

THE GOLF COURSE

A MONTHLY BULLETIN DEVOTED TO THE DISCUSSION OF MODERN METHODS AS APPLIED TO GOLF COURSE CONSTRUCTION AND UPKEEP

Long Holes

By THE OBSERVER

I AM going to tell you about three friends of mine, Long, Wild and Short. These men have golfed with me for a number of years and frequently we make golf pilgrimages. Together we visit many courses and I doubt if ever men enjoyed their four-ball matches more than do we. Usually Long and Short play together, while I am paired with Wild, and our battles are close and interesting. My friend Long hits out tremendous shots from the tee and through the fairway, but I think that he is one of the most uncertain putters I have ever seen. He usually manages to get around somewhere in the neighborhood of 85, although when he enjoys a streak of good putting he is very apt to break 80 and altogether he is the best player among us.

On the other hand, his partner Short, is exceedingly accurate and consistent when he reaches the putting green and although his average score is something like 90 he lends valuable assistance to Long.

My partner, Wild, is erratic throughout and my records of our scores show that he ranges between 80 and 95, depending entirely upon the nature of the courses over which we play. I may say that I play a careful game, on rare occasions breaking 80, if the course be none too difficult, but on less fortunate days it is not uncommon for my card to show a 90 and I have to confess to a number of cards touching the three figures. However, I am glad to say that such catastrophes are very infrequent for I endeavor at all times to be careful. But there are occasions when I fear that I lack concentration because of the fact that much of my attention is given to the study of the courses themselves. So much for our four-ball matches and ourselves.

From time to time I endeavor to interest my companions in the holes which we play, but only too frequently they permit their judgment to be influenced by their respective scores. I find our estimates at great variance. For in-

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R. O. SINCLAIRE, *Editor*

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Parallel Holes

ONE of the most noticeable improvements which Modern Golf Architecture has brought over that of previous days is in regard to the elimination of parallel holes.

Early American Courses were laid out without very much thought of this, and there was rarely any provision made to close off the Greens from strokes played from adjoining Fairways, which should have been penalized. The Fairways were usually divided only by a strip of rough grass which caught a ball slightly off the line, but handicapped in no way the player who "pulled" or "sliced" sufficiently to run through it and on to the parallel Fairway. This state of affairs is today considered inexcusable, and the up-to-date Golf Architect, with over 100 acres available for his layout, is ingenious enough to avoid the paralleling of holes, although his task is certainly more difficult if the shape of the property happens to be nearly square.

Property today is becoming so valuable, especially in the neighborhood of the larger Cities, that the committee in

charge of building a new Course should realize how much money can be saved by securing the advice of a first class Golf Architect, even before deciding definitely on the piece of land which is to be used. One tract might contain considerably less acreage than another, and still offer much better opportunities for the building of a first class Course. The selection should be left to the Architect. With only 100 acres it is often hard to avoid parallels in some holes, especially when one considers that it is most important to have the 9th and 18th Greens close to the Club House.

The modern Golf Architect expresses his ingenuity by dog-legging and twisting the Fairways, thus avoiding straight parallels. Inaccurate shots are punished, of course, by trapping the Greens severely on the side adjacent to the parallel Fairway, thus making it practically impossible to hold a shot on the green, which is played from a lie off the proper course.

My boy, if you happen to finish

In a fairly respectable score,
Don't recite its details in the club-house,
For there're some who have done it
before.

PROFESSIONALS and greenkeepers frequently request us to advise them where they can secure situations. We shall be glad to furnish the names of competent men.

Rolling

OWING to the vast difference in soils and climatic conditions it is difficult to give general advice in regard to rolling, yet the poor condition which prevails on many of our golf courses after a torrid spell, or after a severe winter, leads us to believe that too much rolling has much to do with it. We believe from our own observations and that of other experts that because of this many fairgreens are becoming root bound, hermetically sealed and waterproof, thereby making it almost impossible for nature to carry out its proper work. We are quite sure too much rolling with a heavy roller is a common evil. On several courses of which we know a heavy cutter and roller has been constantly employed on some portions and the ordinary horse mower on other portions, and the fact is quite noticeable that where the lighter machines were used the nature and texture of the turf is far superior.

It cannot be denied that a heavy roller or motor power for a new course is a perfect Godsend up to a certain point, but if the ground has been properly prepared its use could probably be limited to two weeks or a little more. A sure way to injure the soil is by packing it in such a way as to exclude the air. If this is done the activities of the chemical agents in the soil are greatly lessened and thus the making plant food available is retarded. On the other hand when the soil is kept in a more open condition and the air is allowed entrance, oxygen being such an

active element and combining freely with other substances, there naturally follows a chemical action and changes take place more actively.

In many sections of the country the soil on golf courses will not permit of packing and one can readily see the great harm which has been done in permitting this condition to prevail. The turf on many courses has been absolutely ruined by heavy rolling and oftentimes the rough is far superior to the fairway simply because it has been left practically untouched. The soil, therefore, is in a better state of receptivity to absorb water, thus augmenting the water reserve and providing the moisture necessary to give vigor to healthy grass growth.

