

Bob Boldt's Golf Dictionary

I put this dictionary together after having received so many questions about different golf terms from my customers over the years. I have been playing professional golf on both the PGA and Senior Tours for over 40 years. This dictionary is to inform our golfing public about some of the language, rules, swing thoughts, etc. that, in some cases, are only known to golf professionals and students of the game.

This dictionary is free to download. If you have questions about terminology, rules, or technique or if you need help with your game see our website, www.BoundaryOak.com, and our professionals.

ACE: Hole in one. Odds are approximately 37,000 to one for amateurs; 7,000 to one for professionals. Art Wall holds the record for most holes in one for the PGA Professionals at 37! The amateur record for a left-handed golfer in a tournament happened at our course (Boundary Oak) during the Contra Costa Amateur. Billy Martin, Jr. (son of the famous baseball player, coach) had two holes in one (Number 2 and number 17) on the same round of the tournament. Odds of this happening are 1,350,000 to one.

AIRMAILED IT: Your shot, for whatever reason, flies over the green.

APRON OF THE GREEN: The grass around the green that is mowed approximately two to three times the height of the green.

BACKSWING: The starting of the backswing varies according to individuals, but the most common backswing starts with the shoulder and arms with the lower body not moving until the club head reaches a position parallel to the ground. See our professionals

BAILOUT: A decision reached as the downswing starts and usually caused by indecision to start with – e.g., OB left – I'll hit the ball to the right and hook it in – no, I'll start left and fade – no, I'll hit it straight.

BALL UNFIT FOR PLAY: If a ball is damaged and the golfer thinks the ball is unfit for play – cut, scuffed, out of round – the ball can be taken out of play if a fellow competitor agrees.

BALL MARK: An indentation on the green caused by a ball landing on the green. Repair with a metal device is preferred.

BALL POSITION AT ADDRESS: One of the most important aspects of the game. A rule of thumb wedge to nine iron middle to middle front of stance with each club advancing due to length of clubs to your left instep with woods.

BASEBALL GRIP – FULL FINGER: The best grip in golf in my opinion. All of the fingers are placed on the club exactly in the same place as an interlocking or overlapping grip. A must for ladies – small hands. See our professionals

BIRDIE: One under par.

BLIND SHOT: Playing from a position on the tee/fairway where you cannot see the green. If you are playing a hole where you cannot see the green from tee or fairway, be sure you check the green is clear. An abundance of blind shots is due to faulty design.

BOGEY: One over par.

BOUNCE: The most important aspect of a sand wedge. You must have bounce on your sand wedge for sand shots – no bounce for fairway, rough, or hard pan lies. All pros carry a minimum of two sand wedges. See our professionals

BUILDING A STANCE: You cannot build a stance anywhere on the course. Example: putting a towel down to keep your pants clean – Craig Stadler did this in the San Diego Open, while kneeling to hit a shot. Craig is a friend and his charm is his disheveled look – why worry about a little mud?

BURIED LIE: Anytime your ball buries at impact, excluding a hazard, you may lift and clean – no penalty

CARPET: On the carpet – slang for being in the fairway.

CASTING FROM TOP: Moving from the top of your backswing with your hands -- generally caused by too fast a backswing and too tight a grip going back.

CASUAL WATER: Any accumulation of water that you can see from your stance that is not in a trap or hazard -- free drop.

CHILI DIP: Have you ever put chips into chili and try to keep the chili on the chips? This is where chili dip came from. Chi Chi Rodriguez stated “I chili dipped it”. A vertical motion usually a chip with a sand wedge that sticks in the ground, mostly performed from wet or thick rough.

CHUNK: Same as chili dip.

CLUBHEAD SPEED: The club and body turn creates club head speed. 110 – 130 mph for professionals; 70 – 100 for amateurs. How do you get more club head speed? See our professionals

COIL: The coiling of the body parts from address to top of backswing. Most amateurs have little or no coil. See our professionals

CROSS-HANDED: Jim Furyk uses a cross-handed putting grip – Fred Couples - no one uses a cross-handed grip in hitting the golf ball. One of the most amazing things I have ever witnessed in golf was when playing with Charlie Owens, an African-American one-legged PGA Professional. Charlie had a stiff left leg due to a parachute jump in the Army. He used a cross-handed grip, and shot 68 in the round that I played with him. He also used the first long putter. Charlie couldn't bend over to putt and he is the only PGA Professional to win a PGA event playing cross-handed. Try to hit a golf ball cross handed – unbelievable.

