

LETTER AND SPIRIT OF THE AMATEUR CODE

by

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A FRESH appraisal of the Rules of Amateur Status is always apt to follow a conspicuous case such as that of E. Harvie Ward, Jr.

Mr. Ward was found to have violated the Rule about expenses during an investigation by the USGA Executive Committee last month. He is thus ineligible to play as an amateur. This means he cannot try for a third straight USGA Amateur Championship in September.

The case focused attention on the Amateur code, mainly on these two points:

1. What actually is an amateur in golf?
2. Why are amateurs prohibited from accepting expenses, with a few rare, specific exceptions? Other sports have other rules; why is golf different?

What Is an Amateur?

The USGA Definition says:

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

It was put in another way, a compelling way, a generation or so ago by Prof. Charles W. Kennedy of Princeton, who had been Vice-President of the American Olympic Committee and President of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. He wrote, in his book on "Sport and Sportsmanship":

"I believe that an amateur sportsman is one who wishes to play a game as well as he can play it *in relation to more important things* . . .

"Where else than on the playing fields of amateur sport can youth learn so well the joy of achievement with no hope of reward other than the achievement itself? The glory of amateur sport lies in competing for nothing except the love of the game and the joy of accomplishment. Therein lies, perhaps, its greatest social value."

The derivation of the word "amateur"

gives the best possible insight into its true meaning. "Amateur" comes from the Latin root "amare," meaning "to love." Thus, an amateur is one who pursues an activity purely for love of it, for personal pleasure, and not professionally for gain.

This gets to the heart of the matter. It is admittedly a puristic viewpoint. For this day and age of super-commercialism in almost all things, it may seem an old-fashioned viewpoint.

If so, it is good company. Truth is old-fashioned, too. And it endures.

Expenses

The amateur code in golf provides for forfeiture of amateur status by one who, after the 18th birthday, accepts "expenses, in money or otherwise, from any source other than one on whom the player is normally or legally dependent but excluding an employer," to engage in a golf competition or exhibition or personal appearance as a golfer, including radio and television broadcasts, testimonial dinners and the like.

There are four exceptions when reasonable expenses may be accepted:

1. As a USGA representative in an international team match (Walker, Curtis or Americas Cup).
2. As a qualified contestant for the USGA Amateur Public Links Championship.
3. As a representative of a school or college or of a military service in team or other events limited to school or college students or the military, respectively.
4. As a representative of an industrial or business golf team in industrial or business golf team competitions, respectively, within limits fixed by the USGA.

In each of the four exceptions, it would not be normal or reasonable to except the participant to defray his own expenses.

The Heart of the Code

Golf is rare among popular games in requiring amateurs generally to pay their own way. This is at the heart of the code.

Why is this the rule in golf?

It is the rule because it more closely expresses the spirit of amateurism than would any other rule.

Among most popular games, golf is unique in its atmosphere. It is essentially a recreation, played simply for the fun of play, by nearly four million persons in the United States. It is unique among popular games in that it may be played all one's life. Jack Westland won our National Amateur Championship at age 47 in 1952. The Hon. Michael Scott won the British Amateur Championship at age 54 in 1933.

Suppose there were no rules prohibiting acceptance of expenses. Then there would unquestionably spring up a class of players who would be subsidized from tournament to tournament the year 'round and would wind up devoting virtually their entire time to competitive golf. Their whole way of life would be bound up in golf. They would be professional in the sense that they would play the game for reasons other than the pure love of it, yet under such an imaginary code they would carry the label "amateur."

This is not fanciful. It has happened in other activities. It would happen in golf if the expense rule did not exist or were appreciably more liberal.

This imaginary class of touring "shamateurs," going about the country on golf expense accounts, would automatically develop skill superior to most of their unsubsidized amateur opponents. There would be no true basis of fair competition for all amateurs. It would be unfair.

The only reason for distinguishing between amateurs and professionals in the first place is to provide a basis of fair competition. The professional, devoting himself to the game as his vocation, has far greater opportunity to develop skill than has the average amateur, for whom golf must be subordinated to things of greater importance to him.

