

# Rule Tip of the Week

## April 2013 Fools

In the following situations involving players attempting to change their relief options, see if you can determine which players are the “fools” for not abiding by the Rules:

1. Both balls come to rest in an unplayable position under a bush, and both players elect to proceed under Rule 28c [Ball Unplayable] by dropping a ball within two club-lengths of the spot where the ball lay, but not nearer the hole. However, when Player A drops a ball, he drops it nearly three club-lengths from the spot. Meanwhile, when Player B drops a ball within the two club-length area, the ball strikes his foot. Both players then decide to proceed under Rule 28b by dropping a ball behind the point where the ball originally lay in the bush, keeping that point directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped.
2. Both balls have curving trajectories and come to rest in a water hazard. Both players elect to proceed under Rule 26-1b [Relief for Ball in Water Hazard] by dropping a ball behind the water hazard, keeping the point at which the original ball last crossed the margin of the water hazard directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped. The caddie for Player A drops a ball for Player A in accordance with Rule 26-1b. Meanwhile, when Player B drops a ball, he mistakenly drops it on the line of flight of the original ball. Both players then decide to proceed under Rule 26-1a by playing a ball as nearly as possible at the spot from which the original ball was last played.
3. Both balls come to rest in a lateral water hazard. Both players elect to drop within two club-lengths of the point where their balls last crossed the margin of the water hazard. When Player A drops a ball, it rolls and comes to rest in the hazard. When Player B drops a ball, it comes to rest nearer the hole than the point where the original ball last crossed the margin of the lateral water hazard. Both players then elect to proceed under the stroke and distance option of Rule 26-1a.

Answers:

1. *Rule 20-2a [Dropping and Re-Dropping] requires that the player must re-drop the ball, without penalty, if the ball, when dropped touches any person or the equipment of any player before or after it strikes a part of the course and before it comes to rest. According to Decision 20-2a/6 [Ball Dropped Under One Option of Unplayable Ball Rule Strikes Player; Player Wishes to Change Relief Option], a player may not change his relief option when re-dropping a ball under Rule 20-2a. Thus, Player B is the fool because he is not permitted to change relief options in this situation.*

*On the other hand, Player A is permitted to change relief options because he dropped in a wrong place, i.e., more than two club-lengths from the spot where his ball lay in the bush. See Decision 20-6/2 [Changing Relief Option After Ball Dropped in a Wrong Place].*

2. *Rule 20-2a requires that a ball to be dropped under the Rules must be dropped by the player himself. Therefore, Player A must correct this error. As noted in the first answer, a player may not change his relief option when required to re-drop a ball under Rule 20-2a. Thus, Player A is the fool in this situation. Player B dropped in a wrong place and is entitled to change his relief option pursuant to Decision 20-6/2.*
3. *Decision 20-2c/5 [Changing Relief Options When Re-Dropping Required] advises that a player may not change his relief option when a re-drop is required by Rule 20-2c [When to Re-drop]. Both Player A and Player B are fools in this situation because they are both required to re-drop by Rule 20-2c.*