

From Tee to Green and all Between: **Bunkers**

Each month we will go over a separate *Obstacle Factor*. These are all of the details beyond the length of a hole that impact play and difficulty.

This month's topic is **Bunkers**. Our mission is to evaluate how **Bunkers** come into play and how difficult it may be for the player to recover.

Definition of **Bunker** from the USGA Rules of Golf:

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.

Bunker rating is based on:

- Difficulty of the Green Target
- Fraction of the Green closely bordered by Bunkers
- Difficulty of recovery from the bunker(s) due to size and depth, bunker lip, sand condition, etc.

First we calculate the **Green Target** rating (size of Green and Length of Approach Shot). Then we assess the fraction of the green surrounded by bunker(s), in the case of the picture below, less than $\frac{1}{4}$ of the Green is protected by Bunkers.



Rose City Hole #15

Here are some of the Adjustments that we think about when assessing **bunkers**:

- Depth: greenside bunkers deeper than 2' for Women and 3' for Men adds difficulty
- Squeeze: if bunkers are located directly across the fairway and less than 20' from each other
- Carry: if a player must carry a fairway bunker to arrive at their next landing zone or, if half of the entrance to the Green is protected by bunker(s)
- Extreme: if pot bunkers, extra deep fairway bunkers, or other unusual features such as stacked sod, railroad ties, very long or a series of bunkers that make recovering extremely difficult
- Par 3 holes: will never have a 'fairway' bunker, unless the bogey golfer cannot reach the green in one shot and there is a bunker in their landing zone

Extremely deep bunkers, such as this one to the right of #13 on Bandon Trails, considerably add to the difficulty of recovery if the player misses the green.



Just a couple of notes: **Grass hollows**, even if they were once bunkers, are rated under **Recoverability & Rough**. Whereas **Waste Areas** are rated as Bunkers, even though they are considered as 'through the green' under the Rules of Golf.

Next month, we'll go over **Out of Bounds/Extreme Rough**.

If you have any questions, please contact Gretchen Yoder, Manager of Handicapping and Course Rating

gretchen@oga.org