



DUTIES OF A BALL SPOTTER

Ray Burniston looks at the roles of officials.

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One of things that help to speed up play in competitions is the provision of ball spotters at strategic points on the course and it is well worth trying to persuade members to help out for the benefit of those playing.

Often for major events the rough is allowed to grow resulting in many areas around the course in which play could be held up. Also the presence of a strong breeze or wind can turn certain holes into a nightmare for the golfers. This was evident at the Open at Carnoustie in 1999 when the best golfers in the world had great trouble negotiating this famous course. Without plenty of ball spotters some of the competitors would have taken far longer to get around.

You need to identify the problem areas and try to arrange a sensible rota for the day. It is well worth the club providing perhaps some sort of refreshments on completion of their duty for each member. If you provide liquid refreshments on a hot day then stick to non alcoholic drinks while they are on duty.

It is important to emphasize that a Ball Spotter is not a Course Official and should under no circumstances be expected to advise players on rules or regulations. Their job is to show the player what may or may not be the player's ball. It is up to the player to identify his/her ball before playing the next shot.

In the case of whether a ball is out of bounds or not, the ball spotter should inform the player where a ball is located and indicate the course boundary. It is important in making sure that any boundaries around the course are clearly defined either by white posts or by a hedge or fence. It is still up to the player and marker and not the ball spotter to determine if the ball is out of bounds.

If your course has a problem area then it is advisable to have an official in the vicinity who can make a ruling if necessary.

It is important to have ball spotters especially on the early holes which help to keep the field moving.

A letter of thanks to each ball spotter would not go amiss.

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