



Olympia Fields installs two traps adjacent to its clubhouse each fall. When the golf season opens in the spring, the traps are removed to a farther location on the grounds.

# Keep 'Em Coming to the Club Is Sound Winter Policy

By JACK FULTON, JR.

**O**NE ADMITTED weakness of country club organization is the fact that the plant, representing considerable investment in land, buildings and facilities, is patronized at capacity only during the late spring, the summer and the early fall half of the year. During the balance of the year carrying charges and other overhead items continue full force, but not enough departmental business is done to pay for them. Whatever profits the club is able to make during the active season must be drawn on to pay the freight through the winter.

Many clubs have discovered it pays to keep the plant open the year around and install sufficient attractions to lure their members into frequent winter visits. Few clubs can close down tight anyway. Certain hardy members insist upon playing golf whenever the course is bare of snow and the weather reasonably mild, and for these members certain clubhouse facilities must be provided. They will expect the building to be heated and they will consider themselves abused if provision is not made to feed them after their exercise on the wind-swept links.

All of this means that at least a skeleton crew of employees must be held on the pay-

roll through the winter months, whether a full day's work can be found for them all the time or not. The clubhouse is supposedly closed for the winter, but is actually operating on a restricted—and incidentally money-losing—plane.

Clubs have discovered that golf as the sole winter attraction is not enough. Only a small portion of the membership will patronize the establishment in winter for golf's sake. Other outdoor features must be provided, such as trap-shooting, skeet, tobogganing, archery-golf, skating, and skiing; and indoor attractions must be planned, such as brige parties, ping-pong, dinner dances and keno games.

All of these attractions can be made profitable ventures, because each of them requires either the purchase or rental equipment or patronage of the club's regular departments in a substantial way.

## TRAPSHOOTING

**H**UNDREDS of country clubs offer trap-shooting facilities during the months when golf is least active. Enthusiasts of the sport appear at the club in good numbers every week-end and in some districts the interest in trapshooting is so keen that week-day play is not unusual.

The lure of the sport lies in the univer-

sal human delight to "bust something" with a gun. And when this urge to "bust" is surrounded by conditions that make the sport comfortable, active and competitive, few shooters can resist it.

From the viewpoint of the golf club, trapshooting is a sport well worth promoting. Primarily, clubs are interested because the sport offers them an opportunity to make direct profit through sale of shells and targets. In addition, a shooter remains at the club for most of the day if he indulges in the sport, and there is a fine volume of departmental business to be expected.

### Installing Traps.

Trapshooting requires little in the way of equipment. First and foremost a trap to throw the targets must be installed, but the club need not buy the most expensive equipment at first, proceeding rather in a modest way with a moderately priced trap. Once the sport is firmly established, additional traps can be bought. They vary in price from \$10 to \$60 and higher.

It is advisable to locate the trap reasonably near the clubhouse, so that shooters in the winter time waiting their turn at the traps will have a place to keep warm. The shooting area should be free of buildings, trees and other obstructions and the background should be a level field or body of water, against which it is easy to follow the flight of the targets, even on dark days. The sun is least annoying if the trap faces north-east.

A trap-house, blueprints and specifications for which can be obtained on request from the manufacturers of ammunition and traps, is essential to protect the boy who loads the traps. It is located some 25 yards in front of the shooting stations. The cost of an adequate trap-house should not exceed \$75.

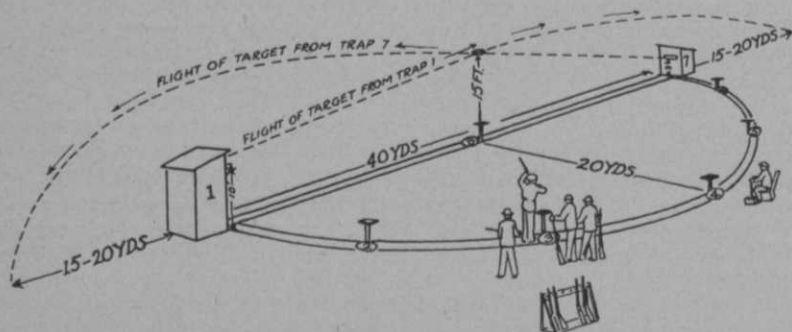
Where trapshooting is well established at clubs, a few shotguns are generally owned by the club and loaned to members on request. These guns can be purchased from local sporting goods stores and it is possible to pick up some fine second-hand bargains most of the time. By having guns available, more members can be interested in the sport and attendance boosted.

The customary charge for trapshooting is \$1.25 per round of 25 shots. For this the shooter is furnished a box of shells with proper loads for trapshooting, and enough money is left over to cover the cost of the clay targets, pay the trap boys, and leave a small profit to wipe out the original investment in traps, trap-house and so on. With reasonable play, a club can cover its investment the first season.

