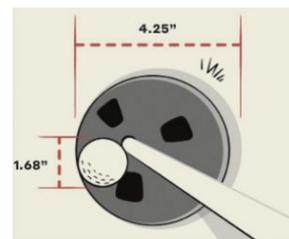


In or Out?

In an effort to simplify the rules of golf and speed up the game there are some big changes that have taken effect as of January 1, 2019. For instance, there is no longer a penalty for grounding your club in a hazard, removing loose impediments or taking practice swings. Also, you can now fix any mark on the green regardless of what caused it (i.e.-spike marks). One of the biggest changes is that you are now allowed to leave the flag stick while putting. I have been asked from many students should I leave the flagstick "In or Out?"

Having spent the past 32 plus years taking the flag out, I was undecided. I began to do some research. Here is what we know...

1. The hole is 4.25" wide.
2. A ball is 1.68" in diameter.
3. The diameter of a standard flag stick is 0.5".
4. The space left for a golf ball is 2.125" minus the .25" for the 1/2 of the flag.
5. Since the ball is 1.68" in diameter that leaves only a .195" gap for the ball to fit into.



Initially it seems like taking the flag out seems like the logical answer, but I continued looking for more information. I came across a study done by Dave Pelz back in 1990. He conducted a Pin In/Pin Out test where he designed a device to roll putts accurately aimed with a laser. He rolled putts at different speeds hitting different parts of the pin on a flat, uphill and downhill sloping greens from 2 feet. The results were conclusive: **You will hole a higher percentage of putts if you leave the flagstick in!**

He goes on to explain that reason for this is due to a significant amount of energy loss when the ball comes into contact with a fiberglass flagstick. This allows for gravity to pull the slower moving ball down into the hole more often. The prime example of this effect is if you look back to how many times you have hit a pitch or chip shot that is carry too much speed as it comes into contact with the flagstick and still manages to stay in the hole. Do note that this effect does not occur if the flagstick is metal. The metal does not absorb the energy.

While it will take some getting used to, it is my conclusion that you should leave the flagstick in if it is fiberglass and remove it if it is metal.

For more information or help with any other part of your game, please visit www.brianflugstad.com to book your next lesson!