



On the Rules of Golf

9

Easy Questions That Every Golfer Should Know

True or False?

Q1. A player can ask for the flagstick to be attended when he is making a stroke from anywhere on the course. True or False?

Answer: True. Rule 17-1.

Note: The person attending the flagstick must not let the ball hit it otherwise the player who made the stroke will incur a penalty of two strokes in stroke play, or loss of hole in match play.

Q2. Hale's putt stops 2" short of the hole. In his exasperation he strides up to his ball and casually tries to tap it in, missing the ball completely. The stroke still counts. True or False?

Answer: True. Definition of Stroke.

Note: Hale's intention was to move his ball with the club and therefore it counts as a stroke.

Q3. Tractor ruts at the side of the fairway are an abnormal ground condition, from which free relief may be taken under the Rules. True or False?

Answer: False. There is no relief from tractor ruts unless they are clearly marked as ground under repair or there is a Local Rule allowing relief. Decision 25/16.

Note: However, a player would be justified in requesting the Committee to declare the rut to be ground under repair.

Open

Q4. Is the nearest point of relief always in a different place for a left-handed player than it is for a right-handed player?

Answer: Yes, with the very occasional exception where they may be equidistant. Definition of Nearest Point of Relief.

Note: Decision 25-1b/2 includes useful diagrams to illustrate this point.

Q5. In match play a player removes a bottle lying alongside his ball in a water hazard before playing from the hazard. What is the penalty?

Answer: There is no penalty. Rule 24-1.

Note: A player can move anything artificial in a hazard, or anywhere else on the course, providing that their ball is at rest.

Q6. On the putting green a player holds his ball still with one finger and cleans grass from it with his other hand. He does not lift the ball, mark its position or change its position. What is the penalty?

Answer. He incurs a penalty of one stroke. Rule 18-2a.

Note: If the player had marked the position of the ball on the putting green before touching it, there would have been no penalty.

Multiple Choices

Q7. In match play Tanya absent-mindedly marks and then lifts her ball from the apron of a putting green. She cleans the ball before replacing it. What is the ruling?

A) Tanya incurs no penalty.

B) Tanya incurs a penalty of one stroke.

C) Tanya incurs total penalties of two strokes.

D) Tanya incurs total penalties of three strokes.

Answer: B) Tanya incurs a penalty of one stroke. Decision 18-2a/13.

Note: Tanya incurs a penalty of one stroke for lifting her ball in play, but Rule 21 says that a ball may be cleaned when lifted except when it has been lifted in accordance with Rules 5-3, 12-2 or 22.

Q8. Which of the following cannot be used to mark a ball under the Rules?

A) A tee peg.

B) A clubhead.

C) A loose divot.

D) A pitch mark located immediately to the left side of the ball.

Answer: D) A pitch mark located immediately to the side of the ball. Decision 20-1/16.

Note: The position of the ball has to be physically marked. Reference to an existing mark on the ground is not acceptable.

Q9. Ronnie's young son has been playing with his clubs and after he has begun his round he realises that he has only three woods and nine irons in his bag. How many clubs is he permitted to add during the round?

A) One club.

B) Two clubs.

C) Three clubs.

D) No clubs may be added after the start of a round.

Answer: B) Two clubs. Rule 4-4a.

Note: A player can add clubs to a maximum of 14 provided he does not unduly delay play and the clubs have not been used by any other player on the course.

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Harder Questions for Club/Society Golfers

True or False?

Q10. A player may play a ball lying through the green with his stance on a wrong putting green. True or False?

Answer: True. Rule 25-3a.

Note: Interference to a player's stance or the area of his intended swing is not, of itself, interference under this Rule.

Q11. If, when dropping a ball under the Rules, the ball hits the player's equipment he incurs a penalty of one stroke. True or False?

Answer: False. Rule 20-2a.

Note: If a dropped ball touches the equipment of the player before, or after it strikes the course, the ball must be re-dropped, without penalty.

Q12. In stroke play, if a player records a score higher than was actually taken he will be disqualified. True or False?

Answer: False. Rule 6-6d.

Note: If a player returns a score for any hole higher than was actually taken, the score as returned stands.

Open

Q13. Paddy finds a sand wedge on the course and puts it in his bag, meaning to hand it in to the locker room attendant. However, when his round is over he forgets all about it. While he is playing the fourth hole of a strokes competition the following Saturday he finds the club in his bag and tells his fellow competitors how he came to have fifteen clubs in his bag. They say that he must penalise himself but he disagrees saying that it is not his club, he took it off the course as a favour to whoever had lost it, and he has not, and will not use it during the round. What is the ruling?

