

# GAMBLING AND GOLF TOURNAMENTS

BY RICHARD S. TUFTS

*President, United States Golf Association*

## *The Position of Clubs and Associations*

THE following resolution by the USGA Executive Committee was favorably received by the Member Clubs' Delegates to the 1956 Annual Meeting:

The United States Golf Association disapproves of gambling in connection with golf tournaments because of the harm it can do to the best interests of the game.

Golf is a game to be played primarily for its own sake, especially amateur golf. When it is played for gambling motives, evils can arise to injure both the game and individual players.

Therefore, the United States Golf Association urges its Member Clubs, all golf associations and all other sponsors of golf competitions to prohibit gambling in connection with tournaments.

This refers to all forms of gambling, including Calcutta auction pools, pari-mutuel betting, lotteries and other devices.

The USGA has received many letters on golf gambling from individuals, clubs and associations suggesting various courses of action for dealing with the problem. Extreme suggestions called for expulsion of Member Clubs which do not agree with the USGA policy. The majority more temperately favored continued educational efforts. Almost without exception, the comments endorsed the Association's long-standing disapproval of gambling in connection with tournaments.

The Executive Committee feels at present that the Association should not attempt disciplinary action against Member Clubs which disagree with USGA policy. There can be so many kinds and degrees of gambling that it would be impossible



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to draw a fair line between the harmful and the seemingly harmless. Further, the Committee is reluctant to intrude in the private affairs of a club, which theoretically is an extension of the homes of its members.

However, some clubs do not fully appreciate the evils inherent in gambling. Too frequently gambling tournaments coming to the Committee's attention have spawned some unpleasantness, if not dishonesty — such things as falsification of handicaps and scores, evasion of Rules of Golf, pay-offs to players (so-called amateurs), attraction of persons of questionable motives, chicanery in various forms. These things seem almost inevitable where the object is not golf but money. Even in the small, seemingly well-controlled Calcutta, the prospect of financial return has undoubtedly influenced some competitor to "negotiate" for a higher handicap. Golf should be played for its own sake and not for profit.

We therefore urge all clubs and associations to give utmost attention to the matter, and to consider the interests of the game of golf.

We respectfully request governing boards to take clear, positive actions by means of resolutions. Following is a suggested sample resolution (based upon one recently adopted by the Maidstone Club, East Hampton, N. Y.):

RESOLVED, that in support of the stand taken by the United States Golf Association, this Club shall neither hold nor permit to be held Calcutta pools or any other form of gambling in connection with any golf tournament on the Club course, and the officers of this Club are hereby empowered to adopt such rules as may be required to put this resolution into effect; and be it further resolved that a copy of this resolution be sent to the United States Golf Association.

Beyond the fact that organized gambling is bad for golf, there can be practical reasons for clubs to adopt a resolution similar to the above. Many State and local laws prohibit gambling, and some are very specific with respect to gambling on the premises of liquor licensees. Federal income tax exemptions of non-profit clubs might be jeopardized by gambling tournaments, according to a representative of the Internal Revenue Service.

But the sure and better way to avoid trouble is for clubs and associations to prohibit gambling and to conduct tournaments solely as golf for golf's sake.

### *The Position of Individual Golfers*

Although the USGA Executive Com-

mittee is reluctant to interfere in the private affairs of a club, it has a clear duty to decide whether an individual golfer is or is not an amateur.

The USGA Definition of an Amateur Golfer is as follows:

An amateur golfer is one who plays the game solely as a non-remunerative or non-profit-making sport.

The Association will deny amateur status or refuse entry for USGA Championships to players whose activities in connection with golf gambling are considered by the Association to be contrary to the best interests of golf. The USGA urges all other golf associations to take a similar position in connection with their tournaments.

USGA teams for international matches will be selected from among players who are considered by the Association to have conformed generally with the foregoing policies.

The following new Rule 1-13 of the Rules of Amateur Status is an example of a violation of the Definition of an Amateur Golfer which causes forfeiture of amateur status:

#### **13. Conduct Detrimental to Golf**

Any conduct, including activities in connection with golf gambling, which is considered detrimental to the best interests of the game.

The USGA appeals to individual amateurs to avoid participation in gambling tournaments. A sure way to eliminate such tournaments is to withdraw support from them. In the last analysis, the welfare of golf is in the hands of the players of the game.

## **SOME COMMENTS RECEIVED BY THE USGA**

On the subject of Calcuttas, we have abolished them at Pine Valley and I think every club in the country should do likewise.

John Arthur Brown, President  
Pine Valley Golf Club, Clementon, N. J.

Our Board of Governors and our mem-

bership know the fight the USGA is carrying on against organized gambling and trying to uphold the integrity of golf.

The Board has voted unanimously to do everything in their power to help. We are having our nineteenth annual invitation tournament and Seniors invitation

tournament in March, and we have conducted a Calcutta every year in the past. We are happy to inform you that this year there will be no Calcutta in either event.

**Raymond Salmen, Chairman,  
Golf and Grounds Committee**

**New Orleans Country Club, New Orleans, La.**

We have always felt that gambling has no place in golf. In both our club and invitational events we have never offered prizes or encouraged betting which would involve anything more than nominal amounts.

You may be assured that our club will continue the policy which you commend and which we think is in the best interest of the game.

**Harold A. Moore, President  
Exmoor Country Club, Highland Park, Ill.**

At the Annual Meeting of Western Golf Association it was voted to include the following paragraph in all Western Golf Association tournament contracts:

"The Championship shall not sponsor any form of gambling, including Calcutta pools and pari-mutuel betting."

