

# "WINTER RULES" FROM ALL SIDES

## A Symposium

### What Are They?

by FRANCIS OUMET

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Winter rules! What are they?

I presume they mean "preferred lies", for I know of no code for playing golf other than the Rules of Golf. To use the expression "winter rules" is as dangerous as it is confusing, because it implies the existence of a code that does not exist.

Let us be realistic and admit that, when we indulge in the privilege of placing our ball at will through the fairways we are not playing the game of golf, but a synthetic form thereof. One of the most fundamental rules of all is that which states, in substance, that a ball must not be touched or moved, except in the act of striking it. Proper exceptions are amply provided for under the rules.

I have no quarrel with a committee sug-

gesting, and even requesting, the use of preferred lies in the off season. I do object strenuously to such a practice when the course is officially opened for play in the springtime until it is closed to formal play in the Fall.

Opposed as I am to any deviation of play away from the rules, I would suggest this alternative to Golf Committees whose task it is, among others, to control the play of their membership. Schedule both the opening and closing of the course for regular play. During this period, it is to be understood that players are bound to conform to the Rules of Golf without exception. Beyond this period, and I bitterly dislike saying this, give them their preferred lies, if it seems wise to do so, but not under the cloak of winter rules.

### How They Affect You

by HAROLD SARGENT

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World War II presented many problems to the game of golf. Most of them have since disappeared, but we still have with us a few of the wartime golfing habits tending to detract from the true spirit of the game.

One of the habits remaining with particular tenacity is that of playing what is commonly referred to as winter rules. This is, of course, the practice of improving the player's lie in the fairway.

#### *Reasons For Winter Rules*

There were two major reasons for the adoption and acceptance of winter rules, the first being the effort to save wear and tear on golf balls, and second, the curtailment of expenditures on the up-keep of golf courses. The former was necessitated by the wartime scarcity of rubber and the resulting government ban on manufactur-

ers, designed to conserve the existing supply. The latter became an important factor when, for a variety of reasons, many clubs found it impossible to maintain their courses in pre-war condition.

During the war, these conditions constituted valid reasons for the practice of playing winter rules. However, there is now no reason for compromising the basic principle of golf, that is, "Nothing may be done to improve your lie." This principle has always been a prominent tradition, as well as a rule, of the game.

The relaxation of emphasis on this principle has resulted in countless disagreements and strained relationships among golfers. These conditions must become a sad, but inevitable part of the game when equity, the basic principle and foundation of the rules of golf, is violated.