

Rule Tn March Madness Week

2018

Hey Rules fans, it's "March Madness" time again! No, not the NCAA basketball tournaments that take place this time of year, but rather the fact that you may be going mad trying to figure out the correct answers to the annual quiz issued by the Metropolitan Golf Association. The MGA issues its diabolical 25-question quiz in early-February, and its answers in mid-March. Here are some excerpts from this year's MGA quiz which can be found at www.mgagolf.org/rules/quizzes:



1. Players A and B are playing a singles match. The transportation and one ball conditions are in effect. On the first two holes, Player A scores 4, 5; Player B scores 5, 5. After the first hole is finished, but before anyone has teed off on #2, A realizes he has 15 clubs. He declares one club out of play. After teeing off on the second hole, A realizes that he's done so with a different brand of ball than the one he used on the previous hole. During play of the second hole, A's caddie rides up a steep hill in a golf cart driven by a spectator. And between play of the second and third holes, B realizes he has been carrying a non-conforming club, which he has not used. He declares it out of play. How does the match stand after each hole? (a) #1 all square; #2 B is 2-up. (b) #1 all square; #2 all square. (c) #1 A is 1-up; B is 3-up. (d) #1 A is 1-up; #2 B is 1-up.
2. A competitor hits a ball toward a lateral water hazard. After searching for the ball within the hazard for 5 minutes, all competitors agree the ball is in the hazard. The Rules Official agrees. Prior to the player dropping the ball, the ball is found outside of the hazard. As a consequence, the competitor: (a) May drop under Rule 26-1 (a), (b), or (c). (b) Must drop under Rule 26-1 (b) or (c). (c) Must drop under Rule 27-1. (d) May play the original ball found outside the hazard.
3. Players A and B are playing in a stroke play foursome competition. Player A's third shot comes to rest 6 inches from the hole. Player B puts and, as his ball passes a few inches past the hole, he purposely deflects it back into the hole. The team tees off on the next hole. What was their score for the hole? (a) 5 (b) 6 (c) 7 (d) The team is disqualified.
4. A player's tee shot becomes lodged in a tree overhanging a bunker. Using binoculars, he can identify the ball as his and deems it unplayable. He measures two club-lengths from the spot directly below where the ball was lodged, which is in the bunker, and notices that his drop would still be in the bunker. So the player draws a line from the flagstick to where the ball is lodged and goes back on a line and drops behind the bunker. The player takes three more strokes to hole out. What is his score for the hole? (a) 5 (b) 6 (c) 7 (d) The player is disqualified for a serious breach.

Answers:

1. (a) This is a great question which tests your knowledge of some of those Rules which require adjustments to the state of a match. Based on their scores for the 1st hole, A is 1-up. However, between the play of the 1st and 2nd holes, it is discovered that A has breached Rule 4-4 [Maximum of Fourteen Clubs]. The penalty statement for this Rule states, in part, "If a breach is discovered between the play of two holes, it is deemed to have been discovered during the play of the hole just completed and the penalty for a breach of Rule 4-4a ... does not apply to the next hole." Thus, after the 1st hole, the state of the match is all square. During play of the 2nd hole, it is discovered that A has breached the transportation condition (thanks to his caddie), as well as the one ball condition. These conditions are set forth in Appendix I, Part B [Conditions of Competition], and the penalty statements for each of them indicate that the state of the match is adjusted by deducting one hole at the conclusion of the hole at which the breach is discovered. Based on their scores for the 2nd hole, the match remains all square. However, when the match is adjusted for the dual breach of the transportation and one ball conditions, B is 2-up. Between the play of the 2nd and 3rd holes, it is discovered that B has been in breach of Rule 4-1 [Form and Make of Clubs] from the beginning of the match for carrying a non-conforming club. However, the penalty statement for this Rule points out, "If a breach is discovered between the play of two holes, it is deemed to have been discovered during the play of the next hole, and the penalty must be applied accordingly." Thus, the two-hole deduction for B's breach of Rule 4-1 will not take place until completion of the 3rd hole!
2. (a) The Exception to Rule 27-1c [Ball Not Found Within Five Minutes] states, in part, "If it is known or virtually certain that the original ball, that has not been found, ... is in a water hazard (Rule 26-1), the player may proceed under the applicable Rule. See also Decisions 26-1/1 [Meaning of "Known or Virtually Certain"] and 26-1/3.5 [Ball Dropped Under Water Hazard Rule with Knowledge or Virtual Certainty; Original Ball Then Found].
3. (b) According to Rule 29-3 [Threesomes and Foursomes: Stroke Play], when the partners make a stroke or strokes in incorrect order, such stroke or strokes are canceled and the side incurs a penalty of two strokes, and the side is disqualified if it does not correct the error prior to making a stroke on the next teeing ground. However, in this particular situation, Rule 29-3 does not apply because B has breached Rule 1-2 [Exerting Influence on Movement of Ball or Altering Physical Conditions]. That Rule states, in part, "A player must not ... take an action with the intent to influence the movement of a ball in play." The penalty of a breach of this Rule in stroke play is two strokes. Note 2 of this Rule points out, "In stroke play, except where a serious breach resulting in disqualification is involved, a player in breach of Rule 1-2 in relation to the movement of his own ball must play the ball from where it was stopped, or, if the ball was deflected, from where it came to rest."
4. (a) Since the player was able to identify his ball, the ball is not lost. See Decision 27/14 [Ball in Tree Identified But Not Retrieved]. Having deemed his ball unplayable, Rule 28 [Ball Unplayable] is the applicable Rule. Although his ball came to rest above the bunker, his ball is not in the bunker per the Definition of "Bunker" which states, in part, "The margin of a bunker extends vertically downwards, but not upwards." Thus, the player is not required to drop a ball in the bunker. In fact, all three of the relief options under Rule 28 are available to the player, including that of Rule 28b which is to drop a ball behind where the ball lay, keeping that point directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit to how far behind that point the ball may be dropped.