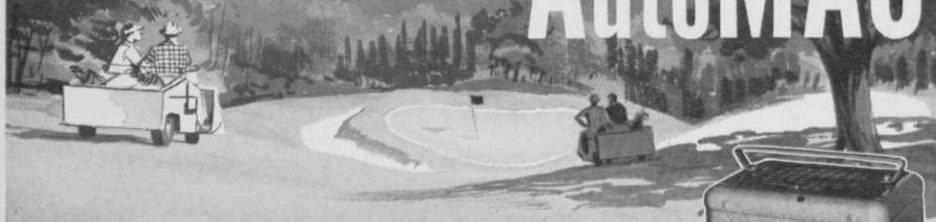


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Reverse Order of Holing Out to Speed Up Play

By JOHN CAIN
Manager, Newport (N.H.) GC

Over the years great progress and improvement have been made in almost every phase of golf including course design, maintenance, equipment and instruction. The only exception is in the area of slow play, the source of the most frequent and vehement complaints about the game.

Nothing takes the pleasure out of a golf game as much as a long wait between shots. Although the slow and inconsiderate golfer is in the minority, he is a major irritant for it takes only one "creep" to stagnate the field behind him.

Laws have been passed to fine and pull slow auto drivers out of traffic. New rules have speeded up football and basketball. It's time that the same was done for golf. Rules and penalties should be devised to speed up the noticeably slow golfer and give him a forced education in good manners and consideration of others.

Greens Are Bottleneck

Besides penalties, there are other means of altering the game to speed up play.

The area around the greens is responsible for most of golf's slackened pace. The main reason for this is that the average golfer is aping the practices of the professional players he sees on TV. It is surprising how the golfer has assimilated the mannerisms, methods and even the temperament of his favorite circuit pro, right down to the "body English" and foot scuffing that is intended to help push the putt into the hole. The viewer does not grasp the importance of each stroke to the "money" players and thinks he is seeing golf as it should be normally played.

To save time in the greens area "within 60 feet of the pin", I suggest we reverse the play. The player nearest the hole should hole out first and so on until all have finished. This will save marking balls and replacing them, jumping over lines of putts, and ganging up around the cups. It also would save wear and tear on the green, especially in the cup area.

Also, each player should do his own putting. Why should a caddie be allowed to show a player how to putt, or how to play any shot for that matter? Golf is intended to be an individual game, so let's keep it that way.