This is merely a reiteration of an unwritten policy of WGA. Please be sure we of Western will join with the USGA and others in golf in eradicating the evils of gambling.

**Milton Woodard, Executive Vice-President  
Western Golf Association, Golf, Ill.**

I agree entirely that there has developed a weakening of the moral fiber of officials of some clubs in their failure to play the game as it should be played and to assign handicaps in an honest and careful manner.

Golf is too fine a sport to be spoiled by anything less than our finest efforts to maintain its integrity and the integrity of all golfers. It is more than recreation, it is *re-creation*.

**Robert O. Conant, Secretary  
Hanover Country Club, Hanover, N. H.**

The Southern California Golf Association wishes to reaffirm the position it has taken for many years.

The Directors feel that organized gambling has no place in golf, particularly amateur golf. We feel that Calcutta pools

are a form of gambling which is detrimental to golf and is unnecessary for the success of any golf tournament.

Where there is big money at stake and handicaps involved there is no possible control to prevent a dishonest player from building up a handicap for this occasion. While fortunately there are very few dishonest players we all know they are there and the temptation to get the big money is always present when there is such as a Calcutta offers.

The pleasure of playing with friends and the thrill of winning a match or tournament are all the reward a true golfer expects. The game of golf is too good in itself to permit anything to spoil it.

**Brig. Gen. Stanley E. Ridderhof, President  
Southern California Golf Association,  
Los Angeles, Cal.**

The Country Club of Virginia outlawed monetary pools of any kind in connection with its annual member-guest four-ball tournament. I am sure the event is more enjoyable for all concerned.

**Richmond Gray, Richmond, Va.**

We do not permit any Calcutta pool type betting. We are also most fortunate in having a course that is at all times in excellent condition and we therefore do not have to resort to "winter rules." Outside our pro shop on the way to the first tee we have a sign which clearly indicates that there will not be permitted any "preferred lies."

We are entirely in sympathy with your concept that golf is a game that should be played for the game's sake.

**Charles A. FoeHL, Jr., President  
Taconic Golf Club, Williamstown, Mass.**

The Invitational Tournament of the Menlo Country Club is the oldest in Northern California, and the holding of a Calcutta pool in connection with this tournament was discontinued fifteen years ago. Gambling of any sort including Calcutta pools has no place, particularly in an amateur tournament, and we are wholeheartedly in accordance with your current campaign of the USGA to eliminate any form of gambling in connection with golf.

**Brace Carter, San Francisco, Cal.**

The Vermont State Golf Association heartily endorses your stand in this matter and we stand ready at all times to cooperate with you to the fullest extent in keeping the game of golf at the highest standards possible.

**Leslie W. Mercer, President  
Vermont State Golf Association**

In a tournament in connection with which there was a fairly sizeable Calcutta pool, the final was won by an "outsider." A rumor gained some circulation that the favorite had been "bought off" by the owner of the winning "horse." The fact that this rumor was completely without foundation is beside the point. That such a thought could occur to anyone in the first place is an indication of the potential danger of the Calcutta.

**Gerald H. Phipps, Denver, Colo.**

Member-guest tournaments should be discontinued if they are to be connected in any way with Calcutta or other substantial financial pools. The guest handicap is beyond the control of the club acting as host and the temptation to establish high handicaps in this connection has not always been resisted. "Member-member tournaments" are not open to the same abuse as the handicapping committee of the club can control all their members in this connection and also their handicaps.

**Henry A. Goode, New York, N. Y.**

Golf tournaments which feature Calcutta pools have all but died a natural death here in Indiana. Although popular a few years ago, practically all have been discarded because of the ill-feeling which usually develops in this type of event.

**Vern R. Dimond  
Elks Country Club, Lafayette, Ind.**

I think the holding of Calcuttas is a disgrace to the game and a reflection upon those who are interested in the preservation of pure amateurism.

**Alfred C. Ulmer, Jacksonville, Fla.**

Canoe Brook Country Club heartily subscribes to the principles which you have outlined and we have been operat-

ing our golfing activities in line with your suggestions for many years.

**E. Mulford Birdsall, President  
Canoe Brook Country Club, Summit, N. J.**

It seems to me that a Calcutta pool serves as a good foot in the door for a class of people that most certainly do not have a place in golf. These pools are embarrassing for the player and frequently place him in a position that could be exceedingly tempting. There are, no doubt, critics of the rules concerning amateur status, but in my opinion the rules are just and fair. We have an amateur code which is unsurpassed and you are to be complimented for your strict enforcement of it.

**Bill Webb, Kansas City, Mo.**

The Titleholders Association will not condone a Calcutta in connection with the Titleholders Association Championship, nor will it accept any donation which is derived from the proceeds of any Calcutta.

**Miss Eileen Stulb, First Vice-President  
Women's Titleholders Golf Association  
Augusta, Ga.**

Our Board unanimously adopted a resolution that henceforth Calcutta pools be discouraged in harmony with your recommendation; further, if this action is inadequate to eliminate Calcutta pools at our Club we will probably take more pointed action to proscribe such pools.

**Charles L. Nichols, President  
Bel-Air Country Club, Los Angeles, Cal.**

The Executive Committee of The Massachusetts Golf Association unanimously voted that the Massachusetts Golf Association wholeheartedly subscribe to this (USGA) policy. The Massachusetts Golf Association will, as it has in the past, cooperate with the United States Golf Association in denying amateur status to individuals who violate the applicable Rules. This Association will also refuse entry for Massachusetts Golf Association Championships to players whose activities in connection with golf gambling are considered by the Association to be contrary to the best interests of golf.

**John W. Goodrich, President  
Massachusetts Golf Association,  
Boston, Mass.**