



Rule of the Month

April 1, 2018

Taking Responsibility

The Committee

Answers:

1. **True.** The Committee has the authority to set the number of holes of a stipulated round to eighteen or less. However, once the round has started, Rule 33-1 ties the Committee's hands and the number of holes in that round may not be changed for any reason. (Also see definition of Stipulated Round and Decision 33-1/2).
2. **False.** Decisions 33-1/2 and 33-2d/1 provide guidelines for the Committee when cancelling a round. It is never desirable to cancel a round once play has begun in the tournament, but circumstances will sometimes require the Committee to take such action. Fortunately, for the player, when a round is cancelled, Rule 33-2d states that all penalties incurred in that round, including disqualifications, are cancelled as well.
3. **False.** While Rule 33-2a requires the Committee to define the out of bounds margins, there is no requirement that any such margins exist. If the Committee wishes to declare an area out of bounds, it must define the area accurately and inform the players by using lines or stakes or a description of objects forming the margin.
4. **False.** It is important to remember that Rule 33-1 restricts the Committee from waiving a Rule of Golf. The same Rule prohibits a competition combining the two forms of play. Therefore, the Committee may not conduct such an event.
5. **False.** It is best to mark all areas of ground under repair prior to the start of the round but the Committee has the authority to declare an area as GUR during play of the round (Decision 33-2a/2).
6. **True.** It is the player's responsibility to play at the pace established by the Committee. However, it is common for Committees to establish checkpoints and warn players that are out of compliance with the pace of play policy. See Rule 6-7.
7. **True.** This is not recommended and could lead to additional confusion, but it is within the Committee's rights to do so. Every golfer should pay special attention to what the Committee

OGA Senior Rules Officials: Pete Scholz and Terry McEvilly



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has declared integral parts of the course from which relief without penalty is not available. See the definition of Obstructions.

8. **True.** Rule 33-7 grants the Committee a bit of leeway when dealing with unruly players. Generally, the Committee will warn a player for the first incident but it does have the authority to disqualify the player for any breach it considers serious. After a breach of etiquette, the player's opportunity to continue playing rests in the Committee's hands.

9. **False.** A Local Rule authorizing a player to complete a hole without holing out waives a Rule and is not allowed. Rule 33-8 restricts the Committee's ability to establish Local Rules that waive or modify a Rule. If circumstances require a Rule to be modified, it must be authorized by the USGA in advance.

10. **True.** Rule 7-2 allows a player to chip or putt on the putting green of the hole just completed, but Note 2 at the end of the Rule allows the Committee to prohibit the procedure. Usually, this Condition of Competition is put into effect for pace of play issues, but if the stipulation is not in place, a player must be careful to not delay play. This highlights the importance of reading all information from the Committee.

NOTE TO PLAYERS: Rules specific to a competition may be listed on several different documents, including the tournament application, registration form, Condition of Competition, Hard Card and Notice to Players. Read everything carefully and ask questions prior to starting the round. It might just save you a few strokes.

NOTE TO COMMITTEES: Often times, clubs call with questions regarding an incident that has occurred on the course. The situation can become quite complicated as we dig into not only the specifics of the situation, but also the Local Rules and course markings in place at the time. Preparation before a competition begins is never wasted time. A proper Local Rules sheet handed out at the first tee may just save you from mediating an argument later. Proper course markings leave little room for a golfer to make a mistake. One final note of warning, if the competition is not conducted according to the Rules of Golf, it may be very difficult to give a ruling. Be careful that your Local Rules do not modify or waive a Rule of Golf.