



# BUNKER POLICY CASE STUDY

## Stensballegaard Golf Club Horsens, Denmark

### INTRODUCTION

- This course is built on a private estate and is part of the succession plan for the estate owners.
- 27-hole regulation golf course plus 6 hole par-3 course
- Course uses 130HA slightly rolling terrain
- Only allowed to irrigate tees and greens
- Grass – Fescue mix all surfaces
- 18 holes opened for preview play in 2009. Officially opens May 29, 2010.
- 650 memberships sold to date.

The site is bordered on two sides by a fjord. Due to location and size, the site has historical and environmental significance and restrictions. Examples include: Minimal earthmoving; 50cm cut/fill maximum, Protected “view corridors”, public walking paths, drainage and lake preservation and enhancement, archeological discoveries, etc.

### DESIGN

The course was not initially conceived with the intent of low maintenance bunkers.

### IDEA

To reinstate sand bunkers as a strategic element.

### WHY STENSBALLEGAARD?

For this policy to be successful, we felt it critical for the golf course owner to provide unmitigated support, and be willing to enforce this policy rigorously. The client understood and embraced the concept.

### DISCUSSION POINTS

- How to communicate the idea - Bunker Policy statement
- Green committee initial reaction
- Tournaments and “Company days”
- Rakes
- How much maintenance?
- Player expectation regarding bunkers: “There is an ‘official’ standard which must be maintained on a quality golf course”

# STENSBALLEGAARD BUNKER POLICY

October 2008

The sand bunkers at Stensballegaard Golf Club are an important part of the tactical challenge. The bunkers will be minimally maintained. This means: only enough grooming to limit plant growth, and sustain the "sandy" aspect.

The sand bunkers are designed to impose a penalty\*.

Upon leaving a sand bunker, players may smooth their footprints and depressions as a courtesy to following players. However, rakes or other implements to smooth the sand will not be provided by the golf course.

In recent times, excessive maintenance practices have caused sand bunkers to lose their meaning in the game of golf. Golfers have come to expect a perfect lie, allowing the golf ball to be easily played and easily extracted from the hazard. This compromises the purpose of the sand bunker.

*Bunkers are not meant to be places of pleasure. They are prisons for punishment and repentance.*

*(Old) Tom Morris*

Bunkers are hazards, as defined by the rules of golf. As such, bunkers represent an important element in defining tactical challenge. In order for a hazard to effectively define strategy, there must be sufficient reason for a player to avoid the hazard.

At Stensballegaard Golf Club, the fairways and roughs are designed with significant width, providing players with a variety of options to approach the green. Sand bunkers are used sparingly and primarily exist to define the strategy of each golf hole. The sand bunkers are located at strategic points within the golf course and it may be advantageous to challenge the bunkers by playing close to them. But, sufficient width has been provided to play safely around these hazards as well. This option, whether to challenge the bunkers by playing close to them or playing safely away from them, is a basic tenet in golf strategy.

The decision to incorporate this challenge, by reinstating bunkers as a true penalty,\* is a choice to celebrate and uphold the heritage of golf. It is our deepest hope the members of Stensballegaard Golf Club will embrace this approach and challenge.

**The official definition of a "bunker" from the Rules of Golf is this:**

**"A 'bunker' is a hazard consisting of a prepared area of ground, often a hollow, from which turf or soil has been removed and replaced with sand or the like.**

**"Grass-covered ground bordering or within a bunker, including a stacked turf face (whether grass-covered or earthen), is not part of the bunker. A wall or lip of the bunker not covered with grass is part of the bunker.**

**"The margin of a bunker extends vertically downward, but not upward. A ball is in a bunker when it lies in or any part of it touches the bunker."**

\*penalty - is a relative term. There is not a specific penalty (for example; one stroke) intended for each hazard. The intent is for the hazards, if entered, to have a negative effect on a player's score.

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