

# RULES CHANGES IN PROSPECT

Penalties Reduced  
in USGA Trial

**A**greement on proposed alterations to the Rules of Golf has been reached by negotiating committees of the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews and the United States Golf Association as a result of their quadrennial meeting at North Berwick, Scotland, last May.

The proposals are subject to approval by the General Committee and the members of the Royal & Ancient. Any final action cannot be taken until mid September. Changes approved would become effective January 1, 1960.

Amendments in the substance of the Rules would be comparatively few in number, most of the proposals dealing

with technical alterations for the purpose of clarification.

Two of the more substantial proposals concern the putting green. They would permit (a) cleaning the ball and (b) repairing ball marks by any method except by stepping on the damaged area.

By agreement of both parties, the USGA Executive Committee has approved amendments for trial in the United States of the Rules dealing with a ball lost, out of bounds or unplayable and a provisional ball.

Penalties for balls lost, out of bounds and unplayable will be reduced for a one-year trial starting January 1, 1960 as follows:

Situation	1960	At Present
out of bounds	loss of distance only	stroke and distance
lost	loss of distance only	stroke and distance
unplayable	optionally either: (a) stroke and distance or (b) drop directly behind unplayable position for one-stroke penalty, except that in a bunker the ball must be dropped in the bunker	optionally either: (a) stroke and distance or (b) drop directly behind unplayable position for two-stroke penalty

There will be no change in the penalties for a ball in a water hazard.

Full text of the 1960 Rules will not be available until the fall of 1959, at which time the status of the provisional ball under the trial rule in effect in the United States will also be announced.

It is emphasized that the changes will not be effective until 1960. USGA handicaps must continue to be computed under 1959 Rules.

To preserve traditional aspects of the game and to combat tendencies toward introduction of gadgets, the R&A-USGA

alterations would require that the flagstick be straight and circular in cross-section and would prohibit artificial devices for gauging or measuring distance or conditions which might affect a player's play.

Further, the decision to have the flagstick attended or removed would have to be taken before the player plays his stroke.

If a ball were moved in moving a loose impediment on the putting green, there would be no penalty, whereas there is now a penalty of one stroke.