

On Drying Up a Calcutta Pool

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For a native Kentuckian inherently fond of a thoroughbred horse and not at all averse to a gentlemanly, modest Nassau wager on a golf game to discuss gambling critically is, to say the least, unique. It should also be admitted that the writer has not been completely innocent in the past of participation in private and limited Calcutta pool activity. Thus, some license may exist for this article.

Those types of gambling should certainly be defined and differentiated from what the United States Golf Association has seen fit to call "organized gambling." The Calcutta as an added attraction to major invitation and sectional golf events has reached such proportions that the subject bears careful study, especially where the pools are featured in connection with tournaments for amateurs.

This article is prompted by an incident in New Orleans during the Southern Amateur Championship in June. The incident is recounted, at the request of the USGA JOURNAL, for varied reasons:

FIRST. An authentic report of what actually happened may correct biased rumors and unfair press stories.

SECOND. It is about time to consider the effect of a so-called and uncontrollable Calcutta pool on amateur golfers.

THIRD. What should ultimately be done with and about Calcutta pools?

Many Youngsters Present

The Southern Amateur Championship always seems to draw an unusually large and brilliant field of junior golfers. In this year's entry list of well over a hundred, including the 1949 USGA Junior Champion and many other boys of immature years, probably 25 capable youngsters of 20 years or less were well able to qualify in the championship flight of 64.



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During practice rounds and even on the first day of qualifying, flagrant publicity about a Calcutta pool, such as distribution of printed invitations to attend the auction in connection therewith, was encountered by contestants, officials and spectators at the tournament site. Officials were approached with requests for early pairing releases to facilitate auction program procedure. The proposed pool was to be conducted at the Metairie Country Club, a member of the Southern Golf Association and the USGA. (The Championship itself was being played at the New Orleans Country Club.)

It immediately became obvious to the officials that many contestants were concerned with the "prices to be put upon their heads."

At a meeting of 13 officers and directors of the Southern Association, it was

unanimously decided to file a telegram of protest to the Metairie Country Club, quoting verbatim the USGA policy disapproving organized gambling, and to express the feeling of the Southern Association as being opposed to an organized and substantial gambling pool.

An immediate reply came from the gentlemen who make up the directorate and the membership of the Metairie Country Club. The pool had not been planned by Metairie but the Club had granted permission to a group of individuals to hold a ticket sale and auction. Metairie now summarily withdrew this permission. The Club's message indicated its complete willingness to cooperate with the Southern Association, and the plans for the pool scheduled for the following evening were promptly cancelled. As a result, there is no doubt that personal and organization friendships were strongly cemented between the member clubs, the individuals and officials.

An almost audible sigh of relief escaped many of the more popular entrants. All fair-minded persons expressed approval of the action, as well as their understanding of the pressure put upon amateur golfers by advertised establishment of their "cash-winning" value.

The only persons in dissension were the opportunistic individuals interested in the operation of the gambling feature. They were without thought of the adverse influences on participants. The accompanying temptation is execrable.

This one great realization has certainly been brought to all golf-minded persons in the area:

Would it not be deplorable for the money involved in a gambling pool to preclude or overshadow the fun and the honor of winning a major amateur golf title? The very thought is incongruous.

A Short Putt for a Young Fortune

As for the second question in the beginning of this article, there can be no doubt in the mind of any sportsman as to the harmful effect on any golfer, young or old, facing a short putt for a win if he stops to think that someone in the

gallery stands to lose a young fortune if he should miss that putt.

At Memphis some years ago, during the final match for the Southern Championship, unsportsmanlike conduct was indulged in by gambling or biased spectators. The President of the Association at one point stepped to the center of a green and threatened to clear the golf course of spectators should further ungentlemanly manners be shown as a result of hostile interests and at the sacrifice of fair play.

To add to the above, the possible

USGA Policy on Gambling

The following is a resolution adopted by the USGA Executive Committee:

"This Association does not approve organized gambling in connection with the playing of the game.

"Section 1 of the Rules of Amateur Status defines what constitutes an amateur golfer. Section 2 gives several examples of violations which are to be interpreted in the light of Section 1. In considering any individual case, the Committee would be guided by the intent for which an event is conducted or the purpose for which a player has competed."

effect on a player's amateur status certainly must not be overlooked in connection with organized gambling of any kind. A fine budding amateur career could, indeed, be demolished in short order.

Now for the third question: What should ultimately be done with the Calcutta pool idea?

As one punster has said, "Why not send the pool back to the 'Black Hole of Calcutta.'"

It certainly does not add anything to the game as the true sportsman plays it.

Year Old

Congratulations to THE GOLFER magazine, which celebrated its first birthday in San Francisco recently.