

GOLF AUSTRALIA RULES

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2015



GolfAustralia



The team of referees at the 2015 ISPS Handa Women's Australian Open

From The R&A Website

Courtesy: The R&A Website - www.randa.org

THE R&A PLANS NEW EQUIPMENT TESTING CENTRE AT KINGSBARNES

The R&A has unveiled plans for a new equipment testing centre at Kingsbarnes Golf Links near St Andrews.

A planning application has been prepared by architects Wellwood Leslie and lodged with Fife Council. The new 22,750 sq. ft facility is to be located to the north of the practice area at Kingsbarnes.

Utilising the latest technology, the building will provide a world class testing and research facility that will house The R&A's Equipment Standards department, which currently operates from three locations, under one roof. It represents a major investment for The R&A that will enhance its ability to monitor and apply the Equipment Rules on behalf of its 152 affiliated organisations around the world.

The building has been designed in an energy efficient, environmentally sensitive manner. As well as maximising the use of daylight, it will incorporate a range of features, such as air source heat pumps, and use sustainable materials, including an extensive sedum roof that will allow it to sit comfortably in its setting at Kingsbarnes.

Dr Steve Otto, Director – Research and Testing at The R&A, said, "The proposed new centre at Kingsbarnes will deliver a number of benefits in terms of enhancing our research and testing capabilities. We currently deliver an extremely high standard of service to golfers, manufacturers and our affiliated bodies but we have to look to the future and developing a custom built centre will give us much greater scope to carry out this work efficiently and improve the service even further.

Autumn 2015: In this edition



Pace of Play Reports
Reports from The R&A and Golf Australia.



A Little Bit of Advice!
What is Advice and when can you give it?



Rules on Tour
The R&A outlines recent Rulings related to equipment





“We have worked closely with Kingsbarns Golf Links on the proposed development and we look forward to consulting with Fife Council and other relevant bodies on the application.”

Each year, The R&A's Equipment Standards

department tests thousands of golf clubs and balls to ensure they conform to the Equipment Rules. Together with the USGA, The R&A is responsible for making any revisions to these Rules if they are deemed necessary. The third part of its remit is to conduct fundamental research into the physics of golf.

The new centre will incorporate an indoor test range to evaluate golf balls. On the range side of the building there will be a biomechanics testing bay, equipped with golf ball tracking radars and a marker tracking system capable of producing three-dimensional videos of golfers' swings. Two golf robots, which are used for both research and the testing of clubs and balls, will be housed at the centre.

It will feature specially designed areas for the testing of clubs and other equipment using a mixture of bespoke and other more standard pieces of equipment. The testing equipment ranges from a container full of water, which uses the Archimedes principle to measure clubhead volume, through to an optical metrology system for iron clubs capable of measuring to sub-micron precision.

DELEGATES ATTEND TOURNAMENT ADMINISTRATORS & REFEREES SCHOOL IN ST ANDREWS



The annual St Andrews Level 3 Tournament Administrators and Referees School (TARS) took place in February, bringing together a record number of representatives from golf organisations around the world.

The School, held at the Fairmont Hotel St

Andrews, was attended by 96 delegates from more than 40 different countries spanning Africa, Asia, Australia, Canada, Europe and the United Kingdom. The event began with practical demonstration sessions that used specially constructed indoor golf settings, allowing participants to discuss different Rules scenarios with the instructors.

On the second day, participants sat the Level Three Rules Exam, a component of the R&A's three-tiered Rules Education programme that guides people from a basic knowledge of the Rules to the standard of a tournament official or referee. Delegates also worked through sessions and presentations on subjects including pace of play, course marking, starting and recording, and took part in a role play session giving individual rulings on different on-course situations.

Former Ryder Cup player Andrew Coltart was on hand to speak

to attendees about the Rules from a player's point of view and European Tour Chief Referee Andy McFee gave a presentation about refereeing at the professional level.

