

# Pro's corner / A case against the 14-club limit

## Frank Cardi

Professional  
Rockaway Hunting Club, Cedarhurst, L.I., N.Y.  
President Metropolitan PGA

## Joe Moresco

Professional, The Woodmere Club  
Woodmere, Long Island, New York  
Chamber Public Relations Committee Metropolitan PGA

### WHY 14 CLUBS?

Rule Three, of the *Rules of Golf*, as approved by the United States Golf Association and the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland, states, "Maximum of Fourteen Clubs." The rule goes on to say that "the player is limited to the clubs thus selected for that round."

This rule was necessary to prevent tournament players from loading their golf bags with every conceivable weapon from two putters, to four wedges, chipping clubs, extra drivers, etc., and to provide some reasonable control where players would compete on an equal basis regarding their equipment.

From its inception, the rule has created a great deal of controversy, not regarding the limitation of clubs, but rather the specified number, "fourteen." Again today from tournament players, both amateur and professional, comes the cry, "Why not 16 clubs?"

Discussions of the subject have run the gamut from the preservation of skill and technique, through the obvious abuses of the past, to the present fear of the power hitter and the possible loss of perspective in scoring.

We think the whole issue revolves around one point, namely, "has the method of playing golf changed in the past 40 years?" If we conclude that it has remained the same, that is, the approach to low scoring is the same with today's competitors as before; then, perhaps, the 14 club rule should remain unchanged. On the other hand, if today's players have a different approach, then one must conclude that perhaps the 14 club limit is lagging behind the growth of the game and a more realistic 16 club limit should be substituted.

### WHY 16 CLUBS?

In the days before steel shafts, swingweights and matched sets of

clubs, the players learned to compensate and improvise with a small number of "favorite clubs," all selected by feel. It was difficult to find a set of clubs in this manner and the player learned to adjust his swing to compensate for the lack of uniformity in his equipment. The mark of excellence was "how many different shots could a man play with control with a given club." But even these players recognized the fallibility of their equipment. It is remarkable how close these men could come to matching complete sets by feel alone.

The most famous example of this was the great Bob Jones. When he retired in 1930 and his clubs were weighed and compared, they were found to be almost identical in swingweight with the exception of the seven-iron, a club known to cause Mr. Jones some consternation.

With the advent of the steel shaft, the modern player could pick up where Bob Jones and other greats left off. A new challenge was offered by the perfectly matched sets turned out by manufacturers. Now it remained for the player to produce a machine-like consistent swing, and new standards of excellence became possible.

Below you will see a chart recognizing 15 clubs. Add the putter

CLUB	Degree Of Loft	Approx. Dis. in Yards
DRIVER	9°	265
BRASSIE OR TWO WOOD	13°	250
THREE WOOD	16°	235
FOUR WOOD	19°	220
ONE IRON	18°	205
TWO IRON	22°	195
THREE IRON	25°	185
FOUR IRON	28°	175
FIVE IRON	31°	165
SIX IRON	34°	155
SEVEN IRON	37°	145
EIGHT IRON	40°	135
NINE IRON	43°	125
PITCHING WEDGE	46°	110
SAND WEDGE		

to this list and you have a complete set of sixteen clubs.

A close examination of this chart indicates that removing two clubs from this list becomes a most difficult problem. From the standpoint of loft alone, removing more than the one iron leaves a serious gap in the player's bag of clubs. A very fine professional told us about playing in the U. S. Open at San Francisco two years ago. On one long par four hole after hitting his best tee shot and a full three wood was still short of the green. If he had been able to use a brassie, he could have reached the green. Why arbitrarily keep an excellent player from using the proper club? Of course, the player could have carried a brassie, but he would have had to remove another club in its place.

The selection of these 16 clubs is not an arbitrary one. Experience of great players of several decades in the proving ground of major championship competition results in almost unanimous agreement. Herein lies a standard of excellence to be striven for by every golfer.

If the player is capable of producing a repeating swing, he will be rewarded with the ability to cope with any given distance. His degree of proficiency will still be determined by how well he masters each of the 16 clubs and how well he learns to apply this to playing the game.

Under the present 14 club rule, the player is forced to compen-

Starting with this issue, GOLFDOM launches its Pro's Corner column. We invite any professional, who would like to voice a constructive opinion on golf or the golf business, to send in his views. GOLFDOM will pay up to \$150, for articles accepted, depending on length and quality of material.

