

## Rule 33. The Committee

### Rules 33-1, 33-2, 33-8

Most rules in golf are directed to the player. Among other things, they tell the player how to proceed in various situations, what relief options exist and what penalties apply when a rule is breached. Rule 33 is different. It is directed to the committee in charge of the competition. It sets forth its duties and a very specific prohibition in Rule 33-1, namely, the Committee has no power to waive a rule of golf. (The committee may not waive the rule requiring that a player hole out, for example).

A principal duty of the Committee is to define bounds and margins. Specifically, the committee must define the course and out of bounds; the margins of water hazards and lateral water hazards, ground under repair and integral parts of the course (Rule 33-2).

PWGA rule officials take this responsibility very seriously. We preview a course to be played in our major tournaments and discuss our marking requests with course professionals. We know that if a course is well marked, our players will be better able to proceed in accordance with the rules. Course professionals are generally very cooperative and really appreciate our review. For the most part, they do a very good job of marking the course once an issue has been brought to their attention. For example, we ask that white circles delineate ground under repair and that signs such as “wet area” or “GUR” be removed. We also ask that transitions be well marked. A water hazard may be designated in part as a lateral water hazard and in part as a regular water hazard. The transition between the two needs to be double-staked so that the boundaries of each are clearly defined. Why? Because relief options for the two are not identical. Course pros will make these changes.

Another responsibility of the committee is to write local rules for abnormal conditions which may interfere with the proper playing of the game (Rule 33-8). For example, one very common local rule permits treating stones in bunkers as “moveable obstructions”. Moveable obstructions may be removed from bunkers, but loose impediments may not. The committee is also empowered to establish ball drops when it is not feasible to proceed exactly in accordance with a rule.

Rule 33 covers other committee responsibilities relating to starting times, handicap charts, breaking ties which are not covered here.