David Rickman, Executive Director – Rules and Equipment Standards at The R&A, said, “It is fantastic to see such a high level of interest in the Rules and the diverse range of countries represented this year. The School is a wonderful opportunity to bring people together from all over the world to gain a broader understanding of the Rules and the many different aspects of refereeing and administering tournaments.”

The event culminated with a reception and dinner at The Royal and Ancient Clubhouse on the final evening, giving delegates a chance to see inside the historic building.

Australia was represented at the School by Susan Seja (Golf SA) and John Robinson (Golf NSW). The photos below show Susan involved in a practical workshop and John posing with the Auld Claret Jug.



Pace of Play Reports

Below we have set out recent reports from Golf Australia and The R&A on the important topic of Pace of Play. These follow extensive consultation with golf clubs and golfers throughout Australia and worldwide.

FROM GOLF AUSTRALIA

30 April 2015

To all Australian Golf Clubs,

Subject: Release of GA and R&A Pace of Play Reports

Late last year two surveys were conducted on pace of play. The R&A conducted an international survey of golfers (ie consumers), and GA built on the work of The R&A by commissioning a survey of Australian clubs (ie service providers). The GA survey was conducted by Jeff Blunden of GBAS. Many thanks to all those club officials who assisted with these surveys – it is sincerely appreciated by GA.

The reports of these two surveys have both been released this week and are now available from the following page of the GA website – <http://www.golf.org.au/paceofplayreport>

We would also like to make you aware that the new edition of Golf Australia magazine (which is unrelated to GA) hits the newsstands today (Thursday 30 April) and it includes a feature written by editor Brendan James on the GA report. We would encourage club administrators to have a look at this article.

The objectives of The R&A and the GA surveys were to try to establish whether people genuinely feel there is a problem with pace of play, the degree of importance they attach to the problem, what people feel are the causes of the problem, and whether there may be any financial or participation impacts. Previously there has been plenty of anecdotal evidence available on some of these topics and everyone will have their view, however we believe it is important to be proceeding on the basis of accurate and comprehensive data and these surveys have been very helpful in this regard.

When releasing its report earlier this week The R&A commented that “we feel the next step in this process is to engage with our partners throughout the golf industry to look at these findings and invite them to contribute their views to these important discussions”. The R&A is organising a forum later this year where it will invite contributions from a range of organisations in golf on addressing pace of play and explore the key areas of player behaviour, management approaches and golf course issues. This forum will work through the findings of The R&A report of golfers and it will also discuss the GA survey of Australian clubs.

GA looks forward to contributing as much as we can to The R&A forum. We also look forward to working with The R&A to develop integrated international guidance material that will be of assistance to those clubs who are affected by the issue of pace of play.

To best enable us to put all views forward to The R&A forum we will invite any club or other industry entity to email to us (at simonm@golf.org.au) any submission or thoughts it may have that has been provoked by either the GA report or The R&A report, or by discussion of pace of play generally. We will publicise closing dates for submissions once The R&A has announced the timing of its forum.

We hope these reports are of interest. Please contact me should you have any queries or if you wish to make a submission or comment to GA on this issue.

Yours sincerely,

Simon Magdulski

Director - Rules & Handicapping



THE R&A ANNOUNCES PACE OF PLAY SURVEY RESULTS

The R&A has announced the results of a pace of play survey, with an industry forum to discuss the findings planned for later in the year.

The survey received more than 56,000 responses from golfers in 122 countries between September 2014 and March 2015. It was carried out by The R&A as part of its efforts to investigate the issues affecting golf and the extent to which they impact on participation in the sport.

The survey revealed that while 70% of golfers are largely happy with the duration of their rounds, 60% of golfers expressed the view that they would enjoy golf more if they played in less time.

Importantly, of the 25-44 year-olds who said that they were never happy with pace of play, 21% said that golf would need to take as much as one-and-a-half hours less for them to play more often. Of the 8,468 golfers in this age range who responded, 19% said they would welcome the opportunity to play nine holes more often as an alternative format.