DIVOT: Piece of turf taken with an iron – too much produces a fat shot – too little a thin shot.

DOG LEG: Hole that veers right or left from tee area

DOG TRACK: A course you bring your dog to play on

DORMIE: A good position to be in if your winning – bad position if you're losing. Match play the contestants have a situation where the number of holes remaining cannot produce a win for the golfer that is losing, i.e., 4 down, 4 holes to go

DOUBLE BOGEY: Two over par

DOUBLE EAGLE: The ultimate in golf – greater than a hole in one – three strokes under par on one hole -- 2 on a Par 5, 1 on a par 4

DOWNHILL LIE: Probably the hardest shot in golf. Ball must be played back in your stance with a more lofted club. Balance is crucial – not too much weight on your left side. See our professionals

DOWNSWING: Once your club is set on your backswing, the swing plane covers from top to bottom approximately .6 sec. -- too complicated to explain. See our professionals

DRAW: A controlled right to left shot intended to conform to fairway contours or pin position on green. See our professionals

DUCK HOOK: Sharp curve to the left caused by a variety of problems – but always caused by not finishing club head toward target. See our professionals for help with this problem.

EXTENSION: One of the top five parts of the golf swing in importance. I can monitor my shot no matter what position I am in by my extension. This is too complicated to explain in this dictionary. See our professionals.

FADE: An intentional shot that curves left to right in order to conform to angles in the fairway and green.

FAIRWAY: The area that you want to put your tee shot in. Cut height of fairways is usually friendly.

FLAGGED IT: A shot that covers the flag from start to finish.

FLIER: Not intended for airline pilots. A shot that actually flies over the intended target mainly caused by the club and grass catching each other in the rough. Grass comes between face of the club and club head producing a slingshot trajectory.

FLOPSHOTS: Hardest shot in golf. Not really, if you know how to use it. No body movement open stance, hands must be in front of ball, ball position up, slow backswing. See our professionals

FORE: Golf terminology for errant shots – where this came from is uncertain – Scottish vintage. This is a fore warning and the abbreviated slang was fore.

FRIED EGG: Not a desirable saying even if you're ordering breakfast. A half buried lie in the sand. No one is familiar with how to extract a fried egg except professionals. See our professionals

FROZEN ROPE: A shot that needs to be hit on a low trajectory against the wind -- hit off back foot – no wrist action – all arms

GRAIN: The direction in which the grass grows. Grain goes west with Bermuda greens – greens in the west travel with terrain, water

GRAPHITE SHAFTS: Lighter than steel – more forgiving – easier to hit – recent technology produces same characteristics as steel. A must to use. Fitting is essential – best results PGA teaching professional (check background)

GROUND UNDER REPAIR: Usually marked but if not, debris, leaves, maintenance pilings, etc. call official if uncertain.

HAM AND EGG: In match play where you and your partner are erratic on each hole, but one of you is making birdies pars – you will drive your opponents in to the mental ward if it continues through the match

HAZARDS:

Water Hazard – designed to penalize a shot that confronts the target line to the green or fairway

Lateral Water Hazard – designed to penalize a shot parallel to your target line, green or fairway

Bunkers – Bunkers are sand or grass – sand is a hazard in which you cannot ground your club – grass bunkers are part of the golf course with small or deep ravines in which you may ground your club.

INTERLOCKING GRIP: Not a popular grip even though Tiger Woods uses it. Basically seven fingers are the strength of the grip. The left index finger interlocks with the right pinky finger.

This grip is supposed to utilize the hands in a unified grip for accuracy – not recommended for anyone wanting to have more power in their swing.

LAG PUTTING: A slow, soft putting stroke intended to put the ball near the hole. A method to keep from 3-putting usually a long downhill or slippery side hill putt.

LINE OF PUTTING: Reading a green is tricky, but there are some rules to go by:

1. Ball will usually break away from mountains, hillsides, and toward water
2. Grain on green is the manner that the cut grass grows – Bermuda grass grows in a westerly direction – Bent or PoaAna grows according to slope
3. Ball will seldom break against the grain
4. Most championship golf courses will have little or no grain – except Bermuda greens.

LOOSE IMPEDIMENTS: Nature's leavings such as leaves, twigs, and pebbles -- can be refuse or any man-made leavings that can be picked up without a penalty. In so doing, be sure your ball doesn't move.

LOST BALL: If you think you might have hit your ball O.B. or it might be lost, you have the option of hitting a provisional ball or you can search for the ball for 5 minutes. You are on the clock when search begins. If you decide to hit a provisional, you must inform your partner that you are going to hit a provisional ball, show him the ball you will be using (put a mark on it). If you find your original ball, pick up your provisional ball – no penalty.