Answer: Paddy incurs a penalty of four strokes. Rule 4-4a.

Note: A player must not start a stipulated round with more than 14 clubs. The penalty in stroke play is two strokes for each hole at which the breach occurred, with a maximum penalty of four strokes a round.

Q14. On the morning of a semi-final match with their local rivals, Hedge Row G.C., three members of Trees Green G.C. play nine holes on the stipulated course. Should they be disqualified from playing for their team in the afternoon matches?

Answer: No. Rule 7-1a.

Note: On any day of a match-play competition, players may practice on the competition course before a round. However, if it was a stroke play competition they would be disqualified.

Q15. Sandra and Karen hit their second shots into the same area. Both balls are found but, because they were both playing new balls of the same brand and number, they cannot be certain which ball is Sandra's and which is Karen's. What is the ruling?

Answer: Since neither player can positively identify their balls as theirs, both balls are lost. Decision 27/10.

Note: This situation emphasises the advisability of putting identification marks on all your golf balls.

Multiple Choices

Q16. Davis is standing too close to his ball when he makes a clumsy practice swing on the fairway and accidentally moves the ball with the toe-end of his club. What is the ruling?

A) Davis has made a stroke and must play the ball as it lies, without penalty.

B) Davis incurs a penalty of one stroke and must replace the ball.

C) There is no penalty but Davis must replace the ball.

D) Davis incurs a penalty of one stroke and must play the ball as it lies.

Answer: B) Davis incurs a penalty of one stroke and must replace the ball. Decision 18-2a/20.

Note: There is no stroke unless the player intends to move the ball (see Definition of Stroke) so the player incurs a penalty stroke for moving the ball in play and it must be replaced.

Q17. In match play Rachel's chip from off the green stops 3" short of the hole. She removes the flagstick, holding it in her left hand, while she putts the ball one-handed with her right. Joan, her playing partner, claims the hole saying that Rachel is not permitted to hold the flagstick while putting. What is the ruling?

A) There is no penalty.

B) Rachel incurs a penalty of one stroke.

C) Rachel incurs a penalty of two strokes.

D) Rachel loses the hole.

Answer: A) There is no penalty. Decision 17-1/5.

Note: A player may putt the ball while holding the flagstick in this way, providing the ball does not strike the flagstick and she does not lean on it for assistance.

Q18. Ben is having a bad day in the Saturday strokes competition. After his tee shot on the 15th hole he plays a wrong ball into a difficult area under a tree. His next shot is a fresh air and then he manages to move it a few yards onto the fairway. He then realises that he has

played a wrong ball with his second stroke. How many strokes does he lie?

- A) 3 strokes.
- B) 4 strokes.
- C) 5 strokes.
- D) 6 strokes.

Answer: A) 3 strokes. Rule 15-3b.

Note: Strokes made with a wrong ball do not count but Ben incurs a penalty of two strokes and has to find and play his original ball that he played from the teeing ground, or return to the teeing ground to play another ball.

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More Difficult Questions for Rules Enthusiasts

True or False?

Q19. After a player replaces his ball on the green, but before he removes his ball-marker, the wind moves the ball three feet nearer the hole. He must replace his ball at the marker. True or False?

Answer: False. Decision 20-4/1.

Note: The ball is in play when it is replaced and is at rest, whether or not the object used to mark its position has been removed. Consequently the ball must be played from its new position.

Q20. When taking relief under the Rules from a rabbit hole the 'nearest point of relief' may be within the trunk of a large tree. True or False?

Answer: True. Definition of Nearest Point of Relief and Decision 24-2b/3.7.

Note: The nearest point of relief is the point on the course nearest to where the ball lies that is not nearer the hole and avoids interference from the condition for which relief is sought. If the nearest point of relief is in the middle of a tree trunk the player must estimate the one club relief from that point within which he must drop a ball.

Q21. Patsy is attending the flagstick for her fellow competitor, Carol. Her attention is diverted by some noise coming from an adjacent green and she does not notice that Carol has taken her putt. Carol's ball hits Patsy's foot and comes to rest a few inches from the hole. Patsy is penalised two strokes. True or False?

Answer: False. It is Carol who is penalised two strokes. Rule 17-3.

Note: Because Carole had authorised Patsy to attend the flagstick the penalty is against her. The ball must be played as it lies.

