

# What Golf Rules Affect the Greenkeepers

How the greenkeeper may help the player avoid penalties in his play.  
Knowledge of certain rules and definitions necessary  
to avoid complaint.

By ROBERT E. POWER

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## PART II.

THE underlying thought and intent of the law makers of golf as evidenced by the wording and interpretation of the rules of the game, favor the greenkeeper and his work. They have always appreciated that he labors under difficulties because much of his work must be done when players are on the course. Either they must interfere with him or he must interfere with them.

This irreconcilable fact calls for a compromise and to offset this the rule makers have legislated that no penalty attaches to a player whose ball finds its way among his tools or appurtenances used on the course. They say in so many words, "Don't blame the greenkeeper—he must do his work. If any of his implements or material are in your way drop your ball to one side without penalty."

That's a proper spirit I would say and all greenkeepers should appreciate it. Here's the rule as written:

### Rule 11

#### *Removal of Obstructions*

Any flag-stick, guide-flag, movable guide-post, wheelbarrow, tool, roller, grass-cutter, box, vehicle, or similar obstruction may be removed. A ball moved in removing such an obstruction shall be replaced without penalty. A ball lying on or touching such an obstruction, or lying on or touching clothes, or nets, or ground under repair or covered up or opened for the purpose of the upkeep of the course; or lying in one of the holes, or in a guide-flag hole or in a hole made by the greenkeeper, may be lifted and dropped without penalty as near as possible to the place where it lay, but not nearer to the hole. A ball lifted in a hazard, under such circumstances, shall be dropped in the hazard.

If a ball lie on or within a club's length of a drain-cover, water-pipe or hydrant, located on the course, it may be lifted and dropped without penalty as near as possible to the place where it lay, but not nearer the hole—as near as possible shall mean—"within a club's length." If it be impossible for want of space or other cause for a player to drop the ball in conformity with this interpretation, he shall place the ball as nearly as possible within the limits laid down in this interpretation, but not nearer the hole. U. S. G. A.

A pile or mound of cut grass resulting from the

mowing of the course, or any other material pile for removal, is considered to be upkeep. A ball lodging in or lying on such an obstruction may be lifted and dropped without penalty. U. S. G. A.



Robert E. Power

The leniency of the above rule does not excuse the greenkeeper for leaving his tools lying around when not in use. Like a good housekeeper a greenkeeper must be tidy if he would succeed because members are very observing and they will notice and comment on a roller or mower left on the course more quickly than a badly mowed fairway. As business men they quickly recognize disorder and lack of system; immediately they form an unfavorable opinion of the greenkeeper and nothing he does creditably can erase the impression from their minds that he is far from efficient.

When compost piles stand day after day without being used and piles of grass clippings accumulate near the greens with no signs of removal, the greenkeeper can expect nothing but dirty looks and criticism from those he works for. He must watch his housekeeping duties and keep his course tidy if he desires smiles and words of commendation to say nothing of regular and substantial increases in salary.

### Rule 25

#### *Condition of Play in Hazards*

When a ball lies in or touches a hazard, nothing shall be done which can in any way improve its lie; the club shall not touch the ground, nor shall anything be touched or moved, before the player strikes at the ball, subject to the following exceptions:—

(1) The player may place his feet firmly on the ground for the purpose of taking his stance; (2) in addressing the ball, or in the backward or forward swing, any grass, bent, bush, or other growing substance, or the side of a bunker, wall, paling, or other immovable obstacle may be touched; (3) steps or planks placed in a hazard by the Green Committee for access to or egress from such hazard, or any obstruction mentioned in Rule 11, may be removed, and if a ball be moved in so doing, it shall be replaced without penalty; (4) any loose impediment may be lifted from the putting-green; (5) the player shall be entitled to find his ball as provided for by Rule 21.



(The penalty for a breach of this Rule shall be the loss of the hole.)

A recognized water hazard cannot be "out of bounds." R. & A.

The physical condition of hazards on the golf course comes under closer scrutiny of the club members than most greenkeepers imagine. It's always a tough shot to get out of a bunker even under the most favorable circumstances. That's why especial care should be given to their upkeep. I can recall many good courses with fine greens and fairways but neglected bunkers.

I asked one greenkeeper at a course on the shore of Lake Erie why he didn't put sand in his bunkers. He said, "the boss won't let me, it costs too much." Yet no expense was spared to make his turf as fine as possible. Evidently his "boss" doesn't get into bunkers much or else thinks they are some necessary evil that goes with golf, but should not be encouraged.

The good greenkeeper cannot neglect his bunkers. Suppose Mack Burke at Scioto or Emil Loeffler at Oakmont had let their bunkers go during the National Open and Amateur tournaments. Every player would have been penalized every day.

Three things are very important in bunker upkeep, viz—even distribution of sand, smoothing of heel prints and washes, and elimination of stones large and small that continually work into bunkers in some unaccountable way. Small stones may appear harmless but they tend to deflect the club blade slightly and ruin the accuracy of a well played shot.