"But," some will say, "is there no middle ground? Cannot the expense rule be liber-

alized to a degree and yet retain the amateur spirit?"

The USGA Executive Committee has never seen its way to doing this without charting a whole new and undesirable course for amateur golf. Occasionally the Committee has received requests to permit expenses to be paid under the auspices of responsible sectional amateur golf associations. But one step usually leads to another, and all such requests have been denied on the grounds that they would start a deterioration in the amateurism of golf.

Development Which Youth Needs

It is occasionally contended that a more liberal expense rule would help young players to develop. This question is sometimes asked: "Why shouldn't a promising but poor lad have the same opportunity to play in tournaments as the rich man's son?"

Why shouldn't they have the same opportunities in everything else—in education, in social affairs, in work?

One answer is that this is a democratic society we live in, not a socialistic or communistic society. One of our society's great-nesses is found in the challenge it gives us to seek, to strive, to try to do better and be better. It affords us the opportunity to do this. It does not vitiate our inner fibre by doling out equal little parts of everything to everybody, so that no one has more or less than his neighbors.

We all have our limits. We either overcome them if we can, or we accept them. If we can't afford a thing, we usually don't obtain that thing.

If a young man can't afford to play tournament golf, he is better off not trying to live beyond his depth. Prominence in sports can be a false god, especially to young men at a time of life when they need to learn true values. Which is more important for a young man—to develop skill at golf or to develop a strong, self-reliant character?

Some Expert Testimony

Practically all amateur sports organizations have occasional difficulty in administering their rules about expenses. A rule is a sort of barrier. Many people will always come right up to this kind of barrier—right to the dividing line. Some will always

climb over it, or crawl under it. This is so whether the barrier be low, high or mid-dling.

Golf has had a particularly prominent problem lately in the Harvie Ward case, and golf's rules have come under particularly close scrutiny. But this does not justify leaping to hasty conclusions about the whole code of rules.

The fact is that golf probably has fewer problems in this regard than do other sports. Certainly golf is among the cleanest of amateur sports. Would that have been so if the Rules of Amateur Status had been materially different in the past, especially regarding expenses?

The compelling spirit about golf's code off the course is precisely the same as the code on the course. It is a code that appeals to honor and sportsmanship. There is that in man which responds to such an appeal, almost without exception. In that is found the strength of golf.

When the USGA Amateur Championship was played in 1951 at the Saucon Valley Country Club, Bethlehem, Pa., the Honorary Chairman of the Club's Executive Committee for the Championship addressed the contestants at dinner before the Championship. He is Eugene G. Grace, Chairman of the Board of Bethlehem Steel Co.—a leading industrialist and a leading sportsman. He said in part:

"You contestants know better than anyone that you have paid your own way here, and that you are entirely on your own.

"The only way in which amateurism in sports can be defined is in the sportsman's own heart.

"If the player says to himself that the only reason he is playing (and putting up with the sacrifices and inconveniences of stiff amateur competition) is that he gets his full reward out of his enjoyment of the game, then he is a sure-enough amateur. If he expects direct or indirect cash reward, then he is a pro.

"It is certainly not dishonorable to be frankly a professional; but to lie to yourself and pretend you are an amateur, when you know in your heart you are lying, is just a ruinous habit. That's the real nub of the amateur problem in athletics. Schools

that are supposed to train young men, yet warp their consciences by phony amateur standards, can't have much to brag about."

Prof. Charles W. Kennedy has said this:

"No matter how roughly you may be used, it is your duty to keep your temper and play fair. When you pass out from the playing fields to the tasks of life you will have the same responsibility resting upon you, in greater degree, of fighting in the same spirit for the cause you represent. You will meet bitter and sometimes unfair opposition to much that you try to do. You will meet defeat. The 'lost causes' of history are proof that victory will not always come because the cause you represent is right. You must be prepared to see what you believe to be wrong for the moment triumphant, and still have courage to fight on. You must have faith that the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.

