

GOLF AUSTRALIA

RULES

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2012



Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of the new quarterly national Rules publication.

On behalf of Golf Australia, can I start by thanking our Editor, Tom Duguid, and his team of contributors. Between them they have over a hundred years of experience in managing the Rules at the peak level in Australia and we are very fortunate to have the benefit of their knowledge and expertise in putting this publication together.

The full version of the Golf Australia Rules Newsletter is for all those people who have gained Club Level, State Level, and National Level Rules accreditation. If you know someone who has attained official accreditation at any level and who has not received this publication, please pass on their details to the GA office or to your Member Association. Selected articles will be available for general access on www.golfaustralia.org.au.

The Golf Australia Rules Newsletter is to take the place of similar existing State/Territory produced publications, with the editors of those newsletters shifting their focus to contributing to the national publication and thereby saving the duplication of effort at State/Territory level.

The Golf Australia Rules Newsletter will feature articles from expert contributors across Australia, as well as content which is specific to your State/Territory.

The primary focus of this publication will be to provide content that will add value to the service that GA and the Member Associations provide to clubs and golfers. If you have any thoughts on items that may help you and our other readers to better assist clubs in their competition management, or to help to develop the Rules knowledge of club officials and golfers, I would encourage you to contact Tom Duguid (via the GA office OR at rulesnewsletter@golfaustralia.org.au). We will also be seeking to provide items that will be of general interest to our army of dedicated accredited Rules personnel.

We hope you enjoy the read and we look forward to receiving any feedback or thoughts you may have.

Kind regards,

John Hopkins
Chairman of Golf Australia & Chairman of the GA Handicapping & Rules Policy Committee

Spring 2012 In this edition



Dispute Resolution

Frank Gal tells us what to do if there is a query while playing



Diary of Referee

PGA Tour Official Graeme Scott gives some insight into refereeing at a Major



Dropping Stakes

David Greenhill explains how dropping stakes can be a useful alternative to drop zones



Rules Quiz

Prepared by Brian Nesbitt
(Victorian State Level Official)

Answers to the Rules Quiz can be found on the back page

True or False?

1. During a match play round it is permissible to ask for advice from anyone on the course except your opponent.
2. There is no minimum or maximum length for a putter.
3. A player has taken his stance when he has placed his feet in position for and preparatory to making a stroke.
4. It is possible for a stroke play competitor to play a wrong ball, tee off from the next tee and not be disqualified.
5. There are three Rules under which you cannot clean your ball if it is lifted.

David and Brian strike trouble

Now for a few stroke play holes with David and Brian. Please count Brian's strokes, and any penalties involved, in each paragraph and check your score for each hole at the end.

Hole 1

1. Brian unleashed a booming drive which just leaked into the left rough. The club felt a bit different and when he examined it he found the grip had become loose, so he sent his caddy into the nearby pro shop to get a replacement driver from the Pro.
2. Brian's ball was lying about 60 centimetres behind a large stone, so he enlisted the aid of a couple of robust ground staff who were working nearby to move the stone out of the way.
3. Brian played his shot and it sailed towards a water hazard. He found it lying in water, so he fished it out and took relief by dropping his ball on the line of the flag and where the ball lay in the hazard. David pointed out that the correct point was on the line of the flag and where the ball last crossed the margin of the hazard. This made a huge difference and, not liking his new correct place to drop, he lifted his ball and played from where he had played his previous stroke. He then played an excellent shot onto the apron of the green.
4. Brian now decided to putt his ball. His caddie touched the green with the flagstick to indicate the line of putt before replacing the flagstick in the hole. Brian putted firmly and the putt raced 2 metres past the hole.
5. Brian's caddie now roughened the surface of the green with his fingers to check the texture. Brian immediately told him to desist. Brian received no information or advice from the caddie and stepped up and confidently holed his 2-metre putt.

