



HAZARDS AND MAJOR TOURNAMENTS

Ray Burniston looks at the hazards on the course and preparation for a major tournament.

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Pro-Forma for Major Tournaments

It is a good idea to have a set formula for the course for all major events. This will include events such as the Club Championship, Captains' and Invitation Days, Pro/Am or Am/Am, County and National Events etc. In cases of County and National events then the officials you deal with will produce their guidelines for the course which the club must follow.

A well planned course with both the Secretary and Course Manager working together will normally see that for most club events a set standard is not only set but adhered to. Often a course which is in reasonable condition is spoilt by tee markers that have not been painted for some time, bunkers without enough sand, GUR and Water Hazards not properly defined and so on. Markers for sight lines for blind shots should be kept maintained so that they show up along with flags and flag sticks on the greens.

Work out a formula for your course in conjunction with your course manager and see that it acted on for most of the golfing year.

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In preparation for a major tournament the condition of the course and hazard areas will be inspected and action taken as necessary.

The following information covers relevant sections that will need to be considered before a Tournament:

Out of Bounds

One problem often experienced on golf courses is defining the area of "out of bounds". Far too often the white posts that were placed to do this have disappeared or are at infrequent intervals which make it difficult to decide whether your ball is in play. Club members in the monthly medal do not have the advantage that professionals have in major tournaments when they can send for an official to obtain a ruling. A golf course holding a major event should have been prepared so that all areas which require rulings are clearly defined with dropping zones and ground under repair clearly marked.

In most cases the internal areas of “out of bounds” have been done away with. Just occasionally you come across a course in which the adjoining fairway is “out of bounds” but thankfully on most courses this does not happen. If you do have problem areas they should be regularly inspected and clearly defined. If you have a ditch that defines the course boundary then it is important to ensure that even when it is dry in the summer it is clearly stated the ball is not in play. In some cases a links course that is directly alongside the sea will have no boundary on the seaward side and a ball can be played from the beach depending on the state of the tide.

Make sure you regularly inspect the course with your course manager to see that everything is kept in good order.

Ground Under Repair (GUR)

Every golf club will need to protect certain parts of the course from time to time and this is usually done by marking the area as GUR. To save any arguments it is best to mark the area with white lines so that there is no dispute whether the players ball is in the area or not. Any stakes or lines defining the GUR are part of the ground and stakes are Obstructions. The ball is in GUR when it lies in or any part of touches the GUR.

Problems often arise because unless the committee have made a local rule prohibiting play from GUR a player is perfectly entitled to play their ball from the area of GUR if they should so wish. Therefore if you wish to prohibit play from GUR you must make a local rule and see that it is prominently displayed.

If you have large areas of the course under temporary GUR then it is in most cases best to have a dropping zone which must be clearly marked and again with notices displayed on the course.

It is also within the power of an appointed Referee in a match to declare an area as GUR. Once again good course maintenance and regular inspections will see that action is taken when necessary and that players will be kept informed of any changes. Once you put an area back in play make sure that all notices are taken down and any dropping zones eliminated.

Water Hazards

More and more courses have made additional water hazards over the past few years. Many of the newly built courses which started up since the late 1980's were renowned for including as many water hazards as possible as features on the course. The water stored within these often man-made ponds and lakes was invariably used to irrigate the course. On many courses an elaborate system of drainage has been built which takes the water through a series of ditches into a purpose built reservoir for irrigation. These add to the frustration of the golfer who faced with a long carry over a hazard will invariably finish up with the ball lost in the water.

The important point is to clearly define these hazards. It is recommended that all water hazards other than Lateral Water Hazards are defined by yellow stakes or lines which clearly show the extent of the hazard. This is important when the hazard is dry because it stills remains a hazard whether it has water in or not. The margin of the hazard extends vertically upwards and downwards. If you have ponds, lakes or ditches that dry up for part of the year but have

abundance of wild life and such like it is advisable to prohibit play from them by introducing a local rule.

A Lateral Water Hazard is often a drainage ditch or it could be a river running alongside a course in which it is deemed by the Committee to be impracticable to drop a ball behind in accordance with the rules. This Lateral Water Hazard must be defined by Red Stakes or lines. Care should be taken when the Lateral Water Hazard joins up with a Water Hazard such as a pond or lake so that players can see clearly where one hazard ends and the other begins. Stakes often get pulled up and thrown into the hazard so regular inspections are needed to avoid any problems later on.

In preparation for a major tournament all these areas will be inspected and action taken as necessary. However, the club member is often forgotten and regular maintenance of all these areas shows a well kept course and avoid many disputes.

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