



Rule of the Month, Foursome Stroke Play Answers, March 2015

February's Rule of the Month article focused on Four-Ball Stroke Play, due in part because many clubs hold Four-Ball competitions. Another commonly used form of play at the club level, as well as the Ryder Cup, is Foursome Stroke Play. Sometimes referred to as Alternate Shot, an easy way to remember this format is that "some" of the players play "some" of the time. It is important to note that this form of play is quite different than Four-Ball where each player plays their own ball. In Foursome play, the partners will have only one ball in play between them.

For the purpose of this True/False quiz, Players A and B are partners in a Foursome Stroke Play competition.

1. The partners may share clubs using just one set of clubs for the entire round.
2. On the 4th hole, Player A is in a deep greenside bunker and is not aware that Player B is attending the flagstick. Player A makes his stroke and the ball strikes the flagstick. The side is not penalized because the stroke was not made from the putting green.
3. On the 6th hole, Player A plays a wrong ball. They resume searching and find their original ball within 5 minutes of starting to search. It is Player B's turn to play.
4. Player A fails to pay attention on the 7th hole and plays a tee shot when it was Player B's turn to play from the teeing ground. The side is disqualified unless they correct the error before teeing off on the next hole.
5. On the 8th hole, Player A tees a ball and makes a stroke but he misses the ball. It is still Player A's turn to play.
6. On the 11th hole, Player B's tee shot is hit towards the out of bounds. Side A/B elect to play a provisional ball. Player A must play the provisional ball.
7. On the 14th hole, Player A's tee shot finds the deep end of a water hazard. When dropping a ball under Rule 26 for water hazard relief, Player A, the player of the original stroke, must drop the ball that will subsequently be played by Player B.
8. Player B emphasizes how he thinks a putt by Player A will break by touching the green with his putter head to show Player A where to hit the ball. Since Player A did not touch the green or his line of putt the side is not penalized.
9. On the 15th hole, Player A makes a stroke from a bunker but fails to extricate the ball from the bunker. In anger he hits the sand with his club. The side incurs no penalty for touching the sand with a club because it is now Player B's turn to play.
10. Only one of the players must sign the score card before it is returned.

ANSWERS:

1. **True.** Rule 4-4b allows partners in Foursome and Four-Ball competitions to share clubs provided the total number of clubs carried by the partners does not exceed fourteen.
2. **False.** If the flagstick is attended by a member of the player's side, it is deemed to be with the player's knowledge and authority. Side A/B incur a penalty of two strokes and must play the ball as it lies. It is irrelevant that the ball was not on the green. See Rule 17-3b and Decision 17-3/4.
3. **False.** If a member of the side plays a wrong ball they must correct the error by playing the correct ball or proceeding under an applicable rule in regards to their original ball in play. Side A/B incur a two stroke penalty, however, it remains A's turn to play as penalty strokes do not affect the order of play. Additionally, the stroke at the wrong ball does not count in their score. See Rules 15-3, 29-1 and Decision 29-1/8.
4. **True.** In Foursome stroke play the partners must play alternately from the teeing grounds and alternately during play of each hole. The error of playing in the incorrect order must be corrected before teeing off on the next hole and the side incurs a two stroke penalty for the breach. If the error is not corrected the side is disqualified. See Rule 29-1.
5. **False.** Player B must make the next stroke. In this case, a stroke was made by Player A and it is now Player B's turn to play. See Decision 29-1/6.
6. **True.** A provisional ball played in Foursome must be played by the partner of the player who made the original stroke. See Decision 29-1/4.
7. **False.** The member of the side whose turn it is to play must drop the ball. As penalty strokes do not affect the order of play, it is Player B's turn to play and he must drop the ball. See Rule 20-2a and Decision 29/4.
8. **False.** Player B breached Rule 8-2b which prohibits the player, partner or caddie from touching the putting green when pointing out a line for putting. Side A/B must add two penalty strokes to their score for the hole. Also, in this situation, caution should be used to avoid touching the line of putt or a reasonable distance on either side of the line as this would breach Rule 16-1a.
9. **False.** The definition of "competitor" states that in Foursome and Four-Ball competitions the word "competitor" includes his partner. Therefore, Player A's actions have breached Rule 13-4 and the side incurs a penalty of two strokes. It is irrelevant that it was not his turn to play. See Decision 29/5.
10. **True.** While it would seem logical that both players must sign the card as they are playing as one side, the Rules are silent on the matter. However, Decision 29/6 states that only one of the partners must be responsible for signing the score card before it is returned. Additionally, it must be returned as soon as possible. See also Rule 6-6b.

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