

# The New Rule on Grips

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On January 1, 1949, all golf grips with channels and furrows designed as artificial aids in placing the fingers on the shaft will become taboo.

They will fall under a newly effective prohibition imposed by Section 4 in the Rules Governing Form and Make of Golf Clubs. The provision was adopted and announced nearly a year ago, but the effective date was postponed until 1949 to allow players and manufacturers opportunity for convenient adjustment.

The USGA never has sanctioned any substantial departure from a plain shaft, partly because of its conviction that individual skill in gripping the club is an integral part of the skill involved in playing a stroke. It is what we call "feel."

For some time the Association has prohibited grips which were so molded as to make the placing of a finger or fingers automatic in one set position. The amendment to Section 4 now rules out channels and furrows large enough for the fingers.

Section 4 now reads:

**"4. The grip shall be a continuation of the shaft to which material may be added for the purpose of obtaining a firmer hold. The grip shall be substantially straight and plain in form, may have flat sides, but may not have a channel\* or a furrow\* for the fingers or be molded to the fingers.**

**\*The above prohibition against a channel or a furrow for the fingers will not become effective until January 1, 1949."**

As a careful reading will indicate, this rule does *not* eliminate everything except a round, smooth grip.

A shaft with a slight heel or protuberance at the top to enable a player to grip the club more firmly has been approved. Rough wrappings and wrappings which indent uniformly down the shaft have been approved. Even a paddle grip, with flat sides, is approved as long as it does not have a channel down the center for the thumbs.

On the opposite page are sketched ex-

amples of some grips approved and some disapproved by the Implements and Ball Committee.

Although No. 1 is the only one of the four grips at the top which is plain and round, all four meet the new specifications. No. 2 has an indented spiral wrapping running uniformly from top to bottom, but the depressions are not large enough to hold a finger or fingers and are not an aid in placing the fingers on the shaft properly. No. 3 is a flat-sided paddle grip, but it contains no channels or furrows. No. 4 widens at the top, but this "heel" is an approved device for enabling a player to take a firm grip; it has no channels or furrows.

All four grips shown at the bottom are obviously outside the new specifications and have been disapproved. No. 5 is constructed with two knobs and a channel between, and the proportions are such that a player can place his hands and fingers on the club in only one way. It is an automatic aid in gripping. Grip No. 6 has channels for the thumbs, another automatic aid.

No. 7 is a paddle grip as commonly constructed for a decade or more, with a channel down the top for the thumbs. The channel places it outside the specifications (but the same club without the channel, shown as No. 3, is approved). No. 8 has both a "heel" and a channel for the left thumb. The channel places it in a different category from No. 4, and it is thereby disapproved.

Examples of approved and disapproved grips, however, really should not be necessary to a full understanding of Section 4. Any golfer can judge whether his grip meets specifications by asking himself a simple question: Is it so molded, either with knoblike protuberances or with channels deep enough to hold the fingers, that he is artificially or automatically aided in properly placing his fingers on the shaft the same way each time?

If the answer is "yes," the golfer should go to his professional and have the molding, channels or separate recessions removed. The correct grip should be a matter of skill, not artifice.

**APPROVED**



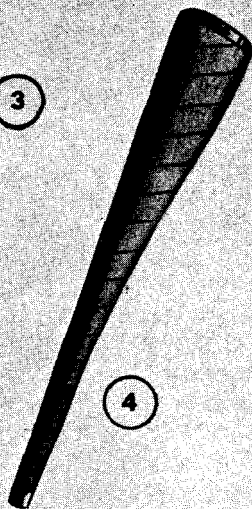
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2



3



4

**DISAPPROVED**



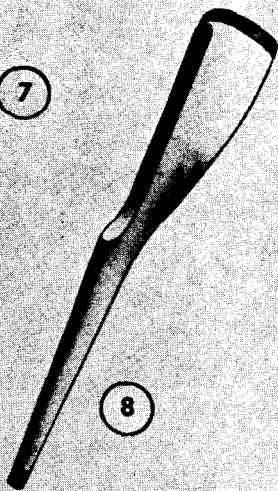
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6



7



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