

GOLF ETIQUETTE AND THE CARELESS BREED

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THE tender turfgrass of a golf course has many natural enemies in the world of bugs and worms and fungi. To the list of costly opponents must, unfortunately, be added a careless breed of the genus golfer.

He is the fellow who doesn't replace divots on fairway and tee — who plows through the sand of a bunker without a thought of smoothing his marks — who fails to repair ball marks on the green after his group has holed out—who leaves a trail of trash in his wake for someone else to pick up.

If the careless golfer did what he should, he would save himself and his fellow-players a repair bill of about five million dollars a year—somewhere around five per cent of what it costs to maintain all the courses in the country. There are 5,358 courses, and they spend from \$80,000,000 to \$100,000,000 a year for course upkeep to please America's 3,680,000 golfers.

But there are other important costs of negligence. What golfer's pleasure has not been spoiled by the excavations of some preceding player? The offending player, too, has been hurt, for who can be negligent of the rights of others without losing something good in himself?

A strange change of personality comes over some otherwise respectable citizens when they embark on golfing pleasure. They become largely unmindful of any game and any interests but their own. It is, in minor degree, much the same sort of personality quirk that takes charge of some of us when we get behind the wheel of an automobile—a change that accounted in large measure for the 37,800 needless deaths in motor accidents last year.

The thoughtless breed is found every-



A lady golfer demonstrates what NOT to do in a bunker. This photograph was taken from the USGA film "Etiquette", an excellent reminder of golf's courtesy code.

where, from first-class private clubs to the most simple public courses. At one fine club which has entertained USGA Championships, more than 50 per cent of the members do not replace divots on fairway and tee, according to the course superintendent. Still more do not repair ball marks on greens after they have holed out; many don't know how to do it without causing further harm to the greens.

To counteract such human failings, golf has a written code of manners. The first thing in the Rules of Golf is a section on Etiquette.

It covers two principal subjects—the relation of the player to his fellow-golfers, and the relation of the player to the course.

Here is a quick summary of how to behave though a golfer:

1. When someone is playing, don't move, talk or stand near or directly behind the ball or the hole.
2. Don't tee your ball until it's your turn to play.
3. Don't play until players ahead are out of range.
4. Play without delay.
5. Invite other players to play through when:
 - (a) You are looking for a ball.
 - (b) Your group falls a hole behind the players in front, and the group behind is waiting on you.
 - (c) They are playing a full round and you are playing a shorter round.
 - (d) You are playing alone (a single player has no standing, golf being a sociable game).
6. Fill up all holes you make in a bunker.
7. Replace divots on tees and fairway and in rough.
8. Repair carefully any damage to putting greens made by your ball or you; do this after your group has holed out, but be sure to do it then.
9. Don't drop your bag or the flagstick on the green.
10. Don't damage the hole by standing close to it or in handling the flagstick. Replace the flagstick carefully, and in its normal position, before leaving the green.
11. When play of the hole is over, your group should leave the green promptly.
12. Teach your caddie these things.

Contrary to report, it honestly isn't true that golfers operate under rough-and-tumble laws such as "Don't pick up another players' ball until it stops rolling."

You can wrap up golf's code and any other code of etiquette in one word—courtesy. Despite our faults, that's really what most golfers believe in, and that's one reason why golf is a delightful game.

But let's have more of it.

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USGA GOLF HANDICAP SYSTEM FOR MEN, containing recommendations for computing Basic and Current Handicaps and for rating courses. Booklet, 25 cents. Poster, 10 cents.

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