

Rachael and Gemma from Membership Services would like to welcome 70 new members to the Association.

# Membership Update

## BREAKDOWN COVER HAS NEVER BEEN BETTER

Silver Knight Rescue is being relaunched this month and now offers three different levels of cover that provide even better value than before.

The levels of cover available are as follows:

### PREMIUM

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- Roadside Assistance 24 hours a day, 365 days a year anywhere in the UK
- Recovery to a garage, your home or your original destination
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### PLUS

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Everything provided under Premium with the addition of Home Rescue if the breakdown occurs at home

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ONLY £62.00

Everything provided under Plus with the addition of European Cover



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Silverknight		AA*	RAC*
PREMIUM	£36.00	£84.00	£81.00
PLUS	£49.50	£149.00	£149.00
ADVANCE	£62.00	Additional cover must be purchased	Additional cover must be purchased

\* Nearest equivalent cover - prices correct on 11/03/04

## For further details please call 0800 068 1893

Please note the original Silver Knight package launched in November 2002 is no longer available. The special deal available when Rescue and Repair are purchased at the same time no longer applies as current deals are now cheaper than the original offer.

### BIGGA welcomes...

#### SCOTTISH REGION

Fraser Cochrane, Central  
Gary Douglas, Central  
Colin Finlay, East  
David Goldie, Central  
John Harvey, West  
William Lewis, West  
Iain Macdonald, Ayrshire  
Joseph Maloy, West  
Martin McKenzie, East  
John Mitchell, Central  
Stephen Nelson, West  
Graeme Petrie, West  
Mark Rae, North  
Barry Ross, Central  
Dale Stephen, North  
David Stephen, North  
Allan Syme, West

#### NORTHERN REGION

Daniel Adams, Northern  
Gavin Barker, North West

Arthur Brown, Sheffield  
Richard Bull, Northern  
Stephen Byrne, North West  
Gary Catley, Sheffield  
Kevin Clarke, Sheffield  
Christopher Cole, North Wales  
Mark Cooper, North East  
Richard De Vall, North Wales  
Michael Gillett, Sheffield  
Mark Grice, North West  
John Hammond, Northern  
James Hopkins, Northern  
Charles Poulter, Northern  
David Sales, Sheffield  
Jonathan Schofield, Sheffield  
David Stokoe, North East  
Dylan Williams, North Wales

#### MIDLAND REGION

Chris Carey, BB&O  
Lee Cooper, East Midlands  
John Cox, Mid Anglia  
Paul Crooks, BB&O

Marcus Davis, Mid Anglia  
Richard Dimmock, Midland  
David Harcombe, East Midlands  
Christopher Hindle, East Midlands  
Daniel Hodkin, Mid Anglia  
Ian Holborn, Midland  
John Jarrel, East of England  
P Lawrence, Mid Anglia  
Gary Matthews, Midland  
Niki Megarity, BB&O  
Steven Payne, BB&O  
Timothy Reynolds, Midland  
Simon Rhodes, East Midlands  
James Robinson, BB&O  
Simon Walthers, Midland  
Dean Wingfield, Mid Anglia

#### SOUTH EAST REGION

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Daniel Breen, Surrey  
Peter Brudenell, Kent  
Sam Butler, East Anglia  
Gerard De Wolff, East Anglia

Tommy Drewett, Surrey  
Steven Dyne, Kent  
George Grimes, Essex  
Paul Newnham, Sussex  
Peter Lee, London  
Andrew Taylor, London  
Terence Simmonds, London  
Daniel Simpson, Kent  
Jay Wall, Surrey  
Barry Williams, Surrey  
Matthew Winter, East Anglia

#### SOUTH WEST/SOUTH WALES

Andrew Webber, South West  
Antony Moore, South West  
Matthew Worster, South West  
Lee Baddeley, Devon & Cornwall  
Terrance Burke, South Coast  
Stephen Christopher, South Coast  
Paul Evans, Devon & Cornwall  
Scott Gaylard, Devon & Cornwall  
Graham Hastie, South Coast  
Simon Johnstone, South Coast

Robbie Kingman, South Coast  
Paul Moore, South Coast  
George Morgan, South West  
Richard Peters, South Wales  
Gary Pither, South West  
Martin Saunders, South Coast  
Christopher Sherrington, South Coast  
Phil Smith, South Coast  
Derek Waters, South Coast  
Brian Wheeler, South Coast