NINETEENTH HOLE: The place, usually the bar clubhouse, where all the lies, bets and drinks are finalized.

NO BRAINER: A shot that is hit badly but ends up perfect.

OUT OF BOUNDS: Off the course, not in play, marked by white stakes or boundary fences -- can be put in for safety reasons (like on #3 and #14 at Boundary Oak). Stroke and distance penalty.

ON THE CLOCK: On the PGA Tour, golfers are expected to hit their shot in 40 seconds. If a player or group is out of position, they are put on the clock. If a group is not playing up to pace (by the clock), they are warned that they will be timed and a two stroke penalty will be imposed to the group or individual that is causing the delay.

ON THE DANCE FLOOR: Term used that you have hit the green but you are not next to the pin.

ON PACE: Pace is usually based on a 4 to 4 ½ hour round.

OUTSIDE AGENCIES: Anything that causes your ball to move that is not caused by the golfer (animals, birds, squirrels, leaves, etc.) -- complicated situations that need to be interpreted by a rules official.

OVERLAPPING GRIP: The most popular grip – right pinky finger is on top of left index finger. Supposed to provide more control.

PAR: Scoring standard

One over par is called a bogey. Two over par is called a double bogey. Three over par is called a triple bogey.

One under par is a birdie. Two under par is an eagle. Three under par is a double eagle.

PAUSE AT THE TOP OF YOUR SWING: A critical part of the coiling of your body. Ideally, a slight pause (Camilo Villegas – Rookie of the Year – has the best pause I have seen). A pause at the top will set your swing to start the down swing. Your keys for pausing – loose grip, slow backswing. See our professionals

PLAYING OUT OF TURN: The player who has the lowest score must tee the ball first. On the fairway, the player who is farthest from the pin is deemed to play first. If a player on the tee plays out of turn in match play, he must hit another shot with no penalty. In medal play, there is no penalty, but seldom occurs unless the player who is up first states “go ahead, I have to go to the bathroom” or is preoccupied with equipment, clothing, etc.

POA ANNUA GREENS: There are basically three putting surfaces: Poa Annua, Bent or Bermuda. The preferred putting surface is bent, but the evasive Poa Annua eventually takes over due to its native growth in fairways. Bermuda is generally a regional grass in extremely hot weather states.

PUNCHED SHOTS: An abbreviated following through used to create a low trajectory to help in windy conditions See our professionals

RELEASE THE CLUBHEAD: A complicated term referring to the impact of the club head at contact. All sports have a release point. In golf, the release can be as fast as 1000th of a second and can only be felt after contact. See our professionals

REROUTING THE CLUB: Jim Furyk is the example of rerouting. The path of Jim’s swing changes from outside going back to inside coming down. Not recommended for the average golfer. Most golfers who change the path of their swing go from inside to outside the swing plane, coming over the top. See our professionals for help with this problem.

SAND WEDGES: Sand wedges vary from 53° to 63° loft. The sand wedge used for bunker shots must have bounce. Sand wedges used outside of bunkers, especially on tight or hard pan lies should have little or no bounce. Most professionals carry two to three sand wedges.

SHUT CLUBFACE: A hooded clubface going back to the top of the swing generally caused by too tight a grip and a fast take away, causing the club to rise vertically and out of plane. If your club head is shut, you will most likely top the shot or duck hook.

SKULLING THE BALL: A form of topping caused by standing too far from the ball, looking up too soon or bad ball position – too far back or forward in stance. See our professionals for help with this problem.

SLOPE - HANDICAP SYSTEM: A rating of various courses in order to even handicaps for varying difficulty of individual courses.

SHANK: The worst word in the golfing world or English language. A shot that is mentally and physically devastating. Hitting the shot off the hosel of the club caused by a myriad of swing flaws. Generally hit when hitting a sand wedge, but can be by any iron club.

Peter Aliss stated it best while broadcasting the Senior British Open. I can't remember who the golfer was but Peter stated "Oh, my God, he just hit a lateral into the latrine next to the clubhouse, and I mean he is not going to the bathroom".

SNOWMAN: A term for scoring an eight on a hole – UGH!

SOLID CENTER GOLF BALLS: Until recently, most golf balls were made with rubber bands. Titleist was the foremost maker of rubber band balls. A Balata cover was put on the ball's surface. The ball would go out of round and cut easily. Most professionals would change balls every few holes to keep roundness and compression the same.

