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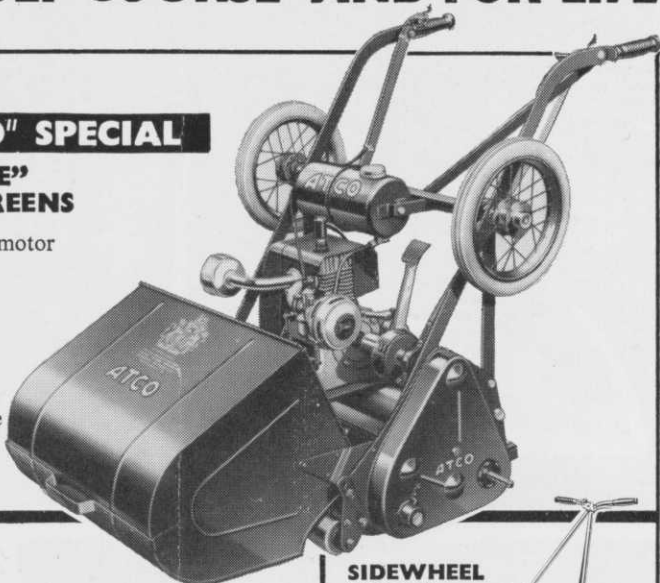
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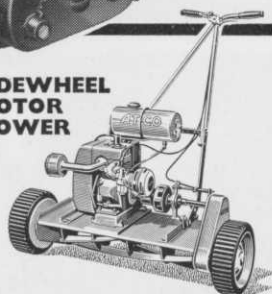
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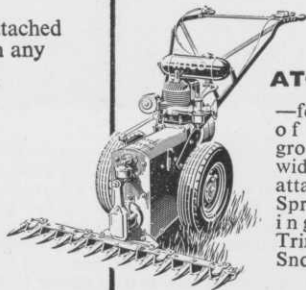
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GREENKEEPER

HON. EDITOR: F. W. HAWTREE.



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JANUARY 1962

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Oscar Wilde.

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TEE SHOTS



by the Editor

What new ideas will golf produce in 1962?

In its Christmas Number "Tennis et Golf" devoted a page to a Belgian golfer's proposal for modifying the game. A 36 in. white plastic ring (hence the name Ring Golf) is placed round the hole and a ball lying on or within the ring is considered holed out. The flag and hole remain unchanged but serve only as markers. If the ball finishes in the ring from an approach shot the player scores a bonus point. No bonus points are given for shots made with the putter. Well . . . ?

Or perhaps Mr. Henry Cotton's elimination of all rough on his new course at Harlow will catch the general fancy. Whatever your opinion, this is good publicity and many inland courses can do with an original turn of thought. Will this one save upkeep or increase it. Your comments will be welcomed, even on a postcard.

Or will some benefactor institute the National Golf Course with impeccable playing conditions and adequate spectator amenities for food, drink, and watching play? One view is that golf can never be a spectacle on normal lines. Space and movement are too restricted to develop any established golf course for the comfort of more than a very limited number of spectators. Even a new golf course specially designed would

be little better. Only a golf stadium will solve the problem. An oval arena some 500 yards long by 150 yards wide will contain 3 greens and nine tees in a triangular layout. Covered space surrounds the arena and the players are undisturbed by gallery, stewards, or the chaps that met them last year at Gleneagles. With field glasses every shot could be seen, and many without them. The idea could be developed and speeded up by opposing two teams of four players with three pairs putting and driving off and one pair playing the fairway shots in the middle.

From the design point of view, the scheme is ideal. Every kind of shady device could be introduced to make the holes testing since the objective is only to provide a spectacle. When not in use, the arena could be used as a driving range from each end.

Golf would then finally attract the non-players. Vernons and Littlewoods could move in. Bids from Milan would have a wider scope. Mr. Henry Longhurst would no longer have to climb those dangerous looking television towers and the greenkeeper's job would be neat and uncomplicated.

This was not our idea originally but, in the absence of strong protests we will publish a plan for it soon.