The method pursued in constantly rolling the fair greens with a heavy roller has in some cases formed a surface almost as hard as asphalt, through which only a very small percentage of the rainfall can percolate. Instead of going deep into the soil where it belongs it runs off into low spots, sours the greens, kills the grass and encourages the germination of every weed seed that is blown in. Weeds with large top roots bore down and thrive where it is impossible for grass to do so. Evidences of this can be seen on almost all courses where the soil is of a clay nature and a heavy roller has been used, and it is a wonder that those in charge of affairs have been so slow to recognize the trouble.

Water is of so much importance to the life of grass that we see thousands

of dollars spent annually in the piping of putting and fair greens all over the country and yet by the methods pursued of racking and caking the soil by heavy rolling, the object sought to be gained is in a great measure nullified. When it is considered that water is the greatest essential for plant life it is easily seen why so much is expended in the piping of golf courses. The water acts upon the plant food in the ground by turning the materials into solution and thus making them available for absorption. It should be the aim of those looking after the golf course to see that the ground is kept in a friable condition and always maintain the porosity of both fairgreens and putting greens. If this is done less water will be necessary for their maintenance and the textures of the grasses are sure to be better.

A heavy roller is a very good thing to have on a course where the soil is of a sandy nature, but its use should be limited to Spring and Fall rolling wherever the soil is clay.

Clover Greens

MANY beautiful lawns and greens are spoiled by the presence of a large percentage of clover plants. The little dwarf clovers usually found in mown turf are natives of this country and are generally most in evidence after a wet season or after the application of manures rich in phosphates or potash.

Clover in lawns, especially lawns devoted to games, is very objectionable, because the foliage being soft, pulps under foot, stains the balls, and becomes extremely slippery and danger-

ous, especially to lawn-tennis players: it holds the dew longer than gress, and consequently keeps quite green during dry weather when the grass burns brown and so gives the lawn a patchy appearance, its foliage being stiffer than the leaves of the grass makes the lawn or green slow, or worse still, slow in patches, and it dies away to a considerable extent in the winter.

The clover plants grow in two distinct formations, sometimes they are found forming self-contained patches, having apparently smothered out all the grass within their reach, and at other times they are found growing interwoven with the grass plants.

A clover plant or patch when in full foliage, in itself, presents a very accurate surface, and a green composed entirely of clover when in full foliage plays "slow" but fairly accurately; in fact, more accurately than it would if only partly composed of clover, but in the winter when it loses its foliage little or nothing is left but its branches which lie on the surface of the ground like so many pieces of stick, and make accurate putting impossible.

If the clover is interwoven with the grass plants it is not so objectionable as when it grows in patches, but as there is always the danger of it growing more vigorously during a favorable season and forming self-contained patches, every effort should be made to eliminate it, or, at least, to keep it in check.

The eradication of clover is always a difficult matter owing to the ramification of its roots, and any attempt to uproot it is doomed to failure and great damage will be done to the turf.

Clover belongs to the natural order of leguminosæ, and has the power, in

common with all leguminous plants, of extracting nitrogen from the air and storing it in nodules attached to its roots.

Grasses, on the other hand, have no power to extract nitrogen from the air, and to flourish, grasses must have a plentiful supply of nitrogen; consequently it follows that if a manure rich in nitrogen is used on turf containing clover, it will help the grass without assisting the clover to an appreciable extent.

After a considerable amount of experiment we have been able to produce a manure with its ingredients so completely balanced, that it will, if used systematically, eventually starve out the clovers.

It is, of course, impossible for us to say how long this process takes, as its action to an extent depends on the nature of the soil and the quantity of phosphoric acid and potash that is available, but if a lawn or green containing clover is dressed with Anti-clover Manure, a distinct improvement in the grass and a diminution of the clover will be noticed within a few months of its application.

Long Holes

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stance, not very long ago we discussed one of the longest holes which I have ever seen. It measured 640 yards and I contended that it was much too long, for the fairway gave none of the shots unusual length. Long was loud in his praise of it, for he had no difficulty in reaching the green in three. The green was large and not closely bunkered. I contended that under normal conditions

there was no excuse for a three-short hole of this length.

"Surely," I argued, "The course offers a great many opportunities for the hard hitters to extend themselves, and this hole demands nothing but three lengthy wallops with no great premium offered for the placement of any one of the three."

Naturally Short agreed with me and on this occasion Wild did, too, for he had visited the rough on both sides. I had no ax to grind for fortunately my third was close enough to the green to enable me to lay my approach dead enough to hole in five, which secured a half with Long. But I found but little pleasure in playing the hole for it seemed to me quite featureless.