You will note that steps may be removed without penalty. That's a good rule and helps the greenkeeper because he can put in steps to save his banks from breaking down knowing that they do not interfere with play. More greenkeepers should avail themselves of this rule.

Finally, remember this. Visiting golfers who know anything judge the greenkeeper on two things—first, his putting greens and second, his bunkers. If the boss won't let you keep your bunkers up tell him to get another greenkeeper—one that doesn't know his business.

#### Rule 27

##### *Ball in Water Hazard*

##### *Ball in Casual Water in a Hazard*

(1) If a ball lie or be lost in a recognized water hazard (whether the ball lie in water or not) or in casual water in a hazard, the player may drop a ball under penalty of one stroke, either: (a) behind the hazard, keeping the spot at which the ball crossed the margin of the hazard between himself and the hole, or (b) in the hazard, keeping the spot at which the ball entered the water between himself and the hole.

Ice on the putting-green or through the green is considered "casual water." R. & A.

##### *Ball in Casual Water Through the Green*

(2) If a ball lie or be lost in casual water through the green, the player may drop a ball, without penalty, within two club lengths of the margin,

as near as possible to the spot where the ball lay, but not nearer to the hole.

If a ball when dropped roll into the water, it may be re-dropped without penalty.

##### *Ball in Casual Water on the Putting-Green*

(3) If a ball on the putting-green lie in casual water, or if casual water intervene between a ball lying on the putting-green and the hole, the ball may be played where it lies, or it may be lifted without penalty and placed by hand, either within two club lengths directly behind the spot from which the ball was lifted, or in the nearest position to that spot which is not nearer to the hole and which affords a putt to the hole without casual water intervening.

##### *Water Interfering With Stance*

(4) A ball lying so near to casual water that the water interferes with the player's stance may be treated as if it lay in casual water, under the preceding Sections of this Rule.

##### *Want of Space to Drop*

(5) If it be impossible from want of space in which to play, or from any other cause, for a player to drop a ball in conformity with Sections (1) and (2) of this Rule, or to place it in conformity with Section (3), he shall "drop" or "place" as nearly as possible, within the limits laid down in these sections, but not nearer to the hole.

The penalty for a breach of this Rule shall be the loss of the hole.

Many recognized water hazards consist of small creeks that traverse the course. These are frequently dry through a portion of the playing season and many balls driven into them are playable if the owner is expert enough to play the shot correctly. It behooves the watchful greenkeeper then to frequently go over these creek beds and keep them cleaned up and free from stones and debris. In so doing he will win the inward and heartfelt gratitude of his members and their guests who appreciate more than he can possibly realize his thoughtfulness in looking out for these "little things." A stroke saved here may mean the winning of a close match.

In the preceding installment we called attention to the necessity for draining storm water out of bunkers so that repetition here is unnecessary. The writer believes that we are coming to open drains and drain covers in bunkers and I know we will put them in at Westwood next season. It is the only way to get rid of the casual water handicap that is the curse of all play on flat courses after a heavy rain. Should a ball by any chance come to rest on or within a club's length of such drain cover the player may lift and drop it in the bunker away from the cover without penalty.

##### *Recommendations for Local Rules Special Hazards or Conditions*

When necessary, Local Rules should be made for such obstructions as rushes, trees, hedges, fixed seats, fences, gates, railways, and walls, for such

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difficulties as rabbit scrapes, hoof marks, and other damage caused to the course by animals; for such local conditions as the existence of mud which may be held to interfere with the proper playing of the game, and for the penalty to be imposed in the case of a ball which lies out of bounds, see Rule 23 (1), and also for the penalty to be imposed in the case of a lost ball, see Rule 22 (1). U. S. G. A.

**Ball When Dropped, When Placed**

When a ball is lifted under a Local Rule, as in the case of a ball lifted from a putting-green other than that of the hole which is being played, the Rules of Golf Committee recommends that if it is to be played from "through the green," it should be dropped; if it is to be played on the putting-green of the hole that is being played, it should be played. U. S. G. A.

This rule is intended to take care of conditions that are not covered by the regularly constituted rules. When you have some obstruction on the course which must necessarily remain there, the Green committee should make a local rule regarding it and the greenkeeper should place a small sign or notice covering this local rule at the place where it applies. This is notice to the conscientious player that he need not take an unfair penalty.

If this notice is not posted he must play the ball where he finds it or pick it up. It is the greenkeeper's duty to mark such places as "Ground under Repair," etc., otherwise the player who really wants to know what is the right thing to do is completely baffled.



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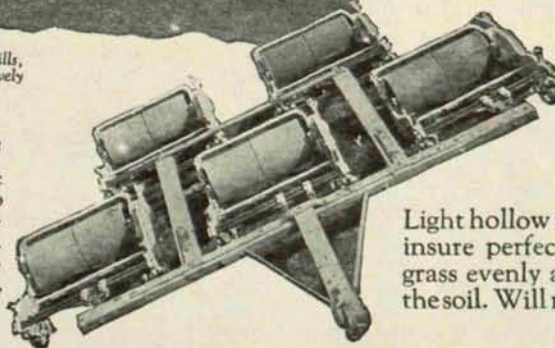
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