

A World Code of Rules

By JOSEPH C. DEY, Jr.
USGA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Twelve men sat around a large conference table. They were in a committee room of the House of Lords in London.

The twelve men represented the governing authorities of golf in Great Britain, Australia, Canada and the United States. They were trying to develop a code of Rules of Golf which could be used uniformly throughout the golf world. In the main, this meant trying to reconcile the differences between the British and American codes, in substance and form.

At the moment of which we write, the conferees were in a deep discussion of a point. After full consideration, the British view prevailed. At lunch, the British representatives decided it would be preferable to change their position because of possible complications for the USGA.

"That," said Lord Brabazon of Tara, "is the way to negotiate: you win your point and then concede it."

This symbolized the spirit of the meetings. For four days those twelve men explored every phase of the Rules. There were no axes to grind, no ultra-nationalistic views. They were just golf-lovers, and they worked together in complete harmony.

They reached full agreement on a uniform code. They had a wonderful experience together, and a memorable one.

The London meetings had been preceded by months of correspondence. After London, the meetings were adjourned to St. Andrews, in Scotland, the home of golf. There, in the clubhouse of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, overlooking the historic Old Course, four of the negotiators worked five days more as a Drafting Committee in rounding the London decisions into shape.

The recommendations of the Negotiating Committees now must be considered by the USGA Executive Committee and by the full membership of the Royal and An-

cient Golf Club of St. Andrews, which is the governing authority of British golf. The next R. and A. General Meeting is to be held in September, at which time the proposals will be acted upon. The USGA Executive Committee will have two meetings before then.

If approved, the changes probably will go into effect January 1, 1952.

Proposed Changes

The major points proposed:

Among the changes which would affect both the USGA and the R. and A. codes are:

1. The Stymie—abolition.
2. The Putting Green — to be all ground of the hole being played which is especially prepared for putting or otherwise defined by the Committee in charge. Heretofore it has represented all ground except hazards within 20 yards of the hole.
3. Practice Stroke — to be prohibited during a round, including the re-trying of putts after holing out.
4. Ground under Repair and Casual Water — to be treated alike.
5. Out of Bounds — penalty: stroke and distance.
6. Sand — Sand not in a hazard no longer a hazard.

Among the changes which would affect only the USGA code are:

1. Size of the Ball — the use of the British ball of 1.62 inches diameter to be permitted in the United States. This compares with the American standard of 1.68 inches. The weight remains the same—1.62 ounces avoirdupois.
2. Adoption of British format of code.
3. Obstructions — adoption of British definition.

A "United Nations" of the Rules of Golf



Photo by ALEX BREMNER

Negotiators representing four countries drafted a Rules of Golf code designed for world-wide use during meetings last month at London and St. Andrews, Scotland. Differences between the American and the British Rules will be eliminated if the proposals from these historic meetings are ultimately approved by the governing bodies which appointed the negotiating committees. Above, nine of the negotiators outside the clubhouse of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews. Left to right: Front row—Dr. James Lawson, R. and A.; Isaac B. Grainger, Chairman of the USGA Rules of Golf Committee; Dr. Harold Gardiner-Hill, Chairman of the R. and A. Rules of Golf Committee and Chairman of the Joint Negotiating Committees; Comdr. J. A. S. Carson, R. and A. Secretary. Rear row—Joseph C. Dey, Jr., USGA Executive Secretary; Ivo Whitton, of the Australian Golf Union; Lt. Col. John Inglis, Deputy Chairman of the R. and A. Rules Committee; Richard S. Tufts, USGA Secretary; Colin Rankin, Rules Chairman of the Royal Canadian Golf Association. Negotiators missing from the picture are three R. and A. representatives—Col. T. J. Mitchell, Lord Brabazon of Tara, and Roger Wethered, former British Amateur Champion, and Herbert Jaques, former USGA President, who did not make the trip.

4. Lateral Water Hazards — adoption of British definition and rule.

Among the changes which would affect only the R. and A. code are:

1. The Clubs — adoption of the American provisions for:
 - (a) Permitting shaft of putter to be fixed at any point in the head of the club.
 - (b) Prohibiting channels, furrows and molding of grips for any part of the hands.
 - (c) Specifications limiting markings on the faces of iron clubs.
2. Roads — no longer classified as hazards.
3. Ball Lost or Unplayable—penalty: stroke and distance.
4. Restoration of the General Pen-

alty to loss of hole in match play and two strokes in stroke play.

Those who participated are:

For the R. and A. — Dr. Harold Gardiner-Hill, Chairman of the Rules of Golf Committee; Lord Brabazon, Lt. Col. John Inglis, Dr. James Lawson, Col. T. J. Mitchell, Roger Wethered and Comdr. J. A. S. Carson, Secretary.

For the Australian Golf Union — Ivo Whitton.

For the USGA — Isaac B. Grainger, Chairman of the Rules of Golf Committee; Richard S. Tufts, Secretary; Herbert Jaques, former President (by correspondence), and Joseph C. Dey, Jr., Executive Secretary.

Dr. Gardiner-Hill served as chairman.