

Eliminate the Small Ball Here

By CHARLES B. GRACE

CHAIRMAN, USGA IMPLEMENTS AND BALL COMMITTEE

It has come to the attention of the Association that some small-size golf balls are in use in this country, and the aid of every Member Club is being enlisted to help eliminate their distribution.

The use of the small-size ball here, except in an international team match, is a violation of Rule 2-3, and the penalty in both match and stroke play is disqualification.

Scores made with the small ball, even in informal games, are not acceptable for handicapping.

The use of the small ball is, in fact, a fraud which weakens the sportsmanlike fibre of the game, engenders disrespect for the Rules and, if it expands, can distort the playing values of United States golf courses to the detriment of the Member Clubs.

The Difference

Here is a comparison of specifications for the United States and the small (British) ball:

	USGA	British
Weight—not greater than	1.620 ozs.	1.620 ozs.
Diameter size—		
not less than	1.680 in.	1.620 in.
Impact velocity—		
feet per second	250	no rule

Note that there is no impact-velocity specification under the British rule. This is an important difference.

The USGA impact velocity test pertains to special apparatus which the USGA obtained a number of years ago at a cost of many thousand dollars. Its sole purpose is to produce a standard by which to limit the distance qualities of the ball.

Some years ago it became necessary to limit the distance qualities. As the ball became longer and longer, courses were being outmoded, some clubs were having to buy more land to lengthen their courses, were therefore paying more taxes and the essential nature of golf was being affected by distortion of the playing values of courses. This was costly, unnecessary and harmful to golf.

TROUBLES

An exclamation of disgust at your hard luck or lack of skill is tolerable. However, remember that your playing companion's game is causing him such excruciating pain that he has neither interest in nor sympathy for your troubles and, at best, is only bored by them.

For these same reasons, it is still essential that the distance qualities of the ball be limited. United States manufacturers have been most cooperative to that end.

There is no such velocity limit on the small ball. Therefore, it is a matter of self-interest for Member Clubs to insure that a ball with unlimited distance qualities does not gain a foothold in United States golf, even in the most informal games.

USGA specifications for the ball have been worked out over a great many years. They have resulted in a ball which, we confidently believe, is far and away the best for use in this country. Aside from distance qualities, the United States ball sits up better in fairway, rough and bunker and putts and chips better. That is the consensus of leading American players and of many British players. Admittedly, the United States ball is shorter than the small-sized ball against the wind, but downwind and under other conditions it is vastly superior to the small ball in all-around playing qualities.

So the player who attempts to cheat on distance by using the small ball against the wind is very likely to cheat himself in far more important factors. Certainly, he is cheating himself in being no sportsman.

Officers of Member Clubs can do a service to the game of golf by:

1. Informing their members of some of the essential facts and appealing for their cooperation.
2. Seeing to it that their professional sells only merchandise which conforms with USGA Rules.