

WHICH CLUB TO BE USED WHEN MEASURING



In applying Rule 24-2b when her ball lay on the cart path, this player correctly determined the nearest point of relief but did not measure to define the required area within which the ball must be dropped before dropping the ball. Is that proper? For the answer see Decision 24-2b/2.

INTRODUCTION

There are several important principles established in the Decisions regarding the club that must be used for measuring when applying one of the relief Rules.

- A player may use any club he has selected for the round [Decision 20/2].
- He may borrow a club for measuring from anyone but he must achieve the same outcome with the borrowed club that he could have achieved with one of his own clubs [Decision 20/2].
- A player must continue to use the club he originally used for measuring for all further measuring in a given situation [Decision 20/1].

While these principles are quite clear, there are two questions that may arise in practice.

THE TWO QUESTIONS

Prior to taking further action such as putting a ball into play, may a player change his mind regarding club selection for measuring?

The third principle above must be taken in the context of the situation described in the question in Decision 20/1. In this situation, a player selects his driver to measure the extent of the required dropping area specified in the relevant Rule [for example Rule 24-2b or Rule 28c]. After measuring with the driver, he drops the ball within the area defined by his driver. If the ball rolls more than two club-lengths from where it struck the ground, in applying Rule 20-2c (vi), the question is whether he may now use a putter to measure the two club-length limit of that Rule. The answer is that he must continue to measure with the club he originally selected and used. However, this answer is to be taken only within the context of a player who measures with a certain club, then puts a ball into play and is subsequently faced with complying with another Rule that requires measuring.

A player who has not yet put a ball into play under a Rule in a given situation may select a different club for any number of measurings regardless of how much measuring he does or for what purpose. So if he measured with a driver, changed his mind, then measured with a putter and dropped a ball, he has proceeded correctly but must then use the putter for all subsequent measuring in that situation.

In other words, a selection of a club for measuring is confirmed by putting the ball into play before it is to be considered as the selected club. This reasoning would be analogous to that found in Decision 4-4a/1 regarding selecting a club for adding or replacement where the action of making a stroke confirms the selected club.

Once a ball has been put into play without formal measuring, may a player use any club selected for the round for any ensuing measuring?

Regarding a player proceeding under a Rule that requires a ball to be put into play within a specified distance [one club-length or two club-lengths] from a specific spot, point A, he is not required by the Rules to actually measure the distance from point A to the point of dropping, point B, or to measure the area within which he is required to drop the ball. However, in order to satisfactorily comply with the Rule under which he is proceeding, the ball when dropped must first strike a part of course, point B, at a distance from point A that could be reached by any club that meets the criteria given in the first two bullet points above [Decision 20/2].

If the ball struck the course at a point farther away than what could be reached by the player's longest club, he must re-drop the ball under the Rule that applied to the initial drop [for example, Rule 24 or Rule 28].

If the initial drop met this condition [reached by the player's longest club] and the ball came to rest at point C, in satisfying Rule 20-2c (vi), he could select any club to measure from point B to point C provided that it was long enough to reach from point A to point B.

EXAMPLES

In a recent Sectional Qualifying for the 2013 US Women's Open Championship, the principles from the Decisions together with the extensions formulated in answering the two questions above came into play in two separate situations.

In the first situation, a player's tee shot was played slightly right of the fairway, struck a tree and dropped straight down. When the player arrived at the spot where it was near certain to lie, she found an embedded ball that she identified as hers. She lifted and dropped the ball according to Rule 25-2, which she properly followed. It struck the ground at point A and rolled a considerable distance down the hill toward the fairway where it came to rest at point B. It then almost immediately subsequently moved and rolled another considerable distance coming to rest in the fairway at point C. The player questioned whether she was required to re-drop her ball. Since her ball had come to rest in the fairway in a playable position, she decided that it was in her best interests to be able to play the ball from there and not be required to re-drop the ball. The distance from point B to point C is irrelevant [see Note 1 to Rule 20-2] but Rule 20-2c (vi) governs the distance from point A to point B regarding the requirement for re-dropping. A re-drop would be required if the distance from point A to point B was more than two club-lengths as measured with a club which complies with the criteria specified above. She selected a driver to measure this distance and as a result was able to play the ball from the fairway.

In the second situation, a player had interference by a cart path with her stance. She mentally determined a nearest point of relief and dropped her ball some distance away from this point. The ball rolled and came to rest just short of reaching the fairway. Since her ball had not come to rest in the fairway, she decided that it was in her best interests to be able to re-drop the ball in another attempt to reach the fairway. She selected her putter to apply Rule 20-2c (vi) when her actions were questioned by a fellow-competitor and a rules official was summoned. He asked her to identify the nearest point of relief that she had used in following Rule 24-2b and place a tee marking that as point A. It was found that this point satisfied Rule 24-2b. She was then asked to place a tee at point B, the spot where the dropped ball first struck a part of the course, and measure the distance from point A to point B with the longest club in her bag. Point B was determined to be within reach of the longest club so the drop was determined to be proper according to the Rules. She was then told that she could measure the

distance in club-lengths from point B to point C using any club that would reach from point A to point B. It was determined that her putter would not reach from point A to point B and therefore could not be used for the measurements to satisfy Rule 20-2c(vi) regarding the distance from point B to point C. Ultimately, the length of the shortest club that would reach from point A to point B determined that point C was less than two club-lengths from point B. The dropped ball was played as it lay.