The survey found that the two biggest factors preventing people from playing golf are work commitments (34%) and family commitments (29%) with the time taken to play (16%) ranked third. Other factors mentioned were alternative hobbies (12%), cost of play (7%), difficulty of play (1%) and cost of equipment (1%); although there were some regional variations on these percentages.

The R&A is organising a forum later this year where it will invite contributions from a range of organisations in golf on addressing pace of play and explore the key areas of player behaviour, management approaches and golf course issues. Duncan Weir, Executive Director – Working for Golf at The R&A, said, “This survey is the first step for us in examining, in detail, the wide range of issues currently affecting participation in golf. There is plenty of anecdotal evidence available but we conducted the survey to obtain accurate data on how much of an issue pace of play is for golfers and to give us an insight into what they see as the main factors contributing to slow rounds.

“We feel that the next step in this process is to engage with our partners throughout the golf industry to look at these findings and invite them to contribute their views to these important discussions. Our forum later this year will provide the opportunity for these discussions to take place.”

The R&A distributed the survey through its affiliated bodies around the world and it was offered in six languages: Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese and Spanish.

Pace of Play Global Survey (2015 R&A Report):

<http://ow.ly/NQZ2X>

Extract of Australian data:

<http://ow.ly/NQZ43>

Rules Quiz

By Brian Nesbitt

(Victorian State Level Referee)

Club Level, No Rule Book Quiz – Rule Headings Please.

The key here is to try to learn Pages 2 and 3 in the Rule Book

Please fill in the Rule Headings as by now you should have learned most if not all:

1. Rule 28 Heading is....
2. Rule 27
3. Rule 26
4. Rule 25
5. Rule 24
6. Rule 23
7. Rule 22
8. Rule 21
9. Rule 20
10. Rule 19
11. Rule 18
12. Rule 17
13. Rule 16
14. Rule 15
15. Rule 14
16. Rule 13
17. Rule 12
18. Rule 11

Club Level, you may use the Rule Book if necessary here, but I want the Rule number and sub-para as well please.

1. Improving Lie, Area of Intended Stance or Swing, or Line of Play
2. Ball in Hazard; Prohibited actions
3. Ball at Rest moved by Outside Agency
4. Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped by Outside Agency
5. Movable Obstruction
6. Wrong Putting Green
7. Embedded Ball
8. Abnormal Ground Conditions
9. Provisional Ball
10. Ball Played within Water Hazard

Now for a Hole with our Intrepid Heroes – Gertrude and Felicity. Please count the strokes and any penalties involved in each paragraph and check their scores for the hole at the end. Please give the Rule number too.

Gertrude and Felicity's Matchless Play

1. In a recent Pennant Match, Gertrude drove slightly down the right of the fairway, stood aside and watched Felicity boom a huge drive straight down the middle, some 40 metres beyond her drive. As they walked along, Gertrude chatted nervously and failed to notice her ball in front of her and clipped it with her buggy wheel. She replaced the ball and played a shot to the front of the green and informed Felicity of her error.
2. Felicity strode out to her ball and proceeded to hit an enormous wedge to the heart of the green.
3. Gertrude deftly chipped on to the green and left her ball about 15 cms beyond the edge of the hole. Felicity then putted up but left her approach putt about a metre short of the hole.
4. Felicity lined up her putt and missed it, leaving it on the edge of the hole. Gertrude conceded Felicity's next putt, so she was in the hole in 5 strokes. Gertrude, listening to Felicity grumbling on about missing the putt, thought Felicity had conceded her 15cm putt, so she picked up her ball. Felicity immediately said she had not conceded the putt. However Gertrude replaced her ball and putted it in. What was the result of the hole?

This next Section will require the use of the Decisions Book and is aimed at State Level Referees. Please give the Decision number, but you should be able to give the Rule number and possibly the sub-para from memory!

