

The Danger of Opening Putting Greens for Play in March

By PETER LEES.

WITH the coming of Spring the Green Committees will soon be preparing for the golfing season, which is fast approaching, and the work of preparing the putting greens and fairways will occupy a large part of their attention.

One of the mistakes frequently made by Green Committees is to open the greens for play in March. More harm can be done in one day at this time than can be rectified in weeks afterward, and many clubs that find their greens in poor shape in the summer could trace the trouble to this source. The weather may be fine and warm during the daytime, but frosts will frequently be experienced at night, and if the grass is subjected to the wear and tear of play in addition to having to resist the weather conditions, it naturally will suffer greatly. After the Winter snows and frosts the surface of the putting green is loose and soft, the greenkeeper not yet having had time to work them up to a firmer condition. If played on at this time the bad effects will be apparent later on.

After his long absence from the game, the golfer is very anxious to get started again, and at the first sign of good weather, he is at the club ready to play. He expects to find the Summer greens with the holes cut and flags in position all ready for use, and does not like the idea of using temporary or "relief" greens. Personally, I recommend these with great diffidence at any time, but in circumstances like the above I think that the golfer ought to bear with the committee and put up with them until such time as the Summer greens may be opened up with no danger of damaging them.

The use of temporary greens will also help the greenkeeper to bring the regular greens to first-class condition, and he would have the knowledge that he ran no risk of spoiling them for the busy season. The results obtained by

the use of a little forbearance in the early Spring will be more than repaid by putting greens of superior quality a little later in the season.

Another important point to be considered is that if the greens are not used too early, the grass will recover from the effects of the winter and the young shoots will have become much stronger and better able to withstand the wear and tear of play.

The temporary, or relief greens can be made as near the Summer greens as desired, and are of course on the fairway. They should be on the approach, if possible. The work expended on them will improve this important part of the fairway by truing it for play when the ordinary or Summer green is opened.

At best, golf in March cannot be considered seriously under any circumstances, and this applies particularly to putting, as conditions are all against it.

Spring Renovation Work

L. M.

JUST as soon as the frost is out of the ground and the soil is dry and in good condition, golf clubs should commence the renovation of their courses. It is usually quite safe to figure on starting this work about the 1st of April, but of course it all depends upon the locality and whether the soil is of a sandy, medium or heavy nature.

The chief causes of a worn or poor turf are hard usage, poverty of the soil, the damage done by extremes of temperature, or the want of proper drainage; the result of hard usage and extremes of temperature is shown by the appearance of bare patches; the sign of poverty is a thin turf, and bare patches with moss and stagnant water usually denote faulty drainage.

Some greens will possibly be found in very good condition, with a thick, fine turf, and quite free from weeds. Nevertheless, they should be renovated and strengthened so as to make them better able to withstand a severe summer season and heavy play.