

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE 2008–2009 EDITION OF DECISIONS ON THE RULES OF GOLF**

### **NEW DECISIONS**

- 1–3/0.5      When Breach of Rule 1–3 Occurs
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- 29/5.5 Raking Sand in Bunker After Partner Fails to Extricate Ball but Before Stroke; Foursome Match
- 30–3/3 Application of Rule 2–2 in Four-Ball Match Play
- 30–3e/1 Partners Fail to Discontinue Play Immediately Contrary to Condition of Competition
- 30–3f/2.5 Touching Sand with Practice Swing After Partner Has Extricated Ball from Bunker; Four-Ball Match
- 30–3f/13 Partner Stands on Extension of Player’s Line of Play Behind Ball
- 33–2b/1.5 Committee Wishes to Move Hole During Stroke Play Round Due to Severity of Location
- 33–8/34 Relief from Divot Holes
- 33–8/44.5 Status of Growing Things Rooted Within Environmentally-Sensitive Area
- 34–1b/9 Breach of Anti-Doping Condition Discovered After Competition Closed

## REVISED DECISIONS

- 1–2/3.5      Player Repairs Hole After Holing Out But Before Opponent, Fellow-Competitor or Partner Holes Out  
*Amended to clarify that the player’s act of courtesy should be for players in following groups.*
- 1–4/9      Bird’s Nest Interfering with Stroke  
*Expanded to address the situation where the ball lies on the putting green, to clarify the relief procedure for a ball in a hazard and to make the relief procedure more similar to that for relief from an abnormal ground condition.*
- 1–4/10      Dangerous Situation; Rattlesnake or Bees Interfere with Play  
*Expanded to address the situation where the ball lies on the putting green, to clarify the relief procedure for a ball in a hazard and to make the relief procedure more similar to that for relief from an abnormal ground condition.*
- 2/2      Stipulated Round in Match Play  
*Amended to refer to the final hole of the match, rather than the final hole of the round, and expanded to address a 36–hole match.*
- 2–1/5      Three Holes Played Out of Sequence in Match  
*Amended so as not to require the players to replay the holes played out of sequence.*
- 3–4/1      Competitor Not Given Opportunity to Lift Ball Assisting Fellow-Competitor  
*Amended to clarify that a competitor is in breach of Rule 3–4 even if he does not know that he is refusing to comply with the Rules.*
- 4–1/5      Adhesive Bandage or Tape Applied to Clubhead to Reduce Glare or for Protection  
*Expanded to include reference to exceptions for material attached to the clubhead.*
- 4–3/1      Meaning of Damage Sustained in “Normal Course of Play”  
*Amended to clarify that the throwing of a club for the purpose of retrieving a ball is not considered to be part of the normal course of play.*
- 4–4a/1      When Club Is Considered Added  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 5–3/7      Ball Thought to Be Unfit for Play; Committee Involvement  
*Amended to allow a referee or member of the Committee to fulfill the responsibilities of the opponent, marker or fellow-competitor even if the opponent, marker or fellow-competitor is readily available.*

- 6–2b/2 Wrong Handicap Knowingly Used in Stroke Play; Error Discovered After Competition Closed  
*Amended to clarify that A is deemed to have knowingly played off a higher handicap even if he had been uncertain as to which handicap to use.*
- 6–4/5.3 Status of Additional Persons and Items Carried by Such Persons for Player  
*Amended to clarify that the additional person is not carrying the player’s clubs.*
- 8–2b/1 Caddie Casts Shadow to Indicate Line for Putting  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 10–1a/2 Determination of Honour at Hole Following Claim  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 13–3/2 Making Stroke While Kneeling on Towel  
*Amended to clarify that the answer would be the same if the player wrapped the towel around his knees.*
- 13–4/38 Sand Smoothed After Ball Played Out of Bunker; Ball Later Returns to Smoothed Area  
*Amended to correspond properly with Exception 2 to Rule 13–4.*
- 14–3/16 Use of Electronic Devices  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 14–6/1 Ball Moves in Water in Water Hazard After Address  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 15/14 Ball in Bunker Deemed Unplayable, Dropped in Bunker and Played; Ball Then Discovered to Be Stray Ball  
*Amended to reference the player’s ability to lift the found ball for identification under Rule 12–2.*
- 16–1a/9 Brushing Loose Impediments Off Line of Putt with Palm of Hand  
*Amended to provide for no penalty if nothing is pressed down and the player does not roughen the surface with the intention of testing its condition.*
- 18–1/3 Player Unaware Ball Moved by Outside Agency Does Not Replace Ball  
*Amended so that the answer corresponds with the Note to Rule 18–1.*
- 18–1/8 Ball Moved by Stone Dislodged by Partner’s or Opponent’s Stroke  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 18–2a/20.5 Player’s Practice Swing Moves Loose Impediment Which Moves Ball  
*Amended for clarity.*

