

# PENNSYLVANIA LOWERS CADDIE AGE TO 12

Survey shows  
State labor laws  
vary widely

The State of Pennsylvania enacted a law in July which should ease the shortage of caddies there and, at the same time, afford boys 12 and 13 years old the opportunity to work in a wholesome atmosphere.

The law specifically exempts caddies from the State Child Labor Laws which place the minimum age for work at 14. Boys of 12 and 13 are now permitted to carry one bag for one round per day in Pennsylvania.

Morton H. Fetterolf, Jr., a member of Pennsylvania's House of Representatives, introduced the bill. Mr. Fetterolf is President of the Golf Association of Philadelphia and was a member of the USGA Junior Championship Committee from 1956 until this summer.

The law is attracting attention elsewhere, particularly in states where there are similar child labor laws and where there is also a shortage of caddies.

In some sections the shortage of caddies is acute, but this is not true nationwide. These conclusions are based on a USGA survey of golf associations throughout the United States conducted after the passage of the Pennsylvania bill.

Thirty-four associations, with member clubs ranging from New England to the west coast, responded to a questionnaire which asked about state laws concerning the age of caddies, whether there is a shortage of caddies, and if the associations would favor legislation similar to that enacted in Pennsylvania.

### Curbs Juvenile Delinquency

According to Representative Fetterolf, the bill he introduced "may help in fighting juvenile delinquency in that youngsters will have an additional opportunity to earn a few dollars under pleasant, healthful conditions rather than lounging on street corners.

"Before I introduced this bill, a great many golfers in the outlying towns and



Morton H. Fetterolf, Jr.

villages throughout the State expressed an interest in reducing the age limit because they frequently found it very difficult to get caddies at their clubs over the weekend. I hope this will help to alleviate that problem."

There was considerable opposition to the bill, both from governmental sources and from legislators—some unfamiliar with golf—who argued that the job of a caddie is too arduous for a 12-year-old.

Representative Fetterolf's story of the passage of the bill may be helpful to those who envision similar legislation in other states. His words follow:

"It is interesting to know that this bill passed by the House of Representatives by a vote of 124 to 66 (106 votes are needed for passage). In the course of its passage, there was considerable debate and certain legislators representing the

State Department of Labor and Industry fought the bill.

"In the course of interrogation, one of our legislators asked me the weight of a golf bag, and I stated that a bag might vary between four and 40 pounds. Of course, the latter weight was accepted as the truth of the matter and from then on an effort was made to bring the weight of a 12-year-old boy down to the weight of the heaviest of golf bags.

"An incident occurred during the bill's passage in the Senate which I should report. A senator friend of mine from Lancaster County amended the bill to allow a 12-year-old to caddie for 36 holes a day rather than 18.

"I heard of this, and my first impression was that this was done by the opposition in an effort to cripple the bill, and I immediately went about finding out which senator introduced the amendment. When I learned it was my friend from Lancaster County, he advised me he thought he was doing me a favor but I suggested that perhaps he might introduce another amendment returning the bill to allow only 18 holes per day. We both agreed that perhaps the passage of the bill would be assured if this was done. It was, and the bill passed the Senate 31 to 18.

#### **Former Caddies Vote "Yes"**

"I am convinced this legislation went through with flying colors against the solid opposition of the State Department of Labor and it is only because 90 percent of the members of both chambers, at one time in their lives, have caddied. This could be called 'America at its best'."

Of the 34 associations which responded to the USGA questionnaire, the officials of nine answered unequivocally that a caddie shortage exists. Twelve others say there is no shortage.

The 13 other associations answered yes or no with qualifications. In some areas there is a need for more caddies once the school year begins. Many associations report that the caddie problem varies according to the location of the club. Those in densely-populated zones have less of a problem than clubs situated many miles from metropolitan regions.

Fifteen associations reported age restrictions similar to those in Pennsylvania before the new law was enacted. Of those 15, 10 indicated they would be in

favor of lowering the minimum age for caddies.

The Indiana Golf Association reported that caddies are specifically exempt from the state child labor laws. Nebraska's State Labor Law was amended in May to permit "that a boy under 14 may caddie at a golf course."

It is apparent that in many states where caddies are not exempt from child labor laws, nothing has been done to enforce the law with respect to caddies.