#### INTERNATIONAL MEMBERS

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Jens Andersen, Denmark  
Nick Bosholdt, Denmark  
Jeppe Kristensen, Denmark  
Christen Lassen Schmidt, Denmark  
Jason Law, Southern Ireland  
Bart Cash, USA  
Jim Ramey, USA  
Mark Aitken, Other America

Nicholas Weller, Middle East

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Robert Cassells, Northern Ireland  
Roger Walfe, Surrey

#### CORPORATE MEMBERS

Simon Watson, Northern

#### STUDENT MEMBERS

Mathew Sparrow, Sussex  
Gavin Lowe, Central Scotland  
Donal Kearney, Essex  
Andrew Henderson, Northern Ireland  
Adam Champion, Canada  
Matthew Howes, East Midlands  
Brian Noble, East Scotland  
Matthew Schiffer, East Scotland  
Kevin Whalley, Northern  
Jake Gibbs, East of England

### APRIL'S MEMBERSHIP DRAW WINNER

Just introduce one or more new greenkeeping members to BIGGA and your name will be placed into a draw to win an 0.5 litre isolating flask suitable for hot and cold drinks and soups. Our congratulations go to Marcus Phelps from Marlborough Golf Club who wins a digital clock.

### Message of the Month Winner

The best message on the BIGGA Bulletin Board, this month is Robert Sandilands from Kenwick Park Golf Club whose message was posted on the 15th March 2004 under the 'Talk about Turf' section. Congratulations, and you will receive an 18 litre Gelert Rucksack featuring a multi function organiser, 2 mesh pockets and a grab handle

# Golf's Sweetspot

Bernhard's Scholarship Delegate Will Bowden reports on a successful trip to San Diego

On Sunday the 8th of February at about 12 pm the 10 successful applicants of the 2004 Bernhard and Co. BIGGA delegation left London Gatwick, and embarked upon almost 13 hours of travel en route to San Diego and the 75th GCSAA Tradeshow and Conference.



▲ Of special interest was the wastewater wash down area in operation



▲ Pictured are the members of the delegation with Jose Garcia on one of the greens

It's fair to say that the many hours of flying took their toll on most of the delegates. However much of our tiredness was swept aside by the impressive sight of an illuminated San Diego as we descended in to the city's airport at about 7.30pm local time.

Immediately the grey, drizzly England we had left behind became a distant memory as we stepped off the plane and in to a place of palm trees and suntans!

We were met by the Bernhard team and a local taxi driver who insisted we were Australian, his only reason for this being that Melbourne was the only city he'd ever visited outside the US and therefore we must be Australian!

We were taken to our hotel which was situated in the district known as Mission Valley, a short shuttle-bus ride from the conference centre.

The next morning we awoke to glorious sunshine and clear blue skies.

San Diego is just 50 miles North of the Mexican border, it's the sixth largest city in America and the place where Americans like to holiday most! The area is rich in cultural, geographical and climatic variety.

There are four different climate zones: coastal, inland (where summer temperatures often exceed 90c), mountain and desert. With a population of 2.8 million San Diego benefits from a temperate climate averaging just 15 wet days a year. (a bit like Manchester!) During our stay temperatures averaged about 66f.

From a golfing perspective there are approximately 90 golf clubs in the area, equally divided between private and public.

Our week began with an eight hour educational seminar entitled: 'Turfgrass Stress Management'. The lecturers were Karl Danneberger and Joseph M. DiPaola.

The seminar focused on the various cultural systems and turf responses to environmental, cultural and biotic stress conditions. The aim was to highlight various methods of preventing or minimising stress injury to turf.

The topics ranged from the intensive use of PGR's in the battle to reduce Poa infestation, through to strategies for reducing the occurrence of summer dry patch and even methods to eliminate tissue damage from winter chilling stress.

Not all the information could easily be applied to our situation in Northern Europe. Elements of the presentation were interesting, not least when we were assigned group tasks.

This allowed us to discuss among our American colleagues typical maintenance strategies both in the UK and US. Some of the philosophies and levels of detail were eye opening to say the least!

The following day of the tour was one of the most memorable. We were taken on a field trip to two destinations in the area. Accompanied by Stephen and Sam and the rest of the Bernhard team our first stop was the Golf Club of California, an impressive facility situated just 25 minutes from downtown San Diego.

