

GOING FOR THE GREEN

WHAT DOES THE TERM "GREENS IN REGULATION" MEAN?

It's one of several statistical categories helpful in tracking play. On a par-3, it means hitting the green in one shot from the teeing ground. On a par-4, you've got a "GIR" if you reach the green in two shots; with a par-5, it means hitting the green in three shots. Hitting 18 greens in regulation means you arrived at each of the greens in the prescribed number of shots quoted above. It obviously requires excellent shotmaking, and if you're putting well, doing so will give you a very good score. On the other hand, hitting just two greens in regulation and still shooting par would mean you had an excellent day chipping, pitching and putting, but you might want to practice your driving and iron play.

SWINGING IN THE RAIN

WHILE WATCHING AN LPGA TOURNAMENT BEING PLAYED IN INCLEMENT WEATHER, I NOTICED THE CADDIES HOLDING UMBRELLAS OVER THEIR PLAYERS WHILE THEY WERE LINING UP PUTTS, THEN PULLING AWAY ONCE THE PLAYERS ADDRESSED THE BALL. I CAN UNDERSTAND WHY A CADDIE WOULDN'T STAND THERE WHEN THE PLAYER IS SWINGING A CLUB, BUT WHAT'S THE DANGER IN DOING SO DURING A PUTT?

Precaution against injury is not the issue: Giving assistance to a player in the act of executing the stroke is

a violation (Rule 14-2). Holding up an umbrella during a shot is considered physical assistance. It's a two-shot penalty in stroke play and loss of the hole in match play.

MAKING THE MARK

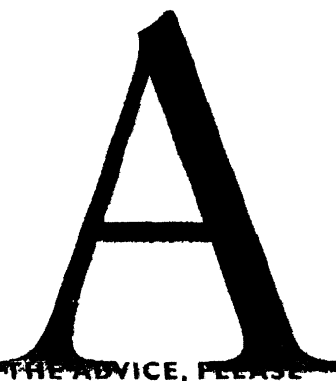
ONE OF MY OPPONENTS IN A TOURNAMENT MARKED MY BALL WITHOUT MY PERMISSION. SHE THOUGHT SHE WAS BEING HELPFUL, BUT I FOUND IT DISTRACTING. IS THERE A RULE THAT ADDRESSES THIS?

An opponent may not mark another player's ball without the authority of the player. A one-stroke penalty is incurred by the opponent (Rule 20-1).

HITCHING A RIDE

ARE SPECTATORS ALLOWED TO RIDE IN CARTS WITH COMPETITORS DURING A TOURNAMENT? MY PRO SAYS THERE'S NOTHING IN THE RULE BOOK AGAINST IT. IF THERE ISN'T A RULE, CAN A LOCAL RULE BE INVOKED?

It is the tournament committee's responsibility to lay down the conditions under which the competition is to be played (Rule 33-1). Decision 33-1/8 allows golf carts to be used during a competition. The committee should decree that only competitors and/or their caddies are allowed to ride. In the event of a breach, a two-stroke penalty would be assessed with a maximum penalty of four strokes in medal play. This is a suggested local rule found in the Decisions of Golf (Rule 33-8/4).



HOLD THE ADVICE, PLEASE

AT A RECENT CHAMPIONSHIP AT OUR CLUB, I WAS AMAZED TO HEAR A SPECTATOR CALL OUT TO A PLAYER WHO WAS SETTING UP HER SHOT, "JUST KEEP YOUR HEAD DOWN AND FOLLOW THROUGH." WHAT DO THE RULES SAY ABOUT GIVING (OR TAKING) ADVICE DURING PLAY?

Advice is defined as any counsel or suggestion that could influence a player in determining his or her play; for example, club selection or technique. The penalty for this is two strokes or loss of the hole. If unsolicited advice is given, a warning should be issued to the heckler.

SAMARITAN OR HOMER?

A FRIEND AND I WERE WATCHING A TEAM MATCH BETWEEN OUR CLUB AND A VISITING CLUB. TWO PLAYERS HIT INTO THE FAIRWAY AND TWO DROVE INTO THE WOODS. WE WEREN'T SURE WHICH PLAYERS HAD LOST THEIR BALLS, BUT WE WANTED TO BE HELPFUL. ONE OF THE OPPOSING CLUB'S PLAYERS SAID WE WEREN'T ALLOWED TO LOOK FOR THE BALL BECAUSE EACH PLAYER HAD HER OWN CADDIE. IT TURNED OUT THE PLAYERS WHO HAD LOST THEIR BALLS WERE FROM OUR CLUB, AND THE VISITORS THOUGHT WE WERE GIVING THEM AN ADVANTAGE.

They were mistaken. In professional tournaments, you'll often see enthusiastic fans wading through tall grass or worse conditions to help a player find her wayward ball. Despite the suspicions of your ▶

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club's opponents, there is no rule prohibiting spectators from assisting in the search for a lost ball.

