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COURSE MANAGEMENT, MARKING THE COURSE, & COURSE SET-UP PROCEDURES – Golf Australia Recommendations (Version – 13 November 2008)

Many aspects of this document have been re-produced from The R&A's "Guidance on Running a Competition". The information is provided to assist Committees in setting up their own courses.

PART I – Course Management

a) Match Play Index

The Committee must publish a table indicating the order of holes at which handicap strokes are to be given or received (Rule 33-4). This order should be printed on the club's score card.

The following is provided by Golf Australia as an option for clubs. This method provides for a fairly even distribution throughout the round. It also disregards hole difficulties, is fair to players on all handicap levels and has proved satisfactory in use. It avoids allocating low-numbered strokes to the last two holes so players receiving few strokes will have the opportunity use these before a match is decided. It also avoids allocating low-numbered strokes to the first three holes in case a match goes to extra holes.

(Note – When using the match play index in match play competitions, the index should be adapted when a match commences at any other hole on the course. Hole 1 in the recommendation should apply to the first hole to be played, Hole 2 to the second hole to be played, etc. It is important to take this into account when the starting hole for a match is any hole other than the 1st.)

Hole	Index	Hole	Index
1	18	10	5
2	8	11	11
3	12	12	2
4	3	13	15
5	14	14	7
6	6	15	13
7	10	16	4
8	1	17	17
9	16	18	9

b) Stroke Play Index

The Committee must publish a table indicating the order of holes at which handicap strokes are to be received (Rule 33-4). This order should be printed on the club's score card. The one index can be used also for the match play index but generally it is better to have different tables.

Traditionally the stroke index is drawn up by allocating the holes in the order at which it is considered most difficult to achieve par. However clubs usually like to spread the strokes fairly evenly over the two nines. If stroke index 1 is in the first nine holes, stroke index 2 should be in the second nine holes, and so on.

Strokes beyond 18 may be allocated in the same or different order to the first 18. The index would state "1/19" or "3/24". If not allocated beyond 18, the stated order up to 18 applies beyond 18, ie 1/19, 2/20, 3/21, etc.

An analysis of the results of an eclectic competition conducted over a reasonable period of time can prove helpful.

c) Standard Length of Holes

Allocation of the Par figure for each hole is the responsibility of the Club. For guidance, the recommended Par evaluations are as follows, however other factors such as dog-legs and topography need to be considered.

	Women	Men
Par 3	up to 180 metres	up to 230 metres
Par 4	181-365 metres	231-435 metres
Par 5	366 metres and over	436 metres and over

d) Tee Markers: Colour Standardisation

It is recommended that the following colours be used for tee markers:

Women	<i>Red</i>
Men's Championship Tees	<i>Blue</i>
Men's Club Events	<i>White</i>
Men's Forward Tees	<i>Green</i>
Men's 'Tiger Tees'	<i>Black</i>
Visitors	<i>Yellow</i>

e) Distance Markers

Whilst it is desirable for clubs to note distances on fairway sprinkler heads, they may also wish to use marker posts (or ornamental shrubs, etc) set to the sides of fairways. Another option is a series of coloured disks set flush in the centres of fairways (eg white at 50 metres; red 100 metres; blue 150 metres; yellow 200 metres).

Wherever distances are noted they should be in metres to the centres of greens. The club's score card should give advice as to the significance of any distance markers, or markings.

f) Bunker Rakes (in accordance with Decision Misc./2 from Decisions on the Rules of Golf)

There isn't a perfect answer for the position of rakes, but on balance it is felt there is less likelihood of an advantage or disadvantage to the player if rakes are placed outside bunkers. In practice, players who leave rakes in bunkers frequently leave them at the side which tends to stop a ball rolling into the flat part of the bunker, resulting in a much more difficult shot than would otherwise have been the case.

If rakes are left in the middle of the bunker the only way to position them is to throw them into the bunker and this causes damage to the surface. Also, if a rake is in the middle of a large bunker it is either not used or the player is obliged to rake a large area of the bunker resulting in unnecessary delay.

However, each individual committee will face its own set of circumstances and is always entitled to adopt or maintain a different course of action.

g) Course Records (in accordance with Decision Misc./1 from Decisions on the Rules of Golf)

The term "course record" is not defined in the Rules of Golf. However, it is generally accepted that a record score should be recognised as the official "course record" only if made in an individual stroke play competition (excluding bogey, par or Stableford competitions) with the holes and tee-markers in their proper medal or championship positions.

It is recommended that a record score should not be recognised as the official "course record" if a Local Rule permitting preferred lies is in operation.

PART II – Marking the Course

Rule 33-2a of the Rules of Golf states:

The Committee must define accurately:

- i) The course and out of bounds,*
- ii) The margins of water hazards and lateral water hazards,*
- iii) Ground under repair, and*
- iv) Obstructions and integral parts of the course.*

Items which need to be clearly marked are:

a) Out of Bounds

- Stakes defining out of bounds should be painted white.
- The distance between boundary stakes may vary, but it is crucial that it is possible to sight one stake from the next. Stakes should not be obscured by bushes, trees or the like.
- As a precaution, in major events it is recommended that a white circle is painted around the base of each stake so that if the stake is removed without authority, the Committee will know exactly where the stake had been located.
- Out of bounds may be defined by a line on the ground which should be white. (The line itself is out of bounds.)
- If out of bounds is defined by a wall, the Committee must clarify in the Local Rules whether the inside face of the wall defines the boundary or, alternatively, whether a ball is only out of bounds if it is beyond the wall.
- It is not uncommon for the boundary line to be defined by a trench, with a ball being out of bounds if it is in or beyond the trench. If stakes are used to draw players' attention to a boundary trench, rather than define the boundary itself, they should be painted white with black tops. As such stakes do not define the boundary they will be movable obstructions. This point should be clarified in the Local Rules.
- At times there may be a public road defined as out of bounds which divides a course. Decision 27/20 advises that if a ball crosses the road and comes to rest on the part of the course on the other side of the road, that the ball is in bounds unless a Local Rule provides otherwise. However, because it is unfair that a ball on the road is out of bounds and a ball beyond it is in bounds, it is suggested that a Local Rule declaring the ball on the other side of the road out of bounds be adopted.