Hole 2

1. From the tee Brian ballooned his tee shot high and right. He discovered his ball in bounds but near an out-of-bounds stake which impeded his swing.
2. He took relief from the stake under Rule 24-2b and struck a lofted iron back onto the fairway.
3. When he got to his ball there was an attached divot behind his ball, so he took the attached divot and placed it neatly in the divot hole, without pressing it down. He then played his shot which drifted into a vile position left of the green.
4. His ball was in a terrible lie and Brian had no option but to declare his ball unplayable. He opted for relief under Rule 28b and dropped his ball in a long shallow bunker. He applauded his strategy when he struck a magnificent sand wedge to the heart of the green.
5. Brian marked his ball, lifted it and rubbed it on the green to clear the last bit of sand off it. He then putted but his putt stopped a centimetre short of the hole.
6. Somewhat frustrated, he flailed near the ball in frustration with the back of his putter, intending to miss the ball, but inadvertently hit it over the edge of the green. He regained his composure, replaced his ball on the lip of the hole and, feeling very deflated, tapped it into the hole.

Decisions Book required

These questions require the use of the Decisions Book. Please give the Decision number.

1. During the play of the 6th hole, A asked B what club he (B) had used on the 4th hole, which is a par 3 of similar length. Was A in breach of a Rule?
2. A player's ball is lodged in a tree branch beyond the reach of a club. The player swings at a lower part of the branch with a club for the purpose of dislodging the ball, and the ball falls to the ground. Has the player made a stroke?
3. B lifts his ball on the putting green and sets it aside elsewhere on the green. A then putts and his ball is deflected or stopped by B's ball. What is the ruling?
4. A player's ball is lying on grass-covered ground within a bunker. The player deems his ball unplayable and elects to drop it under Rule 28b. Must he drop it in the bunker?
5. A player's ball is 3 metres off the ground, lodged in a tree. The player deems the ball unplayable. May the player proceed under Rule 28c which permits him to drop a ball within two club-lengths of where his ball lay unplayable?

Dispute Resolution

By Frank Gal

(GA Rules of Golf & Amateur Status Sub-Committee Member)

In match play, you can ask a Referee or the Committee to resolve a dispute by lodging a claim under Rule 2-5. The claim should be considered if the requirements for a valid claim have been met. For a claim to be valid, you must notify your opponent (i) that you are making a claim or want a ruling and, (ii) the facts of the situation. This must be done within the time required by the Rule.

In stroke play, if, before making a stroke, there is disagreement as to the course of action you are about to take, you may invoke Rule 3-3 and play two balls if you have some doubt as to whether the course of action complies with the Rules. For example, if you feel you may be entitled to free relief from a damaged area not marked as ground under repair, but your marker or a fellow-competitor disputes this, you may invoke Rule 3-3 and proceed accordingly. Note that you must report the facts to the Committee in all cases when this Rule is invoked, even if your score with both balls is the same.

If a doubt or dispute arises during play in stroke play about the breach of a Rule or the correct score for a hole, the matter should be referred to the Committee (Rule 6-6b). If, for example, a fellow-competitor claims that you played from a wrong place after taking relief, you should ask the Committee for a decision on the matter. The timing of this referral is important, since alterations cannot be made to a score card after it has been returned to the Committee.

If the card is considered returned when it is placed in a designated box, the referral must be made before the card is placed in the box. If the card is considered returned when it is handed to a Committee member in a designated "scoring area", the referral must be made before you leave the scoring area. In either case, if the Committee rules that you did play from a wrong place and incurred a penalty of two strokes, the penalty should be added to your score if the ruling is made before your card is considered returned to the Committee, but you should be disqualified if you informed the Committee of the breach after the card is returned.

The Rules of Golf provide guidance to Referees and Committees on how to settle disputes and claims between players in both match play and stroke play. This guidance is contained in Rule 34 - Disputes and Decisions.

Decision 34-3/9 provides an excellent summary of how a Referee or Committee charged with resolving a dispute should proceed when it must resolve questions of fact in order to reach a conclusion.

All relevant circumstances must be considered and the weight of evidence evaluated, including the balance of probabilities, where applicable.

If the Committee is unable to determine the facts, it must resolve the matter in the fairest way.

- The testimony of the players must be given due consideration. In evaluating this testimony each situation must be treated on its own merits; there is no hard-and-fast rule.
- If spectators or others not involved in the competition provide testimony, it must be accepted and evaluated.
- Questions of fact must be resolved in a timely manner to allow the competition to proceed in an orderly manner. A ruling given by a Referee with this time restriction is always subject to further review as additional evidence becomes available.

