, and plays that one, and while walking to the green finds the original ball that apparently was lost, what rule covers?

Decision.—After a player has searched for five minutes, the ball is considered lost and he must either give up the hole or return and play another ball as provided under Rule 22. A player may not under the rules play the original ball under the circumstances mentioned.

A is on the green, B is approaching the green from more than twenty yards distant. A removes the flag-stick as the ball is played. B claims the hole, on the ground that A has no right to move the flag-stick except for his own side. Rule 32 (1) reads as follows: "Either side is entitled to have the flag-stick removed when approaching the hole; if a player's ball strike the flag-stick, which has been so removed by himself, or his partner, or either of their caddies, his side shall lose the hole."

Decision.—A was entirely within his rights either to remove the flag-stick himself or have his caddie remove it when B was about to approach the hole. B's claim to the hole on the ground that A had no right to remove the flag-stick except for A's own side can not be sustained. Rule 32 covers this point specifically.

Has there been any change in the rule providing that when a ball is in a sandpit that the ball must remain exactly as it fell into the trap without the leveling of the sand surrounding the ball?

Decision.—There is no change in the rules regarding ball in hazard. The club may not be soled without being penalized as specified under the rules. You have probably confused the rule that allows a player who has played a shot from a hazard, when the ball still lies in the hazard to smooth over the spot from which the first shot was played, provided in doing so he does nothing to improve the lie of the ball for his subsequent shot.

A small creek runs along the left boundary of the fairway of the third hole of our course. It is played as a water hazard and a penalty stroke incurred for lifting out of the creek. Please advise as to whether a ball which has been lifted out of the creek should be dropped on the fairway or near side (this being the side on which the ball goes into the creek) or whether the ball must be dropped on the left or far side of the creek.

Decision.—The ball must be played as provided under Rule 27 unless your local committee rules that the position of the creek is such as to declare it a "parallel water hazard"; then it is permissible to drop the ball on the near side with a stroke penalty. It is usual to designate the boundary of parallel hazards by a line of white stakes.