- 18–2a/21 Ball Moved Accidentally by Player in Playing Wrong Ball  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 18–3b/1 Ball Moved Accidentally by Opponent in Playing His Own Ball  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 18–3b/2 Opponent’s Stroke Disturbs Bushes Causing Player’s Ball to Move  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 18–5/3 Competitor and Fellow-Competitor Unaware Ball Moved by Fellow-Competitor’s Ball Until After Completion of Hole  
*Amended so that the answer corresponds with the Note to Rule 18–1.*
- 20/2 Borrowing Club for Measuring Purposes  
*Amended to clarify that, if a player who is to drop a ball borrows a club to measure with, he must be able to obtain the same result with one of his own clubs.*
- 20–3a/2 Using Line on Ball for Alignment  
*Amended to state explicitly that it is permissible for a player to draw a line on the ball for alignment.*
- 20–3b/3 Lie Changed by Removal of Gallery-Control Stake  
*Expanded to provide the ruling if the player had sanctioned the removal of the gallery-control stake.*
- 20–4/2 Ball Lifted from Putting Green and Placed by Caddie Behind Marker  
*Amended to emphasise the intent element of putting a ball into play.*
- 23/6.5 Status of Snake  
*Expanded to clarify that an item or person can fall under more than one Definition.*
- 23–1/6.5 Removal of Loose Impediments from Spot Where Ball to Be Placed  
*Amended to refer to the spot where the dropped ball first struck a part of the course when re-dropped.*
- 24–2b/11 Ball Lying on Elevated Part of Immovable Obstruction  
*Expanded to provide the relief procedure when the ball lies underground.*
- 25/13 Bunker Totally Under Repair  
*Amended to provide that a bunker that is entirely ground under repair automatically becomes through the green unless the Committee states otherwise.*
- 26–1/9 Caddie Lifts Ball in Water Hazard Without Player’s Authority  
*Amended to provide for 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.*

- 26–1/19 Permissible Dropping Area Under Lateral Water Hazard Rule So Narrow Player Has Difficulty Dropping Within It  
*Amended to clarify that if the player drops the ball in a wrong place he may correct the error by using any of the options available under Rule 26–1.*
- 26–2/2 Ball Played from Within Hazard Comes to Rest in Same Hazard After Exiting Hazard  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 28/6 Player Plays Second Shot, Deems Ball Unplayable and Returns to Tee  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 29/6 Signing of Score Card in Foursome Stroke Play  
*Amended to refer to Rule 31–3.*
- 30–3f/9 Player’s Ball Moved by Partner in Playing His Own Ball  
*Amended for clarity.*
- 31–3/1 Gross Score of Partner with Better Net Score Omitted from Score Card  
*Amended for consistency in terminology with Rule 6–6b.*
- 32–1/1 Competing Simultaneously in Bogey, Par or Stableford Competition and Stroke Play Competition  
*Expanded to include par competitions.*
- 32–1/2 Omitting Holes in Bogey, Par or Stableford Competition  
*Expanded to include par competitions.*
- 33/3 Match Play Finalists Both Disqualified  
*Amended to give the Committee the option of having the beaten semi-finalists play a match to determine the winner of the competition.*
- 33–2b/1 Holes Relocated and/or Tee-Markers Moved During Stroke Play Round  
*Expanded to refer to new Decision 33–2b/1.5.*
- 33–8/24 Local Rule Permitting Relief from Edging Grooves Around Putting Green  
*Amended to have the Local Rule provide relief from interference with the player’s area of intended swing.*
- 33–8/32.5 Local Rule Treating Severe Damage by Non-Burrowing Animals as Ground Under Repair  
*Amended for consistency with the Note to Rule 25–1a.*

