

Maintenance and the Rules

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What the greens department should
know about the Rules of Golf

AT this time of year, before our Northern courses have opened for the 1941 season, suppose we examine the Rules of Golf as they affect maintenance practices. The subject is well worth considering because, generally speaking, too little attention is paid by green-chairmen and greenkeepers to ways and means of making the Rules easier for players to interpret and easier for golf committees to enforce.

For example, what is a *teeing ground*? How wide may it be; how deep? Let's take a look at Definition 4 of the Rules for the answer: "*The teeing ground is the starting place for the hole being played. The front shall be indicated by two marks and the teeing ground is a rectangular space of the depth of two club-lengths directly behind the line indicated by the two marks.*"

Handling the Tees

The definition tells us all we need to know. First of all, the front *shall be indicated by two marks*. Two marks, not one; I have seen many courses with a single marker on each tee, which means the players must guess at what angle from this marker the front edge of the tee projects. It's unfair to the players, who are penalized if they tee up ahead of the markers in stroke play and who may lay themselves open to shot-recall in match. So if your course happens to use but one marker on the tees, a little reform is in order.

The definition says nothing about how far apart the two markers may be, so use your own judgment. Good maintenance practice would suggest that on a nice wide tee (by which I mean the area kept mowed and available for the markers) you should be generous with your players and place the markers far apart. If the mowed area is long and narrow, be as kind as you can to the players and move markers as soon as divots have chopped away the turf.

And here is another point—while the greenkeeper is not required to place the two markers at right angles to the line-

of-play, it is certainly a good maintenance practice to follow. Players welcome the chance to blame poorly placed tee-markers for their poorly directed drives. It takes but a moment to make sure the markers square up to the correct flight line and groundmen should be instructed to watch this.

Finally, notice that the *teeing ground* is not a line between the two markers, but rather a rectangular area as wide as the markers are apart and two club-lengths in depth. (For purposes of interpretation, a *club-length* is approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet, so a *teeing ground* is seven feet in depth.) The course maintenance lesson in this conception of the *teeing ground* is: never place the markers so far back on a tee that less than seven feet of smooth-mowed turf is available behind the markers.

Now let's talk about *hazards*. Everybody knows a creek or a pond is a hazard, and that sand traps are hazards, but the list doesn't end there. The Rules (under Definition 6) say: *A hazard is any bunker, water (except casual water), ditch, sand or road*. Let us consider in turn each of those five kinds of hazards as they relate to maintenance. What's a *bunker*?

Grass Not Part of Bunker

The definition says it is a *depression in the ground where the soil is exposed and sometimes covered with sand*. The word *bunker* is English; the U. S. equivalent is *trap* or *sand trap*. But notice that only the soil-exposed depression in the ground is hazard and that any mound which may lie adjacent is not hazard, although it is standard practice to allow the grass on such mounds to grow long and matted, often longer than the rough. This

Illinois Hotel Foundation, Inc., in which members of the Chicago District Club Managers Assn. are active, has been conducting a sampling survey on American wines.

Club managers are having some of their members express their taste preferences after sampling unlabeled selected wines from New York, Ohio and California.

may or may not be fair to your golfers, depending mostly on the architecture of the hole. Perhaps they deserve to be punished for being in the vicinity of the trap, even if they missed the sandy area and bounded onto the grassy mound; maybe, having missed the trap they deserve a break. At any rate, the green-committee, in conference with the golf committee, should establish maximums of grass height around bunkers.

Now, since a bunker is only the *exposed* depression in the ground, it follows that an island of grass inside a trap and the grassy sides of a trap are not a part of the hazard. Greenkeepers should keep this in mind and spade out all grassy islands if it is the intent of the course architect to punish every ball that comes to rest in a trap. It isn't necessary to chop away every scattered blade of grass that starts to grow, but once it begins to form in patches, it should be removed.

Marking Hazard Margins

The second type of hazard mentioned in Definition 6 is *water* (except *casual water*). Not creeks or ponds or lakes, but *water*. Rule 27, which deals with water hazards, says: *If a ball lie or be lost in a recognized water hazard (whether the ball lie in water or not) . . . the player may . . .* What does *recognized* mean? A general definition is impossible, nor can any specific rule be laid down for the extent of a water hazard, but definite margins must be established for your players. This is essential because, while grassy slopes bordering a bunker are not hazard, the grassy banks of a brook or a pond *are* hazard, and your players are entitled to know whether the restrictions to play in hazards applies to them in a given lie.

All this means that the green-committee and the golf committee, working together, should define the limits of all water hazards. The USGA recommends the use of white stakes for this purpose, although very often it is possible to mark the banks of a brook quite accurately by running the fairway mowers along the exact limits of the hazard, so that the golfer may recognize those limits by the difference in height of turf—long grass is *in* the hazard, short grass is *not*. When the hazard extends into the rough, and it generally does, the use of white stakes is recommended, since no mowing procedure will do the marking job.

Casual water (by definition *any tempor-*

ary accumulation of water which is not one of the ordinary and recognized hazards of the course) need not be naturally accumulated, but might be the result of sprinkling, or seepage from a leaky pipe. If, however, seepage from a pipe is a more or less permanent thing, so that a certain area of your course is constantly wet, that part of the course cannot be considered casual water. The leakage should be repaired.