#### **Sleeping Dogs**

One respondent, in answer to the question about the desirability of legislation exempting caddies, replied "no," with the explanation "let sleeping dogs lie."

The possible danger in this attitude was uncovered by still another state association. The law in that state has it that children under 14 may not be permitted to work in any gainful occupation. The practice, nonetheless, is to use younger boys as caddies.

A lawyer who was consulted indicated there is only a very remote chance that his State would change its policy and begin to enforce the provisions of the law with respect to caddies since the occupation is essentially not dangerous and, on the contrary, is generally healthful.

He called attention, however, to a definite problem in the area of tort liability:

"If a child was hit by a golf ball even if the caddie is negligent, I think both the golfer who employed the caddie and the club at which he worked would be jointly and seriously liable for the injuries and there would be no statutory or common law defense which would stand as a brook to the claim." He added that the problem might be handled by insurance.

#### **Comments**

Here is a sampling of comments by association officials on the caddie situation at their clubs:

Iowa: "Electric carts here seem to take up the slack. A good caddie gets \$2-2.50 plus a tip. Two men can rent an electric cart for \$6.

Dallas, Texas: "If a boy is big enough, regardless of his age, he should be allowed to caddie."

Rochester, N. Y.: "The age should not be reduced because 12-year-old boys should not be permitted to associate with

older boys and men unless a high quality of supervision and guidance exists. We do not believe the average 14-year-old boy can or should carry two bags. Industry would not be permitted to demand the carrying of such a load for such a distance for four hours."

Miami: "Caddying among youngsters in this area is almost nil."

Northern California: "We would favor reducing the minimum age to 13; 13 through 15 years, one bag only; 16 years and over, two bags. It is the expressed opinion that boys under 13 are incapable of doing a good job."

Wisconsin: "Our reason for favoring legislation which would lower the minimum age for caddies to 12 is that in the metropolitan areas many of the boys who start to caddie at the ages of 14 and 15

find more remunerative occupations during the summer when they reach the age of 16 and, as a result, we are forced to draw on younger boys to caddie."

Western Golf Association (which has mailed a similar questionnaire to its Member Clubs): "Far and away the biggest theme running through the replies in favor of lowering the age minimum to 12 is the growing attrition among older caddies. Many clubs expressed concern because many boys, by the time they are trained as good caddies (age 15-16), drift away from caddying to full-time jobs or at least to jobs paying more than caddying. The turnover seems a real problem. They expressed belief that boys of 12 and 13 (hiring only those with size and strength to be caddies) would stay longer in caddying."

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## DO YOU KNOW YOUR GOLF?

John G. Clock, the USGA President, recently said that the USGA Golf Handicap System "enables a child to make a fair match with his grandmother."

The system, although used effectively every week-end by children, grandmothers and others at thousands of courses, is fully understood by a minority of players at each club.

To better acquaint golfers with correct handicap procedures, this month's quiz is extracted from "USGA Golf Handicap System for Men," a booklet that can be obtained at the USGA headquarters at 40 East 38 Street, New York 16, New York, for 25¢. The answers are on page 18.

1. What is course rating?
2. What is the hole rating?
3. A handicap differential is the difference between a player's gross score and the par of the course. True or False?
4. A USGA handicap is computed from the lowest (5, 10, 15, 20) handicap differentials of the player's last (10, 20, 25, 50) rounds.
5. If a player has less than 25 differentials available, may he obtain a USGA handicap?
6. Are scores that include some conceded putts acceptable?
7. May the player record scores for

holes in which he has picked up without concession?

8. For what period of time are scores acceptable for handicap purposes?
9. Should the player report scores made on courses away from home?
10. If a player belongs to more than one club and has different handicaps, which shall he use when competing with players from more than one club?
11. How often should handicaps be revised?
12. Is a committee justified in granting automatic handicap increases at the start of a playing season or year?
13. Is a committee justified in reducing the handicap of a player who does not turn in all scores?
14. May a committee increase the handicap of a player who has suffered a physical disability?
15. Should handicap stroke play competitions that end in a tie be determined by a "matching of cards"?
16. Should a club rate its own course?
17. Are scores acceptable for handicapping purposes when "winter rules" or "preferred lies" are in effect?
18. If a player's handicap is changed after the first round of a two-week tournament should he continue to play with his original handicap?