

WHY PLAY BY THE RULES?

by

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FOR MANY YEARS I have played in a local golf league, probably too many years, the way I often hit the ball.

For some time, and particularly of late, I have noticed an increasing tendency to violate some of the Rules of Golf. There has been an expressed thought that the matches are played for fun and sociability and therefore it is not necessary to adhere to the Rules too carefully. Yet I am positive that, being good Americans, every individual plays to win.

In this article I don't intend to be critical of any individual, as I hope they are all my friends, but a general tendency toward relaxing the Rules has crept in and it is distressing.

Having spent a good many years in assisting in writing the Rules of Golf, I know that there is no Rule that is less important than another. They are all written so that one Rule ties in with another. None can be relaxed.

I was startled in one match when my opponents felt that I should be able to fix a divot made by my ball which was directly in line with my putt. Other contestants in chatting about it later also felt that I should have been able to repair it and that many would have done so.

Rule 35, relating to the putting green, reads in part: "nothing may be pressed down, and if a club is used it shall not be pressed with more than its own weight on the ground."

It is just as important for a player to repair divots on the green after a hole is played as it is to replace divots on the fairway.

There is general violation of the Rule on asking or receiving advice. Definition 2 on advice reads, "'Advice' is any counsel or suggestion which could influence a play-

er in determining his play, the choice of a club, or the method of making a stroke. Information on the Rules or Local Rules is 'not advice.'" The first paragraph of Rule 9 reads: "A player or a competitor shall not give or ask for advice or take any action which may result in his receiving advice except from his caddie, his partner, or his partner's caddie." The penalty for violating this rule is loss of hole in match play and two strokes in stroke play. In league play a player violating Rule 9 on any hole should mark an X against that hole on his card, and he should lose the hole to all other contestants playing against him.

There is also violation in the Rule setting the maximum number of clubs at fourteen. The penalty for violation of this Rule, Rule 3, is disqualification.

There are a number of Rules where slight variations do not seem too important, such as being a foot ahead of the markers, touching the sand in the bunker on a backswing, having your caddie hold a branch just a little bit so you can swing at the ball and so forth.

A Foot — or Fifty Yards

These violations are all matters of degree, and who is to say if A wishes to shorten the hole by a foot that B can't decide to shorten the hole by a yard and C, therefore, might decide to take the ball out past the rough from the tee.

Anyone violating any Rule is taking an unfair and unsportsmanlike advantage of another who is playing by the Rules.

Many contestants will play in state championships, some will qualify for the USGA Amateur or Open Championships, and many will play in district championships, all of which are played under USGA Rules of Golf.

Some of the penalties that have been invoked throughout the country in these qualifying rounds or championships have resulted not so much from the lack of knowledge of the Rules but from bad golf habits formed by not playing by the Rules in friendly matches.

The golfers who play in league and district events are a substantial part of the foundation of golf. The juniors look to them. The public is interested in their success. Therefore, I would make as strong a plea as possible to the players and to all golfers that they play the Rules as written all the time and that the Rules be enforced, if necessary, because I am sure it would help golf. All of us should be guardians of the Rules, rather than the violators.

There is an old saying that comes from Carnoustie, Scotland, which should hang in every golf club. I quote:

"The game ceases to be golf when the Rules are broken at leisure."

I'll bet there is not a player who will disagree with what I have said.

Perpetual Trophy



George Bertz, veteran golf writer of the Oregon Journal, stands with sterling silver cup which was presented to the Oregon Golf Association in his honor as a perpetual trophy for the Oregon Amateur Match Play Championship.

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Oppose Motorized Golf



JAMES GILMORE HARRISON

The men who design golf courses are officially opposed to use of automotive transportation for playing. The following statement issued from the recent annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the American Society of Golf Course Architects:

"It is the belief of the Society that the use of motorized vehicles to transport players is contrary to the spirit of the game of golf. The benefits derived by exercise and companionship are diminished by the use of such vehicles.

"Inasmuch as the motorized vehicle damages the course materially, especially around the greens and during inclement weather, it introduces a problem in design and maintenance which makes the use of such vehicles undesirable. Therefore, we recommend that their use be limited to those with medical certificates."

James Gilmore Harrison, of Turtle Creek, Pa., is the new President of the Society. Robert F. Lawrence, of Miami Beach, is Vice-President and William F. Bell, of Pasadena, Cal., is Secretary-Treasurer.

Treat your caddie as you would your son.

STATEMENT REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF AUGUST 24, 1912, AS AMENDED BY THE ACTS OF MARCH 3, 1933, AND JULY 2, 1946 (*Title 39, United States Code, Section 233*) SHOWING THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION OF USGA Journal and Turf Management, published seven times a year at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1954.

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Joseph C. Dey, Jr., Editor

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1954.

(signed) Mary A. Freeley, Notary Public,
State of New York.

(My commission expires March 30, 1956).