

AMATEUR STATUS IN TV PROGRAMS

Several inquiries concerning possible application of the Rules of Amateur Status to competitions sponsored by television stations have been received recently by the USGA. The events, which apparently are quite popular, are usually filmed and presented by television stations as regular weekly programs.

In answer to one question, the USGA ruled that participation by amateurs in such television programs, even if commercially sponsored, does not breach the Rules of Amateur Status, provided the participants do not appear in commercial sequences advertising the sponsor's product and, of course, do not receive compensation or expenses in any form.

Several questions have been raised concerning prizes in such events. In one competition an amateur participant who wins one week is invited to return in subsequent weeks until he is defeated. The question was raised as to whether he could accept merchandise prizes valued at \$200 for each victory in the series. He was advised that an amateur participant in such a show is not permitted to accept more than \$200 total worth of merchandise regardless of the number of shows on which he appears.

It was pointed out that such a competition is analogous to a match play tournament in which the eventual winner must win a series of matches; amateurs

in match play events are not permitted to accept merchandise prizes valued at \$200 for each match won.

In another television competition, there were two separate contests, a hole-in-one contest and a partnership contest, in which the partners each played a pitch shot and a bunker shot. The partners with the least combined distance from the hole for all four shots each won a set of golf clubs valued at less than \$200, and the partner who, during that particular month, had the closest shot to the hole won the prize in the hole-in-one contest. This prize was a trip to Las Vegas.

A lady who participated in and won both the partnership and the hole-in-one contests advised that she had accepted a set of clubs for winning the partnership contest. She asked if she would violate the Rules of Amateur Status if she accepted also the trip to Las Vegas which she won in the hole-in-one contest.

She was told that the USGA considers the hole-in-one contest and the partnership contest to be two facets of one tournament or exhibition and that she would violate the Rules of Amateur Status if she accepted the trip to Las Vegas as a prize, unless the value of the trip, when combined with the value of the set of clubs, did not exceed \$200.

Handicap Points Clarified

Three technical changes of minor nature have been made in the USGA Golf Handicap System. They have been published in a new edition of the USGA booklet "The Conduct of Women's Golf," as follows:

1. Section 15-1, dealing with scores acceptable in handicapping, now provides specifically that "Scores may be made in either match play or stroke play." This had long been the intention; the addition merely clarifies it.

2. Section 15-6 has been expanded to provide that scores are not acceptable "When a majority of holes on a course are not par 4s and par 5s."

3. In Section 19, which deals with handicap revisions, Section 2c relative

to unusual situations, has been amplified and the full text now is:

"An increase shall not be granted because a player is temporarily off her game or has discontinued play. However, a temporary exception may be made for temporary disability provided the increased handicap is used only within the player's home club.

"In the case of greater or longer disability, a provisional handicap may be assigned, for use within the player's home club, until she has posted five scores and thus has qualified for a new handicap."

The new edition of "The Conduct of Women's Golf" is now available at 35 cents from the United States Golf Association, 40 East 38th St., New York 16, N. Y.