### SKREET SHOOTING.

**A**BOUT EIGHT years ago a variety of trapshooting known as "skeet" was invented and developed by W. H. Foster of Boston. The game is the nearest to field conditions of any form of clay bird shooting. About 600 organized skeet clubs are now registered with the National Skeet Association, not to mention many private skeet layouts installed as part of the recreational equipment of sportsmen on private estates.

Reference to the diagram will make plain the arrangement of a skeet field. Two traps are used, facing one another 40 yards apart so as to throw targets toward each other with a maximum elevation of 15 ft. at the center. The left-hand trap is placed on a platform not less than 10 ft. from the ground. The other trap is placed at ground level with the target door not more than 3 ft. from the ground. Seven shooting positions equidistant from each other are



Here is a sketch which gives an excellent idea of the layout for skeet shooting. Note trap puller near station 4.

then marked around the arc of a semi-circle 20 yds. from the eighth shooting position, which is located on a straight line exactly between the two traps.

Shooters start at No. 1 position, guns held in an informal "field" position and at their call of "Mark," a target is thrown any time within three seconds thereafter. The first target comes from the high trap and then another from the low trap. The shooters continue around the stations in rotation, shooting at two targets from each position. The final part of the event consists of four pairs of doubles, two targets thrown simultaneously to be shot at from stations 1, 2, 6 and 7 and an optional target, the 25th, which is one from either trap the shooter may designate, shot from any station he selects.

Targets are released by a trap-puller located back of station 4. Electric skeet trap releasing devices have been developed so that the targets are released without human control at any time within the three second limit after the shooter has called "Mark." This rule of skeet shooting, making release of target variable within three seconds, tends among other things to simulate the uncertainty of field shooting.

### Nearest Sport to Hunting.

Skeet is a somewhat more difficult sport than straight trapshooting since the targets must be broken almost immediately after they have left the trap house and before they have sailed beyond the legal limits which is the opposite trap. Nevertheless, it is a sport that will appeal strongly to golf club members since in addition to having all the elements which attract men to hunting, a round of skeet lasts somewhat longer than the same number of shots at straight trapshooting and therefore is not so expensive.

To those clubs interested in laying out a skeet shooting field on their grounds, the following publications will prove valuable:

*When Skeet Birds Fly*, The Chamberlin Cartridge & Target Co., 1459 West Sixth Street, Cleveland, Ohio (free); *Skeet*, The Official Handbook of the National Skeet Shooting Assn., 108 Massachusetts Avenue, Boston, Mass. (25c); *The Trapshooting and Skeet Handbook*, The Du Pont Skeet Handbook and Hints to Beginners in Skeet Shooting, E. I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., Sporting Powder Division, Wilmington, Delaware (free); *Better Trapshooting*, Larry Smith (\$5.00), E. P. Dutton, Publisher; *Western Skeet Equipment*, Western Cartridge Co., East Alton, Ill. (free).

## Claims Excess Watering Costs S. Calif. Clubs \$100,000

**D**R. JOHN MONTEITH of the USGA Green Section, speaking before the Greenkeepers' Assn. of Southern California and the Southern California Golf Assn., estimated the average annual waste of water on Southern California greens and fairways to be in excess of 15 per cent annually.

Monteith censured watering practice because of damage to turf as well as because of expense, but claimed greenkeepers were not at fault primarily. Excess watering results from the demand of players that greens should be soft enough so a shot will almost imbed itself. Inability of many pros and hot-shot amateurs to play a biting shot properly has been followed by alibing about condition of the greens. Greenkeeper, to keep his job, soaks the greens. The shots can't help but stick, the water bill goes up and the standard of the putting surface goes down.

Darsie L. Darsie, golf writer for Los Angeles *Herald-Express*, commenting on the Monteith criticism, estimates that the 15 per cent annual watering excess may run as high as \$100,000 on Southern California courses.

Granting the accuracy of the Darsie estimate and considering the widespread extent of the condition responsible for overwatering of greens, it is reasonable to assume that the waste from this cause must run well over \$1,000,000 annually in the United States. Many greenkeepers recognize the folly of this practice, attention having been called to it frequently by the Green Section and by GOLFDOM, but are helpless to curtail watering because of player demands for soft greens.

## Park Association Holds Equipment Exhibit During Convention

**C**ONSIDERABLE equipment of interest to golf clubs was demonstrated at Thatcher Woods forest preserve, River Forest, Ill., September 21 during the annual convention of the American Institute of Park Executives.

Fairway mowers were demonstrated by Toro, Worthington, Roseman and Ideal and power greens mowers by Worthington, Toro, Jacobsen and Ideal. The Toro Park Special mower also was demonstrated. Goodyear and Firestone tractor tires on Worthington and Toro tractors aroused interest.