

## What the USGA Wants in an Open Course

By Joseph C. Dey, Jr.

### Executive Director, United States Golf Association

The ideal Open course, in the estimation of the USGA, is one that provides a test of Championship skill without being tricky or unfair. Emphasis is placed on accuracy, not only in the green area but from the tee onward.

The rough should be of a depth and cut that rewards good shots and requires testing recoveries from poor shots. No specific height of grass is required since this is dependent on the density and toughness of turf in the rough. Treatment of rough around each green depends upon the character of the green, its size and difficulty of the approach.

These heights and widths of cut represent average treatment for the Open, but are not hard and fast:

	Height	Width
Fairway .....	1/2 - 3/4 in.	30 - 40 yd.
Collar off fairway .....	2 in.	4 - 6 ft.
Rough .....	4 - 5 in.	—
Green .....	3/16 in.	—
Collar off green .....	1/2 - 3/4 in.	30 - 36 in.
Light rough off collar .....	2 in.	2 - 6 ft.

Here are the USGA's requirements for tees, fairways, greens and bunkers:

**Tees:** Firm, dry turf is essential to stance. The teeing areas should be cut at approximately the same height as fairways.

**Fairways:** Should be maintained with minimum quantities of water to provide firm turf. Hard and soft spots should be avoided. Fluffiness, which can be minimized by combing and brushing, is undesirable because it tends to produce a "floater" ball. Cut should be made with the purpose of providing dense, firm turf with no clover, weeds or grass blades.

**Greens:** Cut may be as high as one-fourth inch where greens are severely undulating to prevent possible movement of the ball on a slope when the player takes his stance. Daily mowing is required for several weeks prior to and during the Open. Greens should be fast, not slippery. Irrigation should be uniform and only sufficient to maintain growth and color. Firmness is a must. Matted, fluffy turf should be corrected by combing, brushing and topdressing well in advance of the competition. Greens should not hold easily for a poorly played approach shot, but shots played with good backspin should hold reasonably well.

In locating cups, the first consideration is to what will give fair results. The two- or three-foot radius within the cup should be reasonably level. In no case should a cup be located in a tricky spot or on a sharp slope where a ball can gather speed (a player above the hole should be able to putt boldly for it).

**Bunkers:** A course grade of sand is preferable. If fresh sand is put in a trap this should come a month before the Championship so that it becomes well settled. The USGA doesn't permit use of a rake that puts large furrows in the sand.

To assist in uniform application of the Rules of Golf, the USGA seeks to meticulously define out of bounds, limits of water hazards and ground under repair.



*the grass people*

## GOLF COURSE DIVISION

...IN SERVICE TO THE GOLF COURSE SUPERINTENDENT

DAN MACK

608/362-5664

1827 Grandview Drive

Beloit, Wisconsin 53511

**Was it a Tank? a Plane?  
or SuperGut? Nope - it  
was a Toro  
Mower!**

**DISTRIBUTED BY**  
**GEORGE A. DAVIS, INC.**  
**Chicago, Illinois 60630**