



*Brisbane and District Ladies Golf Association Incorporated*

4<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Mrs Carmel Smith  
State Handicap Manager  
Women's Golf Queensland

Dear Mrs Smith

Re: *WGA Ruling September 1998* -- Bunkers

As advised in our telephone discussions on 27<sup>th</sup> February and 4<sup>th</sup> March, the Management Committee of the Brisbane and District Ladies Golf Association requires a clarification of Rules and Decisions concerning the eligibility of cards for handicapping purposes when Local Rules permit dropping out of bunkers.

An incident occurred at Carbrook in March and again in November 2001 when heavy overnight rain flooded the bunkers and the Local Rule declared "All Bunkers Out of Play - Free Drop". Upon retrieving their ball from the flooded bunkers players proceeded to take a free drop. The Club contacted the District querying the handicap status of that game.

The District Handicap Manager sought and received advice from WGQ as follows -- the players were not entitled to a free drop from the flooded bunkers (Decisions 25-1b/8 and 25/13) and that the cards were ineligible for handicapping purposes as the Local Rule had waived a penalty imposed by a Rule of Golf (Rules 33-8b and 25-1b(ii), Decision 33-8/27). Was this WGQ advice correct?

The WGQ advice referenced the *WGA Ruling September 1998* on Bunkers. The details of the relevant Rules and Decisions (as advised by WGQ) were subsequently referenced in the Brisbane and District Handicap Manager's Report for the General Meeting held in November 2001 (attached) and formed the basis of subsequent advice to inquiring clubs in order to ensure that future scores be eligible for handicapping. Was this District advice correct?

As there have been further breaches of The Rules of Golf by players at other club(s) recently, your clarification of this query and a copy of the *WGA Ruling September 1998* and any further WGA reference would be appreciated.

Yours faithfully

Robyn M Harrison  
District Handicap Manager

Copy to: State Administrator WGQ  
B&D Councillor (WGQ)  
QGU



The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews  
Fife, Scotland, KY16 9JD

Ref: R6/25

6<sup>th</sup> March 2002

Ms Helen R Common  
37 Pinelands Street  
Loganlea  
Queensland  
Australia 4131

Dear Ms Common

Thank you for your recent letter in which you raise several queries on ground under repair.

I would confirm that it is not permissible to declare all bunkers of a course as "through the green" after a period of heavy rain in order that players may then take free relief from interference by casual water. Decision 25/13 (copy enclosed) infers that a bunker may only be classed as through the green when it is being renovated or repaired.

When a player's ball lies in a bunker completely covered by casual water his options are as laid out quite clearly in Decision 25-1b/8 (copy enclosed).

With regard to your remaining queries, I regret that the R&A is the Governing Authority for the Rules of Golf and the Rules of Amateur Status, handicapping and course rating matters do not form part of its jurisdiction. I would advise you to contact the Australian Golf Union (contact details below) who may be able to help.

I hope these comments are of assistance.

Yours sincerely

*Kevin Barker*

**KEVIN BARKER**  
Rules Assistant

Mr C A PHIPPS  
Secretary  
Australian Golf Union  
153-155 Cecil Street  
South Melbourne  
Victoria 3205  
Australia  
Tels. 61 3 9699 7944  
Fax 61 3 9690 8510  
E-mail [au@australia.golf.au](mailto:au@australia.golf.au)

Enc.

Telephone +44 (0)1334 460000 · Fax +44 (0)1334 460001 · Championship Office Fax +44 (0)1334 460002  
[www.randa.org](http://www.randa.org) · [www.opengolf.com](http://www.opengolf.com) Rules Department Fax +44 (0)1334 460003  
Secretary - Peter Dawson

only  
responses  
Private

# NOTES ON THE RULES FOR ALL GOLFERS

There have been several debates and queries over various matters since the amendments and re-wording of the Rules of Golf in January this year. This is an attempt to explain and clarify some of the situations which have been raised. Club Officials are urged to bring these rules to the attention of all players

## 1. BUNKERS FILLED WITH WATER

This situation is covered in great detail in "Decisions on the Rules of Golf 2004-2005".

Decision 33-8/27 states: -

**Q.** May a committee make a Local Rule allowing a player to drop out of any bunker filled with casual water, without penalty, notwithstanding Rule 25-1b(ii)?

