



They're Always Too Something

by Paul Vermeulen

Mid-Continent Region, USGA Green Section

What is always too hard or too soft, too wet or too dry, too dark or too light, and/or too coarse or too fine? If you do not know the answer, then you probably have never played a round of golf. If you have, then you never landed in a bunker. That is the answer — a bunker. A depression, usually filled with sand, that is defined as a hazard in the Rules of Golf. A place where you are never happy because you know you are going to get punished. And, that is what the argument is all about. What is fair punishment?

Should the ball plug if it lands in the face? Some people say it should, others say that plugged lies are unfair. Should you have the opportunity to putt, or must you get the ball airborne? Some people say a bunker would not be a hazard if you have the opportunity to putt, others say being in the sand is hazard enough. Should the surface of the sand have a smooth finish, or should it have deep furrows? Some people say the sand should be perfectly smooth, so that you have an opportunity to make

unobstructed contact with the ball and spin it up onto the green. Others disagree, saying that the bunker should not be a place of opportunity.

Who is the Supreme Judge when it comes to deciding what is fair and equitable punishment? The answer is the Green Committee. In the Rules of Golf it says that the Committee, usually meaning Green Committee, decides the condition of the course to include the condition of the bunkers. To help Green Committees make decisions regarding the "proper" condition of the bunkers, there are some basic guidelines that can be used. Without guidelines to follow, I can imagine that someone somewhere might just run for the office of Green Chairman simply to seek revenge on fellow golfers.

The basic purpose of having bunker maintenance guidelines is that they (1) help avoid controversial ruling decisions, and/or (2) help simplify routine bunker maintenance. For example, one guideline is that the sand particle size distribution should be between 0.25 and 1.0 millimeters. This guideline excludes fine silt and clay particles that would impede drainage. Can you imagine the controversy if someone went on to win a major Championship after they were granted relief in a bunker because of standing water? Ouch. This guideline also excludes small stones and/or pebbles in the sand that, if blasted onto the putting surface, would cause damage to delicate mowing equipment.

Another guideline that is important is that the sand should have a blocky or semi-blocky particle shape, as

(continued page 22)

ONE WAY TO IMPROVE YOUR WELL EFFICIENCY



The normal operation of any water pumping system inevitably lead to less efficient well production due to pump wear and well plugging.

At Layne-Western we have the resources and expertise to provide you with innovative solutions to keep your water pumping system operating at peak efficiency. Our complete repair and maintenance services help guard against costly breakdowns and quickly solve problems that arise.

Call the Layne professionals with over 100 years of experience in the water supply industry.



Layne-Western Company

721 West Illinois Avenue • Aurora, Illinois 60506 • 708/897-6941
229 West Indiana Avenue • Beecher, Illinois 60401 • 708/946-2244

(USGA continued)

opposed to a smooth, almost round shape. This guideline encourages the selection of sands that are stable under foot. From a Rules of Golf perspective, stable sands withstand buried lies, thus preventing the need for golfers to literally dig for a lost ball in a hazard. Stable sands also simplify routine maintenance because they remain in place on the architecturally popular, steep bunker faces. This prevents the need to shovel sand back on the faces of bunkers after golfers have walked up them.

Thus far we have learned that desirable bunker sands should (1) drain well, (2) be free of large stones or other debris, (3) resist buried lies, and (4) remain in place on bunker faces. Is there more to learn? Not really. The rest is a matter of personal opinion. By nature, bunker sands are too hard, too soft, too wet, too dry, too dark, too light, too coarse, and too fine. Usually it depends on how well, or how poor you played your last round. That is golf! If you do not agree run for Green Chairperson and make your own rules. Remember, however, the home of a tyrant can be a lonely one!



MARIANI 
LANDSCAPE / DESIGN-BUILD-MAINTENANCE™
300 ROCKLAND RD., LAKE BLUFF, IL 60044
(708) 234-2172 Fax: (708) 234-2754

SPECIALIST IN:

Club House Landscape Design/Build:

Design and installation of specimen plant material for high priority areas. Design and installation of perennial, annual and wildflower displays.

Complete Expert Maintenance Service:

Use Mariani to renovate and rejuvenate shrubs, ornamentals and all landscape areas as you dedicate your precious time on the golf course.

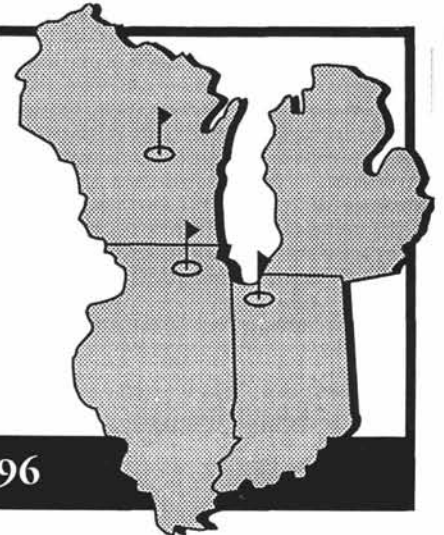
GREENSMIX®

A Division of Faulks Bros. Construction, Inc.

International Soil Blenders ... Serving You Locally!

- ▲ Topdressing & Construction Mixtures
- ▲ Bunker Sands
- ▲ Cart Path Material
- ▲ Decorative Stone
- ▲ Green Sand Divot Fill
- ▲ Peat Moss

For information or quotation please call 1-800-537-1796



PETER E. MULLIGAN
(708) 832-5783

MULLIGAN & ASSOCIATES

- GENERAL AND CONCRETE CONTRACTORS
- RINSATE PAD DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

516 PARK MANOR • ELMHURST, ILLINOIS 60126

LOHMANN

GOLF DESIGNS, INC.

GOLF COURSE DESIGN,
AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT



MARENGO, IL

815-923-3400