1. A lifts his ball on the putting green. He then accidentally drops the ball and it strikes and moves B's ball, which is in play and at rest. What is the ruling in both stroke play and match play (where B is A's opponent)?
2. Under Rule 18, Note 1: It says, "If a ball to be replaced under this Rule is not immediately recoverable, another ball may be substituted. What is the meaning of "Immediately Recoverable"?"
3. A player's ball plugged deeply in short rough. No casual water was visible on the surface, but the pitch-mark in which the ball came to rest was filled with water. Was the player's ball in casual water?
4. A tree has fallen onto a fairway due to a windstorm and is still attached to the stump. Does it constitute ground under repair?
5. Is a rut made by a tractor considered a hole made by a greenkeeper and thus ground under repair? If not, should the Committee declare such a rut to be ground under repair?

Rules on Tour

Courtesy: The R&A Website - www.randa.org

Rulings relating to golf equipment are few on Tour but there have been a couple of cases in recent months.

BREAKING CLUBS



During the final round of the Thailand Classic at Black Mountain Golf Club, Scott Hend played an excellent escape shot from behind a tree but snapped his club in the process. As the club had been damaged in the normal course of play the player was permitted to replace the broken club. This is as per Rule 4-3 which allows a club which is no longer fit for play to be replaced, providing the player does not unduly delay play in obtaining a replacement and providing he does not replace the club by borrowing a club selected for play by any other person playing on the course or by assembling components carried by or for the player during the round.

Under the Rules of Golf, a club is considered unfit for play if it is substantially damaged, e.g. the shaft is dented or significantly bent, the clubhead becomes loose or detached, or the grip becomes loose.

The player does not need to replace the broken club with the same type of club, e.g. a broken 9 iron could be replaced with a 3 wood, providing it is a conforming club.

Should Hend's club have been damaged but still fit for play he would have had the option of using the club in its damaged state for the remainder of the round, irrespective of whether the club was still conforming. Alternatively he could have repaired it or have it repaired, provided this did not unduly delay play.

If, however, a player damages a club and renders it non-conforming other than in the normal course of play, i.e. through acts of abuse such as throwing it, slamming it into a golf bag, or intentionally striking something (like the ground or a tree) other than during a stroke or practice swing, then the club may not be subsequently used or replaced during the round. However, if the player started the round with fewer than 14 clubs, then he would be entitled to add another club for whatever reason under Rule 4-4a (see Decision 4-3/8).

NON-CONFORMING CLUBS

Matt Every was not so lucky after he was disqualified during the second round of the Sony Open in Hawaii for using a non-conforming club which had been damaged during a previous round.

Every had bent the shaft of his 4-iron during the first round of the tournament and unfortunately he not only forgot to take the club out of his bag prior to starting his second round, but he proceeded to use the club for his second shot at the 18th hole (his 9th hole of the day).

Every realised himself that he may have breached a Rule and spoke to PGA Tour referee, John Mutch who confirmed to Every that the penalty for using a non-conforming club was disqualification, under Rule 4-1a. If Every had not used the club but just carried it in his bag, the penalty would have been two strokes for each hole that he had carried the club, up to a maximum of four strokes (Rule 4-1a).

The Rules state that "The shaft must be straight from the top of the grip to a point not more than 5 inches above the sole (i.e. the neck). Every's club was non-conforming as there was a substantial bend around 10 inches up from the neck.

The crucial difference between the Matt Every and the Scott Hend rulings is that in Every's case the club in question was already non-conforming when he started his round.

LAVA TROUBLE



Bernard Langer had some club trouble of his own during the first round of the Champions Tour, Mitsubishi Electric Championship at Hualalai in January. He hit his second shot at the par five seventh hole to the right of the green into an area of lava rocks. Unfortunately for Langer he took several more strokes to escape from the lava rock, including a miss and a double hit, eventually two puttings from 50 feet for a quintuple bogey 10.

As per the definition of 'stroke' in the Rules of Golf, a stroke is the forward movement of the club made with the intention of striking at and moving the ball. Therefore if a player intends to strike the ball, but misses it, the stroke still counts in the score for the hole.

