

Part I

COURSE PREPARATION SAVES RULES TROUBLES

By **RICHARD S. TUFTS**

Former President and Former Chairman of Rules of Golf Committee,
United States Golf Association

THE golf course architect who builds a course and the superintendent in charge of its maintenance have problems and worries enough without thrusting more upon them. One would be inclined to let them go about their business and expect those who play the game to settle their own problems with the Rules of Golf, were it not for the fact that just a little co-operation on the part of the architect and the superintendent can mean so very much to the golfer.

Fortunately, the solution is not too difficult, as indicated by the fact that it has been necessary herein to refer to only some seven of the 34 Definitions and eight of the 41 Rules of Golf. These are the only Rules whose application is even remotely affected by the way in which the course is constructed or maintained. It is the purpose of this article to discuss briefly the relationship between the Rules and course construction and maintenance.

Perhaps the first step should be to dispose of the idea that only for a tournament does a golf course need to be set up carefully to meet requirements for exact observance of the Rules. This is a serious misconception. Golfers should be just as careful to observe the Rules in their friendly matches and in informal club competitions as they are when competing in a tournament of national importance.

WATER HAZARDS AND PROVISIONS

For example, the margins of water hazards should always be properly defined by stakes or otherwise (Definition 14d). It is not sufficient for the club members to understand that "the hazard starts where the ground slopes down to the brook". Such an indefinite line is certain to result in sloppy observance of the Rules, as for example, when picking up leaves and sticks (Rule 18), dropping away from a bridge (Rules 22-2b and 31-2), and many similar situations for which the margin of the hazard must be accurately known.

The same practice must be followed for careful day-to-day definition of all those bounds and margins for which the Committee is responsible (Rule 36-6).

If stakes are used for marking bounds and water hazards, they should be placed close enough to one another for the player to locate accurately the line on the ground, and all intervening long grass or bushes should be cleared out in order to obtain a clear line for sighting. Naturally, these stakes should not be placed in such frequently cut areas as the fairway; even in the rough it can be advantageous to arrange for their easy removal when mowing.

(To be continued in the September issue)

Reprinted with grateful acknowledgements to the U.S.G.A. Golf Journal, in which it originally appeared in April this year.