Meanwhile, we hope your New Year will be happy and successful.

DEVIL'S ADVOCATE 4

by
Goblin

"There's a lot to be said for ten yards of semi-rough . . . before the real lost-ball country."

HOW ROUGH THE ROUGH?

MOST of us may prefer not to think about the rough much of the time. It is one of those things one really wants to have nothing to do with.

This does not alter reality, though; and most of us spend a good deal of time getting very closely acquainted with it. I'd go so far as to say that there is no man in Hertfordshire who knows the rough on my home course better than I do. I could tell him about all manner of little rabbit holes and baby holly trees he goes through life happily, oblivious of!

It may be an odd thing to choose to write about for this rather august journal; for, after all, the rough should, and sometimes does, come last in priority in the maintenance of a golf course. But it really can be important, and there are signs that modern trends have again begun to show their thoughtless faces in the treatment of it.

Skirt length.

The classic and hackneyed remark about the length of a woman's skirt (that it should be long enough to cover the subject but short enough to be interesting) just about sums up the job rough has to do on a golf course. From the point of view of the man who watches much good golf all over the country, and out of it, and who plays much bad golf himself, a sort of philosophy of rough forms in the mind.

Its first purpose, of course, is just to be there. It stands, or should stand, as part of the strategy of the hole, consciously in the player's mind as he stands on the tee, or addresses a shot to the green. It should, as a matter of opinion, be

thickest near the most foolhardy or greedy line up the hole, and thicker just short of the green than level with or past it. The look of it should therefore proclaim its nature—though there are limits to which this can be managed by anyone but Inscrutable Providence.

Never enough.

Here, of course, we come up against one of the inescapable problems of course maintenance. There are never enough men and enough time to do the job ideally. If there were, rough could be cut regularly, and kept at the length and thickness prescribed by the needs of the individual holes. As it is, the rough will inevitably be cut a bit shorter than ideal when it is cut, and then left until it is a good bit longer than ideal before it is cut again.

Surely, though, it is not inevitable that this necessity of time and labour should be carried as far as it is on many courses; so that the rough is butchered right to ground level, breaking its mat and texture, and then left to grow up spindly and uneven, so that the extent of the penalty for a shot into it varies rapidly from one foot to the next.

Heather country.

This can be particularly deplorable in heather, where too tight cutting can lead to scrubby nasty looking up-growths with something like a spoon-lie in between them. The ideal treatment for heather, where the ground is at all level, is to use an old set of gang mowers, set as high as possible: to produce in time a tight, even mat of heather shoots, into which the ball buries itself effectively

enough to demand a recovery shot and no ambitious stuff, but in which the wretched thing can always be found with minimum delay.

Butchery.

Another thing which can ruin a hole is too tight cutting of rough between fairway and the real jungle country. It is fair for a player to expect the penalty for an off-line shot to be graduated according to its sin. If he goes off the fairway and gets into the fair, thick rough, then he has no complaint; but if he goes off the fairway and sees his ball bound right through what *was* rough, until recent butchery, and end up right in the thick bushes bordering the hole, then he has a grievance. There's a lot to be said for ten yards of semi-rough (but not too butchered down) followed by a bit of thickish rough, before the margin of the real lost-ball country itself. Fairness and just deserts are important.

Opinion can always vary, though, about little scrubby bushes. Some think they belong wherever they grow, and if a man is in the rough at all he should

be prepared to take the chance of one. This is rather an alibi than an argument. The point is that rough should give a fairly consistent penalty between one spot and the next; and unless some little new bushes can be easily grown into a largish patch of tough hazard *which adds something to the hole*, it is much better to cut them out all together within ten yards of the fairway. There are probably few things more spoiling in golf than a drive which bounds only just off the fairway into an unplayable lie in a little bush not more than a foot high.

In general, rough is quicker and easier to deal with where the ground is reasonably level. And in case anyone doesn't yet know it, a machine like the Wolseley Swipe can be invaluable for knocking off anthills, levelling ridges and ruts and clearing unwanted bushes and small trees. Where it has gone before, the old gang mowers can easily follow up.