Langer immediately called the double hit on himself which resulted in him incurring a one-stroke penalty. Rule 14-4 states that if a player's club strikes the ball more than once during the course of a stroke, the player must count the stroke and add one penalty stroke.

Langer recovered well and went on to score a level par 72 for the round.

A Little Bit of Advice!

By Tom Duguid

(Editor & Golf Australia National Referee)

Perhaps the rule that is breached the most in club and social golf is Rule 8-1 Advice. It is not unusual for a golfer to ask their fellow-competitor what club he or she used on a par 3 hole before selecting their own implement! Or for a low marker to give a novice a tip or two on how to play a certain shot. Some golfers would be aware that these actions are against the rules but many just consider it part of normal club interaction. To refuse to answer such a query for assistance would be considered churlish by some at club level. As an accredited rules official, you no doubt have been put in this situation whilst playing your usual club competition round or have at least observed it happening.

Rule 8-1 Advice is brief and to the point –

“During a stipulated round, a player must not:

- a. *give advice to anyone in the competition playing on the course other than his partner, or*
- b. *ask for advice from anyone other than his partner or either of their caddies.*

PENALTY: *Match play – Loss of hole; Stroke play – Two strokes.”*

Although seemingly straightforward, like many of golf’s scenarios a number of queries pertaining to advice arise and fortunately The R&A’s Decisions on the Rules of Golf book helps us out. But first it is important to be very clear on the definition of Advice –

“Advice” is any counsel or suggestion that could influence a player in determining his play, the choice of a club or the method of making a stroke.

Information on the Rules, distance or matters of public interest, such as the position of hazards or the flagstick on the putting green, is not advice.

The Decisions book clarifies the following scenarios:-

- Exchanging information about the distance between a ball and the hole, or the whereabouts of a fellow-competitor’s or opponent’s ball, is not advice.
- Asking what club someone used on a previous hole or after both players have played their shots to the green is not advice.
- Making a casual comment about your own club selection is not advice unless it is made to another player about to play a similar shot. However a deliberately misleading comment about club selection to a player about to play would incur the penalty.
- Seeking advice on club selection before starting a round, between two rounds or while play is suspended, from a competitor who has already played the course is not a breach.
- Looking into someone’s bag to check what club they used is not advice as obviously this would be virtually impossible to verify. However taking some physical action such as removing a towel or cover from the player’s bag to view their clubs would incur the penalty.
- Giving a tip on how to play a particular type of stroke at any time during the round is a breach. The recipient of the advice is not penalised unless they asked for such advice.

- Suggesting to a fellow-competitor that they should “lay up short of the green” or “I would take an unplayable if I was you” is giving advice. However giving assistance with the various options under say Rules 26 or 28 is not advice but information on the rules.
- In singles match play it is important to establish who initiated the breach. If player A asks for advice then he loses the hole irrespective of whether player B responds with advice.

Although it is uncommon for breaches of Rule 8 to occur in significant pro or open tournaments due to the competitiveness of the players, it does on occasions happen.

One of the most famous of these occurred when Tom Watson was cruising along with a big lead in the final round of the 1980