Open

Q22. Bob misses a short putt and instinctively throws his putter at the ball, but misses again. Has he incurred a penalty for taking an action to influence the position of his ball?

Answer: No, Bob's instinctive action was not an intention to make a stroke and there is no penalty if he misses the ball. Decision 1-2/4.5.

Note: If the thrown putter had moved the ball, Bob would have incurred a penalty stroke under Rule 18-2a, and would be required to replace the ball.

Q23. A practical joker has stuck the flagstick on the other side of the green to where the hole is cut. Naturally, the players play their strokes towards the flagstick and not the hole. Do the players have the option to replay their shots?

Answer: No. Decision 1-4/3.

Note: The players must accept the resultant advantage or disadvantage.

Q24. Laura and Bernie are fellow-competitors in a stroke play competition. Laura plays her second stroke onto the green from the right rough. Bernie plays her second onto the green from the left side of the fairway. As they mark their balls on the putting green they both realise that some time earlier in their round they must have played each other's ball. They cannot work out where they had inadvertently exchanged balls. What is the ruling?

Answer: If it cannot be established that their balls were exchanged during play of a hole Laura and Bernie should be given the benefit of the doubt that the balls were exchanged between play of two holes, in which case no penalty is incurred. Decision 15-1/2.

Multiple Choices

Q25. In stroke play, Jason's ball lies on the putting green. Before playing his next stroke he taps down spike marks in the vicinity of the hole but not on his line of putt. What is the ruling?

A) Jason incurs a penalty of one stroke.

B) Jason incurs a penalty of two strokes.

C) Jason incurs a penalty of two strokes only if the act assists with his subsequent play of the hole.

D) Jason incurs no penalty.

Answer: B) Jason incurs a penalty of two strokes. Decision 16-1c/4.

Note: The repair of spike marks in the vicinity of a hole might assist a player in his subsequent play of the hole if he putts wide of, or past the hole.

Q26. Several people are searching for Randy's ball in long grass when a spectator says that he has trodden on a ball by mistake pressing it into the ground. Having identified it as his ball Randy is unsure how to proceed. What is the ruling?

A) Randy must play the ball where it lies after being trodden on.

B) Randy must place the ball as near as possible to where it lay in the rough with no penalty.

C) Randy must drop the ball as near as possible to where it lay in the rough with no penalty.

D) Randy must drop the ball as near as possible to where it lay in the rough with a penalty of one stroke.

Answer: C) Randy must drop the ball as near as possible to where it lay in the rough with no penalty. Decision 20-3b/5.

Note: As it is impossible for Randy to determine the spot where his ball is to be placed or replaced he must drop it at as near as possible to where it lay.

Q27. Freddie thins his third stroke out of a bunker and watches as the ball flies over the boundary wall. Trying to compose himself, as he was doing well in the Saturday Stableford competition, he carefully rakes over the area of his stance and stroke. He then drops another ball from where he had played his last stroke, playing it close to the hole, from where he taps in. What is his score on the hole?

A) 5 strokes.

B) 6 strokes.

C) 7 strokes.

D) 8 strokes.

Answer: B) 6 strokes. Decision 13-4/37.

Note: Freddie took five strokes, and incurred the stroke and the distance penalty for ball out of bounds, but no penalty for smoothing the sand. Exception 2 to Rule 13-4 states that if a ball is outside the hazard after the stroke, the player may smooth sand or soil in the hazard without restriction.

The above 27 questions, answers, references and explanations have been taken from my book, '999 Questions on the Rules of Golf'. The book is divided into three sections with 333 questions in each section; easy, moderate and difficult. For variety, the questions are further subdivided into three formats; true/false, open ended and multiple choices. A detailed index provides an easy and convenient way for readers to reference specific situations as they arise. There are multiple questions on every one of the 126 sub-sections to the 34 Rules of Golf.

If you have enjoyed testing yourself above, and have learned something about the Rules of Golf while doing so, then you might like to purchase the book, either for yourself or as a gift. It is available through Amazon or, if you would like a personalised, signed copy, then email rules@barryrhodes.com and I will send you a copy and bear the postage charges to anywhere in the world. The cover price is US€19.99, St£12.99 or Eu€14.99.

I also recommend that you check out my blog at <http://www.barryrhodes.com>. Approximately once a week I write a short article containing miscellaneous content for golfers of all abilities, who wish to improve their knowledge and understanding of the Rules of Golf.

Remember, no Rules, no knowledge; but know Rules, know knowledge.

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