

# AN APPEAL FOR UNIFORM RULES

Delegates Applaud  
USGA Statement

Question has arisen in Southern California as to whether or not golfers want uniform rules to govern play throughout the United States, and the United States Golf Association has presented the case for the affirmative.

If the reaction of delegates to the 65th Annual Meeting is any criterion, the USGA has the popular support of the vast majority of its 2,308 member clubs and courses, in this matter.

Fortunately, uniformity in the rules throughout the world is not in question. The representatives of thirty-five countries who met in Washington, D. C., last spring to form the World Amateur Golf Council reported without exception that their countries played by the United States Golf Association-Royal and Ancient Golf Club code and wanted no other. This greatly facilitated the institution of the World Amateur Team Championship in which twenty-nine countries participated at St. Andrews, Scotland, last fall.

### What Might Be!

Imagine, if you will for a moment, where the game would be if some groups permitted free lifts from water hazards and other did not, if some used 6-inch and others 4¼ inch holes, if some used heavier and faster golf balls than others, if some played the stymie and some did not, if the penalty for a lost ball were two strokes in some places, one stroke in others and distance only in still others.

Actually, individual clubs have in two notable periods written their own Rules of Golf unilaterally.

The oldest of these periods ended when the leading golf clubs in Great Britain pressed the Royal and Ancient Golf Club to establish a Rules of Golf Committee in 1897 to formulate and interpret a uniform code for them all. The other ended when leading golf clubs in the United States met in 1894 and established the United States Golf Association "to adopt, enforce and interpret rules for the play-

ing of the game" and "in general to act as an authoritative national body."

In neither situation had anarchy in rules been satisfactory.

This world-wide phalanx of uniformity was broken when the Southern California Golf Association announced last month that it would conduct its own events under a code which contained several basic deviations from the established Rules of Golf.

In an effort to restore uniformity and to state the case for it, the USGA has sent the following letter to the SCGA and released copies to all member clubs and regional associations:

Mr. Donald W. Spry, President  
Southern California Golf Association

Dear Mr. Spry:

The United States Golf Association respectfully requests the Southern California Golf Association to rescind the local rules which your Association announced on January 15, 1959.

It is best for golf that the game be played under a uniform code throughout the country, simply to insure that we all play the same game. Most of your Association's special rules depart so far from the Rules of Golf as to be dangerous to the best interests of the game.

Golf obviously would be harmed if different sections were to have different codes—if, for example, the South used six-inch cups in the putting greens, if the Pacific Northwest authorized play with 20 clubs, if the Northeast required a larger ball, and if the Middle West restored the old stymie rule.

Early in American golf history the various clubs realized that it would be better for them to act together, rather than individually, in certain matters. They therefore created the United States Golf Association. The 2,308 present Member Clubs of the USGA, in subscribing to the Constitution, agreed that the USGA is "to adopt, enforce and interpret rules

for the playing of the game" and "In general to act as an authoritative national body."

It is desirable for golf to have a common code not only nationally but throughout the world. This was emphasized last year when 29 countries competed in the first World Amateur Team Championship for the Eisenhower Trophy and 32 countries were represented in the Canada Cup event for professionals. All 40 countries in the new World Amateur Golf Council play by the established Rules of Golf, as promulgated jointly by the USGA and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland.

The ideal of a world code does not mean that all golfers agree with every part of the code. The Rules of Golf have evolved as the game has evolved.

The present Rules were codified in 1951 by the USGA and the R & A in concert. The two organizations are literally always at work and in consultation with each other. Every four years their representatives meet formally to consider suggestions for changes; more frequent changes of substance could unduly disturb golfers' understanding of the Rules.

The 1951 code was amended in 1955. In May of this year there will be another quadrennial conference.

In July of 1958 the President of your Association, then Mr. John C. McHose, very kindly informed the USGA of a poll of golfers on some points of the Rules. Mr. McHose said in part: "This information is submitted to you merely for your consideration and you may assign it to whatever value you think appropriate. A similar letter and the enclosures are also being sent to The Royal and Ancient Golf Club in St. Andrews, Scotland."

On December 28, 1958 the USGA announced plans for the conference in the coming May and stated: "Recently the USGA has drafted proposals for refinements. The subjects cover a wide range, including such matters as balls lost, out of bounds, unplayable and in water hazards." This announcement was made through the press and directly to golf associations, including the Southern California Golf Association.

Your announcement of January 15, 1959 stated in part: "Players who intend to play in USGA events must keep a handicap in accordance with USGA rules." It

## Women's Ratings from Men's Tees

Handicap Decision 59-1

References: Men: Sect. 5-1,6; 18-1

Women: Sect. 15-1; 16; 27-1

Handicap Decision 58-4

**Q:** A small number of our women members are playing from men's tees on weekends. Should these scores be used for computing handicaps when we have no women's rating from men's tees?

You recommend a separate rating from men's tees. With 47 courses involved, committee could not rerate them for team play which is already underway. Could you recommend a temporary solution? Could the difference between men's and women's par be used in any way for a temporary rating?

Question by: MRS. HARRY WINTERS  
Inglewood, Cal.

**A:** Women's scores made from men's tees from which there is no women's course rating cannot be used equitably in computing handicaps. Until a women's rating is available, it is recommended that such scores be eliminated from handicap computations.

A USGA handicap is computed from a player's handicap differentials, and a handicap differential requires the existence of a course rating for the course on which the scores are made, including each separate set of tee markers on the course. Without a rating, a score is valueless for handicap purposes.

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would not be possible for golfers in your section to play under the Rules of Golf and your special rules simultaneously, and their eligibility for USGA events could be open to question. Aside from this, your statement quoted above indicated your Association's recognition of the desirability of a national code.

The larger interests of golf in respect of uniformity are, in the long run, more important than any one detail of Rules. There is a well-established procedure for considering amendments. Support of this procedure, rather than making local rules unilaterally, makes the better contribution to the welfare of the game.

Yours sincerely,  
John D. Ames  
President