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DISPUTED GOLF POINTS



FEW recent decisions by the St. Andrews golf rules committee should be of great interest to enthusiasts of the ancient game, as a number of very interesting questions are revealed. One of especial interest to Metropolitan golfers is the question that came up at a foursome competition at the Crammond Brig Club. As the advisability of holding mixed foursomes is being discussed in the metropolitan associations, the answers should have some weight with the local golfers.

In the Crammond Brig tourney it developed that one couple did not have a pair to play with, and were in a curious predicament. They explained the difficulty to the stewards, but the latter could not remedy the matter and as a result the couple had to play alone, and the pair brought along another player as a marker. The team subsequently won the tournament, and the question that now confronted the committee was whether the pair should be disqualified or not. It was left to the rules committee, and the latter gave the following answer, and proved that the players were entitled to the prize on any ground: "There being no local committee present, and as no official marker was provided, the pair were in the same position as a single player and were therefore within their rights, as they adopted the only course open to them."

Another case answered by the St. Andrews committee was that of the Cambushlange tournament last October, when three couples drove off together from the last tee at 5:30 o'clock in the evening and darkness was approaching. It was also shown that these three couples were not the only ones on the links, and the question arose as to whether the six players should be allowed their scores or be disqualified. The answer was very clear as the rule distinctly states that no more than two players shall play together.

The case of a ball lodging in a tree, brought up by the Brodisholm Club, is interesting because the rules committee does not give a direct answer on the issue. The experts dodge it by saying that this is a matter of local rule, or that rule two, which allows a ball to be lifted under a two stroke penalty, should apply. There does not seem to be a uniform practice in respect to the tree penalty, but dropping a ball behind and counting a stroke is generally regarded as fair.

A good story is told by a New York golfer, who was matched to play with a Western player in a Western country town. The latter was a self-taught golfer, and he lost the ball on the second hole. The Western man's conception of the rule as used by his friends was that both players go back to the first tee, and start all over again. This he explained is done to eliminate luck in winning or losing a hole. The New Yorker was asounded, and asked what the penalty

was for bad play, and found out that there was none in that section of the country. From this incident it can be seen that the matter of "local rule" is sometimes unfair, and that for general purposes rule two applies best.

Another case that comes up very frequently is that of the penalty stroke, and procedure which governs a play in which the ball has accidentally been moved. A case of this kind was actually brought to the notice of the St. Andrews committee, who wrote out an opinion.

It seems that a certain golfer in playing on the green dropped a club on the ball, and moved the sphere. The caddy picked the ball up and placed it back on the spot it had rested on previously. This incident was reported to the club committee and the latter body ruled that the player loses a stroke.

The St. Andrews committee ruled that the player was disqualified for not playing the ball from the place where it was accidentally moved. The reason for this was that owing to the penalty that had been imposed the ball was as good as played, and therefore could not be put back to the spot where it was before the accident.

One of the subsidiary questions raised by the club at which the above occurrence took place is somewhat more complex, and there is room for a good deal of discussion on the decision of the rules committee. The point presented was the supposition that the ball was accidentally moved in such a manner that it dropped into the hole. In this case what would the position of the play be in match or stroke competition? To this query the committee still holds the same ruling; that is, that the player loses a stroke, and, of course, in accordance with its ruling, the ball is holed.

It can readily be seen that this seems unfair to the opponent, because an accident of this kind is to the advantage of the player, as the stroke imposed is practically no penalty. The idea suggested in this measure by the club was that the rules committee formulate some plan whereby the player shall put the ball back in the original spot when it is holed in this fashion and lose a stroke, so that the penalty is real.

Cases of all kinds come up from time to time and their solutions prove very interesting, especially as they are bound to occur at any time and under any circumstances.



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