

WHAT GAME DO YOU PLAY?

by

RALPH W. MILLER

Member, USGA
Junior Championship Committee
Los Angeles, Cal.

ARE you sure you play the game of Golf, or is it something else?

Rule 1 defines Golf as follows:

"The Game of Golf consists in playing a ball from the teeing ground into the hole by successive strokes in accordance with the Rules."

Thus golf is not just playing a ball from the tee and eventually getting it into the hole. It must be done "by successive strokes in accordance with the Rules."

There are forty-one Rules in the present code. Each Rule is just as important as another. They are all related to each other, and a breach of one Rule often involves another.

If you disregard one Rule, you might just as well disregard another and still another, or, for that matter, all of them.

How could you play golf without any Rules? Suppose you were going to play a match or a round of stroke play against someone, and there were no Rules. It might go something like this:

On the first tee, you tee off between the markers. Your opponent, however, tees his ball 100 yards in front of the markers and plays from there. Such a thing would, of course, be unfair, but since you are playing without Rules, there is nothing which prescribes where he shall tee off.

His ball comes to rest behind a tree and, not liking its position, he lifts his ball, takes it out in the clear and tees it up so he can get a good shot.

He hits the ball into a sand trap and, after several unsuccessful attempts to get it out, he picks it up and tosses it on the green.

Reprinted by permission from The Junior Golfer, published by the Junior Golf Association of Southern California.



RALPH MILLER

Your ball is already on the green in three strokes, and you putt it in the hole. Your opponent then concedes himself his putt—a thirty-foot one.

You have holed out in four strokes and he has taken at least six, besides several tosses, and he hasn't even holed out yet. However, he says he is not going to count all his strokes, and he gives himself a four for the hole. There being no Rules, there is nothing which requires him to count all his strokes and hole out his putts.

And so on, hole after hole, for the rest of the round your opponent continues to play just as it suits his fancy.

When the round is finished, you claim to have won because you played each hole in fewer strokes than he did. However, there being no Rules, there is no way to

determine how a hole, or a match, or a round is won. Your opponent might just as well claim that he won because he took more strokes than you did.

To play without Rules is impossible, and to disregard even some of them leads to unfairness, arguments and strained friendships and can result in a horrible mess.

Careless About Rules

Many people are careless about observing certain of the Rules. The ones most commonly disregarded are the Rules which prohibit:

1. Cleaning or changing the ball on the green.
2. Asking advice.
3. Agreeing to disregard a Rule or to waive a penalty.
4. Improving the line of putt.
5. Improving the lie of the ball.

A common excuse for not observing those Rules is that "we are not playing in a tournament."

The Rules of Golf are not just for tournaments. They are for playing golf, no matter when or where in casual play, as well as in competition.

It is more fun and more enjoyable to play by the Rules—not just by some of them, but by all of them. Moreover, to do so sets an example to those who are careless about observing them.

Some people criticize this or that Rule as being too technical or having no merit. If the truth were known, such persons probably never saw a Rule Book, or if they did, they never studied it. They neither know the reasons for the Rule they criticize nor the principle behind it.

They are blindly arguing against the considered judgment and experience of generations of golf.

The first known code of golf Rules was issued by the Honorable Company of Edinburgh Golfers about 1744. It contained thirteen Rules, and it is interesting to note that the majority of those original Rules still remain in principle.

There is now one uniform code of Rules. It is the code which is jointly ap-

USGA FILM LIBRARY

Latest addition to USGA's Film Library is "Inside Golf House," a guided tour through the shrine of golf in America. The viewer is given an opportunity to see the many interesting exhibits in "Golf House," USGA headquarters in New York, and to re-live golf triumphs of the past with many of the game's immortals. Lindsey Nelson, Assistant Sports Director of the National Broadcasting Company, is the narrator. The film is a 16 mm. black and white production with a running time of 28 minutes.

Thus far, more than 450 bookings have been made for USGA's motion picture, "The Rules of Golf—Etiquette." The film stresses the importance of etiquette by portrayal of various violations of the code in the course of a family four-ball match. Ben Hogan appears in several scenes, and Robert T. Jones, Jr., makes the introductory statement. A 16 mm. Kodachrome production, the film has a running time of 17½ minutes.

The distribution of both prints is handled by National Educational Films, Inc., 165 West 46th Street, New York 36, N. Y., which produced the films in cooperation with the USGA. The rental is \$15 per film or \$25 in combination at the same time, including the cost of shipping prints to the renter.

proved by the Royal and Ancient Golf Club, of St. Andrews, Scotland, and the United States Golf Association. That code governs the play of golf all over the world.

There is a reason, and a good reason, for each Rule. They are based upon fair play, and the two basic principles involved in the Rules are:

1. Play the course as you find it.
2. Play the ball as it lies.

Each His Own Referee

In golf each player is primarily his own referee. He is on his honor. Golf is, therefore, a game for sportsmen. A sportsman is defined as:

"One who is fair and honorable in sports; a good loser and a gracious winner."

A true sportsman will play fair and will not take an advantage, and, you may be assured, he will observe the Rules of the game—all of them.