

IT'S YOUR HONOR

Expenses and Shamateurism

TO THE USGA:

We have been reading a lot lately about amateurism in sports. It seems to be a problem for many sports, both in and out of college. Anyone interested in golf can hardly help but realize that amateurism in our game also gives rise to problems.

In the Rule books published by both the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews and the USGA, an amateur golfer is defined as "one who plays the game solely as a non-remunerative or non-profit-making sport."

After the 18th birthday, under the USGA code, one act which violates the Definition of an Amateur Golfer is "Accepting expenses, in money or otherwise, from any source other than one on whom the player is normally or legally dependent but excluding an employer." (There are a few exceptions not pertinent here.)

The foregoing is printed on the back of every USGA championship entry blank for amateurs. When the entrant signs it, he certifies that he has not only read the amateur status rules but also that "I have conformed with those Rules in every respect."

We seem to have some "amateur" golfers — both men and women — of outstanding ability, but without any visible means of support that amounts to much. How do they play extensively? Tournament golf is expensive, what with travel, hotel bills, caddie fees, golf balls and equipment, on top of the normal expense of one's club dues and house charges.

One naturally suspects that some players are breaking both the letter of the rule and the spirit of amateurism by accepting expenses in various forms from unauthorized sources.

Oh, I know that there are "jobs",

but some of them must be subterfuges. What kind of a job can a young man or woman get that will make it possible to play golf almost all the time? It would take a salary of many thousands of dollars a year for a single person to support himself and carry on intensive tournament activity involving much travel.

It seems to me that a person who breaks the amateur code undercover would feel mighty cheap walking up to the first tee to match his or her game against a pure amateur.

Some will say "Why shouldn't they be helped out if they don't want to do anything but play golf?"

This is not a communistic country. Why can't everybody stay at the plushiest hotels, dine at the best restaurants, have their clothes made by the best tailors and dress-makers?

If a player wants to play golf all the time, there are plenty of outlets without interfering with the pure amateurs. There are, for example, professional tournaments almost every week for those who want honestly to be professionals.

But there is no right place in amateur golf for expenses-paid shamateurs.

One can only pity ill-advised "backers" who seem to think they are being helpful when they encourage young people to cheat on their eligibility.

Unfortunately, proof of wrongful acceptance of expenses is difficult to obtain. But every individual knows whether or not he is an amateur and so does any ill-advised "backer." They know in their heart of hearts.

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