The course was opened in 2002 and designed by an American architect called Johny Pott. The primary objective was to create a layout that would integrate naturally in to its surrounding environment. Upon arrival we were greeted by the Course Superintendent, Jose Garcia. We were immediately impressed by his new maintenance facility and its level of cleanliness.

The course was young in establishment, however the pure bent greens were impressive as they felt firm and responsive under foot. Designed for the higher end of the market the club has a limited membership of just 160 and impacts approximately 10,000 rounds per year.

Jose explained how he had an operating budget of \$1.3million per year and a staff in excess of 20. Some of these statistics were put into perspective when he claimed that 20% of his budget went on water and power supplies with a staggering \$15,000 per night for water in times of extended drought! It was also surprising to hear that in the two years he had been working at the club, he had taken just three days holiday.

Also interesting was the method of Poa control being employed on the course. It was noticeable that the fairways took on a light brown tinge, this was in part due to the transition of the Bermuda grass, but also the application of diluted paraquat to all fairways and approaches. This is a practice used extensively in the US and with increasing frequency in Britain.

After leaving the Golf Club of California we travelled to the Taylor Made and Adidas Headquarters. Here we were shown around this impressive facility

by the Superintendent Patrick Waymire. The facility not only provides an exclusive club fitting and swing analysis service for some of the World's top players, but also produces every Taylor Made club distributed throughout the World at its assembly plant.

Over 600 employees assemble and pack each club in approximately two to three minutes churning out 20,000 clubs every day! The shop floor spanned over 220,000 sq.ft. with the atmosphere inside the workshop being intense to say the least.

Aside to just club production, the facility also has its own ball testing laboratory and an extensive practice facility of which Patrick was in charge.

As we toured his workplace we soon became united in the conclusion that his was without doubt THE best job in the World!

With a three man team under him and a budget in excess of \$160,000/yr to look after just 10 acres of turf. Added to this were the perks; \$2000/yr golf equipment and apparel allowance, new clubs every season, free health insurance, free meals, no weekend work and a new fleet of machinery almost every year! On top of this we were told how Patrick had just negotiated a years free trial of fertiliser. I think its fair to say he will be going no where fast!

The practice facility encompassed: One driving range, two putting greens (both Bent/Poa) and three bunkers. Patrick had previously worked as a Course Superintendent but he was without a doubt the most laid back man we'd meet on our trip!

Toward the end of our visit we were fortunate to bump into John Daly. The immediate thought of the group was for a team photo. However all notions of this were cast aside as soon as Paul Jenkins decided to introduce himself as the person who'd been the bunker raker for Daly during The Open.

Unfortunately it conspired that Daly had that day visited just about every bunker on the Royal St. George's while on his way to shooting himself out of the Championship. Not a particularly cherished association. Consequently I have a very distant shot of John Daly's behind as he strode away from us... Cheers Paul!

The week was passing us by and by Wednesday we were just getting acclimatised to the Californian weather. We spent the day as part of a Turfgrass field seminar which took us on a pit-stop tour of a range of facilities in the area.

First stop was the newly constructed home of the San Diego Baseball team, the San Diego Padres. The facility, known as Pecto Park, was 90% complete and not due to open until March. It was quite an experience for the group as many of us had never stepped foot inside a baseball stadium before.

We then moved on to the Del Mar race track, where we gained an interesting insight into the various maintenance and damage limitation techniques employed to maintain turf on a race track that is in use for up to 80% of the year.

In the afternoon we were treated to visits to two of the region's most prestigious golf courses: The Bridges Golf Club in Santa Fe, and The Fairbanks Ranch Country Club.

The Bridges Golf Club is described in their literature as 'A place lost in

time'. The concept was to create a little piece of Tuscany in California! The results were surprisingly impressive, with an intimidating Tuscan' style Clubhouse overlooking an awe-inspiring golf course.

The course was opened in 1999 and designed by Robert Trent-Jones Jr. A full time staff of 32 (that swells to 45 in summer) intensively manicure its 300 acres of immaculate turf. The greens were particularly impressive, sown as a G-6 Bentgrass and taking up a total of three acres they are maintained to stimp all year round at 9.5-10.5 on the metre.

The fairways encompassed 26 acres of once, if again, immaculate turf. The TifwayII mix was dense and natural in colour. There was a policy of no overseeding with Rye, which is a unique concept in this climatic zone. The justification for this was pure playability, the members didn't mind the discoloration of the dormant Bermuda and preferred its all year round playing characteristics.

