



## WINTER GOLF – PART 3 TEMPORARY/FROST GREENS

This is the last in a series of three articles written by David Weston, considering various aspects of winter golf.

Secretary At Work: March 2013

### Winter/Temporary/Frost Greens

The further north the club is situated, the more likely the temporary green will be used because the ground is frozen. Grass is an excellent heat insulator and it is the shorter grass areas, ie the greens that freeze first and deepest. This is one of the reasons why the height of cut is raised for all areas of the golf course at the beginning of winter. In choosing the site for a "temporary" green, clubs need to take into account the most regular conditions for their being used. If it is almost guaranteed that they will be needed every winter, their sites should be carefully selected, top-dressed and cut regularly throughout the year, to provide an acceptable putting surface for the long term. If properly prepared, a normal cup may be used. Their size should be sufficient to accommodate two pin positions on reasonably level ground. Clubs will find the cost of top-dressing and preparing them properly insignificant if they are to be used every year. There is no reason why the rationale for the siting of winter greens, winter tees and the route round the course cannot form an addendum to the Course Policy Document.

### Factors to be taken into account in positioning Temporary Greens

- ❧ Avoid wet areas. Make sure winter green sites are on dry positions.
- ❧ If frost is a usual problem, don't site them on approaches. The ball will bounce through onto the normal green and the player will walk onto it to recover his ball. The point of having frost greens is to avoid golfers walking on the mains.
- ❧ Avoid siting them in front of greenside bunkers. If the temporary green is frozen, it is likely that the sand will be too. The recovery shot from frozen sand is extremely difficult. In moving to the next tee, golfers will walk adjacent to the bunker edge creating a wear pattern.
- ❧ If possible site the winter green on the side of the fairway nearest to the play of the next hole. This will keep the wear pattern away from the main green area.
- ❧ If the course has water hazards, do not put the temporary green immediately in front of them. If positioning them on the opposite side of the hazard, ensure there is space behind for the "safe" shot when the greens are frosty.
- ❧ If there is space behind a normal tee to build hard standing for a winter mat, use it. If the winter green is forward of the normal green, the hole will still play its normal, rather than a shorter, length.

## Main Green Protection during Winter Play

STRI recommended waiving the rule that requires the flag to be attended whilst putting. This reduces the "walking" across the green and prevents a "wear patch" hence "crowning" developing at arm's length from the flag.

## Round the Green Areas

It is somewhat ironic that golfers playing winter golf are prepared to walk the 4 or so miles round the course, but are not prepared to walk a few extra yards round the green areas. If they would do so the very poor lies produced by the compaction caused would not be encountered during the summer.

It is a feature of clay based courses that have had a lot of winter traffic to have coarse grass/bare lies in the 5 to 10 yard circle surrounding the green. This makes it very difficult to play a precision shot to the flag during the summer months, particularly if the required shot is over a mound or a bunker. Verti-draining, scarifying and reseeding is need to help such areas to recover, but golfers being golfers, as soon as a decent surface has been produced, will take their trolleys back over it. Strictly enforced trolley no-go areas are the only answer to this avoidable problem.

## Winter Playing Rules

To make winter golf quicker and more enjoyable, players may consider adopting all or some of the "Ted Dexter" rules:

- 1) A player must carry unless in possession of a medical exemption.
- 2) Maximum of 9 clubs.
- 3) Play when ready.
- 4) Only the player whose ball may be lost may look for it.
- 5) If a ball is lost or out of bounds, then a replacement ball may be dropped on the fairway level with the approximate ball position under a 1 shot penalty.
- 6) A maximum of 1 practice swing only is permissible.
- 7) A putt is conceded if it is within a standard putter grip of the hole.

***David Weston, is the former secretary of Enmore Park Golf Club and tutor on the Introduction to Golf Club Management course***

*[This document is prepared for guidance and is accurate at the date of publication only. We will not accept any liability (in negligence or otherwise) arising from any member or third party acting, or refraining from acting, on the information contained in this document.]*