Rough, in sum, should offer a lie you deserve to get, not one which is merely, as your opponent hypocritically observes: "*Rough luck, old man*".

Next Month: Why is a Weed?

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DO WE CARRY TOO MANY CLUBS— OR TOO FEW?

By S. L. McKinlay

THE Americans, according to a report, are proposing to change that Rule of Golf which they introduced on 1st January, 1938, and which the R. and A., after an initial setback, brought into operation 16 months later.

The rule is the one limiting to 14 the number of clubs which a player may select before setting out on a round. There are refinements of the rule covering replacement of a club or clubs broken during the course of play (which have caused some grievous headaches in the past), but in general there has been universal acceptance of the limitation, and nothing in the record books suggests that standards have suffered because players are not allowed to carry a club for every shot they might be called upon to play.

Now the Americans are said to want an increase to 16, and, I suppose, if the Russians played golf, this would be the first step in an arms race and before long there would be something like an auction, ending in no limitation at all.

Large Profit.

It is small wonder that a Glasgow business man told me the other evening that he was going to buy shares in an American company that is soon to start manufacturing golf clubs in Scotland. Only the manufacturers would profit from a lifting of the limit—and how they would profit, too. None of us is so good a putter as readily to resist the temptation to carry another implement against those days when the ball will not go into the hole.

Today, under the 14-club rule, a spare putter is a luxury, if not indeed a snare and delusion. But a spare driver, or an extra wedge, or a No. 5 wood (which has the approval of no less an expert than Bobby Locke), or a special chipper—any golfer of ambition could easily add at least two clubs to his kit in the fond hope that in so doing he might subtract as many strokes from his score.

Alas, as the poet said, regardless of their doom the little victims play.

It is odd that the Americans should want to raise the limit because when

they introduced the 14-club rule more than 20 years ago one of their arguments was that "the limitation of clubs would tend to restore the making of individual shots and increase the skill of the player. The multiplicity of clubs tends towards mechanisation of the game. In earlier days players used to change their swing in order to execute the various types of shots. In recent years the tendency has been merely to take a different club."

Professionals' Part.

Perhaps the new generation of legislators takes a less austere view; perhaps the professionals in America, acting at the behest of the manufacturers who subsidise them, are now too powerful and persuasive. I, for one, would deplore any extension of the limit. I would not go so far as to insist on a return to the older custom when seven clubs were held to be sufficient and only the top professionals thought it necessary to carry more.

Vardon in his heyday carried only nine, and he was not a bad player. His nine, for those with a historical bent, were—driver, brassie, driving mashie, driving cleek, light cleek, iron, mashie, niblick, and putter. The driving mashie was similar to a modern No. 2 iron with perhaps a deeper face, the two cleeks corresponded, very roughly, to the modern No. 3 iron, and the iron was a short-shafted, fairly heavy club not unlike a modern No. 4 iron. The equivalents are very rough, but there was nothing rough about the way Vardon and the other old masters handled clubs that a modern professional would be hard put to wield with equal effect.

On the other hand, at the time the Americans gave a lead in limiting the ironmongery humped around by groaning caddies, it was not uncommon for the leading Americans, both professionals and amateurs, to have at their disposal upwards of 20 clubs. When Lawson Little won the Amateur Championship at Prestwick in 1934 his caddie staggered under a load of 22 clubs. He had some half-dozen pitching clubs, a veritable

(continued on foot of page 9.)

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HON. SECRETARY'S NOTES



F. G. Hawtree Memorial Fund & The Tournament

The Spring course at the S.T.R.I. is already booked but I am hoping that it will be possible to include one more greenkeeper. Two places in the Autumn course are already reserved and I shall be inviting applications later.

It looks as if the popularity of these courses will require booking as far ahead

DO WE CARRY TOO MANY CLUBS—OR TOO FEW?—cont.

battery with which, truth compels me to admit, he peppered the green with deadly accuracy. But he would have been equally effective, I am persuaded, with only half as many. And who is to say that Vardon would have won more than his six Open Championships if he had carried 18 clubs instead of nine?