b) Water Hazards

- Committees must define each water hazard as either a normal water hazard or lateral water hazard. The distinguishing factor is that if a player's ball last crosses the margin of a normal water hazard it will be possible for the player to take relief by dropping a ball behind the hazard keeping the point at which the ball last crossed the margin of

the hazard between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped. If the water hazard is so situated that this is not possible, or the Committee deem it impracticable, the water hazard is a lateral water hazard.

- Stakes and lines used to define the margins of a normal water hazard must be yellow, and in the case of lateral water hazards, they must be red.
- Lines or stakes defining margins of a water hazard should be placed as nearly as possible along the natural limits of the hazard. Therefore, sloping banks will be included within the margins of the hazard.
- When only stakes are used for definition, the straight line from stake to stake determines the limit of the hazard. Therefore, it should be ensured that no area that should be within the hazard lies outside the line (but see Decision 26/2).
- If a body of water is part water hazard and part lateral water hazard, a yellow and a red stake should be placed side by side where the change in status takes place.
- It is recommended that stakes marking hazards are movable – an option for clubs to consider is to create permanent sleeves for water hazard stakes which allow for the stakes to be easily removed and re-inserted.

c) Ground Under Repair

- Committees are advised to conduct a tour of the entire course to identify areas that may need to be marked. Only then should areas be marked, otherwise the Committee may mark areas of GUR at the first few holes and subsequently find that the course has many other similar areas.
- It is very strongly recommended that GUR be defined by white lines (however if the terrain is such that putting down a line is impossible or impracticable, small stakes painted a distinctive colour, such as blue or black, may be used (stakes which are white, yellow, or red, are not recommended)).
- In general, bare areas in the rough should not be marked as GUR.

d) Obstructions

- Although it is not normally necessary to define obstructions, there may be situations where the extent of the obstruction is unclear.
- For example, an artificially-surfaced path may become a natural path (ie integral part of the course), but it is difficult to establish exactly where the transition takes place. In these instances the margins of the obstruction should be defined by stakes or lines. If margins are defined in this manner, the following Local Rule will need to be introduced: *“Immovable Obstructions – White lined areas adjoining any areas defined as immovable obstructions are to be considered as part of the obstruction.”*

e) Environmentally-Sensitive Areas

- Only with the approval of an appropriate authority (ie a government agency or the like) can an area be defined as an Environmentally-Sensitive Area.
- These should be marked with the appropriate colour of stake for the area defined, but with a green top. For example, if the ESA is a water hazard, stakes defining the area should be yellow with green tops.

f) Dropping Zones

- Should be outlined with paint and an appropriate sign should be placed, or the words “Dropping Zone” (or “DZ”) painted, in the area.
- The area created should be large enough to allow for a reasonable lie after divots are taken.
- They may be any shape and the Committee may wish to relate the colour of the paint line to the condition from which relief is being taken, ie yellow if the dropping zone relates to a water hazard.
- The Note to the Specimen Local Rule for Dropping Zones (in Appendix I of the Rules of Golf) lists the procedure for Dropping in a Dropping Zone.

PART III – Course Set-up

Committees are reminded that each course has its own characteristics and has been designed by the architect to have certain features – in preparing a course for a competition, it is important to take account of the strategy that the architects had in mind, and also the type of course and its individual requirements.

It should be the aim of the Course Staff and the Committee to have the condition of the course (including pace of greens) virtually identical from the first practice day to the last day of a multi-day event.

The person(s) appointed by the Committee to set up the course each day must establish the teeing grounds at each hole, determine hole locations, ensure bunkers have been raked and that putting greens, fairways, and tees have been cut, and check lines and stakes defining out of bounds, water hazards, etc.

a) Teeing Grounds

- Teeing areas should be level and firm and the line of sight to the fairway should not be obscured by overhanging branches or the like.
- For competitions which extend over several days, the tee positions should not vary to such an extent as would significantly alter the overall course length. (However, if a strong wind or the like jeopardised the proper playing of the hole, a Committee would be justified in altering the tee markers.)
- A sign stating the hole number, length and par should be clearly visible at each tee to avoid a group or match playing from a wrong teeing ground.
- Tee-markers should be placed approximately six to seven metres apart and the front line of the teeing ground should be set up at right angles to the centre of the drive zone.

- The Rules of Golf state that the teeing ground is an area of two club lengths in depth, and therefore tee-markers should always be at least two club-lengths forward from the back edge of the tee.
- Ensure trees, advertising boards, etc do not create an interference.

b) Hole Positions

- The hole should be positioned at least four metres from any edge of the green. If a bunker is close to the edge, or if the ground slopes away from the edge, the distance should be greater.
- An area of two or three feet around the hole should be as level as possible. Effort should be made to ensure holes are not positioned within three metres of a very severe slope or ridge or of a recently cut hole.
- Consider the condition of nearby turf, especially taking care to avoid old plug holes.
- Ensure there is a balanced selection of holes for the entire course with respect to left, right, central, front and back positions.
- For a competition played over several days the course should be kept in balance daily as to the degree of difficulty. The course should not be set up appreciably more difficult for any round.

We hope that this document assists in the management of your golf course and of play at your golf club. Please feel free to contact your state association if you have any queries or if you would like any further information.

Kind regards,



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