

Slow Play

The pace and the mode of play by some golfers have now reached the state where they closely resemble civil engineers, with all due respect to that profession. One person who doesn't like the unfortunate slowness of today's golf is P. W. Furlong, of Pomona, Cal., who has written the USGA as follows:

"It now takes me *five* hours to play a leisurely *three-hour* round of golf!!

"If a few strokes were added to the scores of the professionals who take longer than three hours to complete any 18-hole competition, this deplorable situation would soon correct itself.

"Beginners naturally try to copy the professionals both as to golf swing and mannerisms. This is normal and as it should be.

"So the novice or run-of-the-mill golfer attends one of the big tournaments to see how the professionals and scratch amateurs do it. Here is what he sees:

"I. Professionals squatting on every putt and usually from at least two sides of the cup. Presumably this is necessary to read properly a green with which they are already very familiar.

"Meticulously going over every blade of grass between their ball and the cup, regardless of whether the putt be 60 feet or six inches.

"Marking all balls on the green regardless of position.

"II. Standing interminably over every shot, whether drive, iron or putt, presumably to register deep concentration!

"III. Tossing grass or holding hat or hands aloft on all tee shots and strokes through the green, presumably to determine the velocity and direction of the wind.

"These are but a few of the dilly-dally practices being employed by our leading professionals. Such practices become ludicrous when indulged in by most golfers, professionals included. After a big-name tournament, play in our local clubs slows down to a crawl.

"But worst of all, it now takes me *five* hours to play a *three-round* of golf."

The British GOLF ILLUSTRATED takes a less personal view. Having observed some uncommonly slow play in British championships this year, particularly by Americans, the writer says in part: "The funereal pace affected the players waiting to play, who piled up behind. In that sense an offense had been committed.

A British View

"The fact that a golfer travels several thousand miles to take part in a championship or tournament is no reason why a comparatively unknown golfer from a local club should not receive consideration. Success does not guarantee priority of treatment. Regarding the common courtesies of the fairways, all have equal rights. On this point we are sure that no one will disagree.

"But... what is to be done about players who find that tortoise tactics are essential for their temperament? It was obvious at St. Andrews during the Amateur Championship that some of the slower brethren were not doing it for effect. They played as if it were a matter of life and death. Their preliminary movements were not posing. They had a distinct bearing on the shots. To insist that they speed-up their ideas would affect their game. How is the rule to be applied in such cases? . . .

"St. Andrews produced a couple of early matches on the opening day that proved how a match can be played at a steady pace if the emphasis is placed on the golf and not on creating an effect. Bing Crosby was an enormous attraction. The gallery that waited in miserable weather was a tribute to his drawing-power. Here was a 'natural' for a long-drawn-out display of American showmanship. On the contrary there was no suggestion of playing to the crowd. An even pace was maintained in spite of the attentions of the crowd. The same might be applied to the match in which Donald Peers took part."