AMATEUR STANDING

FOR YEARS OUR ASSOCIATION HAS BEEN RECEIVING \$125 PER GOLF SEASON FROM A SPONSOR TO BE USED FOR A SPECIFIC MONTHLY EVENT. AT THE END OF THE SEASON, THE FOUR MONTHLY WINNERS HAVE AN 18-HOLE PLAYOFF TO DETERMINE THE OVERALL CHAMPION. EACH MONTHLY WINNER RECEIVES A CHECK, AS DOES THE OVERALL WINNER. RECENTLY, ONE OF THE CLUB MEMBERS INDICATED THIS PAYOFF COULD BE JEOPARDIZING OUR AMATEUR STANDING. ARE WE VIOLATING USGA RULES?

Like integrity or pregnancy, there can be no degrees of amateur status: If a player accepts cash, she forfeits her amateur status (Rule 1-4 of Rules of Amateur Status). Gift certificates or credit in the pro shop (maximum value or credit: \$500) are acceptable alternatives. There is also a restriction on awarding gifts or credit that can be readily redeemed for cash.

THREE'S COMPANY

WHEN PLAYING A TOURNAMENT WITH FOUR-PLAYER TEAMS, INVARIABLY THERE ARE GROUPS MISSING A PLAYER. WHO GETS TO TAKE AN EXTRA SHOT (IF ANYONE) AND WHEN?

The rules don't address this question, and clubs handle the situation differently, but logistically (and to be fair to the field), players in the troika should alternate taking an extra shot following a prescribed order of play.

COUNTING PUTTS

IN THE PAST, THIS COLUMN HAS ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF HOW TO

COUNT PUTTS FOR PRIZES. ONE COLUMN STATED THAT SCORERS IN THE U.S. WOMEN'S OPEN WERE INSTRUCTED TO COUNT THE FIRST STROKE MADE AT A BALL ON THE PUTTING GREEN AND ALL STROKES MADE THEREAFTER AS PUTTS—EVEN IF A PLAYER PUTTS FROM OFF THE GREEN AND HAS TO COME BACK ON. ANOTHER COLUMN STATED THAT PUTTS ARE ONLY COUNTED AS PUTTS IF THEY ARE ACTUALLY TAKEN ON THE GREEN. ISN'T THIS CONTRADICTION?

The LPGA and the PGA Tours instruct scorers to count all strokes as putts once the competitor has begun putting. This makes it easier for the scorers to keep up with the number of putts. However, the traditional approach refers to Rule 16 in the USGA Rules of Golf. Here it is in a nutshell: The line of putt is the line that the player wishes her ball to take after a stroke on the putting green. Therefore, if the line of putt is only on the putting green, it stands to reason there is no line of putt off the green. The bottom line: You may tally it any way your organization prefers.

BUZZZZZZZ

I HIT ONTO AN ELEVATED GREEN (A COMPLETELY BLIND SHOT, AND DISCOVERED MY BALL HAD LANDED IN AN AREA FILLED WITH SWARMING BEES AND AN UNDERGROUND HIVE. CAN I MOVE MY BALL TO A SAFE AREA WITHOUT ANY PENALTIES?

Decision 1-4/11 describes a ball that has come to rest in a dangerous situation. The ball may be moved to the nearest spot that is not dangerous (but is also not nearer the hole) without penalty.

FLYING OFF THE HANDLE

IF A PLAYER IN A BUNKER LOSES THE HEAD OFF HER CLUB WHILE SWINGING AT THE BALL (AND THE BALL

MOVES A COUPLE OF FEET), DOES SHE MOVE THE BALL BACK TO ITS ORIGINAL LIE OR PLAY IT WHERE IT CAME TO REST AFTER THE SWING? DOES HER STROKE COUNT?

If the club breaks during the downswing, and the swing is stopped short of the ball, there is no stroke taken. If the club breaks during the swing and the swing is completed, the stroke counts and the ball is played as it lies (Decision 14/5).

HIT AND MISS

I TEEED OFF FROM THE MIDDLE TEE BOX ONLY TO HAVE MY SHOT LAND ON THE FORWARD TEE BOX. DO I HAVE TO RETEE MY BALL? IS THERE A PENALTY?

There is no penalty (other than embarrassment), and the ball must be played as it lies. No teeing up again—even though the ball is still on the tee box.

Barbara Puett is the owner of the Barbara Puett Golf School in Austin, Texas, and co-author of Golf Etiquette (St. Martin's Press, 1992).



WIN!

Is there a rules or etiquette question that has you stumped? We'd love to hear from you! Send your query, and if we print it you'll receive a can of Callaway Golf by Nordstrom Instant Cooler (see "What's New," page 36, for more details). Write: Q&A, Golf for Women, 125 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017. Fax: 212-455-1246; E-mail: gfumag@mdp.com.