

Rule Tin of the Week

April Rules Quiz 2012

Vicki and Brenda play each other in match play. During their match, they may or may not play the role of the “April fool,” incurring unnecessary penalties. See if you can identify who might be an April fool and why in the following situations:

1. Vicki takes relief from a sprinkler head by dropping the ball over her shoulder within one club-length of the nearest point of relief, no closer to the hole. After the ball hits the ground, it bounces forward and strikes Vicki’s shoe. She re-drops the ball, again over her shoulder, and again the ball ricochets off her shoe. Upon re-dropping a second time over her shoulder, the ball does not bounce forward, but comes to rest close to the point where it was re-dropped. Vicki then plays the ball. What is the ruling? (a) Vicki loses the hole. (b) She incurs a one-stroke penalty. (c) She incurs two penalty strokes, one stroke for each time the dropped ball struck her shoe. (d) No penalty.



2. Prior to playing a fairway wood for her second stroke on a par-5, Brenda walks forward to replace and tamp down a loose divot about 10 feet in front of her ball on her line of play. What is the ruling? (a) Brenda loses the hole. (b) She incurs a one-stroke penalty. (c) She can avoid a penalty by removing the replaced divot prior to playing her next stroke. (d) No penalty.



3. Playing the 18th hole with the match “all square,” Brenda asks Vicki to hold the flagstick above the hole so that Brenda can see the flagstick while playing from a deep greenside bunker. As Brenda was playing her ball, Vicki was distracted by a bald eagle flying overhead, and Brenda’s ball struck Vicki’s arm and fell in the hole. What is the ruling? (a) No penalty to either player. (b) Brenda is penalized one stroke. (c) Brenda loses the hole and the match. (d) Vicki is penalized one stroke. (e) Vicki loses the match.

Answers:

1. (b) *Rule 20-2a [Dropping and Re-Dropping] requires that the player dropping a ball must stand erect, hold the ball at shoulder height and arm’s length and drop it. If a ball is dropped in any other manner and the error is not corrected as provided in Rule 20-6, the player incurs a penalty of one stroke. Note that Rule 20-6 [Lifting Ball Incorrectly Substituted, Dropped or Placed] says that a ball incorrectly dropped but not played may be lifted without penalty, and the player must then proceed correctly. Also, Rule 20-2a advises that, if the ball, when dropped, touches any person before or after it strikes a part of the course and before it comes to rest, the ball must be re-dropped without penalty. Note, there is no limit to the number of times a ball must be re-dropped in these circumstances.*
2. (d) *New Decision 13-2/0.5 [Meaning of “Improve” in Rule 13-2] points out that improving one’s line of play will not result in a penalty under Rule 13-2 [Improving Lie, Area of Intended Stance or Swing, or Line of Play] if the player does not gain a potential advantage with respect to the position or lie of her ball, the area of her intended stance or swing, or her line of play. In this case, Brenda does not incur a penalty because she did not gain a potential advantage with respect to her line of play by replacing and tamping down of the divot.*
3. (c) *Rule 17-3 [Ball Striking Flagstick or Attendant] advises, in part, that the player’s ball must not strike the person attending or holding up the flagstick. In match play, the player loses the hole, unless the flagstick is being attended without the player’s authority. See also Decision 17-3/2 [Opponent or Fellow-Competitor Attending Flagstick for Player Fails to Remove It; Player’s Ball Strikes Flagstick]*