**A.** No. Such a Local Rule is not acceptable as it waives a penalty imposed by a Rule of Golf, contrary to Rule 33-8b

With regard to Abnormal Ground Conditions

Rule 25-1b(ii) states: - ***In a bunker:** If the ball is in a bunker, the player must lift the ball and drop it either without penalty, in accordance with Clause (i) above, except that the nearest point of relief must be in the bunker and the ball must be dropped in the bunker, or if complete relief is impossible, as near as possible to the spot where the ball lay, but not nearer the hole, on a part of the course in the bunker that affords maximum available relief from the condition; or Under penalty of one stroke, outside the bunker keeping the point where the ball lay directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped, with no limit to how far behind the bunker the ball may be dropped.*

Further decisions regarding this ruling are as follows: -

Decisions 25-1b/5, 6, 7, 8 and 9

### 25-1b/5

#### **Explanation of "Maximum Available Relief" from Casual Water in Bunker**

**Q.** In a bunker completely covered by casual water, is the place providing "maximum available relief" the spot which will provide the most relief for both lie and stance or just lie?

**A.** The term applies to both lie and stance. The spot providing "maximum available relief" might be such that the ball will be in shallower water than the players feet after he takes is stance, or vice versa.

25-1b/6

**Ball Dropped from Casual Water in Bunker at Point of Maximum Relief Rolls Elsewhere**

**Q.** A player whose ball lies in a bunker completely covered by casual water drops his ball under Rule 25-1b(ii) at a spot where there is ¼ inch of casual water. This spot is the nearest spot providing maximum available relief. The ball rolls into a spot where there is about ½ inch of casual water. What is the ruling?

**A.** In equity (Rule 1-4), and under the principle of Rule 20-2c(v), the player may re-drop and, if the ball so rolls again, place the ball where it first struck a part of the course when re-dropped.

25-1b/7

**Ball to Be Dropped in Bunker Dropped Outside Bunker and Rolls into Bunker**

**Q.** A player's ball lies in casual water in a bunker. The player elects to proceed under Rule 25-1b(ii)(a) and determines that the nearest point of relief in the bunker is close to the back of the bunker. The player drops his ball within one club-length of the nearest point of relief on a slope outside the bunker because he fears it will plug in the sand. The ball rolls down the slope and comes to rest in the bunker not nearer the hole than the nearest point of relief. Is the player subject to penalty?

**A.** Yes, unless he lifts the ball and proceeds correctly, as provided in Rule 20-6. Under Rule 25-1b(ii)(a), the player is required to drop the ball in the bunker. If the player, although proceeding under this Rule, drops the ball outside the bunker and plays it, he is in breach of Rule 25 and the penalty is loss of hole in match play or two strokes in stroke play.

25-1b/8

**Player's Options When Bunker Completely Covered by Casual Water**

**Q.** If a player's ball lies in a bunker completely covered by casual water, what are his options?

**A.** The player may play the ball as it lies or:

- (1) drop the ball in the bunker without penalty at the nearest point, not nearer the hole, where the depth of the casual water is least - Rule 25-1b(ii)(a); or
- (2) drop the ball behind the bunker under penalty of one stroke - Rule 25-1b(ii)(b); or
- (3) declare the ball unplayable and proceed in accordance with Rule 28.

25-1b/9

**Player Who Invokes First Option of Rule 25-1b(ii) then wishes to Invoke Second Option**

**Q.** A player's ball is in a bunker completely covered by casual water. Under the first option of Rule 25-1b(ii), he drops the ball on ground in the bunker affording maximum available relief. He then decides he would have been better off to invoke the second option and drop behind the bunker. May he invoke the second option?

**A.** No. Rule 25-1b(ii) permits the player to proceed under one of two options. He is not entitled to invoke one option and then, if he does not like the result, invoke the other.

Therefore, as Rule 25-1 no longer applies, the player must play the ball as it lies or proceed under the unplayable ball Rule, incurring the penalty stroke prescribed by that Rule.

If a bunker is TOTALLY UNDER REPAIR the situation is as follows: -

(Decision 25/13)

*If an entire bunker is being renovated, it does not lose its status as a hazard. However, it is recommended that the Committee should, during the renovation period, define the bunker as ground under repair and classify it as through the green. If such a bunker has been defined as ground under repair but has not been classified as through the green, the player may under rule 25-1b(ii):*

- (a) drop the ball without penalty in the bunker as near as possible to the spot where the ball lay, but not nearer the hole, on ground which affords maximum available relief, ie ground which is most nearly normal, or
- (b) drop the ball under penalty of one stroke behind the bunker, keeping the point where the ball lay between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped.