

# Amateurism Is in the Spirit

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Prof. Charles W. Kennedy, of Princeton University, has given to the world of sport, through a series of essays on "Sport and Sportsmanship", a philosophy which I think is basic to golf and is very helpful in interpreting the Rules of Amateur Status. To give you the benefit of Prof. Kennedy's sound logic, here are excerpts from his very enlightening book:

"At bottom the essential distinctions between the amateur and professional points of view are matters of spirit. Many attempts have been made to define amateurism and professionalism in technical terms, and these definitions have quite rightly discerned one of the roots of professionalism as a desire to coin into material advantage a participation in sport which should be governed solely by a love of the game itself and the joy of playing it. But when the last definition has been penned, and the last piece of regulatory legislation formulated, it will still remain true that the essential difference between professionalism and amateurism is a difference of spirit. I believe that it is possible to make a fairly clear and simple statement of this difference in spirit.

## More Important Things

"I believe that an amateur sportsman is one who wishes to play a game as well as he can play it *in relation to more important things*. A man engaged in business, or in a profession, who is free to withdraw a few hours a week from his professional occupation in order to engage in golf or tennis or some other sport, wishes, of course, to play his chosen game as well as he can play it under these circumstances. But he knows from the beginning that he cannot play it as well as he would be able to do if he devoted his entire time to attaining a proficiency in sport comparable to the

proficiency which it is his chief ambition to attain in business or in his profession.

"On the other hand, I believe that in spirit a professional athlete is one who not only wishes to play the game as well as it can be played, but who has made the decision that he will devote all his time, and subordinate all other interests, to the perfecting of his skill and proficiency in his chosen sport.

"In my judgment, therefore, the essential values of amateur sport will always be most wisely discerned from the point of view of those participants whose professional interests lie elsewhere, and who approach a game in the spirit of play and recreation."

The honest-to-goodness amateur golfer, then, plays primarily as a recreation and a diversion from his primary occupation. Strictly speaking, a player is not an amateur at heart if he does nothing but play in order to be able to compete successfully with professionals with the intention of later turning pro. Playing golf is actually his business during this build-up period. In justice to both pros and amateurs, such an individual would do better to turn pro, out and out, at an early stage.

Of course, there are exceptions among those who apparently do nothing but play golf — for example, the individual who has retired from business, or one who never has had an urge to work and who plays golf simply as a diverting pastime. Generally, however, the true amateur cannot possibly compete with a player who does nothing but play golf and who, broadly speaking, is making a business of it.

The majority of golfers subscribe to Prof. Kennedy's views. They are a constant challenge to remind us all of the spirit which lies behind the letter of the Rules.