The Bridges derives its name from the two stress ribbon suspension bridges that link the 10th and 11th holes. These 285 foot bridges were only the second and third to be completed in the US. Among its 250 members is Phil Mickelson and with a substantial membership fee of \$380,000 per year and on top of this a monthly fee of \$1,000 its expected not to grow much higher!

What I think we all found refreshing was that this was not a typical run-of-the-mill American golf course. The Bridges is highly unique and really does sit well among its surrounding arid landscape.

To contrast we then visited The Fairbanks Ranch Golf and Country Club. Again a private members club with roughly 500 members who pay a fee of \$85,000 per year for the privilege.

Designed by Ted Robinson Snr, the Club opened in 1984 and among other things was a site for the equestrian endurance event in the 1984 summer Olympics. The course was built on a riverbed and placed on top of this was over one million yards of imported soil. This allowed the grade of the site to be raised by 20-30 feet in an effort to reduce the occurrence of seasonal flooding.

The primary reason for our visit to Fairbanks was that in the past the course has been irrigated with second grade well water which has an exceptionally high dissolved water content.

Under recommendation all tees, fairways and roughs were therefore overseeded with Seashore Paspalum grass (Excalibur). This was regarded as the only way of maintaining quality turf coverage under such high salt conditions.

The advantages were high wear tolerance, good summer colour and consistent density. The disadvantages were a long dormant season, a sensitivity to many herbicides and significant thatch accumulation.

Consequently the Superintendent is moving away from this species and introducing a more traditional Bermuda/Rye mix, with tall fescue roughs.

Aside from these issues the greens were some of the finest pure Poa annua surfaces imaginable. However with up to 36 staff on 27 holes and just under 35,000 rounds per year it was obvious why!



▲ The picture shows the effect this highly diluted application has in stressing out the Poa, whilst the surrounding Bermuda/Rye mix is unaffected



▲ Pictured is a typical hole at The Bridges. Taken from the tee with a carry over a scrubland ravine



▲ The group pictured at The Bridges

The following is a typical summary of the greens maintenance schedule at Fairbanks:

- Greens fed once a week with foliar feed.
- They receive 6-7lbs/sq.ft. of N and P/ yr.
- PGR's applied weekly.
- Greens toppedressed every three weeks.
- Verticut as required and rolled three times per week.
- Double cut and rolled for tournaments.

Leached every month during times of low rainfall and high irrigation months between June-November. (Leaching helps to maintain low soil salinity)  
Typical pest problems: Anthracnose, Rapid blight, and Fusarium.

The remaining three days were predominantly taken up by the show.

At 9am on the Thursday morning we attended the official opening session. The event was hosted by the then President Jon Maddern with golf commentator Jim Nantz as the featured speaker. During this one and a half hour session there were more backs slapped and proclamations of love made than in any episode of Dynasty I could remember!

This aside there is no doubt that the GCSAA have continually raised the bar in terms of their associations image and stature and as a result the members are justly proud.

The tradeshow was phenomenal, a total of 19,317 delegates attended with 684 exhibitors covering a floor space of 240,000 sq.ft.

It's hard to draw comparisons with our own show at Harrogate. We are poles apart in every sense. The media coverage of the event was intensive, Superintendents were being interviewed with the entire golf industry seemingly aware of the events importance.

The dress code of collars, no denim and no trainers was refreshing and the no smoking or drinking policies within the show were strictly enforced.

Exhibitors were both friendly and well informed, sadly many of the more innovative products in the stands were as yet unavailable in the UK. It was good to see two British colleagues represented at the show and of course the BIGGA stand, where Andy Campbell and the team were ever present to advise



▲ Pictured below the San Diego Convention Centre, home to the 75th GCSAA tradeshow



▲ A view from the Clubhouse at Fairbanks G&CC

visitors with any queries they may have had regarding the association.

On the Thursday evening Stephen Bernard hosted the Prestige Club Dinner which provided us all with a great forum to either catch up with old friends or make new ones, while enjoying a first class dinner.

We all took the opportunity to gain a further insight into the profession as it is in America and discuss a wide range of topics.

During the last day of the show many of us took the opportunity to drive out to Torrey Pines GC and watch the third round of the Buick Classic.

