

IT'S YOUR HONOR

Comments on the Rules

To THE USGA:

After using the 'distance-only' penalty for a year on a trial basis, we find that a vote of our members who consistently break 85 shows one to five in favor of a return to the stroke and distance penalty.

The vote of the members who do not break 85 was one to three—but in the reverse direction. They want to continue the distance-only penalty rather than straighten out their game.

W. F. BEBOUT
Uniontown, Ohio

To THE USGA:

The 1960 experiment has been a completely dismal failure in regards to equity in the Rules. It has shown me that we must impose the stroke-and-distance penalty for out of bounds and lost ball, if for nothing else than to strengthen the moral character of golfers. I can remember nothing that has led to so many flagrant violations of the spirit of the game since the freedom to mark the ball on the putting surface without reason.

Countless times I have observed players, in essence, refuse to conduct a thorough search for their ball because finding it would have forced them to a succession of sacrifice shots. If only one reason was needed to reinstate the stroke-and-distance penalty, this would be more than sufficient.

A player in violation of a rule who can gain an advantage through said violation must, by any law of equality, be penalized. This is not possible under the distance-only rule.

Even the most aggressive argument against a return to the proper balance as regards out of bounds and lost ball will lose strength if equally applied to all erring shots. Any golfer with competitive experience must remember occasions where he would gladly sacrifice distance for

the chance to replay the badly hit shot. Yet distance-only permits this privilege only to a player who has put his ball completely out of play. It obviously is not a proper balance.

There is no reason to believe that golfers would have more respect or understanding for the Rules if they were reverted to distance-only penalties. I suspect that, quite oppositely, a stronger penalty would command the greatest attention and respect. If golfers are unable to appreciate the thinking behind the stroke-and-distance penalty, then I say the golfer is in error and needs adjusting, not the rules.

My only criticism of the rules, or, more properly put, my lack of understanding them, concerns the water hazard. It appears to me that there are four ways a player may put a ball out of play. Since these are going to result in the replay of the stroke, I suggest it would be fairer that stroke and distance apply in each instance. This should do away with dropping the ball and searching for a spot to keep the hazard or point of entry still intact. If the proponents of the soft rule are endeavoring to get scores lower, then let's not bother to count putts.

LES JOHNSTONE
Mason City, Iowa

To THE USGA:

Let everyone play golf like they want to. They are going to do it anyway. Social matches—local or club tournaments—stroke or match play—makes no difference. It's very simple. Just make it a **golden rule** of golf at all courses that those who wish to play under the so-called winter rules or preferred lies method so announce their intentions and accept an automatic penalty of two shots for each nine holes.

Your publication can be of great service by promoting this rule.

RAY E. JONES
Indianapolis, Ind.

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