

Greenside bunker play doesn't have to be difficult

The sand shot around the green has given many amateurs nightmares, whereas professionals claim this to be one of the easiest shots to play. I believe this is because the average amateur is just hoping to escape in one or two shots without having a plan to play this particular shot.



GARY KNAPP
PRO TIP

The following steps will help even the novice to advanced player to become more efficient in escaping the greenside sand. Remember two golden rules for greenside bunkers:

1) Whenever possible, no clubhead-ball contact

2) The ball goes where the sand goes — not where the clubface is looking

These are important rules to remember to reach your potential.

The first step when entering the sand is to always inspect the lie of the ball; this determines the best way to play the shot. The second step is to adjust the clubface to fit the lie of the ball.

For a good lie (the ball

sitting on top of the sand), open the clubface a few degrees to the right. This will add loft to the club but, more importantly, it puts the bounce or bottom edge of the club in the lead position to strike the sand first and sliding through the sand rather than digging too deep.

For an average lie (the ball partially buried), square the clubface to dig the sand a little deeper.

For a bad lie (ball more

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Keeping feet buried elevates ball

► **PRO:** Keeping feet buried will elevate the ball

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than half buried), close the face a few degrees to the left. This helps the leading edge of the club head to enter the sand first, which makes the club dig to get under the buried lie.

The third step is to play the ball just forward of center in your stance.

The fourth step is to bury your feet; this will elevate the ball making it much easier to hit the sand first.

The fifth step is to place your weight on your front foot (the one closest to the green); this promotes a downward blow to help you thump the sand.

Finally, remember to make a big enough swing to not only remove the ball but also about an 8-ounce glass of sand.

Remember these steps the next time your ball ends up in

the greenside bunker and you will encounter a friend not a foe in executing the shot.

Gary Knapp is rated as one of the country's top teachers and has been teaching golf full time for more 26 years. Knapp has appeared on the Golf Channel Academy and was voted South Florida's PGA Teacher of the Year. He moved to Las Vegas to become the director of instruction at Lake Las Vegas and currently teaches at the Silverstone Golf Academy. To schedule a lesson, call 371-6792.



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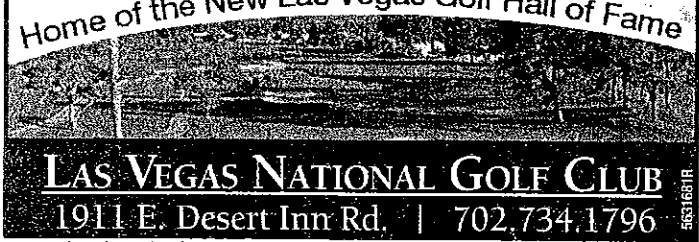
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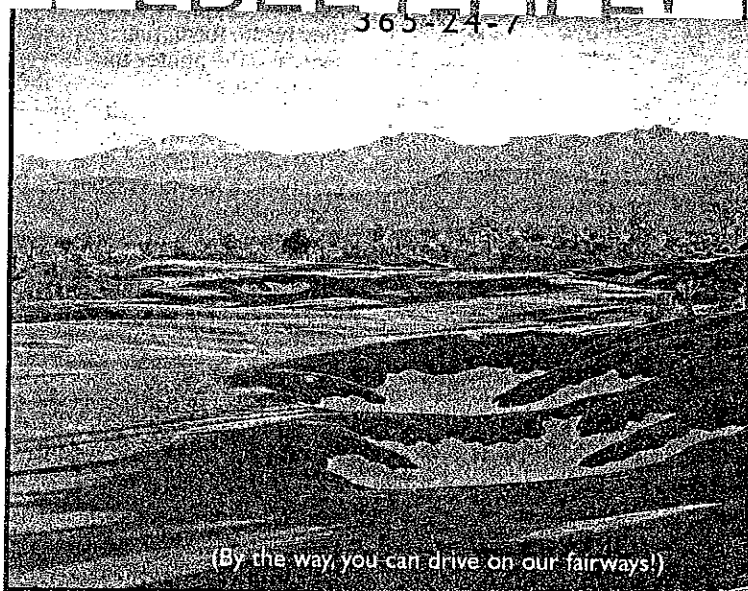


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