

How Long Do You Take to Putt?

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One of the most controversial angles in golf today is the excessive amount of time some tournament golfers spend on the putting green.

The United States Golf Association has tried to cure the malady with a rule. For many years delay which unfairly interfered with another player subjected the slow man to the possibility of disqualification. But the penalty was never applied—its sole use was a threat.

At the start of 1949 the USGA reduced the penalty to a more nearly practical degree—loss of hole in match play and two strokes in stroke play, except that repeated delay was to entail disqualification. In the last two seasons several players in USGA championships have received the minimum penalties under this rule, most of them for being late at the first tee. USGA officials say the general situation about slow play is improving.

But on the putting green play is still painfully slow. In watching tournaments the last two years we have seen many flagrant violations of the rule which requires a player to "play without undue delay," and never have we seen a penalty invoked on the green, although some decidedly should have been called.

Thus far USGA officials haven't been able to solve the problem satisfactorily, and it may take a Philadelphia lawyer to come up with the perfect answer.

The Stop-Watch Test

An idea which might go far toward a solution was tried during the semi-final matches of the Northland invitation tournament in Duluth, Minn.

The four players were timed on the greens from the time they started studying their putts until the ball was stroked.

Player A had an average of 32.1 seconds per putt, with a low of 20 seconds and high of 48.

Player B averaged 21 seconds per putt, with a low of 12 and high of 26.

Player C's average was 28.5, with a low of 6 and high of 62.

Player D had the highest average of the four players, with 38; a low of 21 and high of 53.

The ultimate champion, Tom Hoak, required the lowest average time per putt, 21 seconds. This might be construed as an example of what the late Alex Smith said many years ago, "Miss 'em quick." This colorful Carnoustie Scot had the reputation of being a fine putter, especially in the clutches.

Traveling pros are probably the worst offenders, but amateurs of all ages are likewise guilty. Ten-cent syndicates, dollar Nassaus, regular weekly club events, invitation tournaments, state championships and on down to the biggest championship in the country, the USGA Amateur, they are all guilty.

At the Amateur Championship

We made a time test of a number of contestants in this year's USGA Amateur at the Minneapolis Golf Club with the following results, from the time they started studying their putts until the ball was stroked:

In a first-round match between William C. Campbell, of Huntington, W. Va., and Allan Whaling, of Cincinnati, Campbell averaged 55.3 seconds per putt on 17 greens for a total of 17 minutes and 26 seconds, with a high of 85 and low of 25. Whaling, the winner, averaged 48.8 for a total of 19 minutes and 30 seconds, high 85 and low 5.

This 17-hole match, although slightly delayed by the field, required 4 hours 11 minutes, of which 36 minutes 56 seconds were spent studying and stroking putts.

Defending Champion Charley Coe averaged 43.12 seconds, with a high of 64 and low 22, in his first-round match

Brass without Hats



Alex Bremner photo

USGA officials during the Amateur Championship at the Minneapolis Golf Club. Left to right: Front row — Richard Tufts, Pinehurst, N. C., Secretary; Totton Hef-felfinger, Minneapolis, Vice-President; James Standish, Detroit, President; Isaac Grainger, New York, Vice-President; John Ames, Chicago, Treasurer. Back row: Joseph Dey, Executive Secretary; Charles Grace, Philadelphia; Charles Peirson, Boston; James Walker, New York; Fred Dold, Wichita; Frederic Byers, Jr., Pittsburgh, all members of the Executive Committee. Missing from the photograph are T. R. Garlington, Atlanta; Lewis A. Lapham, New York; Corydon Wagner, Tacoma, members of the Executive Committee, and Fraser M. Horn, New York, General Counsel.

with Thomas S. Jamison, Jr., whose average came to 43.05, high 64 and low 17. Twenty-two minutes 30 seconds were used in putting during this 14-hole contest.

Coe averaged 53 seconds per putt on some of the holes which we checked him on in his other matches. On four or more holes Richard Chapman averaged 43 seconds; Gene Littler, 39; Willie Turnesa, 40; Chick Evans, 34; James McHale, 42, and Pat Sawyer, 22.

Forty contestants were checked on the 13th green, generally regarded as the trickiest on the course, for an average of 38.7 seconds, with a high of 137 and a low of 12.

In Frank Stranahan's match with Mc-

Hale, the British Amateur Champion averaged 61 seconds to his opponent's 59.6, and in the following match with William Mawhinney he averaged 50.6 as compared to the Canadian Champion's 72. These two matches were close and hard-fought, both being decided on the 18th green.

The putting of Stranahan and Sam Urzetta, the new Champion, was checked on 29 holes of their final match, and the total time spent on the greens was: Stranahan — 48 minutes 7 seconds; Urzetta — 25 minutes 39 seconds.

In this match Frank used more time than before in putting. Perhaps it was because he was so close to the title he

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wanted most, but during the 21 holes in the afternoon round he averaged 81.7 seconds per putt on his first putt and 59.7 when he was obliged to make a second effort. His low of 38 came on the first hole, and high of 166 on the 39th, where Frank froze and walked away from the ball to regain his concentration—but came back to miss.

Urzetta was faster and more consistent, having an average of 52.7 on his first putts and 37.5 with his seconds. A high of 80 came on the second extra hole and low of 35 seconds only was required on his championship-winning final putt.

Stranahan ran over the 100-seconds count six times. The majority of Urzetta's efforts were consistently between 45 and 55.

How the Juniors Do It

Proof that four to five hours is not required for a round of championship play was furnished in this year's USGA Junior Championship at Denver.

In the third round Don Bisplinghoff

and Merritt Marcus played 18 holes in 2 hours 10 minutes, and the winner was two under par.

In the quarter-final round Eugene Hay eliminated Bisplinghoff, 4 and 3. The winner was four under par and the first nine was played in one hour.

The final between Mason Rudolph and Chuck Beville required 2 hours 40 minutes for 17 holes and was slowed by a sizeable gallery.

Since timing contestants on the putting greens during these two tournaments, we have made the same test on a number of golfers as they played in their regular Saturday club events. The results were interesting from a number of angles, one of which is that some players didn't realize the time they had been using on the greens.

The amount of time spent at putting might not contain a complete answer to the growing problem of "too much time required to play a round of golf," but a further study along these lines could lead to a step in the right direction.

Spirit of the Women Seniors

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The younger generation could get many tips as to how golf should be played from the Seniors, as this Championship is played according to the strictest Rules of Golf, and often in weather that few players would venture out into.

Life begins at 50 with the Seniors. There is no other game but golf that women of our age can continue to play and enjoy. The Seniors have proven that golf will keep you young and active through the years, and give you more real pleasure than any other sport.

May there always be a Senior Championship!

HORTON SMITH'S FORMULA

Swing your clubhead and play better golf. Swing freely in a circular arc and play more enjoyable golf. Preparation: Visualize your shot, plan your swing, aim club toward hole, adjust your stance and balance, get "clubhead feel," and swing.

Swing formula: Leg-based, arm-measured, hand-hit and head-anchored. Legs provide base and balance-in-motion and also generate force (leg drive). Arms measure circular arc, left arm and club form radius of swing circle. Shoulder-propelled arms act as swinging levers. Hand action (straightening of wrists) climaxes swing at impact. Left hand emphasizes holding, with right hand hitting. Hands give sense of feel and location of clubface. Head and spine are center and location point around which the swing revolves.

Playing good golf requires the ability to swing the clubhead along a given line (direction line) at a given pace.