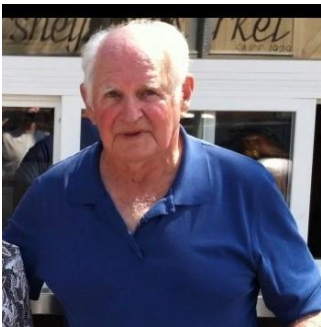




TOMGC Rules and Greens September 2017



I begin this month's newsletter with a note which is becoming all too common as I enter my golden years. Another long-time member and good friend of the club, Ralph McVein, passed away on August 29th at the age of 88. For those of you who knew Ralph, I needn't say anything about him. For those of you who were not afforded the pleasure of knowing Ralph, raise a glass and toast a good man who will be missed by wife Joann, three daughters, surviving family and friends. Ralph, I will not soon forget your firm handshake, good nature, and good conversation while we shared a beer after golf! (Thanks to Bill Jackson for this information and for sticking by his good friend to the end.)

Again, I'm going to delay our discussion of the Rules Quiz from the Summer edition of "Fore" magazine to discuss another rules question. Senior League Match Captain Scott McClellan brought another good rules question to my attention after his match against Coronado on August 17th. It seems that during the match, a Coronado team was searching for a ball while in their golf cart. During that search, the team actually ran over the ball, causing it to move, and/or change position. Scott was later advised by a well-intending player, that this would be a loss of hole in match play, but only a one stroke penalty in stroke play with the ball having to be played as it lies. According to the rules as I read them, this does not seem to be the case, however, the ruling is not as cut and dried as it first appeared. Be careful how you read this if you follow up on this rule as you should.

In order to research an answer to the quandary presented above, we will need to look at the definition of equipment provided in the rules of golf, as well as rules 18-2, and 18-3a and b.

Equipment: With regards to equipment, and for the sake of brevity, suffice it to say that a shared golf cart and everything in it, are deemed to be the equipment of the players sharing that cart.

Rule 18-2: (Ball at rest moved in stroke play) By Player, Partner, Caddie or Equipment – Again, for the sake of brevity, should the equipment of the player or his partner cause the ball to move, the player would incur a penalty of one stroke, and the ball must be replaced. It should be noted that there are conditions for search which would not cause the player to receive the one stroke penalty, but searching in a golf cart would not be one of those conditions.

Rule 18-3a and b: (Match Play) These rules draw attention to the penalty for an opponent whose equipment may have caused a ball belonging to the other team to have moved. In essence, if helping to search for an opponent's ball and you run it over, there is no penalty, and the ball should be replaced. However, if you were not searching for the opponent's ball, and you ran it over, causing it to move, you would receive the one stroke penalty, and the ball must be replaced.

Penalty for breach of rule: Match Play – Loss of hole. Stroke Play – Two strokes.

I, for one, hope that this is one of those rules that will be addressed when the R&A next renews the Rules of Golf.

To recap, as I understand the rules: The Coronado team was searching for a ball, when they ran it over, causing it to move. Regardless of who was driving the cart, the player whose ball was moved by the golf cart is penalized one stroke, and he must replace the ball before making his next stroke. If the ball were not replaced, the player would receive an additional stroke penalty in stroke play, or in this case, he would lose the hole.

If Scott and his partner happened to run over the opponent's ball while helping to search for it, there is no penalty, and the ball should be replaced before proceeding. However, if Scott or his partner drove over the opponent's ball while not engaged in a search for the ball, the driver of the cart would receive the one stroke penalty! Clear as mud, eh? Wow, that is a lot to take in, but it seems that the player who offered his opinion on the occurrence was on the right path, except for needing to replace the ball before proceeding, which would have caused the loss of hole. Good day, and good golf.