## L-O-B-L-O, the Air-Broom...

**SWEEPS UP LEAVES AND LITTER FASTER, BETTER THAN 6 MEN!  
SAVES TIME, LABOR, MONEY AND MUSCLE**

The terrific blast of air blows leaves and litter to a central point for gathering or burning. Attachments available for snow removal, blow washing, etc.

There's a size and price to meet every need . . . 4, 6 and 8 hp. models, a 12 hp. self-propelled model and the new 4 Fan Model PTO 30 pictured here.

Send for literature and name of your nearest distributor.

**ATWATER STRONG CO., INC. • ATWATER, OHIO 44201  
Phone 216/947-2344**

For more information circle number 185 on card



## A case against

Continued from page 36

sate. He must eliminate two clubs. Is this not like asking today's surgeon to operate without his complete modern bag of instruments? Usually the golfer eliminates the #2 wood and the one-iron. These are two of the most demanding and exciting clubs in the set. The player then improvises by making the #3 wood into a 2½ wood and maybe taking some loft off his number two-iron. Stronger players might remove one or the other at the expense of the #3 or #4 wood. But once the set is altered, something is taken from the game.

We read of the great brassie (two-wood) shots of Bob Jones. Think of the memorable one-iron shots of Sam Snead, Arnold Palmer and more recently, Jack Nicklaus.

The particular flight of the #2 wood into the wind on a long par five or that one-iron into a crosswind at a tough par three is something to behold. The exact result cannot be produced by a 2½ wood or a two-iron with less loft, even in the hands of an expert.

Perhaps, if the rule were changed to 16 clubs, there would be more improvisation. A weaker player might substitute the #5 wood for the one-iron. Or, perhaps, some would carry three wedges.

But what is the greater evil, permitting the player, particularly the duffer, a slight leeway, or destroying the integrity of the modern matched set by adhering to a rule retained to perpetuate a philosophy of playing the game which no longer exists?

The Metropolitan Section PGA of America recognizes its obligation to express its views on controversial issues which affect the game of golf. □

## KEN Shop Supplies Help You Give Better Service



**KEN  
Tacky  
Grip Conditioner**

ALSO: Stains, Lacquers, Adhesives, Grips, Listing, Whipping, Shafts, Collars, Plugs, Sheathing, Buffing and cleaning supplies; Golf Club Scales; Official, Lorythmic, Pro-rhythmic.

ALL OTHER SHOP NEEDS

# Kenneth Smith

## GOLF CLUBS

*Hand Made to Fit You*

World's Largest Custom Club Maker

Box 41-GM, Kansas City, Mo. 64141, U.S.A.

For more information circle number 251 on card

## THE FINEST GREENS ARE PLANTED WITH Warren's STOLONS

Perfect even texture and color are maintained with clean, pure-strain WARREN'S STOLONS. Greens planted with seed do not hold their uniformity of color and texture as well as greens planted with stolons. They are apt to develop a "patchwork" look after a few years.



The cost of STOLONS over the cost of seed is insignificant compared to the overall cost of the establishment of a golf course. Why be satisfied with anything less than perfect greens only obtainable from pure-strain STOLONS.



THE FINEST LAWNS  
FROM COAST TO COAST  
**WARREN'S**  
TURF NURSERIES  
PALOS PARK, ILLINOIS

For more information circle number 203 on card

## NEXT TIME USE THE BATTERY BOSS!

GET A **LESTER-MATIC** & STOP  
WORRYING ABOUT BATTERY LIFE

Batteries last longer—and you worry less—when you use a Lestermatic Charger. Proven on courses nationwide under roughest use. No need to be a technician. Set and forget. Your carts will be fully, dependably charged when you need them. See your distributor or write for complete Lestermatic specifications.

**LESTER ELECTRICAL**  
625 West A St. • Lincoln, Neb. 68522

**LESTER EQUIPMENT**  
151 West 17th St. • Los Angeles, Calif. 90015

For more information circle number 252 on card



## RANGE BALLS SOLID - ONE PIECE - PAINTLESS

Strictly Golf Mfg.  
320 N. Webster  
Naperville, Ill. 60540  
Ph. 355-5353 AC 312  
50 dz. Min. Order—Less 5% chk. w/order

For more information circle number 200 on card