



BUNKERS FILLED WITH WATER – Golf Australia Guidance for Committees

(Version – 29 February 2008)

General

From time to time a *committee* will have to conduct a competition on a golf course which has *bunkers* that contain water. This can be a relatively common occurrence in some areas and is a problem faced by organisers of events ranging from Friday twilight competitions right through to international championships. The following information is provided to help *committees* handle these circumstances if they arise.

(NB: Words in italics are defined terms in the Rules of Golf.)

Local Rule Options

It should be noted that a *committee* may not make a Local Rule providing free relief in general from *bunkers* because of flooding. This would waive a penalty imposed by a Rule of Golf contrary to Rule 33-8b (see Decision 33-8/27).

However in conditions of extreme wetness, where certain specific *bunkers* are completely flooded prior to the round commencing and there is no reasonable likelihood of the *bunkers* drying up during the play of the round, the *Committee* may introduce a Local Rule providing that specific *bunkers*, which are known to be flooded prior to the round commencing, are deemed to be *ground under repair* and classified as *through the green*.

If such a Local Rule is in place, relief may be taken outside these *bunkers* without penalty in accordance with Rule 25-1b(i). In a competition played over more than one round, such a Local Rule may be introduced or rescinded between rounds.

Relief from Casual Water in a Bunker as Provided by the Permanent Rules (Rule 25-1)

Where there is no Local Rule in place, whether a *bunker* contains a small amount of water or is completely filled, the Rule regarding *abnormal ground conditions* (NB *casual water* is an *abnormal ground condition*) caters for all possibilities (see Rule 25-1b(ii)). In accordance with this Rule, a player experiencing interference from *casual water* always has the option of dropping their ball outside the *bunker*, under penalty of one stroke. If a player chooses this option, they must keep the point where the ball lay directly between the hole and the spot on which the ball is dropped – with no limit to how far behind the *bunker* the ball may be dropped.

Competitions Conducted Contrary to the Rules of Golf

If a *committee* is unaware of the restrictions imposed by the Rules of Golf and as a result conducts a competition with a Local Rule allowing general free relief from water-filled *bunkers*, the scores must not be used for handicapping purposes. (NB This is for two reasons; firstly, the round will not have been conducted in accordance with the Rules of Golf and, secondly, taking all bunkers out of play will void the AMCR/AWCR.)

Other Options

In situations where there is no Local Rule in place and where only a few *bunkers* are badly affected, players will also have to deal with the issue of balls coming to rest in *bunkers* they have not considered to pose a concern. To remove the surprise factor, and in addition to any maintenance work performed, it is recommended *committees* pre-advise their fields if possible of specific problem locations. This will give players the opportunity to take into account the problem areas when considering their course management, and can be done for example by posting notices on the starting tees.

If a course experiences periods of prolonged wet weather, an option to consider is to have greens staff create an area of heaped or raised sand at a remote part of the *bunker*. This point should be positioned so that it can never be closer to the hole than any point at which a player's ball could originally come to rest within *casual water*. Such areas need not be large – even as small as one metre square – and can be created by dumping, scraping, or heaping sand from within the wet *bunker*. The location of the hole may need to be arranged to suit.

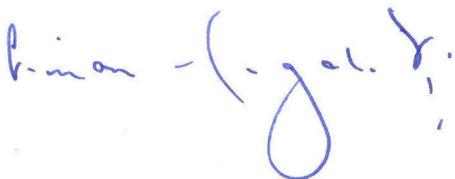
Bunkers Under Renovation

Committees should note that if an entire *bunker* is being renovated, this also presents them the option of providing free relief to players. In order to do this, the *bunker* would need to be declared *ground under repair AND through the green*. (See Decision 25/13 for further details.)

If a renovated *bunker* is not declared *through the green*, it would keep its status as a *hazard*, and a player's only options involving dropping outside it would be firstly to follow the procedure described above in "Relief from Casual Water in a Bunker (under Rule 25-1)" (including incurring the one-stroke penalty), or secondly to take the unplayable ball option prescribed by Rule 28a.

We hope this document assists in the management of play at your 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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