

U. S. Golf Association Decisions on the Rules of Golf

Question.—A and B are playing a match. A claims the hole on B on account of B walking across his line of putt, claiming that an opponent in so doing could turn on his heel, which would affect his putt. Does this not come under etiquette? If there is any ruling on the same, please give the rule that covers.

Answer.—There is no rule nor is there any paragraph under the etiquette of golf that covers this situation. The game of golf is presumably a gentleman's game, and if B deliberately turned his heel in the line of A's putt he would violate one of the fundamentals of golf, which is that no player should take an undue advantage of his opponent. If B deliberately did attempt to injure the line of A's putt, he should be disqualified from any further competitions and suspended from the club. If, on the other hand, it was an accident and not intended in any way to take advantage of A, the matter should be treated as unintentional and A should remind him not to do it again.

Question.—A, B, and C and their partners tie for low gross in a two-ball mixed foursome on medal play score and arrange to play off the tie on 18 holes by playing a three-ball sixsome. In playing out of a sand trap adjacent to the green, B's ball hits A's caddy, who is standing at the pin. B and his partner dropped out before the round was finished, and A and his partner won from C and his partner by two strokes. The questions to be decided are (1) what penalty was incurred when B's ball hit A's caddy; and (2) has such penalty any effect on the match as between A and C?

Answer.—You did not state in your letter whether the ball played out of a sand trap adjacent to a green was within 20 yards of the hole or not. If it was within 20 yards of the hole, rule 13 under Special Rules for Stroke Competition applies. It would cost B's ball two strokes. If it was outside the area of yards from the hole, it would be a rub of the green under rule 10. The fact that B's ball hit A's caddy has no bearing whatever upon the medal scores of A and C.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

All questions sent to the Green Committee will be answered as promptly as possible in a letter to the writer. The more interesting of these questions, with concise answers, will appear in this column each month. If your experience leads you to disagree with any answer given in this column, it is your privilege and duty to write to the Green Committee. While most of the answers are of general application, please bear in mind that each recommendation is intended specifically for the locality designated at the end of the question.

1. **Use of a sod nursery in establishing creeping bent greens.**—We are much interested in the vegetative method of propagating putting greens by planting bent stolons and have a promise from a dealer to supply us with 60 bushels of stolons, which we intend to use as soon as we receive them. In conferring with

some of the members of our green committee it has been suggested that instead of planting these in the intended greens that they be planted in a temporary green, every preparation being made in the temporary green to receive the same treatment as if it were a permanent one, and growing sod on the temporary green and when fully developed to transfer the sod to the regular green. In this way it would put the regular green out of commission only for a few days during the period of sodding rather than for the balance of the season by planting the stolons. It is further thought by some of the members of the committee that these 60 bushels of stolons would likely grow enough sod for several greens, whereas if they were sown on the regular green they would only answer for the one. What would you advise our doing in the matter? (Kentucky.)

Either method should prove satisfactory. If you decide to plant the runners on an area for producing sod to be transferred to a green later, we would suggest that you give this area the same preparation that you would give a green—that is, prepare the ground properly as for an original seeding. If the runners are of a strain of bent grass that is desirable and if they are planted properly—that is, in accordance with the method outlined in the April number of the BULLETIN—they should make turf that can be moved early next fall. This method has been used by others very successfully. We know of an instance where an acre of bent was planted as late as the latter part of May and the sod was ready to move by the first of September. However, spring planting is not as desirable as fall planting; so plant your area as soon as it can be planted, but hardly later than September 15. With ordinarily favorable conditions you should be able to transfer the sod by the first of July of next year. Our advice to you would be to plant the stolons as thickly as suggested in the articles in the BULLETIN referred to. You could of course plant them much more thinly than this and by proper care would get perfectly good turf, but it would require longer time than if planted at the rate recommended.

2. Correcting injury caused by excessive use of commercial "humus."—We are thoroughly satisfied that a large part of our trouble is caused by the use of commercial humus. We used about 20 yards to a green. If this condition which exists with us is caused by the commercial humus, do you think it will be possible for us on the greens that are holding up better, to improve their condition by top-dressing heavily with good compost and disking with a small putting green cultivator? We know you do not advocate disking generally, but under these circumstances would it not help? The one thing that convinces us that the commercial humus is the cause of our trouble is that the greens that are the worst are the ones in which a maximum amount of humus was incorporated when the construction work was done. On the other side of the course we luckily ran short of the material and consequently "slighted" them somewhat, and these greens are acting much better than the others. We have top-dressed them regularly, every month or so, for the past two years, with the result that we have built them up on top with a good compost, quite a little bit. Would this in time help them, or do you think we will have to work the soil in the top four or five inches, which includes the humus? (Indiana.)

