

Protecting the Field

I had the Golf Pro where I play during the summer speak to our lady's league about protecting the field and what it means. I thought I would pass along what this means and how every player needs to be aware of this.

Keep in mind that playing golf during non-league play or non-tournament play is different. If someone is "stretching the rules" it isn't of much concern. Unless, they beat me and brag about it! Then it might bother me a bit. 😊 No, this specifically speaks to tournament play which includes our play of the day.

The rules of golf have two distinct reasons for existence. The first is to level the playing field by requiring players to follow a standard set of rules applied equally across the board. The second is to allow playing partners to monitor and correct a breach if required. During a golf tournament, the second reason is called *protecting the field*.

It is every player's responsibility to protect the field in golf tournaments. Allowing someone to take advantage of the rules by giving them a favorable drop or turning a blind eye to rules infractions without saying anything (because it is your friend or a more skilled golfer) destroys the second reason for golf rules. It is important that we protect the field, and it starts with us *politely* challenging a player who breaks the rules.

As the observer:

If you observe someone in your foursome "bending the rules" by, say improperly marking their ball on the green a few inches closer to the hole, not taking a proper drop, not properly counting their strokes, not properly accessing a penalty stroke (just a few examples), then *politely* "challenge" with a simple statement of what you saw or what you think their score was.

As the person being challenged:

Do not take it personally, *politely* review your strokes on the hole to confirm your score, ask the group to assist in determining what the correct ruling should be (if you disagree, play a second ball, and ask the rules committee for the correct ruling when you complete the game), or apologize for not marking your ball on the green in the correct spot and remark. Remember, you are not being accused of cheating, just being asked to confirm that the rules were properly followed because we all make mistakes or inadvertently do something that breaks the rules.

So, just how does this protect the field? Well, if we have a player or two or three who during the POD or another tournament aren't following the rules and all the other ladies are, it isn't fair to the ones who are doing their best to follow the rules to lose to someone who isn't.

Thank you for reading this and for being willing to say something if you see something and being willing to accept someone confirming that what you did was correct.