

Sectional Qualifying for Women?

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A major change in the pattern of the Women's Amateur Championship is under consideration. If the plan is adopted, this is what would happen:

1. The entrants would compete in sectional qualifying rounds at 36 holes stroke play over two days (18 holes each day). The sectional trials would be held at specified locations (perhaps 20 to 30 in number). Each section's allotment of qualifiers' places would be based on size and playing calibre of the field. Eligible former champions would be exempt from sectional qualification.
2. A total of 128 players would become eligible for the championship proper after the sectional tests.

3. In the championship they would be drawn for match play from the outset by a blind draw (there would be no further qualifying round).

By way of comparison, in the 1948 championship all entrants played an 18-hole qualifying round at the championship site, and G4 qualified for match play; they were drawn by the General Numerical Draw.

Thus, under both the present and the proposed systems, there would be 64 players still eligible as of the second morning of the championship. The plan under consideration would substitute a round of match play for a qualifying round on the first day, and thus would double the number of players who compete in the match play.

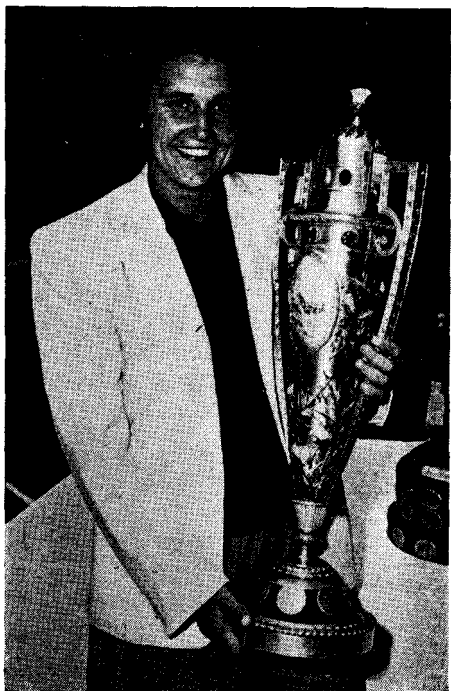
The USGA Women's Committee has considered the possibility of sectional qualifying for several years and has now decided to survey women's golf associations and players for their views.

An open meeting with players at the last championship showed a 2-to-1 majority in favor of sectional qualifying.

It is the present opinion of the Women's Committee that sectional qualifying would improve the over-all quality of the championship by tending to insure that leading players from all sections would compete in the tournament proper. In recent years some sections remote from the championship scene have not always been represented by their best players, and it is believed that the uncertainties inherent in an 18-hole qualifying round were the main reason.

We further feel that sectional qualifying would stimulate interest in all sections and therefore be for the good of the game.

This year's championship at Pebble Beach was a delightful event, but no one enjoyed it more than Miss Grace S. Lenczyk. Her victory for the championship climaxed a year of many tournament successes, during which she won the Canadian Championship for the second consecutive time and the national Intercollegiate.



Julian P. Graham Photo

Miss Grace Lenczyk with the USGA Women's Amateur Championship trophy.

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vited to the fact that Rule 7(5) provides for ground under repair, and it is recommended that occasional unusual conditions which operate against fair or pleasurable play and which are not widespread be so defined accurately as ground under repair.

The Association recognizes, however, that such adverse conditions are sometimes general throughout a golf course, and that local committees sometimes adopt local rules called "winter rules" for such conditions. Any such local rules, like all other local rules, should be stated in detail and interpreted by the local committee, as there is no established code of "winter rules." Without detailed local rules, it is meaningless for a local committee to post a notice which merely says "Winter Rules Today."

From our observation, the following local rule would seem appropriate for the conditions in question, and it is suggested simply for the purpose of standardization:

"A ball lying in a 'fairway' or on a putting surface may be lifted and cleaned, without penalty, and placed within six inches of where it originally lay, not nearer the hole, and so as to preserve as nearly as possible the stance required to play from the original lie. After a ball has been so placed, it is in play, and if it move after the player has addressed it, the penalty shall be one stroke -see Rule 12 (lb) ."

It is emphasized that such a local rule is in conflict with the established Rules of Golf and the fundamental principle of playing the ball as it lies, and the USGA therefore does not endorse and will not interpret it.

Scores made in competitions where such a local rule is in force should not be used for handicapping.

The section in the Rules of Golf entitled "Recommendations for Local Rules" provides in part that "When necessary, local rules should be made . . . for the preservation of the course." That is not to be confused with the local rule discussed above. All too frequently "winter rules" have been adopted under the guise of protecting the course when, in fact, the practical effect was just the opposite—they condoned moving balls to the best-conditioned parts of the course, from which divots were promptly taken and the course injured. Further, such local rules have invariably been permissive, rather than obligatory, so that a player was under no compulsion to move his ball if he did not want to do so. A local rule "for preservation of the course" must be mandatory and must be specific as to details in order to be effective.

EMBEDDED BALL; CLEANING BALL

Rule 16 dealing with casual water does not necessarily apply to an embedded ball, nor does any other Rule of Golf. The Rules of Golf do not permit cleaning of the ball generally

In the interest of fair and pleasurable play, it is sometimes necessary to adopt local rules to give relief. Thus, on particular days in USGA competitions when the conditions warrant, this Association adopts all or part of the following local rules, as may be advisable, but it is emphasized that they are for only particular days and that conditions are reviewed from day to day :

"Local Rules-Applicable Today Only

"PUTTING SURFACE

"A ball lying on the surface especially prepared for putting of the hole being played may be lifted without penalty, cleaned, and replaced on the spot from which it was lifted.

"On such putting surface, a ball which by force of impact remains embedded in its own pit-mark may be lifted without penalty, cleaned, and placed as near as possible to the place from which it was lifted but not nearer the hole.

"THROUGH THE GREEN"

"Through the green,' a ball which by force of impact remains embedded in its own pit-mark may be lifted without penalty, cleaned, and dropped as near as possible to the place where it lay and must come to rest not nearer to the hole. See Rule 10(5). A ball may not be cleaned 'through the green' unless so embedded.

"('Through the green' is the whole of the course except the teeing ground, hazards and the putting green. — Definition 3.)"

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The foregoing supersedes all previous expressions by the USGA Rules of Golf Committee on these subjects.

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Miss Helen Sigel played spectacular golf to reach the final, where she lost to Miss Lenczyk, 4 and 3. In the fourth round Miss Sigel was particularly brilliant—she played the first nine of difficult Pebble Beach in 34, four under women's par, having five 3s in the first seven holes. It was perhaps the greatest nine ever played in the Women's Championship.

Miss Sigel was runner-up in 1941 as well as this year. Miss Lenczyk, who is 21 years old, first played in the championship in 1946 (Miss Sigel defeated her then in the second round) ; she was a semi-finalist last year.