Soon after, on another course, we played another three-shot hole, which measured 525 yards and this time we found the green closely bunkered, which seemed to me quite proper, for I maintained that any three-shot hole should demand two long, well placed shots and then a controlled approach to the green. In playing this hole Wild, who at times hits tremendously lengthy shots with his wood, caught two fairly on the nose, and right down the middle of the course. He was favored by a following wind and his drive, as I paced it off, was close to 350 yards. With a brassy he connected with another long one, which, to his great disgust, found one of the guarded pits. Quite impartially he cursed his luck and the builder of that particular hole.

"None but an imbecile would close off this green so unfairly," he raved.

I ventured the observation that it would be quite impossible to bunker that particular green fairly and at the same time admit two abnormal strokes

such as his, but I fear that I failed to convince him that my thought had any merit.

Short had succeeded in reaching the green with his third, a long mid-iron and although Long had half-topped his drive a brassy had placed him in position to get home with his third. Naturally, Short declared that something must be wrong with that hole and I quite agreed with him, and a few days later our play of a hole of similar length on another course, vindicated my opinion.

This hole, 540 yards long, was provided with a rather small, closely guarded green, which opened up to an approach shot from the left of the fairway, but an immense area of broken ground extended across the fairway and it was fully 75 yards from the near edge, which apparently was about 325 yards from the teeing ground. Obviously, it would require a carry of about 400 yards in two shots to reach the fairway beyond. Short could not make it and was compelled to play short, taking four to reach the green, and Long had to do precisely the same thing, for after half hitting his drive he found the carry too great for him and from a point short of the hazard area he could not reach the green with his third. Fortunately, after my partner, Wild, had sliced into the rough I managed to win the hole in 5 by hitting two good ones to the fairway beyond and placing a very satisfactory jigger on the green.

Here was an instance where we were confronted by an obligatory carry for the second shots and while, generally speaking, I am of the opinion that the carry should be graded, I think that on this three-shot hole such a scheme of hazards is very effective and quite defensible.

Long argues that a three-shot hole should have a wide open green so as to permit the "slogger" to get there occasionally with two abnormally long shots. His idea provides a three-shot hole about 500 yards in length, with a large, unprotected green. To my way of thinking this is neither fish nor fowl. In my humble opinion, the character of each green is fixed by the particular type of shot which is to find the green, and although the three-shot hole is the longest of any on the course it does not follow that the green should be the largest. The real three-shotter should demand two perfect, long balls and then an approach, which must be played with accuracy. Any three-shot hole which enables a player to miss or half hit either his drive or his second and afterward gain the green with any kind of a third stroke, is open to criticism.

In my next article I will relate some of the adventures of Long, Short, Wild and myself over other courses, particularly as we play two-shot holes of varying types.

My Old Putter

Although so often blamed by me

For what was not thy due,
Old Putter, since I knew thee first,
I've always found thee true.

How often have I slighted thee
To give new clubs a try,
And when they failed me one by one
Have sadly laid them by.

And then, my old neglected friend,
I've turned to thee once more,
And confidence from thee regained,
Which friendship can restore.

New putting clubs may come and go,
Block-headed and the rest—
Old Putter of a day gone by,
Thou art to me the best.

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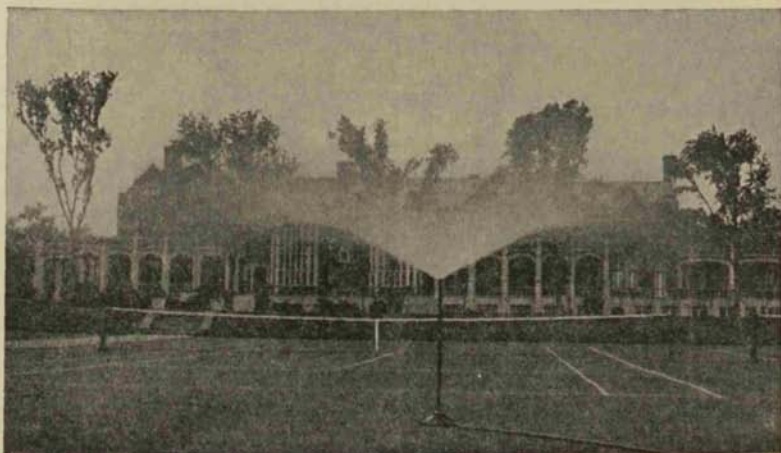
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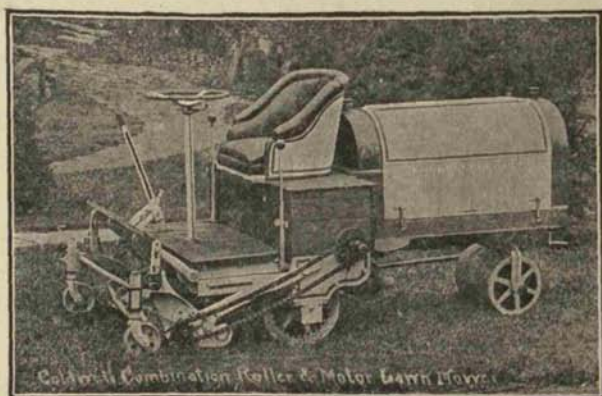
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