



# tee time

Dec 2021

NEWSLETTER OF THE WELLINGTON GOLF REFEREES ASSOCIATION INC.

## Covid-19

Covid continues to influence our golfing environment, most recently by requiring clubs to choose whether to adopt a 'no jab/no play' policy or not. It seems most clubs have taken that path or chosen a hybrid policy of allowing unvaccinated players access to the course but not the clubhouse.

Under the new CPF (traffic light system), official advice is that there are no restrictions on sharing of course equipment (bunker rakes, flagsticks, toilets, water fountains) between vaccinated and unvaccinated players at any alert setting. It has been recognised that the virus is mainly passed directly between individuals rather than being picked up from contaminated surfaces as was first thought.

**Bunkers.** Some clubs continue to play without rakes. In such cases, the R&A recommends that players use their feet to smooth bunkers (as was done before the advent of rakes). But if the committee is still concerned about the possibility of poor lies, the R&A suggests making bunkers GUR, or having a preferred lies rule, but they note that allowing a ball to be lifted and the bunker raked would not be within the Rules of Golf.

## Rules Courses

Unfortunately, the Level 1 Rules course planned for November had to be cancelled with only three registrations being received. The WGRA is now planning to run a Level 1 course on 10 April 2022 and a Level 2 course 13 and 20 June.

## Rules Clarifications Oct 21 Update

For information, the quarterly Rules clarifications issued by the R&A and USGA in October had no new clarifications.

## Wellington Rules (WGRA) Facebook Page

Just a reminder of a new Rules resource, the WGRA Facebook page. It's a private group but easy to find. Simply apply for access. It's for the



WGRA - Wellington Golf Referees Association

sharing of Rules issues, questions and advice, and already has a few interesting posts.

## Rules Question: Can You Go Straight to a Drop Zone?

If you are down to one ball and you need to play across a water penalty area, can you bypass the tee shot, take a penalty and proceed directly to the DZ to minimise the risk of losing that last ball?



It's creative thinking, but not within the Rules. Accessing a relief area requires a ball to be in the

Penalty Area first (R17.1). Incidentally, you can borrow balls from other players if you run out.

## Can I Repair a Pitch Mark on the Fringe?

A pitch mark on the fringe of a green and on your line cannot be repaired if your ball lies off the green. That would be improving your line of play. There is an exception: if the pitch mark was created after your ball came to rest.



## What About Sand on the Fringe?



A similar issue is the removal of sand on the fringe: that too can only be done on the green. Removal of loose dirt or sand

on the fringe also incurs a general penalty.

## Rules Incidents

### Phil Mickelson Cart Path



Phil found himself on a cart path at the Travellers' Championship a few months ago. He wanted relief from the GUR marked above the path and to drop on the path. But the

tournament had designated the GUR above the cart path as part of the path, meaning that Phil couldn't drop where he wanted but had to take full relief. The NPOCR was on the right of the path for a lefty. It was interesting exchange between Phil and the Rules Official and showed

that Phil does indeed know a thing or two about the Rules!

## Unhappy Poulter: Immovable Obstruction

At the Northern Trust PGA tournament in



August, Ian Poulter found himself hard up against a concrete

sewer cover. Unfortunately, the sewer was in a penalty area. Poulter was apparently very unhappy that he couldn't take free relief (R17.3). He pointed out to the referee that the sewer 'shouldn't be there' to which the rules man reportedly replied 'Neither should you'. (The man had guts, if true). Ultimately, Poulter played the lie and did thank the official.

## Unhappy Koepka: Immovable Obstruction at the Ryder Cup

Brooks Koepka too sought relief from an immovable obstruction, at the Ryder Cup. His

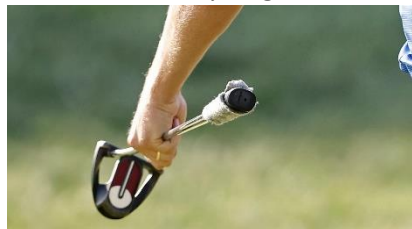


ball was behind a drain that he thought he might hit, but two

referees denied him relief. He told them 'If I break my wrist, it's on \*\*\* both of you!' (Expletive deleted). As it happened, he did brush the drain in making an outstanding shot. Personally, I would have put the decision back on the player: if he truly believed he could be injured and his conscience could live with taking relief, fine, especially as, in this case, his opponent Sergio Garcia agreed.

## Harris English: Ryder Cup Putter Rules Saga

Also at the Ryder Cup: an equipment saga. Before his Sunday singles match with Lee



Westwood, Harris English was told to present his putter to the

rules officials for inspection. The grip had worn away to the extent that it was declared non-conforming. Although US Vice-Captain Davis Love quickly engineered a repair that satisfied the officials, English lost his match to Westwood.

## Spieth and Stenson: Wrong Tee Box

Last week, Jordan Spieth and Henrik Stenson were each assessed two-stroke penalties after



playing from the wrong tee box in the final

round of the Hero World Championships in the Bahamas. The last round?! As it turns out, the committee had swapped two adjacent tee boxes for the last round because of the prevailing weather conditions. (Their intended tee is to the front left in the image). The change had been briefed to the players and the boxes appropriately marked. Oh dear...

## Slow Play: Cyril Walker at the 1929 LA Open



*Cyril Walker*

Think slow play is an issue today? At the 1929 LA Open, Cyril Walker was DQ'd after nine holes for

exceptionally slow play. When he

wouldn't leave the course, the committee sent out two policemen to forcibly remove him and threaten him with jail time. Now there's an idea...

## WGRA News

### Rules Questions or Incidents

If you have any questions on anything to do with the Rules of Golf, any observations or comments, or rules incidents to share, please do send them to Terry Gardiner at [gardfam77@gmail.com](mailto:gardfam77@gmail.com)

## WGRA Executive 2021

### President

Bill Stratford – 528 5080  
[bill.raynor1@outlook.com](mailto:bill.raynor1@outlook.com)

### Vice-President

Vacant

### Secretary/Treasurer

Michael Phelan  
[pheelo.mnp@gmail.com](mailto:pheelo.mnp@gmail.com)

### Committee

Terry Gardiner – 232 3130  
[gardfam77@gmail.com](mailto:gardfam77@gmail.com)

Kathy Goodman  
[kathygoodman58@gmail.com](mailto:kathygoodman58@gmail.com)

Aine Meek  
[ainemeek@gmail.com](mailto:ainemeek@gmail.com)

Cliff Martin  
[cliff.martin@msn.com](mailto:cliff.martin@msn.com)

**WGI Rep**  
Steve Weir  
[office@wgi.co.nz](mailto:office@wgi.co.nz)