



STARDUST MEN'S GOLF CLUB



Clarification of COVID-19 changes to the Rules of Golf

When the pandemic started, the USGA issued some guidance on how to reduce exposure to COVID-19 when playing golf. The Rec Centers Golf Operations then took the guidance and made some decisions on which ones to implement and how to do that. Several are quite obvious: removal of rakes from sand traps, noodle inserts in the cup and the intent to leave the pin in the cup. The ones that aren't relate to the interpretation of situations on the course when we play. Some confusion is evident in these areas, so Burton Murray, President of our club, has asked that we issue clarifications to these.

I read the USGA bulletin thoroughly and then spoke with Pat O'Hara about the way the USGA's guidance was to be implemented in all Sun City West golf courses.

Bunkers and Sand Traps (USGA Rules 12, 16 and 19)

Golf Operations elected to remove rakes from all sand traps. It was their option whether to change the status of sand traps to be part of the general area of the course. Doing so would give players more latitude in what to do when the ball rests in a disturbed part of the trap. This is where some confusion has arisen.

Golf Operations has decided not to change the status of sand traps, so *if your ball comes to rest in a sand trap, **you must play the ball from the sand trap.** You may not lift it out and play it from a grassy area.*

If, however, the last unfortunate golfer who hit into the sand trap did not try to smooth out his footprints and divots, and your ball came to rest in the disturbed area, ***you may move your golf ball from a disturbed area in a sand trap and place it in another part of the trap that is not disturbed within a club length of the spot it stopped.** Use judgement and get the approval of your playing partners if there is any question.*

Please smooth out your footprints and level the area you disturbed when you leave the trap.



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Flagsticks and Cups

Golf Operations opted to leave flagsticks in the cup and insert a hole-liner in the cup, to modify the Rules of Golf slightly to reduce exposure to COVID-19: **Players may not remove the flagstick from the cup, or they will incur a penalty stroke under USGA Rule 1.2b.**

Hole out

Golf Operations requires that the ball comes to rest in the cup to count as holed. However, Stardust Men's Golf Club has decided to follow the USGA guidance on 'Most Likely Score', using a 50% criteria:

In your best judgement, if your ball was traveling slowly, and would have been holed more than 50% of the time had the hole-liner not been in place, then you may count the ball as holed. The same is true if your ball strikes the pin squarely at slow speed, but the ball does not drop onto the hole-liner. Your judgement is subject to review by your playing partners.

Here's a link to the USGA Guidance:

<https://www.usga.org/content/usga/home-page/rules-hub/rulesarticles/covid-19-rules-and-handicapping-faqs.html>

If you have any questions, please direct them to one of the club officers:

Burton Murray, President
Harald Johnsen, Vice-President
Lanny Espinosa, Secretary
Frank DeBold, Treasurer

Thomas Bell
Handicap Chairman