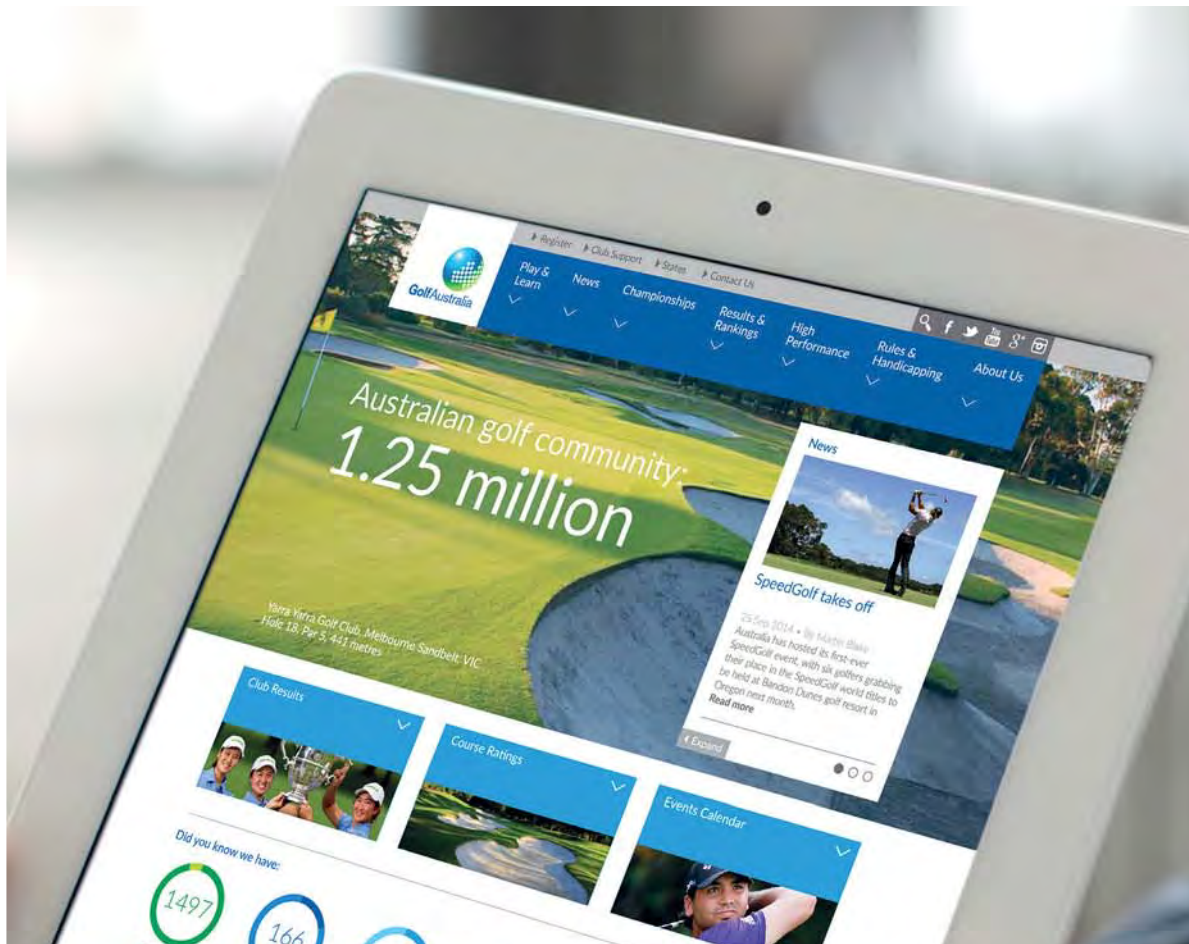


Tournament of Champions at the Las Costa Resort paired with his friend Lee Trevino. Seeing Trevino struggling with his game, Watson uttered a tip to Trevino about his stance. Unfortunately it was caught on television and a viewer called to ask if that was permitted.

When the PGA Tour officials caught up with Watson as he got to the scorer’s tent and asked about the incident, Watson admitted he had given advice and was assessed a two-stroke penalty. He still won by three strokes. However, if he had already signed his score card, he would have been disqualified. Trevino was not penalised since he had not sought the advice.

What happens if your caddie tells another player’s caddie what club you used on a par 3? Well, it resulted in a two-stroke penalty for touring USA professional Mark Wilson in the 2007 Honda Classic as it was considered giving advice. A player is responsible for the actions of his caddie. Despite the penalty, which he called upon himself, Wilson still took home the title after a four-way play-off!

In summing up what on the surface appears to be a simple rule but has its own peculiarities there is one statement that many golfers regularly use but probably shouldn’t if the Rule on Advice is very strictly interpreted. When a fellow competitor’s putt just lips out and he goes charging up to the hole to tap it in we should try to refrain from saying “Take your time”!