I believe those who went were fortunate to meet the Superintendent who showed them the facility and answered their questions relating to the staging of the event.

It was also a relief to see that "The Jenkins' Curse" was not repeating on John Daly, as he eagled the last to set up a famous victory and banish the memories of Royal St George's forever!

As the week came to an end it was clear that we all took different experiences from the tour. We were all astounded by the style of greenkeeping 'stateside' but we were also impressed by the general image and obvious high regard the greenkeeping industry enjoys in America.

On a personal note one of the most memorable moment for me came on the last day of the show when we attended a seminar focussing on how a golf course should be set up to host a major event.

In attendance was the esteemed golf course architect Rees Jones. When he was asked what his views were on the future management of golf courses he replied: "Brown is good, we need to get out of this Augusta Syndrome and start producing sustainable golf courses with firm, fast surfaces" ....wise words!

Finally I know all the delegates would like to thank Stephen and Sam for all their efforts, plus of course Kim and the other Bernhard staff who helped make our stay so special. Our thanks also to BIGGA and their support to the delegation. This is an opportunity, that as members, we should all take advantage of and I would urge others to apply for the Scholarship later this year!



▲ Pictured are a couple of the tour delegates benefiting from a practical demonstration from one of the Bernhard staff

# Your Letters...

## A Lost Friend

What does one say when one loses a friend? Neil Thomas was our Executive Director and our friend. He directed our association from the hotch-potch conglomeration it was to the elevated and respected position we now hold.

He opened doors for the greenkeeper that no matter how we tried as three separate associations we could never have moved.

His educational programme alone entitles him to a place of honour in greenkeeping annals. When we look back to when he took us in hand and pulled our profession up by the boot-straps and told us we had to stand up and be counted if we were ever to become the association he envisaged. We realised that here was someone who could lead us to a place in the big expansive world of golf and make a niche for the unsung, unseen and under-estimated greenkeeper. Neil Thomas never looked back – I don't think he knew how to – BTME is the proof of that.

In the beginning of Neil's time with us we did get a push up the ladder from the R&A but only so far, the exceptional progress was made by Neil.

One could honestly say, considering he had no money, no premises, and most certainly not a lot of prospects when he took on the job, he made the transfer from rags to riches for BIGGA.

Those of us who had the privilege to work with him will remember when he got the bit between his teeth there was no holding him. His aims were high and he and he alone instilled in the early guard of Management a forward drive which still prevails.

What I have written here only scratches the surface of what Neil has done for greenkeepers. I am sure many others will elaborate on his achievements.

As I look back over the years and as we move forward, probably into realms of which we can only dream, we can always hope Neil's guiding hand will be at the wheel of our great adventure into the future.

Cecil George  
Lenzie

## A Debt of Gratitude

In 1986 the three Greenkeeping Associations, The British Golf Greenkeeping Association; The Scottish International Golf Greenkeeping Association and The English International Golf Greenkeeping Association had meetings that were hosted by the Royal and Ancient, out of which, in 1987, was formed the British and International Golf Greenkeeping Association.

I can remember attending the first Annual General Meeting, which was at Wetherby Race course, and was talking to another Greenkeeper colleague and saying to him, "Wouldn't it be a marvellous sight to see all the Greenkeepers in the Association blazer?" This appears to be the norm now at AGMs as we produce a really professional image and make a real contribution in the world of golf.

Looking back on the formation with the appointment of Neil Thomas as the Executive Director no-one would believe we have come so far in such a short time. This is down to the Board of Management and the R&A who have given their time freely for the benefit of the Greenkeepers.

Neil Thomas guided the Association from the headquarters of the STRI at Bingley and brought credibility and worldwide recognition of the Association. Casting my mind back, we now have an Association we can be proud of, with a host of benefits for the Members that can be found in your membership package.

We have a Magazine that we own, a highly successful Trade Show and the Greenkeeping Association that is profiled in the Open Championship with a Support Team and at the Volvo PGA Championship at Wentworth.

Words seem inadequate for what Neil Thomas brought to the Association. I feel we certainly owe him a debt of gratitude for making it an Association that we can be proud of. He has certainly given the Association a springboard to continue the work that he has started.

I would like to pass on my sympathies to his wife Elaine and family. They can be extremely proud of his achievements and I offer my condolences and those of the Northern Region at this sad time.

