

RULES QUERY

To the Editor.

Sir,

My opponent and I, playing in the Monthly Medal, had just holed out on the 2nd green when he said he had forgotten to telephone his office and must return to the Clubhouse. I pointed out that he would be disqualified for leaving the course, but he said that this could not be helped and he would rejoin me at the 4th tee.

A single player in front of us was still on the 3rd tee and drove off as I approached. Evidently his stance was unsound because he fell to the ground with a cry of pain and lay prostrate.

I hurried over to him and asked if he would mind if I played through because he was a single player and had no standing. I explained that I had myself started in a singles match and therefore had priority although my partner was temporarily absent. I also asked him to observe my play for the hole so that he could confirm my score while my partner was away.

He explained that as he had apparently broken his leg he would not be continuing this particular round nor indeed, any other for some time to come and consequently the question of standing need not arise. He added that he would sign any card I cared to produce if this seemed likely to hasten the completion of my round when perhaps I would be good enough to notify the Secretary that there was an injured man on the 3rd tee.

I then asked him to move over since he was occupying that part of the tee two clubs' lengths behind the markers which was the only area within which I was permitted to tee up, and drew his attention to Definition 32.

He said that he could neither refer to the Rules nor accede to my request because the aforementioned broken leg tended to restrict his movements. Nevertheless, if he had been more mobile he would immediately have responded and would moreover have taken some

pleasure in doing me physical injury. Preferring to seek a civilised answer to his unco-operative attitude, I suggested that he allow me to tee the ball on his forehead since I should still be able to drive off with the ball within the prescribed area, although I should be standing outside it (vide: Note to Rule 13). To reassure him, I explained that I had frequently seen this done by professionals of only local repute and it seemed to cause nobody any alarm except the spectators.

I suspect that he was about to reject even this simple remedy when a spasm of pain rather sharper than those which he had been enduring up to this point rendered him unconscious.

I therefore placed the ball on his brow on a rubber tee but the double irritation of argument and delay caused me to swing too quickly and I dealt him a blow on the temple which proved to be fatal. Even so, the ball was dislodged and I was able to hole out in one more than bogey.

I am writing this letter from prison and my future may depend on whether under Rule 31 (2) I should have treated him as an immovable obstruction and dropped within two clubs' length of that part of the outside of him nearest which I should otherwise have been able to tee up, or whether I was obliged to tee the ball within the area stipulated in Definition 32. The Club Committee has ruled that he was a loose impediment and that in any case I should have played a second provisional ball and holed out with both pending their decision. They have therefore disqualified me, but I should like to have your ruling and also the name and address of the Hon. Secretary of any barristers' golfing society of which you happen to know.

Yours faithfully,

STICKLER,

(Name and address supplied).