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It's Your Shot!

The winner for the most interesting reader's letter this edition is Ken Lockery from Killara Golf Club, Sydney.

Golf Australia's Director – Rules and Handicapping, Simon Magdulski, provides the answer to Ken's query.

Q. In round 2 of the US Tour's Players Championship at the 17th hole, Matt Kuchar hit his ball over the green onto the thin strip of land where the players exit the green.

I believe he was outside the hazard line but so close to the hazard that he would be standing on the wooden bulkhead to play a right-handed shot and in serious danger of falling backward into the water. In the end, he played the shot back-handed (standing to the right of the ball as you look at the hole).

My question is as follows. Is the bulkhead an immovable obstruction (I'd have thought so)? If his ball was outside the hazard, could he have indicated an intention to play right-handed, standing on the bulkhead and claimed entitlement to a free drop further away from the bulkhead?

In the end, he bogeyed the hole and that was the difference between making the cut and missing the cut.

SM replies: "A standard local rule on the major PGA Tours is 'Retaining artificial walls and pilings when located in water hazards are integral parts of the course.' As result, the wooden retaining wall on which Matt Kuchar was standing will have been deemed to be an integral part of the course."

The editorial staff would be delighted to have feedback from our readers and as an incentive, a prize will be awarded each edition for the best letter received and published.

Naturally the theme must be Rules and could be about an interesting or unusual situation you have dealt with, a query to which you seek an answer, a comment about an article in the Newsletter or suggesting a topic for inclusion in a future Newsletter.

So, have a think let's hear from you! Send your contribution to rulesnewsletter@golf.org.au.

Rules Quiz

By Brian Nesbitt

(Victorian State Level Referee)

Club Level - Rule Numbers

1. Ball Unplayable
2. Ball Lost or Out of Bounds; Provisional ball
3. Water Hazards (including Lateral Water Hazards)
4. Abnormal Ground Conditions, Embedded Ball and Wrong Putting Green
5. Obstructions
6. Loose Impediments
7. Ball Assisting or Interfering with Play
8. Cleaning Ball
9. Lifting Dropping Placing; Playing from a Wrong Place
10. Ball in Motion Deflected or Stopped
11. Ball at Rest Moved
12. The Flagstick
13. The Putting Green
14. Substituted Ball; Wrong Ball
15. Striking the Ball
16. Ball Played as it Lies
17. Searching for and Identifying Ball
18. Teeing ground

Club Level using Rule Book

1. Rule 13-2
2. Rule 13-4
3. Rule 18-1
4. Rule 19-1
5. Rule 24-1

6. Rule 25-3
7. Rule 25-2
8. Rule 25-1
9. Rule 27-2
10. Rule 26-2

A hole with Gertrude and Felicity:

Para 1. Two strokes, one penalty stroke. Rule 18-2

Para 3. One stroke

Para 4. One stroke. Decision 2-4/3 provides the answer. On the basis that it was reasonable for Gertrude to assume that her 15cms putt had been conceded by Felicity during the mumbling about the missed putt, Gertrude was entitled to replace her ball without penalty, under equity.

Total of 5 strokes each.

Decision Book Answers

1. Decision 18/7.5. A ball that has been lifted and not put back into play is equipment – see Note 1 under the Definition of "Equipment". In match play, A incurs a penalty stroke and B must replace his ball – Rule 18-3b. In stroke play, there is no penalty and B must replace his ball – Rule 18-4.
2. Decision 18/11. "Immediately Recoverable" means that the ball can be retrieved within a few seconds.
3. Decision 25/3. The answer is "Yes", the ball was in casual water.
4. Decision 25/9. No. However, a player could request relief from the Committee and the Committee would be justified in declaring the area covered by the tree to be ground under repair.
5. Decision 25/16. Such a rut is not a hole made by a greenkeeper. The Committee would be justified in declaring a deep rut to be ground under repair, but not a shallow indentation made by greenkeeping equipment.