Neil had a vision from the very outset of the way he saw the Association growing in stature. From the very beginning it must have been a very daunting task, from the humble beginnings to the lasting legacy that he has left the Association. This is a great testament to a very quiet gentleman.

Ian Holoran, Northern Region Chairman

Letters continued  
on page 32...

**YOUR LETTERS ARE REQUESTED!**

Send to: Scott MacCallum, Editor, Greenkeeper International, BIGGA HOUSE, Aldwark, Alne, York YO61 1UF, or email them to: [scott@bigga.co.uk](mailto:scott@bigga.co.uk)

# The Greenkeeper and the Rules of Golf

Tim Hudspith, of the PGA's Tournament Department outlines some of the rules with which greenkeepers should be well acquainted

For a greenkeeper to set up a golf course that is well defined for not only the player but also the Committee administering an event, an awareness and understanding of a number of Rules of Golf issues is of prime importance.

The rules of the game revolve around honesty and integrity and every greenkeeper must endeavour to provide all golfers who step on to their course with an opportunity of applying them fairly and consistently.

This article will attempt to identify a number of on-course rules issues that are frequently misunderstood and applied incorrectly by many greenkeepers up and down the country.



▲ The golfer is entitled to stand outside the markers - always assess the ground around each marker



▲ The teeing ground is two club lengths in depth - always assess the ground within that area

## THE TEEING GROUND

The game of golf begins at the teeing ground and this is one area of the course where many misjudgements are made. The Rules of Golf defines it as 'a rectangular area two-club lengths in depth', therefore when setting the tee markers, greens staff should always ensure that they are positioned **at least** two club-lengths forward from the back edge of the tee.

Additionally, the area surrounding the teeing ground must also be considered. A golfer should be able to make an unobstructed swing even if he tees his ball at the extremity of the two club-length area. Therefore, any trees, artificial obstructions (e.g. tee boards) or advertising banners that may obstruct the golfer when taking his stance or swing should be identified and the markers adjusted if necessary. Much emphasis is placed upon setting up the course at its full length, but accurate rules interpretation should not be compromised for this to be achieved.

Regarding the width of a teeing ground, it is suggested that the markers are placed approximately six paces apart. By doing so, turf is protected and it can also be argued that if any wider, the player may inadvertently breach the rules by teeing his ball in front of the markers, due to difficulties in assessing alignment.

Because Rule 11-1 states that 'a player may stand outside the teeing ground to play a ball within it', it is also recommended that the markers are thus set that if a player wishes to take advantage of this option, his stance will be on the same level as the ball. A golfer may wish make full use of the teeing ground in order to gain a particular view of the hole - he will not be impressed if by doing so he will be standing on a bank one foot above his ball!

Although not strictly a rules of golf issue, the direction of the tees must also be considered. It sounds obvious but a golfer will be much better prepared to play a hole if the tee is pointing straight down the fairway rather than towards the trees or worse still, out of bounds - not an uncommon sight!

Effectively, the line between the two markers should be at a right angle to the drive zone or putting green if the hole is a par 3. The simplest way to establish this is for a greenkeeper to stand on the tee, extend his arms at a 90 degree angle to the intended target on the hole (e.g. drive zone) and place the markers in line with his arms.



▲ When setting tees, ensure the markers are pointing in the right direction!



▲ When defining out of bounds, stakes should be clearly visible and continuous

# teeing

Finally, lefties should not be forgotten! There is no doubt that they are in the minority, but it is important to ensure that on the teeing ground a left handed golfer is afforded the same room to manoeuvre as a right handed player.

## WATER HAZARDS & OUT OF BOUNDS – HOW SHOULD THEY BE MARKED?

All golfers from time to time encounter water hazards and out of bounds (OB) and because penalties are involved, clear and accurate definition of both are vital.

With regards water hazards, if stakes (and in some cases, lines) are installed, the Rules of Golf advise that they should be 'placed as nearly as possible along the natural limits of the hazard', i.e. where the ground breaks to form the depression containing the water - not on the water line itself. All too often, stakes are installed at the bottom of banks, as close as possible to the water. However, if the course is subjected to heavy rain and the hazard overflows, the player would be entitled to a free drop if his ball has come to rest in such overflow – advantageous for the player, but not what the rules of golf intend!

When marking water hazards, it is also important to visualise where a player would be dropping his ball after hitting his ball into water. For example, with a lateral (red) water hazard, a player is entitled to take relief within two club-lengths of the point where the ball last crossed the margin.

