

Club Grips and Gloves

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ONE of the most important phases of the USGA Implements and Ball Committee's work in recent years has dealt with artificial aids in the gripping of a golf club.

As a general proposition, the Association believes that individual skill in gripping a club is an integral part of the skill involved in playing a shot. It is a part of what all golfers know as "feel." Thus, the Association is generally opposed to club grips and accessories which provide pronounced automatic aid to the player in placing any fingers on the club.

Over a period of many years grips which were not of the traditionally round form have been submitted to the Implements and Ball Committee. Some of them, while of help in enabling a firm hold, did not assist in automatic placement of the fingers; and, in general, such grips were approved. On the other hand, some samples submitted had various indentations and knobs which required the player to place his finger or fingers in one set position. They were, in fact, molded to the fingers. Such grips have been disapproved.

Last year the Rules contained a new general provision on the subject, and this year the provision has been made more nearly specific, in order that all players might be aware of the interpretation which the Association has made to inventors and manufacturers. This new Rule appears as section 4 in the Rules Governing Form and Make of Golf Clubs (*see page 60, 1948 USGA Rules of Golf booklet*), and it provides as follows:

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."*

The Rule does not mean, and in fact

does not say, that a grip must be perfectly round. It does not disapprove certain departures from round grips. But it does prohibit devices for automatic placement of any fingers on the club. The furrows and channels referred to have to do mainly with hollowed out grooves extending over the greater part of the grip and which are wide enough and deep enough for thumbs or fingers to fit into.

Aside from grips on clubs, there are certain golf gloves in existence which are so constructed as to be of artificial aid in making a stroke. Some have leather loops or pockets attached so that the end of the shaft may be fitted into a socket or the shaft itself put through a loop, in each instance binding the hand or fingers to the grip by other than the natural means of holding on. These obviously cannot be approved.

The Glorious Game of Golf

(Continued from preceding page)

To the gentleman, the etiquette of the game is also equivalent to a rule of the game, just as much as the etiquette of the drawing room is a rule which one cannot repeatedly violate without ostracism.

Let us keep these fundamental thoughts in mind when we take our place on the tee under a clear sky, with glorious fairways stretching away into the distance, and as we smile at our opponents and begin the battle, let us remember that we are in God's great outdoors in search of pleasure; and this being our mission, let us fit ourselves for the play by an understanding of the rules of the great game we are about to play, and thus add a hundred-fold to the charm that comes from knowing just what each crisis calls for, so that in the end one's knowledge of rules, one's devotion to their observance, and one's skill in the use of every club will have played their respective parts in the contest.

In that event, no matter who is the winner or the loser, each will have proven himself a competitor whose companionship is worth cherishing, and golf will continue to remain without a rival as a game and without a peer as a pastime.