

Rangers Can Help Cure Slow Play

TO THE USGA:

What immediate good will come from the wide circulation of your observations on slow play, I do not know. However, speaking from long, hard-bitten experience, I am firmly convinced that you have struck right at the heart of the greatest single obstacle to the growth of golf in this country.

Prevailing conditions not only are responsible for discouraging new golfers but each year these conditions cause many an old-timer to seek other recreation. The youngster, especially the unmarried youngster, does not feel the pinch of a six- or seven-hour stretch from home to get in a round as does the man with a family and responsibilities.

Golfers of this type, as well as many young prospects, are lost simply for lack of a little effort to regulate play. We are not utilizing facilities to the extent that a little supervision would make possible.

The ranger idea is what I believe to be the cure.

My introduction to all that a ranger can accomplish came one morning when four of us were playing a municipal course. There were hardly any golfers on the course, but on the third hole we were slowed down by a group of three. When we walked to the fourth tee, we saw they had lost a ball, and being hardened to the peculiar type of golf etiquette practiced there, we looked around for a bench.

At that moment, a young man—a ranger—stepped out of nowhere, shouted to the three ahead to move aside, and ordered us to shoot.

Once we cleared that group, there wasn't another party on the course for several holes. But had we gotten stuck on any other public course I have played on, chances are we would have had to stay behind that crowd throughout the round.

In a general way, lack of etiquette is the chief cause for slow play, and the municipal course player is chief offender

and chief sufferer. If he loses a ball, the odds are strong that he will not wave the next party through; in many instances he does not acknowledge the right of the other party to pass him even after a reasonable length of time.

The golfer who does not acknowledge this right just doesn't know any better. He is in the minority. A high percentage should know better and the majority are veteran golfers. Their attitude reflects what has just about become a code—that is, hold the line at all costs, even to the extent of dropping the ball at the moment the oncoming party is abreast.

When this every-day situation presents itself, someone has to give, and that is when an arbitrator is badly needed.

Imitation of Slowness

Walking hand in hand with the lost ball problem is the constantly growing inclination to piddle around with each shot, especially on and around the green. Nearly every day in the year thousands of all types of golfers witness some of our foremost golfers surveying every putt and approach. When they get back to their own games, imitation of the champions is reflected more in their pace than in their play. This situation will be more difficult to handle, but a ranger's authority can be extended to encourage such groups to a faster tempo.

Each game has grown up with certain customs peculiar to it. In golf, you're on your honor from beginning to end. Anything foreign to that character is detrimental to the game's growth.

No one ever wants to have a stop-watch held over him on a golf course. For that reason it would be dangerous to approach a reform in an inflexible manner, for to do so would certainly alienate prospective adherents from the cause. The best results can come from drawing a picture of how much more pleasure and profit a little supervision can obtain.

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BY REQUEST)