As the player is already subjected to a one shot penalty, it would be unfair to penalise him further by expecting him to take his drop on a sloping bank, with a difficult shot ensuing. Therefore, stakes and lines defining lateral hazards should be marked on as flat a ground as possible.

With regard to OB stakes, they should be clearly identifiable from post to post - ideally placed approximately 15 paces apart and avoiding intervening bushes and trees etc. They should also follow the natural boundary of the course – ideally following as straight a line as possible.

If the stakes and/or lines 'wobble' or 'zig-zag' their way up a hole, the Committee (and then the greens staff!) are likely to be leaving themselves open for an ear bashing from disgruntled players! For example, a golfer whose ball has unfortunately crossed such a line will naturally be upset if he has to return to the tee, whilst his playing partner who is further from the fairway, but in bounds due to poor marking, avoids penalty.

When marking water hazards and OB, it is vital that all stakes and lines must have a logical 'beginning' and 'end'. All too often, they do not 'tie up', whether it be with one another or a boundary wall etc. In this situation, the golfer may not be sure whether his ball is in/out of a water hazard or out of bounds etc, and may therefore adopt the incorrect rules procedure and be subject to possible penalty.

It should never be assumed that a certain area is 'out of play' – golfers of all standards take on risks when playing, golf balls end up in strange locations, and a player will invariably argue that even though his ball is lying in Mrs Jones' back garden, due to the fact that there are no white stakes nearby, then he must be in bounds! This scenario represents a highly uncomfortable situation for a greenkeeper (and rules official!) to find himself in. Therefore, the whole playing area MUST be clearly and continuously defined.

A current trend amongst greens staff is for water hazard and OB stakes to be cemented into the ground. This obviously reduces wanton course vandalism and theft, but from a rules perspective it can cause confusion for the player.


The rules state that stakes defining water hazards are obstructions and ideally, they should be movable. If not, the player (a) would not be able to move the stake if interference exists, and (b) if the ball is lying in the water hazard, he would not be entitled to free relief. In addition, with OB stakes, although the rule states that a player is not entitled to move them in order to play a stroke, if the Committee wishes to redefine areas and therefore relocate them, the course would be subjected to damage by doing so.

## WATER HAZARDS – YELLOW OR RED?

The difference between a yellow water hazard and a red (lateral) water hazard is also worth highlighting – the colour a hazard is marked will influence the players dropping options if his ball ends up in the water.


Quite simply, a water hazard is marked yellow if it is practical for a player to drop a ball behind the water, keeping the point where the ball last crossed the margin between himself and the hole. However, instances will arise, where it is not practical or even possible for a player to physically drop a ball behind. For example, a hedge or a building may border the hazard, or alternatively, the immediate dropping area comprises of thick woodland or even out of bounds!

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## The Greenkeeper and the Rules of Golf



In these instances, the hazards should be marked with red stakes or lines, thus enabling the golfer to drop the ball **laterally** within two club-lengths of the point where it last crossed, or if possible, on the opposite margin equidistant to the hole.

### GROUND UNDER REPAIR

Finally, the subject of ground under repair (GUR) causes much discussion in clubhouse bars – usually sparked off by a disgruntled golfer who had the misfortune of experiencing a particularly nasty lie in the rough!

However, it is worth noting that many areas of the course that are classed as GUR under the Rules of Golf need not be marked. It is a common sight when arriving at a tournament, for the course to look more like a murder scene than a golf links due to a paint gun happy/GUR obsessed Greens Chairman!

For example, casts, holes or runways made by burrowing animals



or birds do not require white lines, nor does casual water, material piled for removal or **ANY** hole made by a greenkeeper. By remembering this, the greenkeeper will promote consistency in his marking of GUR. Additionally, the aesthetics of the course are not compromised, whilst the club will save themselves a fortune on paint!

In conclusion, under Rule 6-1, 'the player is responsible for knowing the Rules'. However, if a greenkeeper pays special attention to the above pointers, his course will be presented to a highly professional standard and will fall into line with recommendations outlined in the Rules of Golf.

Additionally, it will aid the competitor in applying the rules both fairly and consistently – and may well even help to improve relationships with any 'difficult' Greens Committee or rules 'boffins' at the club!