34–1b/4 Competitor Changes Weight of Club During Round; Breach  
Discovered After Competition Closed  
*Amended to clarify the time period within which the player may have  
known he had incurred a penalty.*

**WITHDRAWN DECISION**

25–3/2 Player Makes Several Strokes on Wrong Putting Green

## NEW DECISIONS

### 1–3/0.5

#### **When Breach of Rule 1–3 Occurs**

**Q** While walking to the 1st green, A and B agree that for a ball that is out of bounds they will drop a ball at the spot where the ball went out of bounds under penalty of one stroke, even though they know the penalty is stroke and distance. Someone overhears this conversation and advises A and B that they may not make such an arrangement. Neither player has yet hit a ball out of bounds. What is the ruling?

**A** A and B are disqualified under Rule 1–3 for agreeing to waive Rule 27–1b. Even though A and B had not yet acted on the agreement, they were in breach of Rule 1–3 as soon as the agreement was reached during the stipulated round. In match play, if the players in a match agree to waive the Rules before their stipulated round, they are in breach of Rule 1–3 if either of them starts the stipulated round without having cancelled the agreement. In stroke play, if competitors agree to waive the Rules before their stipulated round, each competitor is in breach of Rule 1–3 if one competitor who was part of the agreement starts his stipulated round without having cancelled the agreement. (New)

### 1–4/11.5

#### **Player Wraps Towel Around Self or Places Towel on Cactus Before Taking Stance**

**Q** A player's ball lies near a cactus, and to play the ball the player would have to stand with his legs touching the cactus. To protect himself from the cactus needles, the player wraps a towel around his legs before taking his stance. He then plays the ball. What is the ruling?

**A** Provided the player does not breach Rule 13–2 (i.e. he takes his stance fairly), there is no breach of the Rules. However, if the player were to place the towel on the cactus, in equity (Rule 1–4), the player loses the hole in match play or incurs a penalty of two strokes in stroke play. (New)

### 2/3

#### **Refusal to Comply with Rule in Match Play**

**Q** In a match, A requests B to lift B's ball that is on A's line of play. B refuses to do so. What is the ruling?

**A** In equity (Rule 1–4), B loses the hole for failing to comply with A's request to lift his ball under Rule 22–2. (New)

## **2–4/3.5**

### **Stroke Conceded by Caddie**

**Q** In a match between A and B, B's caddie purports to concede A's next stroke, whereupon A lifts his ball. What is the ruling?

**A** As a player's caddie does not have the authority to make a concession, the purported concession is invalid. As A had reasonably believed his next stroke had been conceded, in equity (Rule 1–4), A incurs no penalty and must replace the ball. B incurs no penalty; however, had B's caddie lifted A's ball, B would have incurred a one-stroke penalty under Rule 18–3b. (New)

## **4–1/1**

### **Condition Requiring Clubs Conforming with Groove and Punch Mark Specifications Effective 1 January 2010**

A Committee that wishes to limit players to clubs manufactured with grooves and/or punch marks that conform to the Rules of Golf, including those that are effective from 1 January 2010, may adopt the condition of competition detailed below.

Between 1 January 2010 and 1 January 2014, it is recommended that this condition of competition be adopted only for competitions involving the highest level of expert player. After 1 January 2014, this condition of competition may be adopted more widely (e.g. at the highest level of amateur golf), but it is recommended only for competitions involving expert players.

“The player's clubs must conform to the groove and punch mark specifications in the Rules of Golf that are effective from 1 January 2010.

**\*PENALTY FOR CARRYING, BUT NOT MAKING STROKE WITH, CLUB OR CLUBS IN BREACH OF CONDITION:**

Match play – At the conclusion of the hole at which the breach is discovered, the state of the match is adjusted by deducting one hole for each hole at which a breach occurred; maximum deduction per round – Two holes.

Stroke play – Two strokes for each hole at which any breach occurred; maximum penalty per round – Four strokes.

Match or stroke play – In the event of a breach between the play of two holes, the penalty applies to the next hole.

Bogey and par competitions – See Note 1 to Rule 32–1a.

Stableford competitions – See Note 1 to Rule 32–1b.

\*Any club or clubs carried in breach of this condition must be declared out of play by the player to his opponent in match play or his marker or a fellow-competitor in stroke play immediately upon discovery that a breach has occurred. If the player fails to do so, he is disqualified.