Ditches, the third type of hazard mentioned in Definition 6, require the same careful marking of their limits as other hazards and here again the mowers often can be used to do the marking. Where a ditch lies so near a tee that well-hit drives often reach it, club committees should give players relief either by filling in the ditch, after first laying drain pipe, or should establish a local rule, worded something as follows:

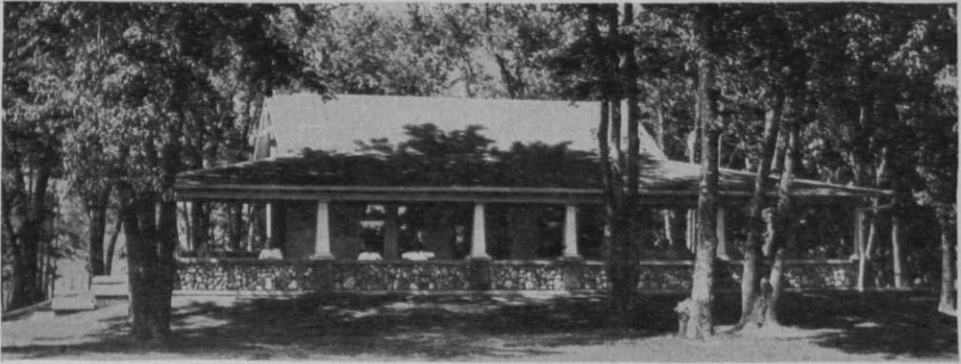
If a ball driven from No. 0 tee lies or is lost in the ditch crossing the hole, a ball may be dropped without penalty, keeping the spot the ball crossed the margin of the ditch between the ball and the hole.

The fourth type of hazard is *sand* and no comment is necessary except to point out that *sand blown onto the grass or sprinkled on the course for its preservation* is not a hazard. Where it is desired to give players relief from sandy areas, a local rule is in order.

What About Roads

The final type of hazard mentioned in Definition 6 is *roads*. The definition goes on to say that *tracks and paths are not hazards*. What is the distinction? The USGA explains that *tracks* means the marks left by the occasional passage of vehicles or of greenkeeping equipment, as distinct from a roadway constantly used as a passage from and to definite points. *Tracks* might reasonably be understood to include the isolated ruts and areas worn by the repeated passage of mowers or other upkeep equipment from one fairway to another, or of equipment from the maintenance barn to various points on the course. But if this wear causes the tracks to take on the aspect of a road—if it looks like it might be a road to the players — then the local committee should declare itself on the matter, ruling either that it is a *hazard* or make plain to the members through local rule that it is *tracks*.

Paths on a golf course occur most fre-



Much of the appeal of the country club in the smaller cities and towns depends on the location and appearance of the clubhouse. Here is the clubhouse of the Fairview GC at Keokuk, Ia., where Harry Ogden is pro-supt. A beautiful natural setting and well-groomed grounds set off the clubhouse most attractively.

quently in the stretches between a given green and the tee of the following hole, and at either end of bridges over hazards. Generally speaking, the greenkeeping department need pay no attention to paths, allowing them to wear in naturally and grow with the traffic over them. Of course, if the paths are slopes, ruts may develop after rains, due to surface runoff. When this happens, you can depend on your players registering loud complaints over the lies they get and it will be necessary either to re-turf the path, apply a binder to the soil to combat erosion, or erect some sort of barrier to force the players to detour permanently around the ratty area. This can sometimes be done with shrubbery.

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This discussion of the Rules of Golf as they affect maintenance will be continued next month.

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CASUAL notes from Golf Monthly of Edinburgh and London:

"British golf ball manufacturing is restricted by government order to 25% of sales from Dec. 1, 1939, to May 31, 1940.

"There are 116 bomb holes on the golf course at Folkestone.

"Wally Marks is the first British pro golfer to get rank of flying officer.

"Lees Hall GC, Sheffield, Eng., has 'adopted' two trawlers and is keeping their crews supplied with essentials and comforts."

And the British are battling to beat hell and not complaining. It makes us Americans who are complaining about every little thing feel rather ashamed, doesn't it?

How I Topdress Greens

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IN the latter half of February and early March we have a lot of light freezing that honeycombs the soil. During that time I put on my arsenate of lead. For the last 3 or 4 years I have been using around 5 to 10 lbs. per 1,000 sq. ft. I use this amount mixed with enough topdressing to make it spread even.

I first mix the arsenate with 100 lbs. Milorganite to each 5,000 sq. ft.; then mix enough topdressing with it to cover the green. I use a steel mat to rub the material in.

I make my own compost piles from barnyard manure, which I am lucky to get from farmers close by. I use old sod taken from the edging of traps and soil into which I plow soybeans and rye each year, to make up the pile.

Last year I had a 25-acre field in fair hay. I tried to give it to farmers, but they were all too busy with their own work to take it—so I cut it with our cutter bar and hired a farmer to rake and haul to my compost area. I would say that I got around 15 tons and I put it in a long flat rick and left the center low so it would take water. I had a farmer put 15 truck-loads of rotted manure on top of this pile. The rains will wash the strength down through, and in a year or two I will have plenty of rotted manure to make most compost piles. I have always said that a green needs plenty of compost and I see that I keep plenty of it aging ahead for my use.

After that first topdressing in late February or early March, I follow in April