

**IT'S BACK TO PLAYING THE BALL
WHERE IT LIES FOR TOUR GOLFER**
New York Times News Service

Harrison - Play it where it lies - a basic tenet of the grand old game of golf - has not been a basic tenet of the Professional Golfers Association in recent years. But it soon will be again.

White chalk lines have been generously used to mark out areas from where the best shotmakers in the world get a free lift to improve their chances at making an even better shot. Golf purists criticize such "ground under repair" lines as ruining their favorite sport. Ben Hogan used to complain that "the cardinal sin of golf was when the first white line was put down on a course".

The PGA has taken steps to cut down the overuse of white chalk lines, particularly outside of the fairways. In a notice to professional golfers when they arrived for the Westchester Classic early last week, the PGA declared its new, stronger policy:

"Effective at Westchester, and thereafter, the white lining of ground under repair will be confined to areas in the fairway.

"Certain areas of ground which are actually in a state of repair, or construction, trenching, and newly sodded areas may occasionally be marked as ground under repair outside the limits of the fairway.

"This policy is in keeping with our desire to reward good shots and to be consistent in course markings. We wish to return to the basic rule of golf, which is to play the ball as it lies.

"Our future goal, as course conditions continue to improve, is to eliminate white lines altogether."



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Jack Nicklaus, the best shotmaker of them all over the last 15 years, said, "Golf was never a fair game, and it wasn't meant to be. The white lines have been carried too far. I like this new policy.

"But you must remember, we play many courses at times in the year when they are not in their best condition. But golf must be played on a piece of ground. No two inches of ground are alike."

Nicklaus is not only the premier golfer of his time, he is also extremely aware of golf rules so that he can help himself wherever possible. Yet, if any man can escape from "jail" on a golf course, Nicklaus has the trouble shots to do it.

"We grew up without those white lines when we learned to play golf", Nicklaus said. "The average player never sees a chalk line outside of a fairway on his own course. It's the way to play golf."

Pete Sesso, a PGA official responsible for pin placements and line markings, said, "The idea is not to help the guy who hits a bad shot. Besides, you see great, dramatic golf when the guys hit as it lies. There's nothing greater than to see a man in an impossible shot, you think, and then you hear the swish of the club through tree or bush limbs, see dirt and gravel fly up and the ball come out of it all straight for the pin. That's golf as it should be played."

Sesso said, "These golfers, why they can hit anything. So why should they be given relief when they hit a bad shot?"

Sesso said, "There are two basic rules of golf - play the course as it is and the ball as it lies. Since we handed out this directive there has not been a word of complaint. I'm inclined to believe the players like it."

Nicklaus said, "You don't see many white lines, if any, at the United States and British Opens. You see a lot less white chalk lines in Great Britain than here."

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