



tee time

May 2016

NEWSLETTER OF THE WELLINGTON GOLF REFEREES ASSOCIATION INC.

The following comment on the Bryson Dechambeau ruling at the Masters is from Ryan Farb, a Californian Tournament Director and rules official.

Masters Ruling: Huh?

On the 18th hole during the second round of the Masters, Bryson Dechambeau found himself in a tie for second place, but also far further left than he had wanted and already laying 3 after using the stroke and distance option of the Ball Unplayable Rule (Rule 28). However, his ball had come to rest in a unique position near a concession area that was defined by the Committee as a temporary immovable obstruction. One of the options a Committee may make available to a player for intervention by a TIO (intervention is when the TIO intervenes on a player's line of play and directly between the ball and the hole), is that the player may find the nearest point where relief is available on either side of the TIO, without penalty.

Dechambeau used this option to go to the other side of the concession area. One thing that makes TIO rulings complicated is that the local Rule (see Appendix I-A-4b) states that a player still has interference if the ball is within one club-length of a point where intervention exists. For that reason, the Rules official terminology for the relief procedure is "more than one, less than two." This is why there were two tees where Dechambeau had measured the one club-length from the nearest point where

intervention did not exist. He was then required to drop within a club-length beyond that initial measured area.

TIO intervention situations don't occur often in amateur events, so Dechambeau actually dropped the ball inside the one club-length "alley-way" the first time. Dechambeau was required to correct this mistake under Rule 20-6 and the referee correctly told him to pick up the ball and drop it again outside the "alley-way". From this point on, the only way the ruling makes sense is if that ball came to rest within two club-lengths of where it first struck the course on the drop, and if that is the case the referee did an amazing job in an incredibly complex situation.

So if the ball was at rest on the road within two club-lengths of where the drop had struck the course, it was properly in play and the next step was for Dechambeau to take relief from the road, an immovable obstruction, by finding his nearest point of relief and dropping within one club-length of that point, no nearer the hole (Rule 24-2b). The referee determined that the nearest point of relief had to be on the opposite side of the road (which it would have been) from where he was originally and had him proceed accordingly. Both of his drops rolled back onto the road, so Rule 20-2c required him to place the ball where it first struck the course on the re-drop.

However, upon watching the situation unfold and then after carefully reviewing the video footage, it appears that the ball came to rest well over two club-lengths from where it first struck the course on the second drop. If that is the case, Dechambeau should have been required to re-drop the ball, and if it rolled more than two club-lengths again he would have placed it – on the original (right-hand) side of the road. If he were then standing on the road, he would have been entitled to relief, but his nearest point of relief would more than likely have remained on that original side of the road. The apparent misstep actually worked to Dechambeau's benefit as he was able to advance the ball to the green more easily from where he eventually ended up. Either way, because Dechambeau was acting under the guidance of the referee, he would be absolved from the ball ending up in the wrong place.

Pace of Play

Here's a true story that says something about the pace of play in the modern game. I've taken this from an article by Herbert Warren Wind on the 1964 Masters. That tournament was won by Arnold Palmer by 6 shots. But the account I found fascinating was of the opening pair in Round 1. They were Freddy McLeod aged 81, and Jock Hutchison, a more youthful 79. They were qualified to play (in those days) as former major tournament winners. McLeod won the 1908 US Open and Hutchison the 1921 Open at St Andrews.

At the 1964 Masters, both completed the first 18 holes in 95s, pretty creditable you might think. But what is really remarkable is that they finished their 18 holes in **two hours, 33 minutes!** That is eight and a half minutes per hole including walking to the next hole. The next pair came in 40 minutes later.

Why can't we play like that these days?!

Villegas Ruling at RBC Heritage at Harbour Town in April 2016

Camillo Villegas's ball came to rest embedded in sand, largely covered by pine straw, and close by a tree on the 15th hole at Harbour Town. According to the commentary, the issue was that the ball was embedded in loose sand, not the underlying soil, though the whole of the local area was sand.

Decision 25-2/0.5 states in part that a ball is embedded only if 'part of the ball is below the level of the ground'. That Decision also says that any doubt should be resolved against the player. In this case it was eventually decided that Villegas was not entitled to relief, and the player played the ball accordingly.

The discussion on Golf Channel can be seen at this link:

<http://www.golfchannel.com/media/rymer-explains-rule-incidents-harbour-town/>

Pauatahanui Hazard

One of the Titahi ladies had an interesting decision at Pauatahanui recently playing interclub. Her ball was in this water hazard



adjacent to the new second green, lying close to small staked saplings.

A local rule reads 'A ball lying so near to a tree under two clublengths in height **MUST** be lifted and dropped in accordance with Rule 24 2b(i)'.

That rule of course, specifically excludes balls in a water hazard.

She wasn't sure of her options, but clearly the intention is that damage to young trees is to be avoided, so she couldn't play the ball as it lay. Because of the density of the young trees, she couldn't take free relief in the hazard even if the rules so allowed, so she correctly dropped out under Rule 26-1 and accepted the penalty.

There is suggested wording in the Rules (Appendix 1: Local Rules) allowing free relief from staked trees in water hazards that would cover this situation and clarify matters for players, which we will bring to the attention of the Club.

Rules Incidents

We're always interested in sharing interesting Rules incidents in 'Tee Time'. Please send any interesting rulings that you might become aware of to Terry Gardiner: gardfam77@gmail.com

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