"Especially, you must not forget that the great victory of which you can never be robbed will be the ability to say, when the race is over and the struggle ended, that the flag you fought under was the shining flag of sportsmanship, never furled or hauled down, and that, in victory or defeat, you never lost that contempt for a breach of sportsmanship which will prevent your stooping to it anywhere, anyhow, any time."

The Harvie Ward Case

In the case of E. Harvie Ward, Jr., the USGA Executive Committee found that Mr. Ward accepted expenses incident to golf competition in such a manner as to infringe the Rules during a period beginning in May, 1952, and ending May 6, 1957.

Under a ruling for this particular case, Mr. Ward will be eligible for reinstatement one year after the date of his last violation, which occurred on May 6, 1957. He has informed the USGA that he will apply for reinstatement.

USGA Amateur Championships won by Mr. Ward in 1955 and 1956 are not affected. It is the Association's policy not to declare such past Championships vacant under circumstances such as existed in this instance.

The normal probationary period follow-

ing violation of the Rules of Amateur Status is two years. The Executive Committee reduced it to one year in view of what it considered to be a mitigating circumstance. That circumstance was the fact that Mr. Ward told the Committee he had understood from his employer that it was permissible to accept the expenses in question for the period 1953-56. His employer, Edward E. Lowery, was a member of the USGA Executive Committee from 1953 through 1956.

Mr. Ward's first violation occurred in the spring of 1952 when, he said, he accepted expenses from Mr. Lowery to participate in the British Amateur Championship. Mr. Lowery was not then a USGA Executive Committee member. Mr. Ward's employment by Mr. Lowery began in October, 1953.

In subsequent years, Mr. Ward said, he accepted expenses from Mr. Lowery's automobile agency, by which he is employed, for various tournaments, including the USGA Open and Amateur Championships and the Canadian Amateur Championship. He told the Committee that in some instances he had attended to certain business at the same time, but the Committee deemed that the acceptance of expenses under the particular circumstances constituted a violation.

Interpretations of Rules

During the course of the Harvie Ward case, the following interpretations of two phases of the expense rule were confirmed:

1. Guests and hosts: It is, of course, permissible to be a guest in a friend's home during a competition, or to accept transportation in his automobile or his private airplane if he has one. It is a violation of the rule to accept commercial living facilities (as at a hotel) or transportation (as on a train or airline) for which a so-called "host" has paid.

2. Business expenses: It is permissible to play in a golf tournament while on a business trip with expenses paid provided the golf part of the expense is borne personally and is not charged to business. Further, the business involved must be actual and substantial, and not merely a subterfuge for legitimizing expense when the primary purpose is golf competition.

USGA FILM LIBRARY

The USGA Film Library has added "Play Them As They Lie" to its two previous films, "Inside Golf House" and "The Rules of Golf—Etiquette".

The latest addition, a 16 mm. color production, runs for 16½ entertaining minutes in which Johnny Farrell, the Open Champion of 1928, acts as intermediary between Wilbur Mulligan, a beginner of unimpeachable integrity, and Joshua P. Slye, a past master in the art of breaking the Rules. The film was made at the Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N. J., where Farrell is professional.

"Inside Golf House" gives the viewer 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. The film is a 16 mm. black and white production and runs 28 minutes.

"The Rules of Golf—Etiquette" also has proved popular. 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. color production, the film has a running time of 17½ minutes.

The distribution of all three 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, \$25 for combination of two and \$35 for all three in combination at the same time, including the cost of shipping prints to the renter.

Questions have been asked as to what sort of competitions may be entered by an applicant for reinstatement to amateur status. The following is noted:

1. Such an applicant is not in fact an amateur, and thus he is not eligible to play as an amateur. It would not technically harm his application for reinstatement if he were to accept an invitation to play in an amateur event, but it would be unfair to his amateur opponents. Sponsors of tournaments are requested to uphold the Rules of Amateur Status.

2. If he enters an open competition as a professional, he further violates the Rules of Amateur Status.

3. He may enter an open competition as an applicant for amateur reinstatement, but he would not be eligible for either an amateur prize or a money prize.