

# 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

Vice President and Chairman Green Committee, Westwood Country Club, Cleveland

**G**REENKEEPERS as a rule are not golfers. One hears this fact deplored quite often by chairmen of the Green who claim that if a greenkeeper played the game he would know better how to keep his course in condition. I am one who disagrees with that opinion: turf culture is one thing and playing golf is another. The man who is concentrating on the condition of the turf while playing golf is not playing golf—conversely the man who plays golf cannot think about the course. Then, too, a greenkeeper's recreation like any other business or working man, must be away from the scene of his daily labors.

However, there are certain rules of golf that affect the greenkeeper's work which he should know and be mindful of as he makes his daily rounds. As I have never seen them set forth in any golf magazine or pamphlet I think an article about them at this time may be of help and benefit.

In the first place let me cite certain fundamental definitions as a basis for better understanding of the rules in which these terms occur:

## Course

The "Course" is the whole area within which play is permitted; more particularly, it is the ground between the holes which is specially prepared for play.

The greenkeeper must remember always that the rough is just as much a part of the course as the fairway and must see to it that big stones and heavy logs are removed and holes filled up so that there are no unplayable or unfair lies. While the player must expect difficult lies and hard play in the rough he should not be expected to find his ball in a position where he cannot hit it in some direction.

## Teeing-Ground

The "teeing-ground" is the starting place for a hole. The front of each teeing-ground shall be indicated by two marks placed in a line as nearly as possible at right angles to the line of play, and the teeing-ground shall include a rectangular space of the depth of two club lengths directly behind the line indicated by the two marks.

When placing their tee plates greenkeepers generally consider only the ground between the markers and therefore we generally find the entire width of the tee used for this purpose. As a matter of fact about six feet of the tee behind the line of the markers is "teeing-ground" and the use of this should be encouraged by placing the marks closer together or approximately half the width of the tee. This area might be mowed a trifle closer than the balance of the tee in order to emphasize and define its location.



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## Hazard

A "hazard" is any bunker, water (except casual water), ditch (unless excepted by Local Rule), bush, sand, path or road.

Sand blown on the grass or sprinkled on the course for its preservation, bare patches, sheep tracks, snow and ice are not hazards.

Heather is not a hazard, R. & A.

Bent is not a hazard. R. & A.

Long grass is not a hazard unless within the boundaries of a hazard. R. & A.

A "Bunker" is (that part of) a depression in the ground where the natural soil is exposed, and sometimes top dressed with softer soil or sand. It is the duty of the authorities in charge of the golf course to define its hazards by Local Rules. R. & A.

This definition brings sharply to mind the constant vigil necessary in keeping paths and roads in playable condition. How often the greenkeeper is "cussed out" when a player's ball lands in a wagon rut or washout, and how often the temptation to cheat a little is overpowering in these conditions. Any greenkeeper is subject to just criticism who permits any hazard on the course to get into or remain in an unplayable condition.

## Casual Water

"Casual Water" is any temporary accumulation of water (whether caused by rainfall, flooding, or otherwise) which is not one of the ordinary and recognized hazards of the course.

The definition of "water" in the term "Casual water" is any water which interferes with the lie of the ball or the stance of the player. R. & A.



Casual water, except in a bunker, is not of any great consequence to the player because he can lift his ball out and away from it without penalty. But in a bunker he must play the ball as it lies or lose a stroke in removing it—so these traps, as we call them, (bunkers is the proper name) *must be drained and kept drained*. This is imperative. If any bunker cannot be drained quickly after a rain it is the duty of the greenkeeper to request the green committee for permission to fill it up.

### Putting-Green

The "putting-green" is all ground, except hazards, within twenty yards of the hole.

When you are inclined to place the cup in the corner of the green, remember that 20 yards or 60 feet is quite a distance and the putting green rules governing play are very rigid and explicit. You better get them out and read them carefully. Part of your "putting-green" may be in bad rough on the back of a hillside where the green is built. While it is almost impossible to confine the theoretical putting green to the surface smoothly mowed for that purpose, it is good practice generally in cutting the cup to permit the player to see the hole unless he is in a hazard.

### Hole

The hole shall be  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches in diameter and at least 4 inches deep. If a metal lining be used, it shall be sunk below the lip of the hole and its outer diameter shall not exceed  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches.

Very little comment is needed except that frequent changing of the hole is necessary if the rule restricting the diameter of the hole to  $4\frac{1}{4}$  inches is to be observed. When the edge shows wear or the hole gets larger, the greenkeeper should change it without waiting for special instructions.

(To be continued)

EDITOR'S NOTE:—Next month the author will cite the important rules of golf that affect directly the work of the greenkeeper and comment on the best way to overcome the problems involved.

December 9, 1926.

The National Association of Greenkeepers of America,  
407 Caxton Building,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

Gentlemen:

Since sending my application to become a charter member of the Association, I have read over the by-laws and organization notes several times, also have given the matter considerable thought and the more I think about it, the better I think of it. The organization is a fine thing and if carried out along the proposed lines, it will be a splendid thing for all concerned. Something of this kind has been much needed and I believe will produce good results in many ways.

Wishing you all possible success, I am,  
Very respectfully,

Wm. E. Ball,  
Greenkeeper, Wampanoag Country Club, West Hartford, Conn.

December 6, 1926.

The National Association of Greenkeepers of America,  
407 Caxton Building,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

Gentlemen:

Enclosed find five dollars as a member of The Association. I believe the Association is just what was needed and I hope to see it grow.

Very truly yours,

Arthur Laven,  
Greenkeeper, Wampanoag Country Club, West Hartford, Jersey.

December 9, 1926.

The National Association of Greenkeepers of America,  
407 Caxton Building,  
Cleveland, Ohio.

Gentlemen:

It is with great pleasure that I enclose my application for a charter membership in such a much needed organization.

If at any time there is anything I can do to help out the officers or fellow members, please let me know.

Sanguine of its instantaneous success, I hope your membership will soon include every worthwhile greenkeeper in the country.

Very sincerely yours,

James A. Lyons,  
Greenkeeper, Flintridge Country Club, Pasadena, Calif.



No. 16 at Westwood Country Club, Cleveland, Ohio