**PENALTY FOR MAKING STROKE WITH CLUB IN BREACH OF CONDITION:**  
Disqualification.”

For further information, please refer to [www.randa.org/equipmentrules](http://www.randa.org/equipmentrules). (New)

#### **4-4a/15**

##### **Assembly of Club Components During Stipulated Round**

**Q** In addition to his clubs selected for play, a player begins his stipulated round with a clubhead and a shaft that are capable of being assembled into a club. What is the ruling?

**A** A separate clubhead and shaft do not constitute a club. Therefore, the separate clubhead and shaft do not count towards the number of clubs the player may carry under Rule 4-4a. However, regardless of the number of clubs carried, it is not permissible to assemble a clubhead and shaft carried by the player during the stipulated round. If the player replaces or adds a club by assembling components carried by him during the round, in equity (Rule 1-4), the player would be penalised in accordance with the penalty statement under Rule 4-3a or Rules 4-4a and b, as applicable. (New)

#### **4-4a/16**

##### **Status of Additional Clubs Being Carried for Player and of Person Carrying Them**

**Q** A player begins his stipulated round with ten clubs carried by his caddie. The player has also asked another person to walk along with the group and carry eight more clubs. During the round, the player intends to add from the clubs carried by the other person. Is such an arrangement permissible?

**A** No. As the player intends to add from such clubs during the round, the eight clubs count towards his total. The player is, therefore, in breach of Rule 4-4a for starting the stipulated round with more than 14 clubs. In addition, the other person is acting as a second caddie in breach of Rule 6-4.

As different acts have resulted in two Rules being breached, multiple penalties would apply (see Principle 5 of Decision 1-4/12). (New)

#### **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. (New)

## 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. (New)

## 13–4/0.7

### Player Rakes Bunker When Ball Lies in Another Bunker

**Q** A player’s ball lies through the green, and he plays the ball into a bunker. Before playing from the bunker, he smooths footprints in a different bunker. As the player had not played from the bunker he raked, Exception 2 to Rule 13–4 did not apply. Is the player in breach of Rule 13–4a?

**A** The answer depends on the circumstances.

Even though Decision 13–4/0.5 states that raking is a form of testing the condition of a hazard, it is not the intent of Rule 13–4a to prohibit players from practicing the proper etiquette of the game. Therefore, when the player’s ball lies in a bunker, it is not a breach of the Rules if the player smooths the sand in another bunker, provided (a) the smoothing is for the purpose of tidying up the bunker, (b) the smoothing does not breach Rule 13–2 with respect to his next stroke and (c) there is not a reasonable possibility that the smoothing could affect a subsequent stroke by the player.

If the player smooths sand in the bunker in which his ball lies prior to making his first stroke in that bunker, he is in breach of Rule 13–4a. (New)

## 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. (New)

## 14–2/2.5

### Player Positions Bag for Purpose of Providing Shade for Ball

**Q** A player positions his golf bag near the teeing ground for the purpose of blocking the sunlight from the position where he tees his ball. He then makes a stroke. Is he in breach of Rule 14–2?

**A** Yes. As the player was not in contact with the golf bag, he accepted protection from the elements in breach of Rule 14–2. This answer differs from that in Decision 14–2/2 as, in that case, the player was in contact with the umbrella.

While a player may not place an object or position a person for the purpose of blocking the sunlight from his ball, he may ask a person (e.g. a spectator) who is already in position not to move, so that a shadow remains over the ball, or to move, so that his shadow is not over the ball. (New)

### **14–3/10.3**

#### **Use of Rod During Round for Alignment or as Swing Aid**

**Q** During a stipulated round, a player uses a rod to check his alignment or his swing plane. What is the ruling?

**A** The player is disqualified under Rule 14–3 as the rod is unusual equipment and such use, during the stipulated round, is not permitted. Carrying the rod is not, of itself, a breach of a Rule. (New)

### **19–2/10**

#### **Ball Stopped or Deflected by Rake Held by Player’s Caddie**

**Q** A player’s ball lies in a bunker. He plays, and his ball is accidentally stopped or deflected by a rake that is being held by his caddie. What is the ruling?