*All photographs taken at the De Vere Belfry.*



▲ 3 photographs above: The Committee should be sure whether the water hazard is to be marked red or yellow

# Putting the Record Straight

The majority of golf clubs and courses never get the opportunity to host a European Tour Tournament and, as such, there are a number of misnomers about the Tour and course conditioning, the set-up of the golf course and its 'agronomy/greenkeeping' support staff. I hope to clear up some of these.

*Continue  
to learn*



▲ Aerial view of the 18th at Wentworth during the Volvo PGA Championship

One of the strengths of the Tour is that it plays on a variety of different types of courses – links, heathland, parkland and many new, modern creations. Each is treated uniquely, as every one has different grasses and a different climate, so the 'set-up' of the courses is different.

Our aim is for the golf course to provide a tough, fair challenge for our members, who are some of the best players in the world. To assist the club in achieving this, we do have 'course preparation guidelines' and we do have an 'agronomy/greenkeeping' support team who work with the resident course staff.

Before discussing our guidelines further, I would firstly like to state that our 'agronomy' department (Richard Stillwell, Jack McMillan, Graeme MacNiven, Dirk Thelen with Eddie Adams, joining the Tour from The Old Course shortly) is there to assist the Course Manager and staff.

Our personnel do not take over the running of the course.

We advise and support as much as we physically can to ensure the best playing surfaces we possibly can. This might mean our staff being on-site for a couple of weeks (though we have had instances where staff have been on-site for 10 weeks).

Through our contract with Toro – the official supplier to the Tour – we are able to support the venue with additional machinery. While via our association with Bernhard we can send in a mechanic and grinding technician to ensure all machines are cutting perfectly and at the exact heights.

**PUTTING GREENS** get the greatest scrutiny and criticism of any area of the course (just like at your own course). In our guidelines we have three main criteria. In order of priority they are:

1. Smoothness of putting surface which will allow a ball to run straight and true without 'snaking' or 'bobbling' and remain in contact with the surface at all times.

2. A good green will be firm (not hard) and will accept a well-struck iron shot and will reject a poorly struck approach shot or a shot from the rough.

3. Pace of the greens should be as fast as possible provided that the surface smoothness is never sacrificed in order to produce speed. Obviously each venue will vary in pace depending on putting green construction, grass type, machinery available and climatic conditions. But speeds between 9' 6" and 11' are desirable.

As you see, we are not ruled by the stimpmeter! Yes, we do have venues where the greens run faster than 11' but only if the quality of the surface can take it. Our guidelines highlight top dressing, aeration, verticutting and water control to achieve the desired quality.

Regular light dressings of dry, fine sand, well matted in, will assist in giving a smooth surface for the ball to run on. The increase in number of cuts of the tournament green will also help the roll of the ball on the greens. In some circumstances the use of rollers (such as a Turf Iron) can aid the levelling of the putting surface but care should be taken not to negate the pre-tournament aeration by over-rolling.

Firm and fast greens provide the best test for both approach shots and putts. A sound programme of using as little water as necessary can help produce championship greens and a well-struck medium iron from the fairway should be able to grip and hold. (The desired effect lies in a layer of thatch or fibre not thicker than 10mm.)

The great tendency is for clubs to over-fertilise and over-water too near to the event which apart from creating growth, promotes the build-up of thatch. Green (colour) is not always best. Apart from not rewarding the skilful well-struck shot, soft greens tend to footprint and mark.

Ideally the green conditions and speed at the beginning of the tournament week should be nearly identical on the final day.

We do not stipulate a cutting height for greens, as much care needs to be taken to ensure they are not put under much stress by too much cutting at low heights, particularly when tournaments are played at sensitive times – ie, spring, autumn or periods of excessive heat. The frequency of cut during an event can vary greatly, from double cutting to six times between rounds. Again the programme is agreed between the Course Manager and the Tour, normally the Tournament Director, and will change daily if required. Hand mowing or cutting by triplex are both acceptable to the Tour.

We do ask that the direction of cut is changed for every cut to help reduce nap or grain.

Naturally any treatment that the greens undergo should also be applied exactly in the same way to the practice putting green.

For the most part, **COLLARS AND APRONS** should be treated as the greens. It is useful to have the cutting heights the same as the tees (ie, 8-9mm) as generally the same mower is used to cut both. It is important, however, that the apron is cut in a diamond pattern and that the collar is cut in reverse direction each day to prevent the build up of nap. (Players have