

Golf Glossary

by John Gunby

GENERAL GOLF TERMS:

Golf: A game.

Golf Course: A place to play a game of golf.

Golfer, player: Look in the mirror.

Caddie: A person who assists the player with additional responsibilities such as yardage information, cleaning the clubs, carrying the bag, tending the pin, etc. These young men & women have respect for themselves, the players and the game of golf. They provide a service that dates back to 1500's and is integral to golf.

Esteem: What you think of yourself. If you are a golfer, think very highly of yourself.

Humor: A state of mind in which there is no awareness of self.

Failure: By your definition

Success: By your definition

Greens fee: The charge (fee) to play a golf course (the greens)-not "green fees". Always too much, but always worth it.

Greenskeeper: The person or persons responsible for maintaining the golf course

Starting time (tee time): A reservation for play. Arrive at least 20 minutes before your tee time. The tee time you get is the time when you're supposed to be hitting your first shot off the first tee.

Golf Course Ambassador (Ranger): A person who rides around the golf course and has the responsibility to make sure everyone has fun and keep the pace of play appropriate.

Scorecard: This is the form you fill out to count up your shots. Even if you don't want to keep score, the cards usually have some good information about each hole (Length, diagrams, etc.). And don't forget those little pencils.

PGA: Professional Golfers Association. Two branches: club pros & tour pros; the first are golf professionals and the last are professional golfers.

LPGA: Ladies Professional Golfers Association. Two branches; club pros & tour pros. Same definitions as above.

USGA: United States Golf Association. The bunch that governs amateur play and writes the Rules of Golf.

Tour: A professional tournament circuit. A tour pro, or touring professional, is one who plays on it.

SCORING/PLAYING TERMS

Stroke: An attempt, whether successful or not, at striking a ball. Count up all the strokes you take to get around the golf course, and that's your score.

Par: The score an expert golfer should make on a hole. Par refers to each hole individually, and par for the course is all the pars for all of the holes added together.

Birdie: One under par on a hole.

Bogey: One over par on a hole.

Course Rating: Used by the USGA in determining handicaps. Not all courses are of equal difficulty. The course rating number tells you a lot about the course you're about to play (a higher rating-high number-means a more difficult course).

Slope: This indicates the difficulty of a golf course. The average golf course slope is 113. The more a course slope is over 113, the more difficult it is.

- Handicap:** For those interested in competitive golf, a handicap reflects the number of strokes "given" prior to play to "equalize" competitors of different abilities.
- Foursome, Twosome, Etc.some:** However, many are playing in your group. Try to get three friends to join you so you'll have a foursome. That's about the only way you can play with people of your own choosing.
- Honor:** In golf, this refers to who has the "right" to hit first, determined by the lowest score on the last hole.
- Away:** As in "you're away," refers to the player whose ball is furthest from the hole. Unless agreed on prior to play, this player always hits before the others in the group.
- Etiquette:** Essentially, in golf this refers to how you should behave on the golf course.

TYPES OF SHOTS

- Hook:** A ball that makes a big curve to the left (right-handed player).
- Draw:** A ball that makes a small curve to the left (right-handed player).
- Pull:** A ball that flies on a straight line to the left (right-handed player).
- Pull-hook:** A ball that starts to the left and curves farther to the left (right-handed player).
- Slice:** A ball that makes a big curve to the right (right-handed player).
- Fade:** A ball that makes a small curve to right (right-handed player).
- Push:** A ball that flies on a straight line to the right (right-handed player).
- Push-slice:** A ball that starts to the right and curves farther to the right (right-handed player).
- Shank:** This is a shot that is hit off the hosel of an iron.
- Topped or bladed shot:** This is when the ball is hit above its centerline by the leading edge of the clubface, causing the ball to roll instead of fly.
- Fat Shot or Chunk:** This is when the clubface hits the big ball (Earth) before the little ball (golf).

COURSE TERMS

- Flagstick, pin:** The pole that sits in the cup to show you where the hole is located.
- Hole, cup:** The object of your affection. It's a round hole in the ground that's 4.5 inches in diameter. Put the ball there.
- Fairway:** The more closely-mown area between the tee box and green. This is where you want to keep your shots.
- Rough:** The less maintained area between the tee box and the green. Depending on the part of the country you live in, and how far from the fairway your ball is, the rough will be more or less difficult to play a shot from.
- Bunker, trap:** These are little pits situated around the golf course. Usually filled with sand, but occasionally will be of deep grass.
- Cart Path:** An annoying maze of roads for riding cars to follow.
- Fringe or apron:** The area right around the green that's usually mown shorter than the fairway but not as short as the green. You can play any club from the fringe as you are not considered to yet be on the green.
- Green:** The closely-mown area on each hole where the flagstick and hole are located. Be careful to not damage this smooth surface.