We note you are convinced that "humus" is largely the cause of your difficulty. We feel quite sure that this is the case and would advise you to apply to these greens liberal dressings of good compost. As for disking compost into the surface soil, we do not ordinarily advise this practice for the reason that disking is severe on existing turf, but in the case of your greens it is probable that disking would help. It is our understanding that it is your intention to sow bent seed with the compost. If so, it is quite

probable that you will obtain material improvement in your greens by the method you have in mind. If liberal treatment with compost such as you have outlined does not produce results, the only thing we can suggest is that you revamp the greens next year—that is, remove most of the surface and resurface them. Our opinion is that systematic compost dressings will ultimately bring you the desired results.

3. **Controlling the Japanese beetle.**—The Japanese beetles have just appeared on our course. What are the best methods of combating the pest? (Pennsylvania.)

The best remedy that we know of is that described on page 173 of Volume III of the BULLETIN. This treatment is, of course, not used until the larvæ are found working beneath the sod. The adult beetles are active from June to October and during this time feed on a great variety of plants—mostly tall growing weeds and trees—over 210 species having thus far been recorded. Beginning in early summer the females lay their eggs in the soil. In turf these grubs work just beneath the turf, and their presence is usually first indicated by injury to the turf becoming evident. If lifting of the turf discloses the presence of the grubs they can then be destroyed by the method referred to above. So far as orchard trees and other cultivated plants are concerned, more or less success has been obtained by the spraying of arsenicals, but this seems scarcely practical for golf courses, as the beetles feed on so many different kinds of trees.

4. **Selecting creeping bent stolons for vegetative propagation.**—We are tearing up three of our greens this fall and intend to plant chopped bent stolons, of which material we have quite a quantity on our course. We are sending you a sample of these stolons. Would you advise our using these stolons for the planting of greens? (Ohio.)

It is a little difficult to tell from the specimens you submit whether they will make satisfactory turf. They produce vigorous stolons, but we are somewhat inclined to think from the appearance of the specimens that the turf they would make would not be as close and thick as is desired. We should like to have you try the vegetative method and are inclined to advise you to plant one green with the material you have at hand. There are many strains of creeping bent, as you doubtless know, and some of them are not satisfactory for putting green turf. We have found from experience that it is a little difficult to tell from the appearance of a strain with which we are not entirely familiar whether it will be suitable or not. For this reason we hesitate in advising you to go ahead with your program of planting two or more greens. We would say, however, that of all the strains we have tried there has not been one but that has produced turf which is superior to that produced from the average seeding. Therefore we do not know that after all you will lose much by planting the stolons as represented by the specimens you sent us. You should read carefully the instructions given in the April number of THE BULLETIN with regard to the propagation of putting greens by the vegetative method. The subject is discussed in detail in that number.

5. **Inserting bent stolons in turf not out of play.**—One of our friends is seeking information in regard to creeping bent greens which he is anxious to see installed at his club. He has the idea that the greens can be gradually converted into bent greens and says that their idea is to do this without putting the greens out of play. He seems to think it can be done by cutting into the turf with a spade and laying in stolons and then tramping back the turf, thinking the stolons

will vegetate and in the course of a year take the place of the existing turf, doing this over each green in rows 6 inches apart. We told him this would be a slow process, and that it would be quicker to strip their greens and plant the stolons now so that they would get a good start this year during the good growing weather of August and September and be ready for play next spring. He said, however, that their members would not stand for having the greens out of play, particularly as they had some of them out of play for some time owing to unsatisfactory turf. Will you kindly let us know if his idea is practical, and if so, what is the best method to pursue? If the method is not practical, what can be done to convert the greens to creeping bent without putting the greens out of play? (New York.)

We have had very excellent success with the dibbling into turf of stolons in our experimental work, but have not tried it on an area as large as a putting green. We use small pieces of stolons and dibble them in by means of an old file knife, which is not unlike a trowel except that it is not a three-cornered tool. We do not know what to advise you in this matter, but would like to see some one give the method a thorough trial on a putting green. Ordinarily, of course, it would be better, if planting material were available, to strip the green and plant it by the vegetative method described in the April (1923) number of *THE BULLETIN*. If planted now (August 22) the green should be ready for play, if properly treated, by next spring. However, bent runners can be dibbled into a green without putting the green out of play.