**A** There is no penalty. Items such as rakes that are placed on the course for general use are not part of the player’s equipment and remain outside agencies at all times. (New)

### **19–5/1.5**

#### **Ball Lifted and Replaced; Ball Then Rolls and Strikes Ball on Putting Green**

**Q** In stroke play, after a stroke from the putting green, a competitor marks the position of and lifts his ball from the putting green. After he replaces the ball at rest, and before he addresses it, the ball rolls and strikes his fellow-competitor’s ball, which was lying on the putting green. Is the player in breach of Rule 19–5a?

**A** No. The competitor incurs no penalty and must play the ball from its new position. After the competitor had lifted and replaced his ball, any subsequent movement is not considered to be “after a stroke” for the purposes of Rule 19–5a. (New)

### **20–2a/8**

#### **Player Drops Ball to Determine Where Original Ball May Roll if Dropped**

**Q** A player’s ball lies on an artificially-surfaced path. The player determines his nearest point of relief and measures the one club-length in which the ball may be dropped under Rule 24–2b. As the player is concerned that the ball, when dropped, may roll into an unplayable lie, he takes a ball from his bag and drops it in the area to test where his original ball may roll to if he elects to take relief from the path. He did not intend to put the second ball into play. What is the ruling?

**A** As the player had no intention of putting the dropped ball into play, that ball did not become the ball in play, and his original ball on the path remained the ball in play. However, it is contrary to the purpose and spirit of the Rules for a player to test what may happen when he drops his ball. Therefore, in equity (Rule 1–4), the player incurs a penalty of loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play. In stroke play, the player may play the original ball as it lies on the path or take relief under Rule 24–2. (New)

### **20–3b/7**

#### **Whether Original Lie May Be “Nearest Lie Most Similar”**

**Q** A player finds a ball he believes to be his lying in a water hazard. When he lifts the ball for identification under Rule 12–2, the original lie is altered. When proceeding under Rule 20–3b, if the altered lie is the nearest lie most similar to the original lie within one club-length of the original lie not nearer the hole and inside the water hazard, is the player required to replace the ball in the original lie in its altered condition?

**A** Yes. Although in most situations the nearest most similar lie within one club-length will be located elsewhere, there may be circumstances when the nearest lie most similar to the original lie will be the original lie in its altered condition. (New)

### **20–3b/8**

#### **Loose Impediment Affecting Lie of Ball Moved**

**Q** A’s ball lies in a bunker, with a loose impediment immediately behind the ball. The ball of B, his opponent or fellow-competitor, lies near A’s ball in the same bunker, but farther from the hole. B asks A to lift his ball under Rule 22–2, which A does. B’s stroke moves the loose impediment that was behind A’s ball. Is A’s lie considered to have been altered as a result of the removal of the loose impediment, in which case Rule 20–3b would apply?

**A** No. Loose impediments are not part of the lie of the ball as contemplated by Rule 20–3b. Therefore, A is not required to replace the loose impediment before his next stroke. If he did replace the loose impediment, there would be no penalty. The same answer would apply on any part of the course. (New)

### **25–1b/25.5**

#### **Application of Exception to Rule 25–1b When Ball Lies Underground in Burrowing Animal Hole**

**Q** Through the green, a player’s ball comes to rest underground in a hole made by a burrowing animal. A large bush is immediately next to and overhanging the entrance to the hole. Given the Exception to Rule 25–1b, is the player entitled to relief without penalty from the burrowing animal hole?

**A** For the purpose of applying the Exception to Rule 25–1b, a ball lying underground in a burrowing animal hole is deemed to lie at the entrance to the hole. If the nature of the area surrounding the entrance to the hole is such that it is clearly unreasonable for the player to make a stroke at a ball lying at any part of the entrance to the hole (e.g. because of the overhanging bush), the player is not entitled to relief without penalty under Rule 25–1b. Otherwise, the player is entitled to relief without penalty under Rule 25–1b.

If the ball lies in a hole, but is not underground, it is the position of the ball, rather than the entrance to the hole, which is relevant in determining whether the Exception to Rule 25–1b applies. (New)

**27/17**

**Competitor Plays Out of Turn Other Than From Teeing Ground and Puts Another Ball into Play at Spot of Previous Stroke**

**Q** In stroke play, a competitor whose ball lay through the green played out of turn. He should have continued play with the ball played out of turn without penalty, but he mistakenly believed he needed to cancel and replay the stroke in the correct order. The competitor dropped another ball at the spot from which he made that stroke, but his action was questioned before he played the dropped ball. What is the ruling?

