

The USGA and the Colleges

The various sponsors of amateur sports use different yardsticks to measure amateurism. This point was brought out strikingly in the case involving a number of present and former students at North Texas State College, Denton, Texas.

These boys were to a degree victims of the differing views of amateurism held by the United States Golf Association and by some colleges. In accepting the routines of their college, the boys had engaged in practices which did not conform to the USGA Rules of Amateur Status.

Since the Rules of Amateur Status apply throughout one's life as a golfer, the Executive Committee, representing the 1,675 clubs which comprise the Association, wishes to cooperate with institutions charged with educating the young men of the country. However, the USGA will not compromise the Rules as they stand.

The North Texas State case is one in point. The USGA acquired evidence that some golfers there had been compensated by work scholarships for instructing classes in golf and/or had accepted expenses in connection with non-college competitions. The President of the College was notified of the divergence between these practices and the Rules of Amateur Status, and the golfers were notified that they had breached the Rules of Amateur Status.

The President promptly indicated his desire to revise the practices of the College so that no individual's amateur status in golf would be affected. Several of the boys soon thereafter filed applications which revealed that they had become aware of the Rules of Amateur Status and intended to conform to them. In view of this evidence of cooperation,

these particular boys were therefore reinstated immediately. The Rules permit an individual to be reinstated only once, so that if any of them should again breach the Rules, they would not be eligible for reinstatement.

The Executive Committee has noted assertions that there may be violations of the Rules at institutions other than North Texas State. If that is so and the Association obtains proof, the Rules will be applied.

Question has been raised as to whether the USGA can enforce the Rules uniformly without having a police force. The USGA is a voluntary association of golf clubs—a non-profit organization which seeks only to serve the good of golf. Long experience has proved that the best way to administer a gentleman's game such as golf is by the honor system. Honor is the soul of the golf code. You don't send out a detective or a policeman with every player. You accept a player's word as to his score, unless you have cause to believe that he may be falsifying, in which case you investigate.

The same code applies off the course in amateur status matters, just as much as in returning the right scores. If a player states that he is an amateur under the Rules, you take his word unless you have cause to believe otherwise, in which case you try to find out the facts.

Golf has thrived on this code of sportsmanship. In the long run, young players will be better off for developing their own self controls and a true sense of honesty than if they are obliged to do something only because of outside compulsion.

We feel that these principles were at the heart of the present case. We hope that the young men concerned may have learned something not only from the educational institution which they attend but also from the game to which they devote much interest. Perhaps golf has contributed something to their development as persons. We hope that it has.