- A player is always entitled to proceed on the basis of a ruling given by a Referee. An incorrect ruling may be corrected in certain circumstances.

Decision 34-3/9 refers to a number of other Decisions to illustrate these concepts. The Decisions can be accessed on the R&A website randa.org under the "Rules and Amateur Status" tab. A Decisions App is also available for Apple and Android devices.

Finally, I will leave you with three Decisions which are typical of the type of decision Referees and Committees face from time to time.

Decision 34-3/4

Dispute as to Whether Competitor Played from Outside Teeing Ground

Q. In stroke play, B, A's fellow-competitor and marker, claimed at the completion of the round that A had played from outside the teeing ground at the 15th hole. A stated that he had played from within the teeing ground.

The Committee ruled that the claim was invalid because it was not made at the 15th tee and because A disputed the claim. Was the ruling correct?

A. It is a question of fact whether A played from outside the teeing ground. The matter should be resolved on the basis of the weight of evidence. The timing of a claim is not necessarily a factor.

In this case, it was B's word against A's and the weight of evidence did not favour either competitor. In such a case, the benefit of the doubt should be given to A, the player of the stroke.

Decision 34-3/5

True State of Match Not Determinable

Q. On completion of a match, A claims he is one up and B claims the match is all square. The matter is referred to the Committee. The Committee gathers all available evidence and is unable to determine the true state of the match. What should the Committee do?

A. It should resolve the matter in the fairest way. An equitable solution would be to order that the match be replayed.

Decision 27/12

Identification of Ball Through Testimony of Spectator

Q. A's ball and B's ball came to rest close together. Neither A nor B could identify one of the balls as his ball because they were using balls with identical markings.

A spectator who saw both shots land was able to state which ball belonged to A and which one belonged to B. May his testimony be accepted, or should both balls be deemed lost because they could not be identified by A and B?

A. If the Committee determined that, based on information given by the spectator, A and B were able to identify their balls, the balls should not be deemed lost. Otherwise, they would have to proceed under Rule 27-1.

Diary of a Referee

By Graeme Scott

(PGA Tour Australasia Tournament Manager at the US PGA Championship)

Extracts from article originally published at www.pga.org.au

Tuesday 7 August

I had planned to head out to the course at around 8.00am and check in with the Tournament Office.

There were no carts available and so myself, JP (John Paramor) and Andy McFee headed to the 10th tee to start our course walk. It was hot and sticky over the first few holes but the intensity just increased as another storm front approached Kiawah. We were all required to take an air horn with us so that we could assist with any suspension of play due to a dangerous situation.

The big talking point prior to this week was the decision made by the PGA of America to have no "bunkers" on the golf course during the Championship. When only 15% of the sandy areas out on the course are in the form of traditional bunkers, the decision does make very good sense. All sandy areas are deemed to be through the green, unless of course they lie within a water hazard, and therefore competitors can ground their club, take practice swings, remove loose impediments etc.

Play was indeed suspended before we had progressed past the 17th green. We had no sooner made it back to the clubhouse when the storm hit and lightning filled the sky. After a lengthy period, during which players could not play or practice, the air cleared and we headed out onto the front nine for a look around.

Wednesday 8 August

Another early rise this morning as our Rules meeting was scheduled for 7.30am.

The main agenda item was to go through all aspects of the tournament in relation to Rules Assignments and possible scenarios. There will be an official posted on each hole and then there will be eight rovers covering four specific zones around the course. There will also be two general rovers. I will be a rover again this week providing support to the hole officials and timing any groups that may be out of position.

At 9.30am we had a Rovers meeting to ensure that we are all singing from the same song sheet. A line has been drawn regarding abnormal conditions, particularly in relation to the sandy waste areas, with no relief without penalty being provided for a ball in a footprint or tyre mark.

After the break there was a short teaching session on TIO relief for those officials who had not had much experience with them before. I still like to attend anything like this as it tunes you in and also provides a different perspective on how to get the information across.

As soon as this was completed it was time for another sweep of the back nine as I will be working holes 14, 15, 16, 17 and 18 tomorrow with Andy McFee.

