

SAMSUNG WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP
BIGHORN Golf Club
The Canyons Course
Palm Desert, Ca

October 16, 2005

Final-round quotes

AN INTERVIEW WITH RULES OFFICIALS
ROBERT O. SMITH AND JIM HALEY

PAUL ROVNAK: As can you see we are joined by LPGA rules' officials Robert O. Smith and Jim Haley. Unfortunately we had a disqualification in the tournament today. Michelle Wie was disqualified.

I will allow Robert O. to explain the ruling today.

ROBERT O. SMITH: Well, I was sitting on the golf course, and a spectator came to me and told me of an incident which occurred yesterday on the 7th hole, when Michelle had taken relieve from an unplayable lie to the left of the green.

The spectator told me that he felt that the player had dropped the ball and played the ball closer to the hole than where the ball originally lay unplayable.

Well, rules of golf provide that if you take -- when taking relief from an unplayable lie measuring two club lengths, you can't go closer to the hole.

Well, unfortunately, this ball was about -- ended up being played about 12 to 15, 18 inches closer to the hole than where the ball originally lay.

Because of that, because she had played that ball from that position yesterday she played from a wrong place and violated Rule 20-7 which is: Playing the ball from a wrong place.

The penalty for that is two strokes. She didn't put that on her scorecard for the 7th hole, so therefore she had a scorecard of two strokes less on that hole.

The rules of golf provide also under Rule 6, that if you sign your scorecard with a score lower than you actually made on the hole, you're disqualified.

Unfortunately, that's what happened and that's it in a nutshell.

I don't know if Jim can add anything to that or not.

MR. JIM HALEY: That's it. That's it in a nutshell.

PAUL ROVNAK: We have time just for a couple of questions.

Q. I take it you brought her out to the spot and she showed you?

ROBERT O. SMITH: Yes, sir, we had Michelle and her caddy, Greg, come to the 7th hole, and I said what I need to know is what happened yesterday when you took your unplayable lie. Where was the ball?

I want to tell you something right now, and I told them, the rules of golf, ladies and gentlemen, are based on facts. Where was the ball? It's a fact where that ball was. They had to tell us where it was. From there I can tell. Then I have to find out where did you play your shot from after you dropped the ball. That's also a fact.

And the fact was, the ball was closer to the hole by about 12 to 18 inches unfortunately.

Q. That being the case what took so long?

ROBERT O. SMITH: Took so long today? There was quite a discussion with everyone involved with that after the round was over. She came out there -- I guess, immediately Comet brought her out, Jim brought her out after the round was over and unfortunately -- what they showed us.

Q. I'm saying this has been well over an hour?

ROBERT O. SMITH: I know that. There was a lot of discussion with all parties involved with this. Jim and I have a philosophy that we try to let them say their piece and make sure -- is this where that ball was? Tell us that.

And, unfortunately, when the ball was in that bush, no matter where it was in that bush, that ball was closer to the hole when they played it. I looked at the videotape which was inconclusive, I might add, so at that point I want to make sure we were making the right decision, because this is important to Jim and I and all of the officials on our tour.

Q. When did the spectator bring this up?

ROBERT O. SMITH: I was sitting on the 15th hole. The final group was on, what, Comet, 14.

MR. JIM HALEY: Yes, somebody else asked me the same thing. I think it was about 40 minutes before the tournament was over approximately.

Q. What was her emotional state?

ROBERT O. SMITH: Obviously, I know when I played as a youngster, and when I was 16-years old, if this would have happened to me, I would have been pretty broken up. She was a little bit emotional about it unfortunately. But you know what, good things come from things like this. That's what I believe.

Q. Were any calls put into the folks at Daytona, the LPGA headquarters or was this the decision here?

ROBERT O. SMITH: No, sir, we feel confident what we did was the right thing. Unfortunately we have had to do this before. Believe me, ladies and gentlemen, this is not fun.

Q. Are you saying that no matter where she would have dropped the ball out of that bush, unless she had gone across the cart path there, the ball was going to be closer to the hole?

ROBERT O. SMITH: If that ball, if you had to see this situation, she would have probably been dropping in a dirt area, not on the grass area. And that's the bad part of it. We measured this three or four times. Jim and I wanted to be perfectly sure that what we were doing was right. Unfortunately it turned out that way.

Q. Was it some sort of a device?

ROBERT O. SMITH: We use string, like plumber's string.

Q. She was emotional, what did she say? Did she dispute the ruling during your discussion?

MR. JIM HALEY: Once we pointed out, you know, went through the whole procedure, and they realized that they did play, or Michelle did play from a closer spot, I mean it was fairly conclusive then after we used the string. And it was conclusive. There wasn't much they could say unfortunately.

Q. Who all was out there, the two of you and the two of them? Was it you two, Michelle and Greg and that was it?

ROBERT O. SMITH: Initially. Who else?

MR. JIM HALEY: There was one individual from the tournament, tournament management staff that came along with us just to be there. That was essentially it. I have to admit we did come back to the office and Michelle's parents were there. Obviously they were quite concerned. We did have some discussions with her parents.

PAUL ROVNAK: We have time just for two more questions.

Q. Can you show us like the video replay?

MR. JIM HALEY: Excuse me?

Q. Can we see the video replay?

MR. HALEY: We both saw the video in the tape, in the truck.

Q. You're not allowed to show it to us?

MR. HALEY: I don't have the capability.

ROBERT O. SMITH: I don't have the capability. I can only tell you this. If I had to make the ruling based on that videotape, to me it was inconclusive because I want -- I can't see. Angles play tricks on you. I've dealt with this for 17 years on this Tour. Those camera angles can play tricks on you. I had to go see for myself.

Q. Just for clarification sake when she put the ball in the bushes was she able to definitively say where she dropped her ball. Was there still a divot there? Or are you saying, Robert, it didn't matter, anywhere on the grass would have been too close?

ROBERT O. SMITH: Yes, sir, that's what I'm saying. When I went out there, I looked for a scuffed up area where that ball might have been hit yesterday. I could not find it. I could not see it. That's 24 hours, so the grass tends to rebound.

Q. She had to estimate where the ball was?

ROBERT O. SMITH: The videotape will probably tell you where the ball was after when she played it. But we couldn't tell where the ball lay in the bush on the video tape. That's why we had to have them tell us. What they told us, that becomes a fact.

PAUL ROVNAK: One last question.

Q. Was the spectator here yesterday or did he see it on TV and did either of you know the spectator?

ROBERT O. SMITH: I don't know who it was. They were here yesterday and they told us about it today. Unfortunately, what we like to do, if a spectator sees something like, they need to tell us because if they can tell us right away, if she could have played that, and we could have caught her in the tent at 18, it would have been a two stroke penalty. Play golf today. But once that scorecard is signed, it's history. That's the unfortunate part of it. That's the sad part of this whole thing.

PAUL ROVNAK: Thank you all.

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