

New Year's Resolutions For The Putting Greens

By Larry Gilhuly, agronomist, West Region

January 20, 2017

With the start of every new year comes a list of resolutions. In this case, the resolutions specifically pertain to putting greens. As you dust off your clubs for the coming season, please consider the following resolutions:

I resolve to properly fix ball marks for the benefit of putting green recovery and putting green smoothness. This simple and critical part of the game is outlined in the video, [How to Repair Ball Marks](#) (also available in [Spanish](#)).

I resolve to not only fix my ball marks, but also the ball marks left by others when I observe them on a putting green.

I resolve to place my golf bag, pull cart or golf cart in appropriate locations that allow easy access to putting greens without causing excessive turf wear. This not only minimizes damage near putting greens, it can help improve pace of play.

In using a pull cart, I resolve to never take it between a putting green and greenside bunker.

I resolve to carefully remove and replace flagsticks as to avoid damaging holes. I will also never drop a flagstick on a putting green as to avoid leaving indentations that impact ball roll for other players.



Forgetting to knock sand off your shoes when leaving a bunker and walking onto a putting green will disrupt ball roll.

I resolve to remove my golf ball from a hole with my hand or an appropriate tool, never with the head of my putter or other golf club.

I resolve to not leave remnants from any snacks or seeds on putting greens.

I resolve to remember that cigars can leave large ash deposits that should never be on a putting green.

I resolve to understand that when putting greens have frost on them, the delicate turf can be killed by footsteps.

I resolve to be aware that even though most golf shoes have soft spikes, they can still impact putting green smoothness if I scuff the turf with my shoes. When playing with others, I will not walk on their intended line.

I resolve to always knock excess sand off my shoes when exiting a bunker and before walking onto a putting green.

Finally, I resolve to improve pace of play by being prepared to putt when it is my turn.

West Region Agronomists:

Patrick J. Gross, regional director – pgross@usga.org

Larry W. Gilhuly, agronomist – lgilhuly@usga.org

Brian S. Whitlark, agronomist – bwhitlark@usga.org

Blake Meentemeyer, agronomist – bmeentemeyer@usga.org

[Information on the USGA's Course Consulting Service](#)

[Contact the Green Section Staff](#)