

The Golf Rules Review

An Intermittent Communique by the WWGA Golf Rules Maven

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Issue XX

2021 Golf Course Turf Survey for the WWGA

This issue of The Golf Rules Review covers the golf course turf survey done by Ron Springer, Director of Golf and Robin Kuhns, VP of the WWGA on April 26, 2021. It also includes some information regarding taking free relief for adverse course conditions noted during the survey.

Background

Last year the WWGA received requests to invoke preferred lies aka "lift clean and place" during our Tuesday Games and Weekend Tournaments due to poor turf conditions. As you know, all rounds that can be used for handicap purposes must adhere USGA rules. This means we play the course as we find it and play the ball as it lies.

An exception for preferred lies can be allowed when the course is "so saturated from temporary accumulations of water (e.g.: flooding, heavy rains) that it would require the ball to be moved a substantial distance and potentially into an adverse condition to get complete relief". However preferred lies is not to be used for poor turf conditions in general e.g. winterkill, lack of grass, or other typical agronomic challenges.

The USGA has allowed Ron Springer to make a temporary limited exception for the turf issues on the fringe around the greens for our Tuesday and Tournament play but this exception cannot be published as a Local Rule for all course play. Basically we cannot make general exceptions for poor turf conditions that apply to the whole course or a large portions of the course. With this in mind Ron Springer and Robin Kuhns surveyed both courses and here is what has been decided.

Survey Results

This year's course conditions have improved over last year partly due to a wet spring and the aeration done on the fairways last fall. We noted 2 fairways that continue to have turf issue throughout the fairway and one putting green with extensive issues. Effective April 26th 2021 and until further notice for the 2021 season, the following exceptions to "play the ball as it lies" will apply for our WWGA Tuesday Games only;

Stony Lick

- Hole #9 Fairway Only -If your ball is in a bare spot on the fairway, you may place it on the nearest tuft of grass no closer to the hole. This is NOT lift clean and place. You may only lift, but not clean your ball, and then place it on a tuft of grass. If your ball is in the rough, play it as it lies.
- Hole #11 Putting Green- Due to the poor conditions on the green, you may pick up after 2 putts and consider your ball holed. You would record your score as if you had 2 putted, unless of course you had really one putted or chipped in.

Mountain View

- Hole #14 Fairway Only- While there is some improvement this year, there are still a lot of bare spots throughout the fairway. If your ball is in a bare spot on the fairway, you may place it on the nearest tuft of grass no closer to the hole. This is NOT lift clean and place. You may only lift, but not clean your ball, and then place it on a tuft of grass. If your ball is in the rough, play it as it lies.

Fringe around the Greens

The rule from last year regarding turf conditions on the fringe of the putting green still apply. To reiterate, if your ball is on the fringe and in either on a bare patch or there is a bare patch in front of your ball, you may place your ball on the nearest spot no closer to the hole to provide relief from the turf condition. In some cases you may not find a spot which doesn't have some issue, so just find the nearest spot with fewest issues .

Ground Under Repair

We noted several areas with persistent issues which Ron Springer will mark as Ground Under Repair. There were also a few areas where the penalty area needs to be better marked with stakes (see photos on next page). These are:

Mountain View

- Hole 7 – inside 100 yards left fairway. This looks good now, but it will be monitored and if need be Ron will have Gary put ropes around this low area which has a tendency to get wet and get tire tracks.
- Hole #8 – the rough on left side valley near the green will be marked and stakes will be added to more clearly define the penalty area boundary.
- Hole 14 – tire tracks will be marked as ground under repair.

Stony Lick

- Hole #6 – the persistent mower tire track damage will be marked as ground under repair.
- Hole 13 – Stakes will be put up near the culvert closest to the right side of the tee box (about 60 yards away).
- Hole #14 – the dirt path from the cart path leading to the left side of the green is considered a cart path the you may take free relief, one club length no closer to the hole.

Tire Tracks that Cause Ground Damage.

Mowers, as well as golf carts and vandals can cause turf damage. Tire tracks were noted especially on Stony Lick. In some cases they are persistent because it is a low area and are the only place the mowers can get to the green (e.g. Hole #6).

- You are allowed free relief from tire tracks that eat into the turf anywhere on the course except in a penalty area. This relief is one club length, nearest point of relief, no closer to the hole. **This relief is allowed whether or not the area is marked as Ground Under Repair.**
- You do not get relief when the mowers smash down the grass and do not tear up the ground (see photo for SL Hole #1).

Once these areas are marked, please let Ron Springer know when they start fading away so he can re-mark them.

Other

- MV Hole 15- turf is coming back and the whole fairway looks better than last year. This hole will be monitored as the summer progresses.

The Rough

- There will be no exceptions to the USGA rules for the rough. The rough for both courses has always been a mixture of sometimes heavy grass in the spring, wispy grasses in late summers, tree roots, pebbles and dirt under trees, bare spots on hillsides, along with areas with very playable conditions. If you think you cannot hit from an area in the rough, you may take an unplayable lie with a 1 stroke penalty, 2 club lengths, no closer to the hole.

MV #8 damage in left Rough before the green. To be marked as ground under repair



MV Hole 14- damage on the left before the green to be marked as ground under repair



MV #8 penalty area left front of the green will have additional stakes to better mark the penalty area.



SL #1- smashed down grass from mower - **NO RELIEF**, play the ball as it lies.



SL #4 - 1st photo is golf cart/mower damage in the middle rough.



SL #6 - Persistent damage near the bunker where the mowers need to get to the green. To be marked as Ground Under Repair.



SL #14 - tire damage . Middle photo is dirt cart path, free relief. Far right photo shows penalty area in right rough to be staked.

