

## Through the Green



I received a simple question this week, “How does ‘through the green’ affect the Rules, could you provide an example?”

It made me realise that whilst many of my blogs have included references to ‘through the green’, I have not discussed the meaning of this golf term in detail.

The area ‘through the green’ is often misunderstood by golfers. Common misconceptions are that it is; when a ball goes over the back of the green; another way of describing the fairway; another way of describing the rough; or another way of describing the fairway plus the rough.

Here is the Definition from the front of the Rules book;

*“Through the green” is the whole area of the course except:*

- a. The teeing ground and putting green of the hole being played; and*
- b. All hazards on the course.*

Here is an example of how understanding the meaning of ‘through the green’ may affect your play. If your ball lies in the rough, just off the closely mown fairway, and you are taking relief from an immovable obstruction, or an abnormal ground condition (e.g. GUR or casual water), the relief procedures outlined in Rules 24-2b(i) and 25-1b(i), Relief - Through the Green, require that you must drop the ball within one club-length of and not nearer the hole than the nearest point of relief, which must not be in a hazard or on a putting green. So, if the permitted one club-length relief takes you from the rough to the fairway you are entitled to drop the ball onto the fairway (Decision 24-2b/8). Similarly, if your ball lies on the fairway and a Local Rule for Preferred Lies is in effect, you may place the ball onto the first cut of rough, providing that spot in the rough is within the distance you are entitled to prefer your lie (e.g. within 6 inches, or the width of the score card).

It is worth noting that Rule 25-2 only permits players to take relief for a ball that is embedded in a closely mown area (see **this blog** for more detail). However, many Committees extend this relief to ‘through the green’. It is my understanding that USGA invokes a Local Rule permitting relief without penalty for embedded balls ‘through the green’ in all their championships and that most US Clubs follow suit.

Although they are uncommon in Ireland, where I play most of my golf, there are many courses around the world that have 'waste bunkers', or 'waste areas'. These are typically sandy areas, often very large, that might also contain rocks, pebbles, shells and various types of vegetation. Unless otherwise covered by a Local Rule, a waste bunker is not a hazard under the Rules of Golf and is therefore 'through the green', meaning that players may ground their club in these areas.

I have a little test to finish, to see how closely you have been paying attention! What areas of the course are included in the term 'through the green', other than what are commonly referred to as fairways and rough? The answer is below

**Answer:**

**Teeing area (boxes) other than the teeing ground of the hole being played; and putting greens other than the one that is being played. However, note that Rule 25-3 deals separately with a ball that comes to rest on a putting green other than the one being played.**