6. Injury from an excessive amount of humus in the surface soil; fertilizing with ammonium sulfate.—Our putting greens hold out good until the month of July, at which time they begin to thin out, nothing being left with the exception of the New Zealand red fescue, which does not seem to thrive as it should. Our greens are large, with a prepared top soil composed of 20 per cent "humus," 20 per cent sharp sand, and 60 per cent good loam. We fertilize mostly with sulfate of ammonia, beginning in April with 25 pounds of sulfate of ammonia to 1,000 square yards. We make our last application the first part of June. The fescue in spots seems to die out and it does not appear to be brown-patch, as the shape of the diseased portions is too irregular. Will you kindly advise us what is causing this damage to our greens? (Ohio.)

We are inclined to think that part of your difficulty may be due to the fact that the surface soil contains a considerable proportion of so-called humus. This material has given trouble in many cases elsewhere, and it may be the partial cause of your difficulty. As for your system of fertilizing, it seems to be satisfactory. We use ammonium sulfate quite liberally. In the spring we use as high as 3 pounds to 1,000 square feet, but in the summer we apply not more than 1 pound to 1,000 square feet and are very careful in making applications. Summer applications, unless handled carefully, will scorch the grass. You state that the fescue in spots in your putting greens dies out and that the injury does not resemble that caused by brown patch in the matter of shape. In this connection we would say that we have observed brown-patch to work in a very irregular pattern so that it can scarcely be called a patch, but in most cases the pattern is circular and well defined. Just why it works irregularly while in the majority of cases it works in a regular pattern is hard to understand.

7. Attempts to obtain creeping bent from German bent seed.—We bought 100 pounds of German bent seed under a strong guarantee and recommendation, but to those who have examined the grass produced they say it is not German bent. We are sending you samples marked "No. 1" and "No. 2" of plants

grown from this seed, which we would like to have you identify for us. We paid a fancy price for the seed, and there appear to be no creeping tendencies to the grass; it comes up in the same manner as other grasses and does not spread or cover over the ground as bents are supposed to do. (Wisconsin.)

Your envelope marked "Specimen No. 1" contains plants of velvet bent. There is approximately 15 per cent of velvet bent seed in all true German mixed bent seed. Therefore, we are inclined to think that the seed you obtained is true German mixed bent seed. There is about 85 per cent of seed in German mixed bent which is of the same species as the grass we know as Rhode Island bent. Your specimen No. 2 is of that species. There is only a mere trace of true creeping bent seed in German mixed bent seed. The trade name "creeping bent," which is a misnomer, has been used in connection with the mixed bent seed for years and is only just now falling into disuse. Rhode Island bent, as above mentioned, makes up a large part of German mixed bent seed. It is not a creeping grass in the sense that creeping bent is a creeping grass. It spreads, however, and makes an excellent turf and is regarded as highly satisfactory.

8. **The nursery row in vegetative propagation of creeping bent.**—By splitting in half nursery rows as they are now growing and leaving half to continue to grow, would that be as well as to take the whole row? It has occurred to us that if left in part they could continue to accumulate, and the half taken up we could plant. Is there any objection to that idea, or would you advise our taking all of each row as far as needed? (Wisconsin.)

As for leaving half the row to continue to grow (we presume for next season) we would suggest that you do not do this. We find it unprofitable. For best results a nursery should be planted each season from stolons in the manner of the original planting. The bents do not spread well from old rows. Please note the articles in the April number of *THE BULLETIN OF THE GREEN SECTION* on vegetative planting. They will give you a very good idea of the method from start to finish.

9. **Mushroom soil as a top-dressing.**—Is it advisable to use mushroom soil as a top-dressing for bent greens in place of the regular compost dressing? (New Jersey.)

As a top-dressing for bent greens, mushroom soil is very satisfactory, but we prefer to use it mixed with good loam or loam and sand. Mushroom soil frequently contains large amounts of clay and therefore is improved by the addition of sand. As a general formula for compost for top-dressing bent greens we advise the following: One-third good top soil, one-third mushroom soil or similar organic matter, and one-third sand, well mixed, screened, and scattered evenly over the green, after which it should be brushed in with a rake, wire mat, or a coarse stable or street brush.

10. **Colonial bent seed as a substitute for German mixed bent seed.**—In view of the exceedingly great difficulty of getting German mixed bent seed at the present time would it be advisable to attempt to use Colonial bent as a substitute? (Pennsylvania.)

Colonial bent would be a very satisfactory substitute. In fact, German mixed bent seed contains approximately 85 per cent of seed of the same species as Colonial bent. Colonial bent and Rhode Island bent are identical, except that Colonial bent seed is harvested in New Zealand and Rhode Island bent seed in New England.