

# THE AGELESS FACE OF GOLF

By

JOHN G. CLOCK  
President  
United States  
Golf Association



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Among the more popular games of the world, golf is unique in its atmosphere. It is essentially a recreation, played simply for the fun of play, by an estimated 4,400,000 persons in the United States alone. Golf is different from most

other sports in that it can be played practically all of one's life. Be he 9 years old or 90, the player can always derive fun from golf. The game's handicap system enables a child to make a fair match with his grandmother. The Rules of play are the same for players of all ages and skills.

A perfect example of breadth of appeal of golf is found in two entries for USGA Championships this year. There was Kathy Hutson, of Lubbock, Texas, age 11, an entrant in the Girls' Junior Championship. There was Parren C. Jarboe, of Portland, Maine, an entrant for the Senior Amateur at age 72.

## Golf's Lifetime Appeal

Golf has a code of amateur status that is distinctive among sports, and one of the reasons for its distinctiveness arises from the very fact of its lifetime appeal. An amateur is an amateur at age 11, at age 72, and at all the ages in between. The spirit of amateurism which early developed in golf was the result of the very practical consideration that a player, of any age, should be assured that his opponents, of all ages, were playing the game purely as a sport and not as a vocation.

In what other major sport is this normally true? Not basketball, football, baseball or track.

Suppose a boy excels in basketball. He plays, perhaps, in junior high school, then in high school, and finally college.

However, this competition normally comes to an abrupt stop upon graduation from college and his entrance into his life's work.

Thus, his competitive period in this amateur sport is confined to relatively few years.

## Champion at 47

But, in golf, just look at Jack Westland, who won the 1952 USGA Amateur Championship at the Seattle (Wash.) Golf Club at the age of 47, the oldest man to ever win this title. It is also interesting to note that Westland that year defeated Al Mengert, who was 24 years his junior. Then there was Johnny Dawson, at the age of 44, who finished runner-up to Robert H. (Skee) Riegel in the 1947 Amateur at Pebble Beach. The Hon. Michael Scott won the British Amateur Championship at the age of 54 in 1933.

Miss Margaret Curtis, who started golf at an early age and won the first of three Women's Amateur Championships in 1907, is still playing golf now some 54 years later at the age of 77. THE GOLFER'S HANDBOOK reports that the oldest living golfer was the late Nathaniel Vickers, who died at the age of 103. On his 100th birthday, he apologized for being able to play only nine holes of golf a day.

Charles (Chick) Evans is another prime example of the longevity of golf. Chick, now 71, was to play in his 49th Amateur Championship this year at Pebble Beach. He won the Amateur crown in 1916 and 1920 and also the Open Championship in 1916.

Now the only reason for distinguishing between amateurs and professionals 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.

Suppose there were no limit to the acceptance of money to play in tourna-

ments. Soon you would have so-called amateur golfers playing weekly tournaments and winding up virtually devoting all of their time to competitive golf. They would be classified as "amateurs" but they would in actuality be professionals in that they are then not playing the game for the love of it.

The Definition of an Amateur Golfer is as follows:

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

Without a code of amateurism, the quasi-amateur would hurt the game in two ways. The player would be subjecting the game to the indignity of using it as a means to an end. Also, the true amateur would eventually find it tasteless as

a competitive sport.

The late Eugene G. Grace put it aptly in a speech to contestants at a dinner prior to the 1951 Amateur Championship:

"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 sport can be defined is in the sportsman's own heart."

George Heany, a California professional, has said it another way:

"If an amateur plays with an ulterior motive—if he plays for any reason other than the joy of playing—he has missed the boat.

"If he can do those things and live with himself, he not only has a poor roommate but he will never get from golf the many things it offers."

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## HANDICAP DECISION

USGA Handicap Decision 61-2

References: Men—Section 4-4, 8-3a,

Note to 14

Women—Section 15-4, 19-3a, Note to 25

### Scores Made Away From Home: Handicapper May Not Decline To Use in Computations

**Q.1:** Does the club handicap chairman have the option of accepting or declining the scores of his fellow club members which are made at other recognized golf courses? Since the degree of difficulty varies from course to course, we feel for purposes of rating our own members for tournaments at our club, we should limit scores for handicap purposes to those made on our own course.

**A.1:** No. There is no provision in the USGA Handicap System to permit this. Further, Section 4-4 of "USGA Golf Handicap System For Men" provides: "Scores on all courses, at home or away, should be reported by the player, along with the course ratings." The fact that courses differ in degree of difficulty is of no consequence as the use of course ratings and handicap differentials in the USGA Handicap System make it possible for the handicaps of players at all courses to be equitable.

### Scores, Arbitrarily Reducing: Not Permitted In USGA System

**Q.2:** As handicap chairman, do I have the authority to change a score which I feel is not representative of the ability of the player. For example, in the case of a player who has twelve or fourteen pars and in the same round shows several eights and nines, may I reduce the total score for handicap purposes?

**A.2:** No. This would be tantamount to employing stroke controls which are not a part of the USGA system and the USGA would therefore not recommend it. See the note under Section 14 of USGA Golf Handicap System For Men which provides: "Under the USGA System, a score for any hole may not be reduced to a specified number of strokes over par for handicap purposes. Such a control is unnecessary in view of the other balancing factors in the USGA System."

Section 8-3a empowers the handicapper to reduce the handicap of a player when normal computation methods produce a handicap which is obviously too high. However, great discretion should be used before the handicapper uses the power bestowed upon him by this section, and it should never be used to take the place of stroke controls.

Questions by: THOMAS DESANTO  
Haworth, N. J.