

Beware of False Idols

By ROBERT A. GARDNER

Former American Amateur Golf Champion

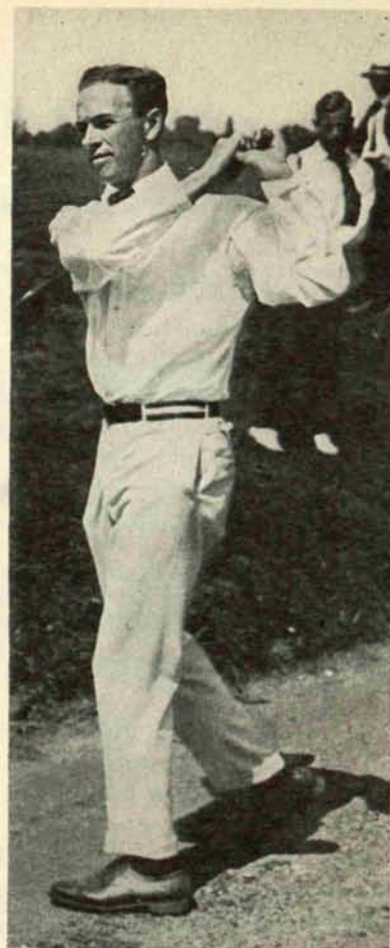
GOLF'S charm is being imperiled by two false idols, according to Robt. Gardner, former president of the Chicago District Golf association, former member of the U. S. Walker Cup team, and United States national amateur champion in 1909, who spoke at the April meeting of the Midwest Greenkeepers' association held at Great Northern Hotel, Chicago.

Standardization of golf course design and maintenance and the strenuous efforts being made to eliminate the element of luck, Gardner named as the two factors that, in his opinion, were inclined to take zest from playing.

In designating the condition of the greens as the most important item in greenkeeping Gardner stated that as putting put the premium on skill rather than on the "lucky breaks" it was essential that a golf course to rank high must have its greens in such condition that a stroke rolled exactly as it was played. He cited the excellent condition of Skokie's greens in 1922 as the deciding factor in the U. S. G. A. award of the event to the Glencoe club, although parts of the course were obviously of old-fashioned design. As a member of the U. S. G. A. course selection committee Gardner spoke with authority on the necessity of first class greens.

Today's tendency with bunkers, he stated, is to make them pretty, rather than penalties for poorly played shots. He cited numerous instances where the effort to provide a picture instead of placing emphasis on penalizing poor play had resulted in traps that shots would roll through or that shots could be played out of with practically no loss of distance or direction. He pronounced traps around greens that allowed playing out with a putter, as one of the grave errors in design and as deadly to one of the game's most exacting and satisfying shots.

ROBT. A. GARDNER began his athletic career as Yale's champion pole vaulter. In 1915 he won the Amateur Championship at the Country Club of Detroit, defeating John G. Anderson in the finals. He is an ardent student of golf course conditions.



The old style architecture had the virtue of making a trap mean a penalty, remarked Gardner, who named the Chicago Golf club as a place where tough traps existed in the Chicago district.

"What fun is there in winter rules?" asked Gardner in talking on the thrill of a lucky bounce as one that was as delightful to the star as to the dub. He spoke of such games as tennis and billiards as putting so much of a premium on skill and so little on good fortune that they were out-ranked in player favor by golf. This slant on the game was a rare one to be heard by the greenkeepers for the usual tale that comes to their ears about fairways is a complaint if the turf is not as even and as thorough as that of the greens.

Gardner also expressed the opinion that except in the case of tees on short holes, the players were penalizing their budgets by their demands in tee maintenance because the general idea is today that the tees must run the greens a close second in evenness and condition.