

THE AMERICAN GOLFER

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AND ANCIENT" GAME
CONDUCTED BY GOLFERS FOR GOLFERS

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The Editor will be glad to receive for consid-
eration, articles, humorous anecdotes, unusual incidents
and photographs of a bright and original character,
and, when accepted, payment will be made on
publication. Secretaries of clubs are informed that
schedules of club fixtures and competition results
and items of news, are welcome at all times; as
well as copies of latest club books.

CENTRE- SHAFTED CLUBS DEBARRED.

Considerable interest has been aroused
by the recent action of the Rules of Golf
Committee of St. Andrews in deciding that
all clubs with heads of the mallet type are
a substantial departure from the traditional
and accepted form and make of golf clubs,
and therefore inadmissible.

It will be recalled that some few months
ago the following question was submitted
to the committee: "With regard to 'Form
and Make of golf clubs,' is it permissible
to use a small croquet mallet to putt with?"
The answer was: "A croquet mallet is not
a golf club and is inadmissible."

The committee has now gone a step
further and arbitrarily decided that all im-
plements of the mallet type, i. e., all imple-
ments in which the head is not on one side
of the shaft, or in which the socket is so
bent and twisted that the line of the shaft,
if produced, would pass the face of the
club, are inadmissible. This of course in-
cludes all putters of the Schenectady type
and wry-necked clubs of all kinds embody-
ing to a greater or lesser extent the centre-
shafted principle.

In another column we publish the re-
marks of our foreign correspondent con-
cerning this ruling, from which it will be
seen that the decision of the committee has

already aroused considerable opposition in
Great Britain. That it will not be grace-
fully accepted on this side is certain, in
view of the great popularity here of put-
ters of the type which are tabooed. And
it is by no means assured that the U. S. G.
A. will ratify the decision, although it is
hard to see how it can escape doing so
without disloyalty. Which in itself will
prove interesting.

The Rules of Golf Committee is a self-
appointed body. Its work is done gratui-
tously. And without question it has done
a great deal for the good of the game. It
would, however, appear that it has over-
stepped the limits and has taken a quite
unnecessary step—one which is not only
uncalled for but which will provoke dis-
sension—possibly a serious breach. It is
the first step toward standardization. Golf
is a game that does not call for anything
of the sort, either in regard to clubs or
balls. In this respect it is absolutely unique
in all ball games in that there is no inter-
change between opponents. It is purely
and essentially individualistic. That is its
very essence. Standardization, whether of
clubs or balls, would carry many serious
evils in its train and work grave injustice
in many cases. In all other ball games it
is quite different for the simple, and vitally
important, reason that the ball you play
has to be played by your opponent in oppo-
sition. And as a corollary, the implements
necessarily have to be standardized. In
golf such necessity does not exist.

There is no good and substantial reason
why any embargo should be laid upon clubs
of any shape or form so long as they do
not possess any mechanical devices. If a
man can putt better—or think he can putt
better—with an umbrella, for instance, by
all means let him do so. It is open to all
other players to go and do likewise. The
idea of narrowing down any one to the
use of a "traditional and accepted form
and make" means the stifling of enterprise,
the throttling of ingenuity—in short, it
spells in large Roman capital letters
RETROGRESSION. We all know that
with any kind of club, whether of "tradi-
tional and accepted form and make," or
the so-called freaks, it is difficult enough
to play the game decently. If "freak"
clubs would by any possibility make it
easier why rob anyone of the opportunity
of cutting off a stroke or two, since the
"other fellow" can always avail himself of
the same kind of weapon. It is one of the
delightfully comforting—but entirely vain—
thoughts of the vast army of the inept
golfer, commonly known as the "duffer"—
that he, or some one else, may invent a
club, or a ball, which will improve his game
miraculously. It is of course a delusion
since all others would benefit accordingly
if the thing possessed any merit. There is
little or nothing to gain, however, in this
direction. Both clubs and balls have prac-
tically reached finality, short of mechanical
devices, which are tabooed.