**A** As the dropped ball was not dropped with the intention of putting it into play under penalty of stroke and distance, the original ball was not lost. As the competitor had put a ball into play under an inapplicable Rule but not played it, Rule 20–6 applies, and the player may correct his error by continuing play with the original ball, without penalty.

Had the competitor played the dropped ball, he would have been considered to have played under penalty of stroke and distance (Rule 27–1a) and the original ball would be lost. (New)

**27–2a/1.3**

**Player Intends to Play Provisional Ball But No One Present to Hear Announcement**

**Q** In stroke play, A hits his tee shot into the trees. After a search of five minutes, he does not find his ball and returns to the tee to play a second ball under Rule 27–1c. He hits the second tee shot into the trees as well. He intends to play a provisional ball, but his two fellow-competitors are well down the fairway and unable to hear an announcement from A of his intention. How should he proceed?

**A** Rule 27–2a does not contemplate the absence of an opponent, marker or fellow-competitor when the player intends to play a provisional ball. In this case, in the interest of not delaying play A is considered to have fulfilled the announcement requirements of Rule 27–2a if he informs his marker or fellow-competitor as soon as practicable that he has played a provisional ball. (New)

**29/5.5**

**Raking Sand in Bunker After Partner Fails to Extricate Ball but Before Stroke; Foursome Match**

**Q** In a foursome match, A and B are partners. A plays a bunker shot, but fails to get the ball out of the bunker. Before making the next stroke, B rakes the sand. What is the ruling?

**A** In a foursome match, the word “player” includes his partner, where the context so admits – see Definition of “Partner”. In these circumstances, Exception 2 to Rule 13–4 applies to both the player and his partner. Therefore, Side A-B does not incur any penalty for B’s raking of the sand. (New)

**30–3/3**

**Application of Rule 2–2 in Four-Ball Match Play**

The second paragraph of Rule 2–2 does not apply in four-ball match play. (New)

### **30–3e/1**

#### **Partners Fail to Discontinue Play Immediately Contrary to Condition of Competition**

**Q** A and B are playing C and D in a four-ball match for which the Committee has adopted the condition of competition, authorised by the Note to Rule 6–8b, requiring players to discontinue play immediately in potentially dangerous situations. The Committee suspends play for a potentially dangerous situation and the players have heard the signal for that suspension. A and B play, and C and D make a claim. What is the ruling?

**A** A and B are disqualified.

In four-ball play, when a player is in breach of a condition of competition authorised under a specific Rule, that breach is deemed to come under the appropriate Rule (Rule 6–8 in this case). Both A and B were in breach of the condition of competition and are disqualified – Rule 30–3e(ii).

In four-ball stroke play, Side A-B is disqualified – Rule 31–7b(i). (New)

### **30–3f/2.5**

#### **Touching Sand with Practice Swing After Partner Has Extricated Ball from Bunker; Four-Ball Match**

**Q** In a four-ball match, A and B are partners. The balls of A and B lie in the same bunker. A plays a bunker shot and extricates his ball, but it comes to rest in another bunker. Before B makes his stroke in the bunker, B makes a practice swing, touching the sand in the bunker. Is B exempt from penalty by virtue of Exception 3 to Rule 13–4?

**A** No. In a four-ball match, the word “player” includes his partner, where the context so admits – see Definition of “Partner”. However, in four-ball play, as each partner is playing his own ball, Exception 3 to Rule 13–4 applies only to the player whose ball has been extricated from the bunker. Therefore, while A does not incur any penalty, B is disqualified from the hole (Rules 13–4 and 30–3f). (New)

### **30–3f/13**

#### **Partner Stands on Extension of Player’s Line of Play Behind Ball**

**Q** A and B are partners in a four-ball competition. A’s ball is on the putting green 30 feet from the hole, and B’s ball is 20 feet from the hole on a similar line. To assist him with his own putt, B stands on an extension of the line of putt behind A’s ball while A putts. What is the ruling?

**A** A was in breach of Rule 14–2b by allowing his partner, B, to position himself on or close to an extension of the line of putt behind the ball while he made his stroke. As A’s breach assisted B, B also incurred the same penalty (Rules 30–3f and 31–8).

In match play, Side A-B loses the hole.