Clubs Used.

Let me suggest for those who may seek to anticipate the day when the 14-club limit may be raised a simple exercise in recollection. After your next round of golf make a count of the clubs you used. And count, too, the number of times you felt at a loss for a club. If your experience is anything like mine you will have to admit that you did not use more than three-quarters of your clubs and that you would not have trimmed your score by a single stroke if you had had an extra club to play with.

Most people have the standard set of clubs—four woods, nine irons—from 2 to 9 and the wedge—and a putter. How often, I wonder, do you use your No. 2 iron? And if you do use it how often do you play a satisfactory shot? For

After visiting the Sheffield Section to hear Mr. Hawtree's lecture on golf course design at the end of November, I travelled down to Bristol with him in December to hear a repeat performance for the South Western Section. A. A. Cockfield, the Section's Hon. Secretary had brought along a strong contingent from his club at Sham Castle, and as usual question time was a lively feature of the entertainment. I hope to get along to the Southern Section lecture on 31st January, and possibly to another Section this winter, if I can get a lift in the right direction at the right time.

as does August accommodation for the Tournament which will take place this year on the 13th, 14th and 15th August. Prospective competitors should be thinking about this. I hope we shall have an even bigger attendance this year.

A Happy New Year to you all,

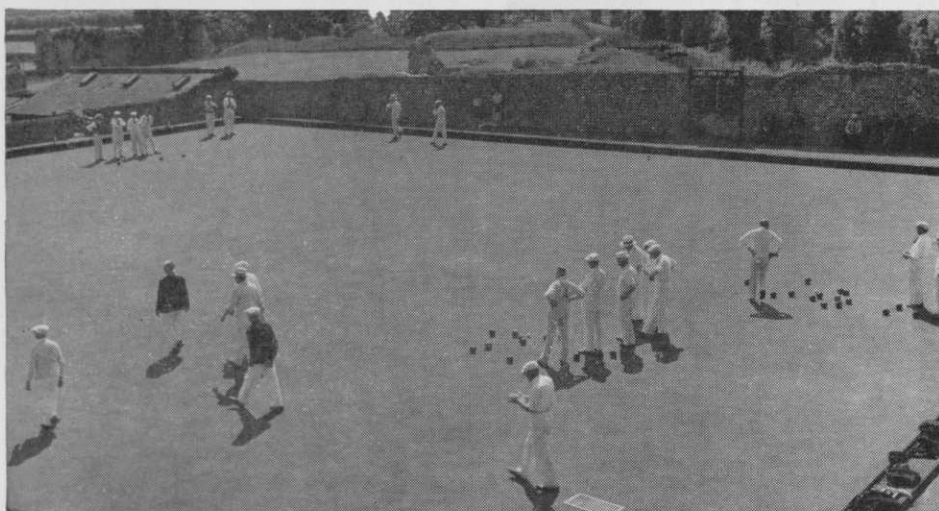
C. H. Dix.

that matter, how many of our professionals will back themselves to hit and hold a green with a No. 2 iron? Precious few of them, for the bigger the iron the less assured are they, and the majority of golfers, of hitting an adequate shot.

No doubt the power of the modern professionals and the excellence of modern equipment combine to give them few opportunities of playing very long second shots. They are wonders with the medium and short irons, but notably weaker vessels when they have to use the big stick through the green. Why then should we handicap golfers think that we can rifle long iron shots to the heart of a green?

Perhaps these rather sour reflections are the best kind of argument for carrying the No. 5 wood, and we might have to be very strong-minded to jettison the No. 2 iron in its favour. I prefer to think that the Royal and Ancient, despite its known passion for solidarity with our American cousins, will cry "Hold, enough", and not tamper with at least one rule that has done no harm to golf and golfers.

With grateful acknowledgments to "The Glasgow Herald" and the Editor of the "Evening Times".



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