Thursday 9 August

After days of thunderstorms, the golfing gods smiled on Kiawah Island today with a calm but hot and sticky morning greeting me.

Unlike the US Open or The Open Championship, Rules Officials are positioned on each hole for the day with Rovers then covering sections of the course to maintain the pace of play and provide

second opinions where required. As Rovers we were responsible for looking after the officials in our zone. I was paired up with Andy McFee from the European Tour for the week and we arranged which holes we would keep an eye on. I took 16 green onwards and Andy slid down to hole 15.

I was first called into action when a second opinion was required on hole 17 for a ball embedded through the green. The Local Rules did provide relief without penalty for a ball embedded through the green, however, as this ball was embedded in sand the exception applied and the player was not entitled to a free drop.

A little later I was called to hole 16, again for a second opinion. This time it was to assess the penalty that should be applied to a player whose ball had moved during his backswing. The ball had been perched in grass in the rough and as the player drew his club back to make a stroke, the ball moved slightly before the clubhead made contact with it. Once I was given a clear explanation of what had transpired by the player and his caddie it was a straight forward decision to apply a one stroke penalty and play the ball from its new position.

I had no sooner spoken with Aaron Baddeley's group coming off tee 18 (re pace of play) when he told me that they may need some assistance with the grandstands on the left of the fairway. Aaron's ball was up tight against the structure and was entitled to relief without penalty more than one but less than two clublengths away. As he still had physical interference at the one clublength point we had to establish the point where both the physical interference and line-of-sight interference no longer existed and then drop within one clublength of that point.

It was a draining day and by late afternoon we were running at 50 minutes over schedule which meant that my final group, featuring Robert Allenby, putted out on hole 18 at 8.00pm in the gathering gloom.

Friday 10 August

It was still dark as I drove to the course at 6.00am as sunrise was not officially until 6.40am. The forecast was not too bad for the day but with winds being stronger we knew that this would again play havoc with the pace of play.

My assignment for today was to cover holes 1 through 5 with Andy McFee and it was clear from the get go that the layout of the opening holes was going to present us with a challenge when trying to keep groups in position.

I had only one actual ruling today and that was with Dustin Johnson on the cross walk at hole two. This was a straight forward relief situation as the cross walks are deemed to be ground under repair.

As the day wound on it was starting to look like we were not going to get finished. The weather had been incredible with thunder and lightning passing around us but at least 15km away and so all we got was wet a few times.

The weather team on site did an absolutely amazing job and were spot on with all of their forecasts.

Our side kept working the groups hard as daylight started to fade and we were fortunate enough to have the final group hole out around 8.10pm. The back nine, which plays decisively tougher, was running a bit behind us and when it was decided to sound the siren for a non-dangerous suspension due to bad light, one group was still on hole

18. Two members of the group were not going to make the cut and so decided to play out the hole while the third player decided to call it a day and return in the morning to complete his round.

It was incredible to think that we had almost pulled off the two big days on schedule but even having the one player come back in the morning would have no impact on the day's play but only have an effect on the production of the programmes and draw sheets for the general public.

The day was not over however for the Chairman of the Rules Committee, as he had to meet to discuss the fate of a player who had called in to say that he had failed to recreate a lie in the sand after having moved some sand to identify his ball during the round. The player's honesty saw him disqualified for failing to include the two stroke penalty on his scorecard and this brought the field down to an even 72 players for the weekend.

Saturday 11 August

Andy and I were covering holes 10 through to 13 today and so, with all play commencing from the first tee at 8.50am, this meant that it would not be until around 11.00am that the first groups would be coming through the turn. The first few groups were absolutely flying along but, as happens in so many of our own tournaments, once you get to around group 7 or 8, the anchors seem to go on and you are back battling to keep them on time.

It was around this stage when a call came over the radio to say that an alligator was lying on the 12th tee and could Andy or I check it out. I guess there is a first time for everything and so I headed over to see what was happening.

The marshals had held the spectators back and so I went up on the tee to check things out. The next group had not yet arrived on the tee and so we had a bit of time to resolve things. He didn't seem too keen on moving at first and the marshal suggested that I drive my cart up behind him and hence encourage him to move. I had just got back to my cart when the gator decided enough was enough and it was time for him to have a swim. He waddled off the tee and down a bank and gracefully slid into the nearby pond. I did look at that area very carefully each time I passed by as he could well have come back the other way and had a crack as I passed by.