In stroke play, A incurs a penalty of two strokes and B incurs the same penalty. (New)

### **33–2b/1.5**

#### **Committee Wishes to Move Hole During Stroke Play Round Due to Severity of Location**

**Q** During a round in a stroke play competition, the Committee discovers that one of the holes is positioned such that the ball will not stop near the hole due to the severity of the slope at the hole. As a result, the majority of players who have played the hole have taken an excessive number of putts to hole out. What are the Committee's options in such circumstances?

**A** There is no good solution in such a case, and the Committee, taking into account all factors (e.g. how severe the hole location is, how many players have completed play of the hole and where the hole is in the round), should take the course of action that it considers to be the fairest to all the players. In the circumstances described, the following are examples of actions the Committee may take:

- (a) Have play continue with the hole location unchanged on the basis that the conditions are the same for all players in the field;
  - (b) Keep the hole in the same location but take some action, e.g. watering the putting green between groups, to make the hole location less severe;
  - (c) Declare the round null and void and have all players start the round again.
  - (d) Suspend play, relocate the hole and have the players who played the hole return at the conclusion of their rounds to replay the hole. The score for the hole for these players is the score achieved when the hole is replayed;
  - (e) Have all players disregard their score for the hole in question and play another hole (whether on the competition course or elsewhere) for their score for the hole.
- Options (d) and (e) should be taken only in extreme circumstances because they alter the stipulated round for some or all players. (New)

### **33–8/34**

#### **Relief from Divot Holes**

**Q** May a Committee make a Local Rule providing relief without penalty from divot holes or repaired divot holes (e.g. holes that have been filled with sand and/or seed mix)?

**A** No. Such a Local Rule would modify Rule 13–1 and is not authorised. (New)

### **33–8/44.5**

#### **Status of Growing Things Rooted Within Environmentally-Sensitive Area**

**Q** A player's ball comes to rest through the green but near an environmentally-sensitive area that has been defined as a lateral water hazard. The player's backswing is interfered with by a branch of a tree that is rooted within the environmentally-sensitive area but overhangs ground outside the hazard. With the Local Rule for Environmentally-Sensitive Areas in effect, is the player required to take relief from the branch without penalty?

**A** No. The player must play the ball as it lies or deem it unplayable (Rule 28). The part of the tree that extends beyond the margin of the lateral water hazard is not part of the lateral water hazard and therefore not part of the environmentally-sensitive area. Consequently, the Local Rule does not apply to that part of the branch.

The same result would apply if the environmentally-sensitive area had been defined as out of bounds, as the out of bounds line, like that of a lateral water hazard, extends vertically upwards and downwards.

If, however, the environmentally-sensitive area had been defined as ground under repair, the player would be required to take relief, without penalty, from the branch as the entire tree is part of the ground under repair (see Definition of "Ground Under Repair").

To avoid such situations, it is recommended that, where possible, the Committee define the margins of an environmentally-sensitive area so that any overhanging branches are within the area. (New)

### **34–1b/9**

#### **Breach of Anti-Doping Condition Discovered After Competition Closed**

**Q** In stroke play, a Committee discovers after a competition has closed that a player was in breach of that competition's anti-doping condition, which carries a penalty of disqualification. If the player claims no prior knowledge of the breach, how should Rule 34–1b(iv) be interpreted?

**A** Anti-doping conditions adopt a policy whereby a player is held to be responsible for a breach of the condition regardless of how this may have happened. Therefore, from a Rules of Golf perspective, a player who commits a breach of such an anti-doping condition is deemed to have known he was in breach of a Rule, for which the penalty is disqualification. Accordingly, Exception (iv) to Rule 34–1b applies and the player must be disqualified. (New)

## REVISED DECISIONS

### 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 smooths 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)

#### **5-3/7**

##### **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)

#### **6-2b/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 10 July and stated therein that his handicap was seven strokes, which was his correct handicap. On 1 July, A's handicap was reduced to six strokes and he was aware of the reduction.

On 10 July, 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 is 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 Honour 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 honour at the next hole, how is the honour decided?

**A** In equity (Rule 1-4), the honour 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 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 which 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 penalised 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 opponent'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 has 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 diagram, 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 on 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 penalised 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 authorised 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. bermuda-grass) 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 authorised?

**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 penalised?

**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)