



In-Or-Out Of The Bunker

By Mike McCullough

Why are bunker rakes placed inside the bunkers on some golf courses, outside the bunkers at other golf courses or half in/half out of bunker at other golf courses?

Is the decision of placing rakes in or out of the bunkers made at the superintendent level, the golf professional level or by the golfers who play the course every day? Perhaps the maintenance worker who rakes bunkers on a daily basis makes the decision. Regardless of who decides where the rake should be placed, there are both good and bad consequences for the golfer.

Gail Rogers, Director of Education for the NCGA, has given Rules of Golf workshops on a regular basis and is frequently asked the Shakespearian golf question: Are rakes "To be or not to be" in the bunkers? The answer Rogers gives the most is "the least obtrusive

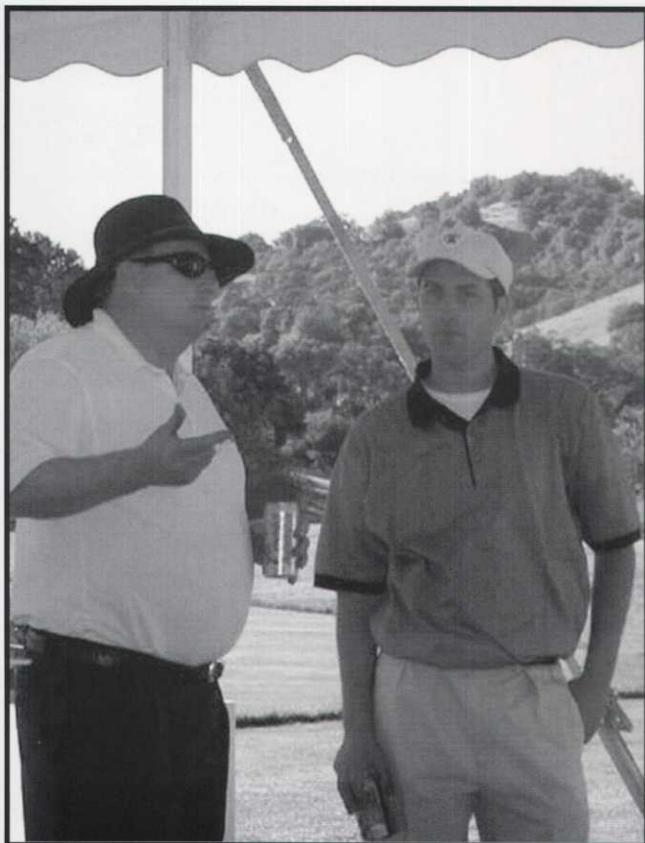
manner." "If courses have small, but severely sloped bunkers, then they should consider having the rakes outside the bunkers, due to the fact that if a ball comes to rest against the rake on a steep bunker slope, the golfer is going to have a difficult time getting the ball back to the original position," says Rogers. "When the ball cannot come to rest no nearer the hole than its original position in the bunker, the golfer must drop the ball outside the bunker, incurring a one stroke penalty."

With some of the more modern courses that have large, relatively flat bunkers, Rogers suggests having the rakes inside the bunkers. If the ball comes to rest against a rake in a large, flat bunker, the likelihood of getting the ball back to its original position is pretty good. So a case of leaving the rakes in the bunker is warranted. However, the player needs to be aware that in a large fairway

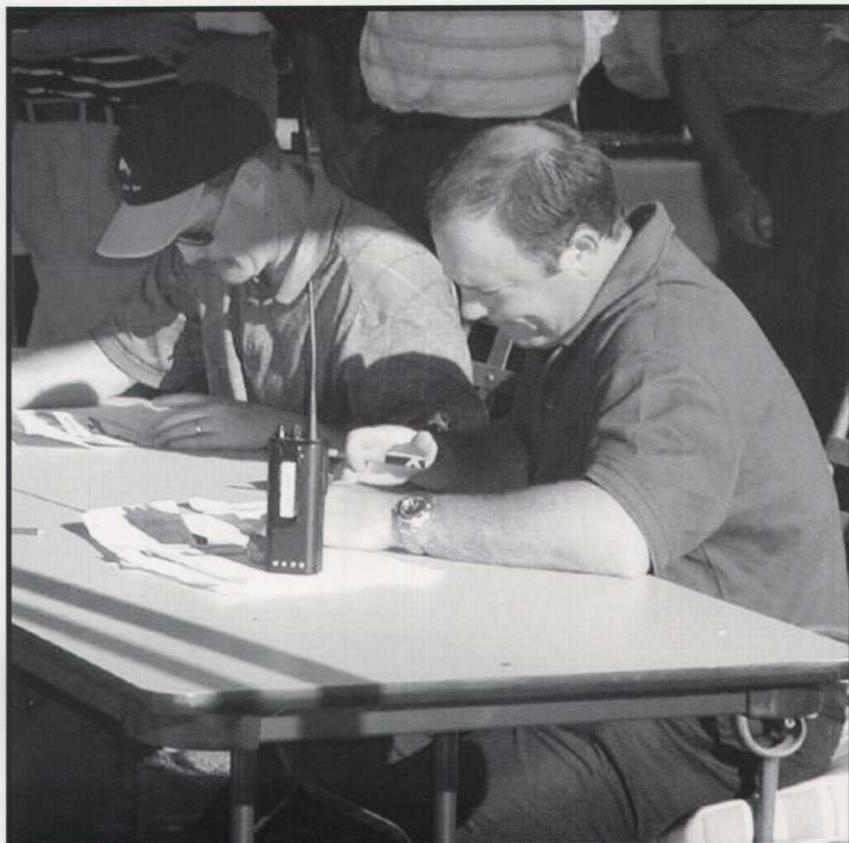
bunker that has the rake on the opposite side of where the golfer's ball entered the sandy hazard, the golfer would be inclined to take the rake and use it to cover up their footprints while walking over and preparing to hit their ball. This is considered testing the surface and a penalty, two strokes, is assessed

The 2002-2003 Decisions on the Rules of Golf book has a ruling that deals with this exact question. Miscellaneous Decision No. 2 answers the question, should rakes be placed in or outside the bunkers? Granted, the decision is not cut and dried, but the decision generally favors having the rakes outside the bunker.

So, before a quick and hasty decision is made on the status of bunker rakes, please take some time and assess the least obtrusive manner for rakes at your course. /



Ross Brownlie talks swing oil



PJ and the host pro could have used a calculator