

# “Traps,” Waste Areas and Bunkers

A pet peeve of mine is the misnomer “traps,” used by golfers and television announcers to refer to sandy depressions on golf courses. “Traps,” as often stated in Rules seminars that I have taught, are what we use in New Jersey to catch mice in our garages during the wintertime. I also began to take a mousetrap to these seminars and pass it on to each person who said the word “trap” for “bunker”; the person holding the trap at the conclusion of the seminar receives some type of penalty, in addition to becoming the owner of the trap. It’s no big deal, but, as with the incorrect substitution of “pin” for “flagstick,” knowledgeable golfers should know the correct terms.

According to the Rules of Golf, the Definition of a bunker is “a hazard consisting of a prepared area of ground, often a hollow, from which turf or soil has been removed and replaced with sand or the like; grass-covered ground bordering or within a bunker is not part of the bunker. The margin of a bunker extends vertically downwards, but not upwards.”

Oakmont, site of the 1994 U.S. Open, is famous for its church pews (grass-covered areas) in bunkers. If a player’s ball comes to rest in a church pew, by Definition, the ball is not considered in the bunker.

A new term on the scene is “waste area” or “waste bunker.” The USGA has received numerous phone calls and letters on this very subject. What are waste areas, and does a player have different options in playing a ball from these so-called waste areas? Not in the eyes of the USGA.

The Definition of “through the green” is as follows: “the whole area of the course except (a) the teeing ground and putting green of the hole being played; and (b) all hazards on the course.”

Thus, by declaring an area that should be a bunker (hazard) as a waste area, players can now treat it as through the green and do such things as ground their clubs and remove loose impediments. Again, the USGA disagrees with areas that meet the Definition of bunkers being called “waste areas.”

We send the following to those who contact us regarding waste areas:

“Under the Rules of Golf, there is no such thing as a ‘waste area’ or ‘waste bunker.’ By Definition, a bunker is a prepared area of ground from which turf or soil has been removed and replaced with sand. There is nothing in the Rules under which a prepared area of sand (bunker) may be categorized as not a hazard, through the green, by terming it a ‘waste bunker.’ On the other hand, a natural sandy area is not a hazard, and a player whose ball lies in such an area may ground his club lightly in, or remove loose impediments from the area.”

Individuals and clubs, to support the Rules of Golf and the history of our great game, should refrain from treating such areas as through the green. Play them as bunkers, please!”

—Tom Meeks, USGA

## Rerouted

(Continued from Page 28)

- 10) Equipment: Not Enough/Poor Quality
- 11) Time Spent on Course
- 12) Documentation
- 13) The Bandwagon Concept (The Leadership CC is doing it)
- 14) Rules Of Golf/Marking The Course
- 15) Lack Of Outside Interest (No Time For Rest Or Family)
- 16) Test Plots
- 17) Staying Current With Technology
- 18) Long Range Planning
- 19) Training & Delegation
- 20) Managing Carts & Cart Paths

Wow! What a list. No wonder the superintendent “leaves home!”

### How To Keep Us!

I’m sure most of us superintendents can handle these various and diverse assignments. However, there are two great big obstacles in the way of making our job more tenable. The “low handicappers” and the “Green Chairperson” are

the major problems at most courses.

The severity of the Green Chairperson problem varies with the type of operation. The Private Club is the worst of all because the Green Chairperson along with the elected board change yearly, or even more often! Most Green Chairpersons are the least qualified to handle the management of the superintendent, and most are too stupid to admit that they are out of their territory.

The other major problem area plaguing superintendents is the “low handicapper” who insists that the green be shaved down to “mud” in violation of all good agronomy practices. Close clipping of the green is one of the worst problems afflicting the game of golf today. Greens were meant to have some turf, and the so-called “fast” green is the ruination of more superintendents than any other one factor!

Let’s not “throw the baby out with the bathwater.” Let’s find a way to keep the fine superintendents we have and give them the much needed confidence they deserve. They may even unpack their bags! And we won’t see their names on the “Rerouted” list!