

Why Not The "Small" Ball?

By CHARLES B. GRACE

CHAIRMAN, USGA IMPLEMENTS AND BALL COMMITTEE

Question has been raised as to why the USGA Executive Committee is proceeding so slowly in considering a recommendation by the British-American Negotiating Committee to authorize the use of the so-called "small" golf ball. It has been decided not to make such a change in the Rules for next year.

Among the reasons for the USGA's cautious attitude are the following:

1. Preliminary tests indicate that the "small" ball has a longer carry-and-run performance under most wind conditions than the present USGA-size ball.

2. Existing USGA specifications limiting the speed of the USGA-size ball immediately after impact with the clubhead to 250 feet per second do not appear adequate to limit the "small" ball similarly.

3. The USGA feels it must consider the problems which golf ball manufacturers would face if the "small" ball were approved, and that, therefore, any change must not be made suddenly.

Increased Expenses Foreseen

As must be apparent, the USGA is fearful that the "small" ball as manufactured abroad would be longer under most American conditions than is the present USGA-size ball. That may appear to be a sadistic point of view when all of us golfers quite naturally want to hit the ball as far as possible. But if a longer ball were introduced, par would be distorted even more than it is now and most clubs would feel compelled to lengthen their courses, which could require purchase of more land, payment of more taxes, increase in cost of maintenance—and perhaps a jump in all of our membership dues. Moreover, there could be some effect upon the basic nature of the game.

Here is a comparison of the present Rules of the USGA and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews as they relate to the golf ball:



Charles B. Grace

| | Weight | Diameter | Velocity |
|-----------|-------------|--------------|------------------|
| | Maximum | Minimum | at Impact |
| USGA | 1.62 ounces | 1.680 inches | 250 ft. per sec. |
| R. and A. | 1.62 ounces | 1.62 inches | No rule |

British-American conferences this year produced recommendations for a worldwide uniform code of Rules of Golf, including R. and A. golf ball specifications as noted above. It was thought at the time of the conferences that the USGA velocity limitation was adequate and could be feasibly retained for use in America only. Thus, the only change from our standpoint would be to reduce the minimum diameter by six one-hundredths of an inch.

Some Surprising Results

Now six one-hundredths of an inch is not much if you're taking an automobile ride or watching your waistline grow or if you're concerned with any of thousands of other things. But six one-hundredths of an inch in the diameter of

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B putted, with the ball stopping on the rim. B then threw his putter to the ground opposite the side where the ball was, and the ball rolled into the cup. Would that mean that B held out on his last stroke, or should that hole have been a tie?

Question by: DR. ANNE S. NEWSOME, PRES.
SEBRING WOMEN'S GOLF ASS'N.
SEBRING, FLA.

A.: B's action apparently was designed to influence or actually did influence the position or the movement of the ball. B therefore violated Rule 18(5), and the penalty is loss of hole—see Rule 2(1).

It should be noted that A's putt could not have been conceded unless it were within six inches of the hole—see Rule 18(7).

Damp Areas in Rough

Q.: On certain holes, there are wet or damp areas resulting from inadequate drainage or to proximity to a brook. The question has come up as to whether damp areas of this sort should be regarded as casual water and played accordingly. In your USGA Rules, is there such a thing as casual water in the rough?

If it is a rule that a damp area of this sort in the rough is to be regarded as casual water, a player playing his ball in the rough and landing in such a damp area may face less of a penalty than the player who also drives into the rough but lands in a dry spot with a bad lie. I would appreciate your advice.

Question by: WILLIAM A. KIMBEL
CHAIRMAN, GOLF COMMITTEE
THE DUNES GOLF & BEACH CLUB
MYRTLE BEACH, SO. CAROLINA

A.: Rule 16—Definition provides: "Casual water" is any temporary accumulation of water which is not a hazard of itself or which is not in a water hazard." Any other water is a hazard: see Rule 17—Definitions. An area which

is merely damp or muddy is not casual water unless it fits the above Definition in Rule 16.

Casual water in the rough is covered by Rule 16(1). The Rules do not distinguish between "rough" and "fairway"—both are covered by the term "through the green"; see Definition 3.

If the areas in question usually contain water, they could hardly be classified as casual water, which is a temporary accumulation of water. Rather, they probably should be classified as water hazards, in which case their margins should be defined clearly and completely.

If they do not usually contain water, they probably should be regarded as through the green, in which case no special treatment would be necessary and casual water would be dealt with as it occurred.

No Measuring Through Obstruction

No. 51-30. R. 7(4), 8(2b)

Q. 1: Please clarify the following portion of Rule 7(4) dealing with relief from an artificial obstruction:—"but in no case shall relief be obtained by measuring through the obstruction."

A. 1: This means that the measurement shall be taken in a direction away from the obstruction, beginning at the point of the obstruction nearest where the ball originally lay. The player is not permitted to measure through the obstruction to another side. Thus, a player who is entitled to relief because his ball stops close to a protective screen cannot measure through the screen to play from the other side. If his ball should lie directly under this screen he may measure in either direction.

Q. 2: Rule 8(2b) provides in part: "keeping the point from which the ball was lifted between him and the hole." Is there any limit to how far back a player can go to accomplish this?

A. 2: No.

Questions by: THOMAS G. McMAHON
LOS ANGELES 25, CAL.

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a golf ball can produce surprising results.

Some recent tests made for us on an outdoor driving machine, with no appreciable wind and the temperature 77 degrees, produced the following comparisons:

| | Carry | Carry |
|--------------------------|--------|---------|
| | Only | and run |
| U.S. "large" ball (1) | first | third |
| U.S. "large" ball (3) | third | fourth |
| British "small" ball (4) | second | first |
| British "small" ball (2) | fourth | second |

In total overall performance of carry and run, the two "small" balls each had a run about 50 percent greater than the two other balls. This was despite the

fact that, in another test, "small" ball (2) was well within the USGA velocity specification. Against the wind, the "small" ball is admittedly superior in distance qualities.

The above tests are considered to be quite preliminary and by no means conclusive. But they help to explain why the USGA is continuing its investigations and is not ready to depart from its present specifications.

However, the USGA Executive Committee has approved a proposal that, in international team play here, either size ball may be used. British rules have always permitted either size ball to be used at any time.