

Winter Kill of Putting Greens

By PETER LEES.

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TO a great many Green Committees, "Winter Kill" of putting greens is a very serious matter and one which has to be faced to a greater or less extent every Spring. Putting greens of the punch bowl variety, those that are situated on low-lying ground where drainage is poor, are especially apt to get this "Winter Kill." Drainage, undoubtedly, is the solution of the question.

Whenever such conditions prevail, steps should be taken at once to get rid of the water so that it will not remain and freeze on the surface of the green. Even if it should not be cold enough to freeze, it should not be allowed to remain on the greens during the cold months, as it is most injurious to the grass.

Opinions naturally differ as to the best means of overcoming this difficulty, and the suggestions which follow should be understood to be methods which I have found from experience will give better results than any others which I have tried. There are, of course, many other good ways of arriving at the same result.

As has already been pointed out, the key to the situation is drainage—surface drainage pure and simple. My first suggestion is to put in a number of "soakaways," which may vary in number with the conditions which prevail. These "soakaways" should be placed so that they will draw the water from a certain area around them. They should be about four feet in diameter and, say, ten feet deep. There is no hard and fast rule regarding the size of these "soakaways" and the greenkeeper should be able to judge just what is required for each particular green. The "soakaways" should be filled to about ten inches from the top with either gravel or ashes, the latter being best, and the remaining

space filled with topsoil and the turf replaced.

Usually there is no play during the bad weather when conditions similar to the above prevail, and if so, I would suggest that a part of the turf and topsoil be removed so as to give the water all possible chance of disappearing rapidly, replacement being made in the Spring. I have found this remedy to work very well.

Another way is to drain the green, herring-bone fashion, with a main drain running into a "soakaway" placed at some convenient spot outside the putting green. Four-inch agricultural drain pipes are used and covered over with ashes, the pipes being placed ten inches below the surface. Open the ground here and there on the drains, as in the way I pointed out in the case of "soakaways."

Where the level of the ground lends itself to direct drainage "soakaways" can be dispensed with altogether and the water drained into an open ditch, lake, or low-lying part of the course.

In conclusion, I wish to bring out very strongly the necessity of getting rid of the water at once and do away with any possible chance of it accumulating on the surface. I think if either of the foregoing suggestions were carried out in a systematic manner the question of "Winter Kill" would rapidly disappear, much to the relief of Green Committees and greenkeepers alike.



Golf Course Critics and Cranks Golf Architecture

By LEONARD MACOMBER.

THE critics of golf courses are numerous. Every club swarms with them, and those who know the least usually talk the loudest.

There is the "length" crank for whom no hole is fit to play which is not one full short, or two, or three, as the case may be. Then there is the "perfect lie"

crank, who thinks that every good shot—and most bad ones, for that matter—ought to be rewarded by a billiard-table lie. Another crank has been to a seaside course, the National Golf Links, or St. Andrews in Scotland, or Sandwich, and has seen some good golf holes and has heard them discussed, and he comes back to his inland course on heavy clay soil—perhaps a beautiful natural one—and wants to transform its beauties into a tinsel imitation of the seaside article.

He has heard that trees are bad hazards, and he condones nothing which is not to be found on seaside links. He wants to cut them all down and put up some “proper” bunkers. This man knows the rules and what is not provided for in the rules is not golf. Of all cranks, this crank is the most pestilent. He has no imagination, and is therefore past convincing.

Then we have the crank who is dead against putting in more bunkers, traps, etc., because he will not be able to go around in the eighties any more, but if he knew that it would only improve his game in time, he would probably take an entirely different view.

The fact is, anybody can criticize but very few can create. There are thousands of people who can sit upon the great novelist, or the artist, or the poet, but how many can write such a book or paint such a picture, or inspire such a poem?

It is just the same in golf architecture. The architect must be born, not made. When you get him, you are surprised to find how few “rules” he has—how he sweeps away your hard and fast formularies and outrages your cherished principles. He looks to nature for his inspiration and tries to fit his golf to his surroundings, and not to destroy his surroundings for his golf. If there is natural beauty he tries to retain it and to make the whole picture harmonize. In this way, by cunning devices, he makes the “bad length” hole into a thing of beauty and the man who has “placed” his drive as it must be placed and has got in that dainty ap-

proach up to the hole is as pleased as if he had hit the two “screamers” of his life.

All holes cannot and ought not to be like this. Length, and plenty of it, is necessary to any good course, but allowing this, it is the beauty of the approach and the green that mostly impresses the mind. Let any golfer think of the principal courses over which he has played and his conclusion is: the holes which he instinctively remembers are those which have a difficult and artistic finish, and it is just this artistic individuality which tells you that the genius of the golf architect has been present. And after all, Mr. “Length” Crank, where are your mathematics when the wind blows, or the ground is dry and hard?

Of course this is partly offset now in building new courses by constructing at least two, and better still, three or four tees at every hole, or one long tee perhaps fifty yards in length.

No great golf architect and no great player wishes for uniform billiard-table lies, which are often found on some of our Western courses, especially around Chicago where it is hard to find rolling country.

Half of the most subtle strokes in golf are brought out in the overcoming of variations in the lie, stance and distance, and it is here that the real standard of a golfer asserts itself.

To the sincere critic, then, always make your suggestions to your committee. They will welcome them if they are good, and do not forget that there are two sides even to a question on which you may hold strong opinions. To those in charge of golf courses it is well to encourage discussion by all who are competent to discuss. One happy idea may make a poor hole into a good one.

And finally, whether you have length or not, always aim to make your holes interesting and your finishes artistic, getting away from any artificial or pattern design.

To the man of uniformity and cast-iron principles—take up some other subject.