

We reprint in full the first two pages of this excellent guide issued by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club because it will not only be of use to those for whom it is intended but also to all golfers in reminding them of situations which can arise and could be avoided.

DUTIES OF REFEREES AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS UNDER THE RULES OF GOLF

DEFINITION 26 defines the principal duty of a Referee as being to decide questions of fact and of golf law. It is not sufficient for him to render a correct decision when appealed to: he must also at all times be sufficiently alert to observe accurately and to interpret correctly all the events which may occur during a round. But within the scope of these duties, he is assigned to a match to help ensure that it will be fairly played under sporting conditions.

This brings up the question of the referee's ethical position when he sees a player about to break the Rules. The referee does not have the authority to prevent a wilful violation of the Rules, but he certainly does have the obligation to advise the players about the Rules. It would be contrary to the spirit of fair play in golf if a referee failed to inform a player of his rights and obligations under the Rules and then penalised him for a violation that he could have prevented.

The following situations are among those where the referee may be able to prevent a breach of the Rules.

- (1) Ask players on first tee, if they have counted their clubs.
- (2) Ask players to identify brand and number of ball on first tee.
- (3) If player at any time puts a second ball into play or plays provisional ball, ensure that player can identify both balls.
- (4) If player tees ball ahead of markers, draw his attention to it before he drives.

- (5) If player is about to lift loose impediment in a hazard or water hazard, remind him that his ball is in a hazard.
- (6) If player is about to adopt wrong dropping procedure, call his attention to it and point out correct procedure.
- (7) If a player is about to play a second ball, ask player whether it is provisional ball.

An occasion when a referee can assist a player is when he is playing from bushes, etc., and is in process of taking his stance: a referee should watch the player and guide him in his actions if need be.

Sometimes a player may be careless in his observance of a Rule. If there has been no actual violation, the referee should caution the player and so minimise the possibility of having to call an infraction later: this can be done by making sure that the player is familiar with the particular Rule.

At times awkward situations will arise. The referee should be firm and positive, but take plenty of time.

It is always as well to consult the Rule Book and it will help to let the players read it. Frequently in reaching a decision, the intention of the player can be important and determination of this can be very useful as a routine approach to a questionable action, as for example if this player should appear to test the depth of sand in a bunker or to touch the line of his putt when there are no visible loose impediments to be removed.

Finally there are difficult questions of fact raised by casual water and interference by an obstruction. To be deemed casual water, a temporary accumulation of water must be visible on the surface of the ground before or after the player takes his stance, under normal pressure of the player's weight. As for interference by an obstruction, the interference must be physical for the player to evoke the Rule. The Rule is not intended to cover mental interference or interference established by wild contortions.

For a referee in stroke play there is one important difference in his duties: he is not bound to reach a decision on the course as in match play: he can, if necessary, require the player to proceed under Rule 11-5 and complete the hole with two balls and pass the burden of a difficult decision to the Committee in charge of the competition.

When committee members are watching play or assigned to a particular place on the course, but are not acting as referees, their duties are different. In match play without a referee, the players involved in a particular match are there to protect their own interests and there is no reason for a committee member to take any notice of a breach of the Rules that he may observe, unless he is satisfied that the opponent is not in a position to observe the breach. His presence on the course is solely to assist players in the event of a claim (Rule 11-1a and Rule 11-3). His handling of the situation will depend on whether the committee have granted individual members unlimited authority to represent the committee and make final decisions. This is an issue on which a clear decision must be made in advance. However, deferring a decision should be resorted to only in exceptional circumstances, since it is a principle of match play that each side is entitled to know the state of the match at all times.

In stroke play the position of a Committee member on the course is different. Now every competitor has a direct interest in the play of all other competitors. Since only those playing in a particular match can represent the interests of the others, it becomes the duty of every Committee member to represent the interests of the remainder of the field. Thus a Committee member must act on any probable violation of the Rules which he may observe. This may be done by immediately questioning the competitor about his procedure. Also he will be called upon to make decisions on the course and they should be handled as in match play except that the need for an immediate decision is less urgent.

Competitors in a Tournament are keenly conscious of the spirit in which it is conducted and there is no more certain way of injuring the reputation of a Tournament than by slack management. It may be difficult and unpleasant to be punctilious in the enforcement of Rules, but it is a rare golfer who does not prefer to compete in a well run event. Players are quick to recognise the official who makes use of his position to watch the play better or to inflate his own sense of importance. Authority should be exercised for the sole purpose of helping to ensure that an event will be fairly played under sporting conditions.



SPECIAL

OCCASIONS

APRIL	22nd	S.G.G.A. West Section, Spring Outing, Old Troon Golf Club.
	29th	Sheffield Section, A.G.M., Brunswick Hotel, 7.15 p.m.
MAY	4th	North-West Section, Spring Tournament and A.G.M., Wilmslow Golf Club.
	6th	North-East Section, Spring Tournament, Whitburn Golf Club.
	6th	Northern Section, Spring Tournament, Shipley Golf Club.
	6th	Midland Section, Spring Tournament, Gay Hill Golf Club.
	11th	Southern Section Spring Tournament, Ealing Golf Club.
	12th	East Midland Section, Spring Tournament, Northamptonshire Golf Club.
	27th	S.G.G.A. North and Midland Section, Tournament, Craigie Hill Golf Club.
JUNE	16th	S.G.G.A., Annual Outing, Luffness New Golf Course.
	22nd	Midland Section, President's Match.
SEPTEMBER	14th	Northern Section, Annual Match v. Sheffield Section, Scarcroft Golf Club.
	29th	East Midland Section, Autumn Tournament, Birstall Golf Club.