Things were going pretty smoothly and we were at the point where Tiger and Vijay were on hole 7 when we were advised that a weather situation was developing and would be with us in due course. I double-checked my area in terms of evacuation vehicles and their exact location so that I could assist the players in making a hasty exit when the time arose.

The sky went very black and we could hear heavy thunder rolling around as it approached us. There was no messing around when the decision was made to suspend. I basically had 5 seconds notice to grab my air horn when the 3-2-1 countdown was made and we gave one prolonged blast to advise the players that they had to cease play. The horns sounded at 4.50pm and we checked ball positions, removed tee markers, collected hole officials and headed for the clubhouse. Everyone made it back under cover before the heavens opened and a torrential downpour started along with thunder and lightning.

Unfortunately, once the initial storm went through a second front built up meaning that it was not going to be possible to recommence play this evening. This left us speculating how the Tournament Committee would restructure play on the final day. The decision was reached that the vans would leave the clubhouse at 7.30am tomorrow with all players to be in position to recommence play at 7.45am.



Sunday 12 August

My job was to go to hole 17 and advise the Committee that Keegan Bradley and Freddy Jacobsen were in place at the required time. It was 7.45am and everyone was in position and so the air horns gave two short blasts to get things going again. Around two groups later I got a call that assistance was required on green 17. Peter Hansen and Tim Clark were at the green and I could see them both looking at the sandy area left of the green.

When I asked how I could help, Tim advised me that he was going to take an unplayable lie due to his ball being completely embedded just under the lip in the sand. His question was whether or not he had to drop the ball in the "bunker" when taking relief. As I mentioned earlier in the week, we played the course with no bunkers and all sandy areas being deemed to be through the green. In view of this he was entitled to drop his ball within two clublengths of the original position but not closer to the hole and this would effectively take him out of the sand and onto the cut surface. Neither player had considered this and so Clark was delighted with the outcome. As the ground was sloping away from the sandy area, his ball rolled closer to the hole after both drops and so he was able to place the ball at the point where it struck the ground on the second drop.

I did get a call from CBS asking me why he had received a free drop on hole 17 and I had to advise them that it was in fact under penalty of one stroke.

The final round was due to commence from tees one and ten in groups of three at 11.44am.

Andy and I were back over on holes 1 through 5 and since there was no hole official on the first I was positioned behind the first green.

The only incident that I was involved with was when I was asked to verify a penalty that Zach Johnson had called on himself on the 18th green. Zach was adamant that his ball had moved when he put his putter down to commence his stroke, which he continued with and putted out. Fortunately, CBS had coverage of the incident and Rules Chairman, David Price, was able to view it and provide Zach with the news that it was a one stroke penalty. However, the interesting thing was that there was absolutely no evidence from the footage that the ball had moved and it was only the word of the player himself that caused a penalty to be applied. That is what is great about this game!!

With play complete through my section of the course and all hole officials collected and returned to the clubhouse I was able to watch Rory McIlroy play his closing holes. As a member of the Rules Committee I was permitted to attend the ceremony on the 18th green and have our photo taken with the Champion.

What a fantastic couple of weeks it has been and, as always it has been a great learning experience.

Dropping Stakes

By David Greenhill

(Golf Victoria, Chief Operating Officer)

Appendix I, Part A, 6 of the Rules of Golf states that it is permissible to 'establish special areas on which balls may or must be dropped when it is not feasible or practicable to proceed exactly in conformity with Rule 24-2b or 24-3 (Immovable Obstruction), Rule 25-1b or 26-1c (Abnormal Ground Conditions), Rule 25-3 (Wrong Putting Green), Rule 26-1 (Water Hazards and Lateral Water Hazards) or Rule 28 (Ball Unplayable)'.

As a consequence, dropping zones have long been used in such a manner both in club golf and during major tournaments and are painted onto the ground either as squares or circles. Generally dropping zones are provided as an additional relief option to those available under the Rule itself, rather than being mandatory.