- Tee box, tee markers:** The designated place on each hole where you hit your first shot from. Marked like so at Shalimar: Yellow (forward), white (middle), and blue (back). You are allowed 2 clublengths behind the markers to tee off from.
- Yardage markers:** These are shrubs, stakes, signs, or a combination, that indicate how far your ball is from the green. Look on the scorecard to know what they are and what they show you. Also look for markers placed on the ground, sometimes on sprinkler heads.
- Divot:** A little patch of earth and grass that gets sliced out of the ground on an iron shot. Pick it up, put it back. It will grow again.
- Ball mark:** A depression left by a golf ball landing on the green. Fix it.
- Golf shop:** Your first stop when you get to the course to play. Go to the counter and check in, just like at a hotel.
- Driving range, practice tee:** An area for warming up and testing fundamentals. Not to be confused with "golf."
- Practice green:** An area for warming up, testing fundamentals, and learning golf. Make sure you ask if it's ok to chip onto the practice green; some courses have a separate area for this practice.
- Par-3 course:** This is a great place to start. As implied, a par-3 course is a layout, usually of 9 holes, that consists of only short holes.
- Executive course:** This is one little step up from a par-three in that it may also have some longer, par-4 holes.
- Regulation course:** This is a "full-length" golf course, usually consisting of 18 holes (you can play 9 or 18). This is the final step. Also, there are vast and great differences among regulation courses: some require much more or less skill to negotiate, just like ski runs.
- Pars: 3s, 4s, 5s:** Unless there are extenuating circumstances, such as the layout of the hole, golf course designers generally go on distance alone to determine par for a hole. Generally, a hole shorter than 250 yards will be a par 3; from there up to about 450 yards can be a par 4; beyond that are par 5s.

EQUIPMENT TERMS

- Clubs:** The implements with which you play the game of golf. You can carry no more than 14. A club is any golf club—putters, woods, irons and wedges.
- Iron:** One of the many metal clubs in your bag. You use these lot.
- Wood:** Although not necessarily made of wood anymore, these are the clubs that have larger, rounded heads than the irons.
- Driver:** The number 1 wood. This is a big-headed wood designed to hit a ball off a tee.
- Fairway Wood:** Woods that are designed to hit a ball from off the ground or from a tee.
- Putter:** The most important club, and shot, in golf. Try them all and then keep a couple you choose forever.
- Wedge:** Irons that are designed to hit the ball higher & a shorter distance than the other irons. They are what you when you need to hit it high but not very far.
- Hybrid:** A golf club designed to take the place of an iron but designed similar to a wood in order to make hitting this club an easier task.
- Clubhead:** The whole thing that's stuck on the heavy end of the shaft.
- Clubface:** The part that hits the ball.
- Heel/toe:** Just like your foot. The heel is nearest to the clubshaft (leg).
- Hosel:** The part of the club that comes up from the heel and surrounds the clubshaft.
- Shaft:** The long flexible part of the club. Comes in various flexes and materials.
- Sticks:** What some folks call golf clubs.

- Tee:** A wooden peg designed to hold your ball on the tee box. Place the ball on the tee first before you stick the tee into the ground.
- Carry Bag:** A lightweight golf bag with a shoulder strap, designed to be light enough for the golfer to carry around the course.
- Golf Car:** Sometimes referred to improperly as a "golf cart". This is motorized contraption designed to haul people around golf courses. In Scotland you usually need a doctor's note to drive one; in America, you usually need a Congressional favor to avoid one.
- Pull Cart:** An alternative to shoulder-carry & golf cars. This is a two-wheeled device that holds your golf bag and is pulled along behind you. Rent for pocket change or buy your own for somewhat more.
- Spikes, Nails:** Cool-talk for golf shoes.
- Ball Mark Repair Tool:** Sometimes improperly called a "divot tool", use this fork-like tool to repair your ball mark on the green. A tee will work, too.

RULES TERMS

- Out of bounds (O.B.):** Not to be confused with B.O., but you want to avoid O.B. as much as B.O. Defined by white stakes or boundary fences, a ball is "O.B." when all of it lies out of bounds. You are prohibited from playing a shot from O.B., and the penalty (stroke & distance) for hitting your ball O.B. is severe.
- Hazard:** Any bunker or water hazard.
- Bunker:** Sometimes improperly called a "sand trap". This is an area where soil has been removed and replaced with sand. It is a hazard. Rake it smooth after playing from it.
- Water Hazard:** A lake, stream or ditch designated to be a water hazard (doesn't have to contain water). Lateral water hazards are defined by red lines or stakes and generally run along side a hole. Water Hazards are defined by yellow lines or stakes and are designed for you to have to hit over them.
- Through the Green:** Many of the rules use this term. It is the whole area of the course except the teeing area and putting green of the hole being played, and all hazards.
- Ball Marker:** An object (coin or small plastic item) used to indicate where your ball was on the green in case it interferes with the line of someone else in your group. Comply if asked by placing it behind the ball before you pick the ball up.
- Stroke Play:** Competition in which results are determined by the number of strokes played. Also referred to as Medal Play.
- Match Play:** Competition in which results are determined by the number of holes won. You can win a hole by scoring less than your competitor on it. It doesn't matter how many strokes you win by, you only win one hole.
- It's OK:** It's OK to play to do things outside of the rules of golf if you are not in a competition or just want to enjoy your day. Skip a hole if you need to catch up with the group in front; pick up in the middle of a hole & enjoy the beauty of the surroundings; just chip & putt on hole when you feel like it; throw the ball out of a bunker after 1 try; play from shorter tee boxes or 150 yards in; get enthusiastic (big smiles, fist pumps, high fives); **PLAY GOLF FOR FUN!**

This Glossary is developed by