

2. CUSTOMS AT OUR CLUB

Some 'customs' are not in the USGA Rules Book. These are things that our Course Management and/or our STWGC Board have decided. Other Clubs may have different ideas – check with them for their local customs.

Winter Rules – (Permitted as a Local Rule by USGA) When in effect you may lift, clean, and replace your ball within 6 inches, but no nearer the hole. At STWGC you may do this anywhere on the course EXCEPT in a hazard or bunker (the correct name for a sand trap). However, you must replace the ball anywhere within the 6 inches but not nearer the hole - you must not replace it in a like condition; you may move the ball to/from the rough to the fairway if it is.

Procedure: Mark your ball, clean it if you wish, and replace it. To save time, rather than use a tee or other marker, I put my thumb by the ball, rotate my hand to find the best location and (with the other hand) put the ball by my little finger. My hand when relaxed measures exactly six inches – try your own hand to see if you need to stretch the fingers out, or pull them together to get the six inches.

Casual Water – is “any temporary water on the course that is not in a water hazard and is visible to the player before or after he/she takes his/her stance” and nearest relief may be taken. The seasonal ‘lakes’ to the right of #4 and #9 fairways are lateral water hazards IF the course has put up red stakes. In summer, when dry and no stakes are up, they are not hazards, and if some water is in them, that could be called ‘casual water’. (Our STWGC has not officially ruled on this.)

Ditches on #11 and #12 – Traditionally our Club has considered these as Water Hazards, even though the course management has not put up yellow stakes. Several years ago the STWGC Board confirmed this long standing practice.

Chip Ins and Putts – This varies from Club to Club, but our Board has decided that any stroke on the putting green counts as a putt, and any stroke off the green that goes into the hole is a ‘chip in’ regardless of what club is used and whether or not the ball had been on the green and inadvertently putted off the green. (There was much discussion on this and I would be glad to go through the reasons, just ask me.)

Where to leave the Rake – Some courses have rules on this. Course management at Santa Teresa agrees with the USGA that the preference is in the bunker, but no real recommendation is given. Best advice is to leave the rake where it is least likely to either help or hinder following players.

Ready Golf and Continuous Putting – While USGA rules call for honors on the tee, and the player most distant from the hole play first, our Course Management, our STWGC Board and common sense say that if you are ready to hit and the other player is not, then go ahead as it saves time. (Saving Time and Playing at Speed are big issues on Public Courses.) Also, if off the green while another is on the green but further away a player may wish to go first while the flag stick is still in the hole, but should get permission from the other player.

Also a putter who does not hole out may wish to putt again if she won't be standing on the line of another player's putt. This does save time (no putting a marker down, only to replace the ball in a minute) and (in my case, saves my back two bends). In all of this, common courtesy should rule. Don't do this in a tournament without checking to see if Ready Golf is allowed.

Identifying your ball – USGA allows you to identify your ball, but that doesn't mean you can pick it up or move it. You may move anything around it (including sand) JUST enough to identify your ball, and then you must replace anything moved so that the lie is as original found.

[Disclaimer: This series is designed to give easy to understand instructions on everyday situations at STWGC. They do not cover all the odd situations that can occur and you may read about in big tournaments. If you encounter something out of the ordinary, consult the Rule Book,

get an opinion from a Rules Committee Member, or if necessary (especially is Stroke Play), play a 2nd ball and get a ruling as soon as you finish playing. Jan La Fetra]