

Amateurism in College Golf

By JOSEPH C. DEY, JR.
USGA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Do the USGA Rules of Amateur Status operate to deprive some worthy young men of a college education?

Let's see. Let's take the case of Bill.

Bill was a pleasant young fellow. He had always been one of the most courteous and alert caddies at the club. Besides, he had a fine, natural swing such as many caddies are blessed with.

After Bill captained his high school golf team to a State championship, half a dozen college athletic directors and golf coaches sought to persuade him to matriculate at their institutions.

Bill finally made a profitable arrangement with a college located in climate where he could play golf practically all year. His studies didn't interfere too much with his golf, because they fixed him up with some of the less demanding courses, including sail-boating, basket-weaving and aesthetic dancing.

Bill had a delightful time. Of course, he had to work a little to earn some cash, but the college took care of most of his expenses. The college figured it was well worth it, because Bill developed into a nationally known player during his four years there, and he always represented the college and got its name in many newspaper articles.

The college saw to it that Bill went to all the important tournaments. They financed his expenses not only to the usual college events during the academic year but also to many invitation tournaments and championships during the summer.

And when Bill was graduated, he was sure that the world still owed him a living.

Two Violations

That picture of Bill is deliberately overdrawn, and the college is not a typical college. But some of the facts are from real life; there once was a college golfer who actually took courses in sail-boating, basket-weaving and aesthetic dancing.

Bill is not an amateur golfer. An amateur is "one who plays the game solely as a non-remunerative or non-profit-making sport." Bill's principal violations of that USGA Definition of an Amateur Golfer were:

1. Because of his golf skill and reputation, he accepted a scholarship and other consideration as an inducement to be a student in an institution of learning.
2. He accepted expenses for non-college competitions.

Proselyting

Let's examine the first case. Does it mean that, if golf's Rules of Amateur Status covered all of life, all college scholarships and other helps would be improper? Certainly not. Scholarships for scholarship are splendid. But when they are given exclusively in exchange for one's services as a player of golf, the recipient is patently selling those services; and that is not the act of an amateur.

Golf is played for pleasure. An amateur does not use his skill at the game to gain any special privileges. Why should Bill receive financial benefits that are not available to his fellows simply because he can hit a golf ball squarely? Is it fair to his fellows, who do play for pleasure?

Admittedly, the rule here involved does tend to dry up one source of help to student golfers. But it minimizes proselyting of amateurs and attendant abuses, and is really in the best interests of the young fellows. In the long run, it works the greatest good for the greatest number; and that is about as much as can be expected of any rule.

Expenses

As for expenses for college golfers, the subject is a live one because of a recent change in wording of the pertinent USGA Rule.

It is a basic tenet that a player who accepts expenses, in money or otherwise,

in connection with a golf competition or exhibition forfeits amateur status. There are certain exemptions; under one exemption, acceptance of expenses to competitions by school and college golfers has long been permissible. The USGA has always intended this exemption to apply to college or school events or other events in which the institution was represented by a team (such as a team match with a club.)

But it now comes to notice that some colleges and their golfers have construed the special exemption as permitting acceptance of expenses to all kinds of competitions. The language of the old rule was not clear on that point.

So the exemption's phrasing has now been revised to obviate any such misinterpretation. It now permits an individual to accept a reasonable amount of expenses "As a representative of an institution of learning or of a military service in (a) team events or (b) other events which are limited to representatives of institutions of learning or of military services, respectively. In each case, expenses may be accepted from only the authority represented."

Suppose there were no restraints. Our old friend Bill, after spending a comfortable eight or nine months in or near college, could then go on tour for the

summer and represent his college in all manner of events, with the college footing the bill. You might even have the startling situation of having an Open Champion by courtesy of dear old Siwash.

What would be fair about such a situation? If Bill is playing golf solely as an amateur sport, why should he have special privileges not available to other golfers?

So good old Bill during his college days was doing violence to the spirit of amateurism on two counts — he sold his golf skill and he accepted improper expenses. And the college was perhaps guiltier than Bill, for the college knew better.

But wasn't there a third harm? The really important thing in Bill's life was the development of Bill himself — his real self, his character. But they took such good care of Bill's wants at college that he didn't have much occasion to develop his true self. In fact, he had very little to do for himself — except play golf. As long as he did that, everything went along fine.

So it was only natural that, when Bill was graduated, he was sure that the world owed him a living.

For golf, you see, had unfortunately become to Bill a means to an end, and not an end in itself.

Changes in the Rules

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ball in the direction of his choice (subject to limitations elsewhere in this Rule). This does not mean that the desired line of flight of the ball must necessarily be free of such interference. Regardless of how the desired line of flight may be affected, the player is entitled to specific relief as follows," whereupon the Rule details procedure for various situations, as formerly.

CASUAL WATER IN A HAZARD (Rule 16 (3))—Lifting and dropping within a hazard, not nearer the hole, *without* penalty is now permitted. However, in dropping *outside* a hazard, the water hazard principles prevail and a penalty stroke

is added. (This Rule does not apply to casual water in a water hazard.)

HAZARD DEFINITIONS (Rule 17)—The definition of a hazard has been amended to cover "any bunker, water (except casual water), water hazard, or sand." A water hazard now is defined as "any sea, lake, pond, river, ditch, drainage ditch, or other water course (regardless of whether or not it contains water) and anything of a similar nature. All ground within the margin of a water hazard, whether or not it be covered with water or any growing substance, is part of the water hazard."

Included in the Rules book are recommendations for local rules for wet days, for parallel water hazards and for caddy-ing double.