

Evidence and the Semi-Amateur

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A question frequently asked today by those interested in maintaining a high standard of sportsmanship for golf is: "Why doesn't the United States Golf Association do something about the infiltration of semi-professionalism in the amateur ranks?"—a condition abhorred by all and apparently a growing one.

The answer is unfortunately simple—lack of evidence.

A primary responsibility of the USGA Executive Committee is "to adopt, enforce and interpret a rule or test of amateur standing". In doing so, the Committee employs the American way rather than that of the "police state". In other words, evidence is the determining factor.

This is the democratic way, the only fair way by which judgment can be passed on the many and varied cases presented. Even when the Executive Committee may seem to be arbitrary in ruling a player ineligible for amateur competition "for the best interests of the game", you may be assured there is excellent reason.

For the sake of clarity, let us take a brief look at a few specific cases.

Anonymous Letters

In one instance, we received an apparently very sincere letter making strong accusations against an individual who, it was alleged, had become a great detriment to golf through flagrant violations of the Rules of Amateur Status. The writer beseeched us to do something about it. However, he made one great mistake in neglecting to sign the letter, and that reduced to a large extent the effectiveness of the information given.

By coincidence, the letter was supported by the receipt of a number of voluntary oral complaints. Again, however, every individual refused to permit his name to be mentioned, nor would he put his complaint in writing for fear of "becoming involved", although each and

every one felt that calling the situation to our attention was for the best interest of the game. But there was nothing concrete.



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the time being, this particular case remains in abeyance due to lack of evidence.

On the other hand, there was a player of prominence who for some time had been reported in violation of the Amateur Rules but concerning whom there was no concrete evidence. Then a report was received that he had lent his name as a golfer, by markings on his golf bag, for the advertisement of golf equipment.

The player was questioned. He denied having so lent his name.

But several other players gave oral and written testimony which contradicted the individual's statement. The factual evidence was so conclusive that the individual was debarred from amateur status and was disqualified from the Amateur Championship shortly before the tournament began.

Another case in point is that of professional intent. An article in the press reported that a prominent amateur golfer had applied for a job as professional at a club; the article further stated that if his application was not accepted, he would remain an amateur.

The Amateur Status and Conduct Committee then took action to investigate the matter. The person accused was asked a number of direct questions, and the various accusations were enumerated. He categorically denied each charge in its entirety. Thus, for

This was clearly a case of professional intent. Even so, before the Executive Committee could consider the matter seriously, it would need evidence that the player actually filed application for the pro position.

These three cases are cited merely to illustrate the point in question—that the basic determining factor is evidence, even though it may be the consensus that debarment in all three instances would be for the best interest of the game.

The USGA Amateur Status and Conduct Committee welcomes comments and complaints regarding violations of the amateur code, whether intentional or unintentional, and will make immediate investigation of them. But successful prosecution will depend largely upon the evidence produced.

Gossip, reared on false information, or locker-room tips coming sotto voce only tend to aggravate a delicate situation which is harmful to the game.

Championships

The Open

Thirty sectional qualifying locations have been arranged to serve the convenience of entrants in this year's Open Championship, 49th in the USGA series which began in 1895.

A number of new centers were established in the Middle West inasmuch as the Championship proper will be held at the Medinah Country Club's No. 3 course, in the Chicago district. Another large entry is expected after last year's record of 1,411.

Entries, filed on USGA forms, must arrive not later than 5 P. M. on Monday, May 16, at the USGA office, 73 East 57th St., New York 22, N. Y.

Sectional rounds will be held Monday, May 31 in 28 districts. At Honolulu the date is May 24, and at Washington, D. C., it is June 1, to avoid conflict with the final day of the PGA Championship at Richmond, Va. The Championship proper at Medinah will be played June 9, 10 and 11, with 162 competitors.

Girls' Junior

The newest Championship will be played at one of the oldest clubs. The Philadelphia Country Club, which was formed in 1890, has kindly invited the USGA to hold the first Girls' Junior Championship over its Bala Course, and arrangements have been completed for the tournament there from August 15 through 20.

The Bala course is the older of the Philadelphia Country Club's two courses, and is within the city limits. The newer course, Spring Mill, was the scene of the 1939 Open Championship, won by Byron Nelson.

The Girls' Junior is the only USGA Championship in which all entrants go direct to the Championship location without engaging in sectional qualifying. The tournament will start with an 18-hole qualifying round, to determine 32 qualifiers. All matches will be at 18 holes.

Entrants must not reach their 18th birthday by the day of the final (August 20). They must be members of USGA Regular Member Clubs or must enjoy the privileges of such clubs through membership of their families.

CHAMPION IS RUNNER-UP

William P. Turnesa is the Amateur Champion of the country at golf, but he's a runner-up in his home town of Elmsford, N. Y., where he recently failed to win an election for mayor. However, he is on the Board of Trustees of the town.

The Champion is Chairman of the Metropolitan Golf Association's Amateur Status Committee, and conducts that work in an exemplary manner. Whenever he receives an application for reinstatement to transmit to the USGA, he invariably invites the applicant to his business office for an interview.