

STENSBALLEGAARD BUNKERS

October 2008

The sand bunkers at Stensballegaard Golf are an important part of the tactical challenge of the golf course. The bunkers are designed for minimal maintenance: This means only enough maintenance to keep plant growth to a minimum 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.

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

(Old) Tom Morris

In recent times, sand bunkers have lost their meaning in the game of golf. Today, sand bunkers are generally over-maintained. And, golfers have come to expect a perfect lie, allowing the golf ball to be easily played and easily extracted from the hazard. This completely defeats the purpose of the sand bunker.

Sand bunkers are hazards, as defined by the rules of golf. As such, bunkers are 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.

The official definition of "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."

At Stensballegaard Golf, 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.

There is no such thing as a misplaced bunker. Regardless of where the bunker may be, it is the business of the player to avoid it.

Donald Ross
Golf Architect

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

*“intended penalty” is a relative point. 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 players score.

History of Hazards:

- **Hazards**
Although not defined for the first 150 years or so, 'hazards' have been mentioned since the very beginning. From the text of rules it can be seen that hazards included water, holes other than the one being played, rabbit burrows (1812), bunkers, and obstructions (1875).
- When the first definition came in [1891](#) it included almost anything that hindered a fair lie....any bunker, water, sand, loose earth, mole hills, paths, roads or railways, whins, bushes, rushes, rabbit scrape, fences, ditches or anything which is not the ordinary green of the course.
- In subsequent issues of the Rules, the definition was narrowed; [1899](#) dropped loose earth, mole hills and anything not 'the ordinary green'. In [1908](#) railways, whins, rushes, rabbit scrapes and fences all removed. [1946](#) bush and path removed.

- In [1952](#) the new definition of a hazard became any bunker, water (except casual water), or water hazard.
Also in 1952 came the first separate definition of water hazards.
- 1956 ball may not be identified in a hazard.
- 1968 GUR and WH margins extend upwards.
- **Bunkers**
Bunkers were first mentioned in [1812](#) and first defined in [1933](#). Even before a definition, it was clear that the characteristics of a bunker have always been the same.
- [1858](#) For a ball in a bunker, no 'impression' could be made before striking, indicating the principle of not grounding the club.
- Defining the extent of hazards became the committee's responsibility from [1933](#).

Origin of the “sand wedge”:

Sand iron mentioned in a newspaper clipping as early as 1858.

1861 In Rober Forgan’s “The Golfer’s Handbook” – The sand iron is practically a heavy driving iron with the face very much laid back. It’s use has, however, been of late almost entirely superseded by that of the niblick and mashie.

1950 – Gene Sarazen “Thirty Years of Championship Golf (in Wind The Complete Golfer 1954, 274): The sand-iron.... is the greatest stroke-saver in the game. I’m proud to have invented it.