



CERTAINLY UNCERTAIN

When a player is unsure how to proceed, Rule 3-3 explains the procedures to follow in stroke play

In stroke play, when a player is unsure of his rights or the correct procedure to follow under the rules, he may play out the hole with two balls under Rule 3-3 and obtain a ruling at the end of the round.

To invoke Rule 3-3, the player must announce his intention to play two balls to a fellow competitor before playing a stroke or putting another ball into play. The player also must state which ball he wishes to score with if the Rules permit. At the conclusion of the round, the player must report the facts of the situation to the Committee (often the golf professional) or face a disqualification penalty.

Rule 3-3 can be useful in several situations. A player who does not know the status of an item or area interfering with his

play, such as loose twigs, tire ruts or flower beds could play his original ball as it lies and drop a second ball, taking relief from the item or area. Another example would be a player in a bunker who is not sure how to proceed under the Unplayable Ball Rule. He could drop a ball in the bunker, within two club lengths of the original ball, and drop another outside the bunker within two club lengths.

The two balls can be played in any order. A player unsure if he is in ground under repair because his ball lies in a tire rut can take relief with the first ball and put a second ball in play where the original ball lay. Rule 3-3 allows the correct score for the hole to be determined after the round.

In any case, Rule 3-3 is never intended to give the player a choice. The player cannot decide

to play a second ball after playing a poor shot or after an unfortunate drop results in a bad lie. Thus, the rule must be invoked before taking any such action.

The player must choose which ball he wishes to score with if the Rules permit, because it is possible that both or neither ball is played within the Rules.

It is important to note that a second ball played under Rule 3-3 is not a provisional ball (Rule 27-2). While both rules are intended to save time and are invoked due to uncertainty, they are separate and distinct rules.

The facts of the situation must be reported to the committee at the end of the round, even if the same score was made with both balls. This is done to verify that at least one of the balls was played under

the rules. The penalty for failing to report to the committee is disqualification.

If the player does not follow the procedures for announcing the intention of playing a second ball or indicating with which ball he wishes to score, the committee will determine the player's score for the hole as detailed in Rule 3-3.

Any strokes played at a second ball, including any penalty strokes incurred solely by playing that ball, are disregarded.

Rule 3-3 only applies to stroke play. Match play requires an immediate resolution of Doubts to Procedure so that opponents always understand the status of the match. Rule 2-5 covers such situations in match play.

The Rules of Golf can be complicated. Rule 3-3 gives players in stroke play a convenient way to proceed when in doubt. Knowing this rule can help a player avoid penalty. ●

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