**Quiz**

1. In match play a player’s ball is half buried in a water hazard and is not identifiable. Having announced his intention in advance to his opponent, the player touches the ball and rotates it. By doing so he is able to identify the ball as his. What is the ruling?
   - (A) The player incurs no penalty.
   - (B) The player incurs a two-stroke penalty and must drop a ball as near as possible to where the marker is.
   - (C) The player loses the hole.

2. In the area in which his ball presumably came to rest, a competitor finds a ball of the same brand and number, and in the same condition, as the ball he played from the tee. The player assumes it is his, even though it does not carry an identification mark as suggested in Rule 12-2, and plays it. There is no subsequent evidence to suggest that a ball of the same brand and number was lying in the area at the time the player played. What is the ruling?
   - (A) There is no penalty for playing the ball but the player must abandon it and return to the tee to put another ball into play under penalty of stroke and distance.
   - (B) The player incurs a two-stroke penalty for playing the wrong ball.
   - (C) There is no penalty and the player must continue the hole with the ball.

3. A player marked the position of his ball on the putting green and lifted the ball. When it was the player’s turn to play, he could not find his ball-marker. Subsequently, he found the ball-marker stuck to the sole of his shoe. He concluded that he had accidentally stepped on it while assisting his partner in lining up a putt. What is the ruling?
   - (A) The player incurs a one-stroke penalty and must drop a ball as near as possible to where the marker lay.
   - (B) There is no penalty and the player must drop a ball as near as possible to where the marker is.
   - (C) The player incurs a one-stroke penalty and must place a ball as near as possible to where the marker is.

**Answers:** (A), (B), (A), (C)

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**RCGA and USGA Handicaps - Are they the same thing?**

The Royal Canadian Golf Association and the United States Golf Association have always enjoyed a great relationship since the two organizations were formed in 1895 and 1894, respectively. The RCGA and USGA both sit on the Joint Rules Committee, the entity that makes the rules that we all play by. We have a common mission to get more people to play and enjoy the grand game of golf.

Another very important function of the game we share with the USGA is the Handicap and Course/Slope Rating Systems. The standardized system of establishing difficulty ratings for courses and calculating a handicap accordingly is what allows Canadian golfers to compete equitably with their American counterparts.

Considering how many ‘snowbirds’ head south for the winter, it’s easy to see how important it is to have equivalent methods of handicapping.

You may now be asking yourself why in America they use a USGA Index while up here in Canada we use a RCGA Factor? The answer is that while a USGA Index and RCGA Factor are considered equivalent, there are some minor differences between the two.

The first difference does not affect the numerical calculation of a handicap but does affect the updating of handicaps. A USGA Index is updated only every 15 days, regardless of how many rounds are posted during that time. This is referred to as a “revision period.” An RCGA Factor is updated after every round posted, which is why we insist that every score be posted prior to the next round being played (see Section five of the RCGA Handicap Manual).

The second difference involves the method of reducing high hole-scores in order to make handicaps more representative of a player’s potential ability. This procedure is called Equitable Stroke Control (ESC). The ESC method used by the USGA permits higher hole-scores than the RCGA ESC method. Research indicates that the numerical difference between a USGA Index and a RCGA Factor (using identical 20 gross scores) is minimal, particularly for golfers carrying a handicap under 30; so there’s no sense in trying to negotiate a few extra strokes from your American golfing brethren.

Why the difference between RCGA and USGA Equitable Stroke Control? The RCGA simply feels that our ESC method does a very effective job of ensuring that a golfer’s handicap is truly reflective of their potential ability, which is the intent of the Handicap System. The RCGA continues to work closely with the USGA on all handicap matters, including having a representative on the USGA Handicap Procedures Committee.

If you have any suggestions to improve the Handicap System, feel free to drop us a line at mmackay@rcga.org.