

PROPER USE OF THE WORDS – ANNOUNCE, DECLARE, OR DEEM

The following is a preface to a previous paper:

“One of the many ways to study, understand and remember the Rules of Golf is to group together Rules that have common characteristics such as the 16 Rules that call for a one-stroke penalty in both match and stroke play or the six Rules that require rectification of a violation or there will be a disqualification in stroke play. There are many other possible combinations or other groupings that one can manufacture. The basic idea is to establish a common thread among Rules that will lead one to a better understanding of all the Rules.”

While as stated above it is important to group Rules that are interrelated, it is likewise important to properly and consistently use words as they appear in various Rules to describe activities governed by those Rules. Among the words that are most often used incorrectly as interchangeable are the three words – announce, declare or deem. Here is a listing of the relevant Rules governing the player’s responsibilities for actions described by these three words.

Announce [four Rules]

Rule 3-3. Doubt as to Procedure

The competitor should announce to his marker or a fellow-competitor:

- that he intends to play two balls; and
- which ball he wishes to count if the Rules permit the procedure used for that ball.

Rule 5-3. Ball Unfit for Play

Before lifting the ball, the player must announce his intention to his opponent in match play or his marker or a fellow-competitor in stroke play and mark the position of the ball.

Rule 12-2. Lifting Ball for Identification

Before lifting the ball, the player must announce his intention to his opponent in match play or his marker or a fellow-competitor in stroke play and mark the position of the ball.

Rule 27-2a. [Provisional Ball] Procedure

The player must announce to his opponent in match play or his marker in stroke play that he intends to play a provisional ball;

Declare [nine Rules]

Rule 4-1. Form and Make of Clubs

Rule 4-2. Playing Characteristic Changed and Foreign Material

Any club or clubs carried in breach of Rule 4-1 or 4-2 must be declared out of play by the player to his opponent in match play or his marker or a fellow-competitor in stroke play immediately upon discovery that a breach has occurred.

Rule 4-3c [Damaged Clubs: Repair and Replacement] Damage Prior to Round

See Penalty Statement for Rule 4-1 or 4-2.

Rule 4-4c. [Maximum of Fourteen Clubs] Excess Club Declared Out of Play

Any club or clubs carried or used in breach of Rule 4-3a(iii) or Rule 4-4 must be declared out of play by the player to his opponent in match play or his marker or a fellow-competitor in stroke play immediately upon discovery that a breach has occurred.

Rule 6-2a. [Handicap] Match Play

If a player begins a match having declared a handicap higher than that to which he is entitled and this affects the number of strokes given or received, he is disqualified; otherwise, the player must play off the declared handicap.

Rule 11-4b. [Playing from Outside Teeing Ground] Stroke Play

If the competitor makes a stroke from the next teeing ground without first correcting his mistake or, in the case of the last hole of the round, leaves the putting green without first declaring his intention to correct his mistake, he is disqualified.

Rule 15-3b. [Wrong Ball] Stroke Play

If he fails to correct his mistake before making a stroke on the next teeing ground or, in the case of the last hole of the round, fails to declare his intention to correct his mistake before leaving the putting green, he is disqualified.

Rule 20-7c. [Playing from Wrong Place] Stroke Play

If the hole being played is the last hole of the round, he must declare, before leaving the putting green, that he will play out the hole with a second ball played in accordance with the Rules.

Rule 29-3. [Threesomes and Foursomes] Stroke Play

If the partners make a stroke or strokes in incorrect order, such stroke or strokes are canceled and the side incurs a penalty of two strokes. If the side makes a stroke on the next teeing ground without first correcting the error or, in the case of the last hole of the round, leaves the putting green without declaring its intention to correct the error, the side is disqualified.

Deem [one Rule]

Rule 28. Ball Unplayable

The player may deem his ball unplayable at any place on the course, except when the ball is in a water hazard. The player is the sole judge as to whether his ball is unplayable. If the player deems his ball to be unplayable, he must, under penalty of one stroke: