

USGA rules address environmentally sensitive areas

FAR HILLS, N.J. — A new Local Rule designed to address the growing number of environmentally sensitive areas on golf courses heads changes that will debut in the 1996 Rules of Golf, which took effect Jan. 1. Environmentally sensitive areas can only be designated by an appropriate authority, typically a government agency, and a player is prohibited from entering them. "It was necessary to find a way for players to be able to continue to play the game when an environmentally sensitive area af-

ected their play," said Trey Holland, USGA Rules of Golf Committee chairman, of Zionsville, Ind. "This Local Rule accomplishes that. We want the Rules of Golf to reflect that golf courses and nature reserves can be blended together. And they can."

In another change, the USGA and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, in Scotland, who jointly oversee the Rules of Golf, moved to strengthen their position against slow play by expanding Rule 6-7.

A committee may establish

pace-of-play guidelines and add a single-stroke penalty as a first offense option for slow play in stroke play. Subsequent penalties would continue to be a two-stroke penalty and, ultimately, disqualification.

"We are responding to the issue of slow play by giving a committee more flexibility in assessing penalties for slow play," said Holland.

These and other amendments were made after four years of study and recent discussion at the quadrennial Rules conference in April in England.

Ga. links open despite wetland damage

HOLLY SPRINGS, Ga. — The Bradshaw Farm development's new championship-style, 18-hole golf course opened in November after damage to a federally-protected creek stopped construction earlier in the fall.

The course, which takes up 184 of the development's 616 acres, opened in late November. A wetlands violation was discovered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engi-

neers in late August. The Corps found appropriate erosion and sediment controls were lacking in certain areas.

Developer B.F. of Cherokee L.P. voluntarily stopped work before a cease and desist order was issued and submitted a planting plan for vegetation near Avery Creek to prevent erosion. Fines for Clean Water Act violations can run from \$10,000 to \$50,000 per day, but no fines were issued.

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Two St. Louis tracks could be headed for major facelifts

ST. LOUIS, Mo. — Two heavily used public golf courses at the city's Forest Park could be headed for a major facelift.

The Forest Park Master Plan Committee, a 69-member group made up of institutional representatives, park and urban planning experts and environmentalists, is completing plans to reconfigure the 18-hole and nine-hole golf courses as part of a \$98.6 million rehabilitation of the park.

If proposals under consideration are adopted by the city, as many as 11 holes of the 18-hole course — opened in 1912 — will be eliminated or significantly altered. And the nine-hole course, built in 1914 for beginners, will be gone.

The park plan committee employed Hale Irwin Golf Services to create three conceptual designs to conform to the master plan. Two of those designs are being considered seriously. The one getting the most attention is a plan calling for an 18-hole course with practice facilities (including three full-length practice holes), driving range and new clubhouse. The other design calls for 27 holes with no practice facilities.

One key issue driving the makeover of the golf courses is moving golf and golfers away from the Art Hill (which includes a museum), the Grand Basin and surrounding waterways within the park.

American Golf Inc. manages the park's golf facilities and has 12 years remaining on a 20-year lease. The company has remained neutral during the planning discussions, but reportedly prefers an 18-hole design that includes practice facilities. Under its contract, American could eventually reject the redesign plan the city presents and force more debate and negotiation. The financing of the project must also still be determined. The estimated cost of redesigning and reworking the golf courses as part of the master plan is \$4 million.



Tim Johnson, Golf Course Superintendent
Glen Oaks Country Club
West Des Moines, Iowa



Old Overton Club
Bruce Hospes, CGCS
Vestavia Hills, Alabama