Solid center balls come in varied designs two-piece, three-piece, molded with no rubber bands and are 100% more consistent than the old Balata balls. Solid balls do not go out of round and vary in compression -- 70 to 100 compression. Most amateurs should use a lower compression for best results.

SQUARE SETUP: Shoulders, hip, knees and feet are aligned parallel to the line of the target. To be square on your setup, your body must be aligned left of your target line VERY IMPORTANT! Think of a railroad track – your club is on the right track; your body is on the left. See our professionals

SWEET SPOT ON THE CLUBFACE OR PUTTER: The spot where the clubface or putter is struck to produce a straight shot or putt. Modern equipment has increased the sweet spots to such a degree that it is virtually impossible to miss.

TAKEAWAY – STARTING OR BACKSWING: There are five positions that are needed to hit the ball in a straight direction. The takeaway is the most important in that if the initial move away from the ball is incorrect or out of plane, the swing must be re-routed. See our professionals

TEEING AREAS: Where you start each hole. At Boundary Oak, we have five sets of teeing areas to accommodate golfers:

Red – Ladies

Silver – Seniors

White – Medium-High Handicap

(continued on next page)

Blue – Low-Medium Handicap

Black – Low Handicaps-Professionals

You cannot tee the ball ahead of the markers, but you may tee up as much as two club lengths behind the markers.

THE TEMPO OF YOUR SWING: The tempo of your swing is one of the most important aspects of producing a repeatable swing. The best tempo I have ever seen – Ernie Els. The worst tempo – Tiger Woods' downswing. Can he swing with this violent move as his age increases? It will be virtually impossible to keep all his body parts intact. The twisting and 100% power output cannot last. See our professionals to learn how to keep your tempo like Ernie's.

TORQUE OF THE SHAFT: Torque is the twisting of the shaft at impact. All shafts have some twisting (torque for long hitters from 2° -- up to 4° with medium to short hitters). You should know the torque and stiffness of your shaft. See our chart on what shaft you should use in comparison to your length.

UNPLAYABLE LIES: A position where you can not hit the ball. Your three options when you declare your lie unplayable are:

1. Two club lengths taken from original unplayable lie
2. Go back to where you hit original shot
3. Go back as far as you want keeping the point of your unplayable lie between you and the hole. Most amateurs have no idea of this rule.

WATER HAZARDS: See Hazards, Ruling for Hazards

WATER HAZARD

A body of water that will be crossed.

1. Play from location of previous shot
2. Go back on line from point of entry and line of pin as far as you want.
3. Play ball from hazard

LATERAL HAZARD

A body of water that parallels the fairway and green.

1. Play from location of previous shot
2. Go back on line from point of entry and line of pin as far as you want.
3. Play ball from hazard
4. Two club lengths where ball crossed hazard – not where ball hits water
5. You may go on either side of hazard – no closer to pin. Example – you might have a tree on one side and an opening on the other side.

This is good trivia question: Give me the 5 options when hitting into a lateral hazard – you will win this bet!

WORM BURNER: A missed shot hit on top of the ball caused by looking up, standing too far from ball, bad ball position.

WRONG BALL HIT WHILE PLAYING: Happens all the time. Make sure you mark your ball with a marker pen so you can identify your ball. Did you know it is a two shot penalty if you cannot identify your ball? For example: Joe and Jim are playing the same ball, same number – if they cannot identify their balls, they are disqualified due to not knowing which is their ball.

THE YIPS: The yips is a mental disease that can be caused in all phases of the game, but mostly in putting – the inability of the brain and body to put a controlled stroke of the putter shaft and club head together. Similar to stuttering. A twitch before impact, muscle and brain spasms with club head or putter, an uncontrollable motion of stopping or producing side angles, and even whiffing. See our professionals

THE ZONE: The best example of the zone happened to me on the Senior Tour Mony Classic in Phoenix. Everything was going right and I had no idea how many under par I was until my playing partner said “Bob, you are 10 under par and we have only played 12 holes”. At that time we were waiting to hit our tee shots on the 13th tee. My playing partner (will not mention his name because it is embedded in my brain) said “you could shoot 59 today the way you’re going. There are two par fives left that you can reach. You guessed it, the zone disappeared. My first thought: God, I’m finally going to be famous. The next thought, I can reach those par 5’s. I have 6 holes left and the par 5’s, at best, will be birdies that puts me at 60. My shot on the 13th went 30 yards, right off the fairway in the middle of a lake. The zone was gone. I ended up shooting 62. The zone has never reappeared, except in my dreams.

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