Within clubs, dropping zones are regularly introduced as a short term additional relief option for areas of ground under repair, large immovable obstructions/artificial surfaces and occasionally large expanses of casual water. On a longer term basis, dropping zones are also used as a permanent extra relief option for a ball lost or in a water or lateral water hazard, often when such a hazard is located behind or adjacent to a green.

Even during a tournament of relatively short duration, dropping zones get heavily used resulting in inconsistent and sometimes poor turf quality occurring. They also have to be routinely maintained with lines re-painted to maintain visibility and definition to players. In situations where the need for a dropping zone ceases, it can take some time for the lines denoting the zone to fade (as the grass grows and is mown) thus causing confusion to players as to whether the relief option remains.

As a result of the above, over the past 4-5 years in Victoria, dropping stakes have been introduced as the basis for temporary and permanent additional relief options where a dropping zone was previously utilised. The dropping stakes are generally around one metre high, made out of metal or wood, with the words "Dropping Stake" written/painted on at least two sides of them. While it is not mandatory that the stakes be a specific colour, it is suggested that they be light blue so as distinguish them from other stakes on the course.

Where players are provided with an additional relief option under an applicable Rule to drop the ball in a specific location, the ball is dropped within one or two club lengths of the dropping stake instead of dropping a ball in a dropping zone.

The experience to date with dropping stakes has been a universally positive one. Course staff prefer using them to dropping zones as it provides a far better opportunity to spread turf wear and tear, especially where they are used as a permanent additional relief option (often with water hazards at the back of greens such as the 14th at Metropolitan Golf Club).

When undertaking routine mowing duties, the stakes are easy for course staff to remove and replace in slightly different positions to where they were originally located.

Time is saved in not having to repaint dropping zones on a regular basis, especially during the growing seasons. The dropping stakes are easily visible to players as the basis for a quick and simple additional relief option.

As an example, where an additional relief option is required for a ball that is lost or in a water hazard, the Specimen Local Rule (including the dropping stake option) on page 135 of the Rule Book can be applied.

It should be noted that when using a dropping stake option (as is the case with dropping zones), the provisions as specified by in Rule 20-2 still apply regarding the dropping and re-dropping of the ball.

The dropping stakes themselves can either be defined as movable or immovable obstructions at each club's preference to then provide players with the Rule to be used (either 24-1 or 24-2) should a dropped ball come to rest where interference is experienced with the dropping stake itself. For the most part, clubs using dropping stakes define them as immovable obstructions (as they do with other water hazard and GUR stakes on the course). If the stakes are treated by the club as movable obstructions, it is recommended that a small paint mark be made to indicate the exact position the stake is to be returned to in the event it is lifted.

Hopefully the dropping stake option may be a useful alternative to painting dropping zones at your club or event when additional relief options are required in accordance with the above-mentioned Rules.

Rules Quiz Answers

True/False

1. False: Rule 8-1b
2. False: Appendix II 1c. All clubs must be at least 18 inches (45.7 cm) length and must not exceed 48 inches (1.219 m), but there is no maximum length for a putter.
3. True. See definition of stance.
4. True. Rule 31-5 and Rule 31-7c.
5. True. Rule 21a, b and c, which refer to Rules 5-3, 12-2 and 22.

David & Brian Strike Trouble

Hole 1

1. One stroke, no penalties: Rule 4-3a(iii).
2. One stroke, no penalties: Decision 23-1/2 and 23-1/3.
3. One stroke, no penalties: Rule 20-6 (See also Decision 20-6/2).
4. One stroke, no penalties: Decision 8-2b/3.
5. One stroke, two penalty strokes: Decision 16-1d/6.

5 strokes and 2 penalty strokes: total 7 strokes.

Hole 2

1. One stroke.
2. One stroke, two penalty strokes: Decision 18-2a/3.
3. One stroke, two penalty strokes: Decision 13-2/5.
4. One stroke, one penalty stroke: Decision 28-4.
5. One stroke, no penalties: Decision 16-1d/5.
6. One stroke, one penalty stroke: Decision 18-2a/23.

6 strokes and 6 penalty strokes: total 12 strokes.

Decisions Book Questions

1. Decision 8-1/6.
2. Decisions 18-1/9 and 18-2a/29.
3. Decision 19-5/1.
4. Decision 28/9.
5. Decision 28/11.