

EASY GOLF HIKES PLAY

C. M. DOLAN, owner of Indian Head, a daily-fee course in the Chicago district, presents the dope on when and why golf should be made easier and in GOLFDOM'S opinion, reasons logically. Dolan's way of thinking doesn't infer that competition should vanish from golf, nor its interesting problems disappear. He believes that people want golf for fun instead of for frustration.

Club officials and pros who read Dolan's piece will be reminded that the minimum of loss during the depression came from that class of players who shot 85 or under.

Says Dolan:

For some years I have been trying to analyze what is the trouble with golf and I am always forced to one main conclusion, namely, that the game is too difficult. I have a growing conviction that if it were possible to increase the skill of the average golfer to the point where he could shoot in the eighties, we could pack our courses, private and public, with happy, spending golfers.

Was Toughening Courses a Dumb Move?

Unfortunately, for the past 20 years when golf was undergoing its great expansion in this country, we have constantly striven to make it more difficult through lengthening the courses, increasing the hazards, and legislating out many clubs that might have made it easier to hit the ball.

While the fever of something new was in the air, recruits aplenty were found to keep the balloon constantly expanding, but we finally reached the stage where the older men began to weaken under the struggle to hit even a few decent shots in a round of golf, and as for shooting in the eighties, it was simply out of the question. For some years the struggle has been to keep under one hundred. The hopelessness of it all was driven home in such a cruel way, by double figures on some holes and, with rounds of 100 to 120, the average golfer began to weaken and say in ever increasing numbers, "What's the use?"

In most cases pride kept us at the game as we did not like to admit we were unable to master golf after spending endless hours in practice and play.

The depression gave us an excuse and

an incentive to give up the unequal contest and save our face under the pretext of financial reasons; tens of thousands quit. I do not think the price had much to do with it so far as the daily-fee player was concerned, but it did enter decidedly in the resignations from private clubs. Even here, had the rank and file of the club members been playing golf in the eighties or high seventies, I will wager they would have found ways and means to carry on for the thrill that comes to one who is able to play well.

Easier Layouts Please Dubs

I know of no way by which we can make it possible for the dub to acquire skill but we can at least help him a little by putting a maximum limit on the length of our courses, remove some of the excessive tight trapping around the greens, etc., all of which may lower his average score by five to seven strokes and eliminate the double figures that now appear on his card.

This will improve his mental attitude as he reaches the end of the round and he won't be tired by the excessive yardage and by the tramping back and forth as he pitches from one trap to another in a vain endeavor to get the ball to stop on the "carpet." We apparently have lost sight of the fact that golf, public and private, is sustained by men over 35 years of age. When we wear these men down and out through constant stiffening the game to the point where it exhausts them both mentally and physically we have cut off our main source of income.

Now why have we adopted such a short sighted policy during the past 20 years? Simply a matter of pride, as we did not want an expert to be able to visit our club and break par. What a silly reason for ruining the game for the people who make golf possible. Why worry if an expert shoots 65 or even 60 on your course? What

percent of your members gives a "continental" what the experts shoot? What the members are interested in is their own scores.

If we will retrace the ground we may save a percentage of our present golfers between 35 and 65 to the game, but this is not the permanent answer. We must turn to the youngsters and by getting them interested in the game while they are still children, which is the only age at which one can start and attain a reasonable proficiency in the game that will stick through life, we may build up a generation of golf-conscious and golf-playing people who will be able to enjoy the game and as finances permit become the loyal supporters of golf.

I think that every daily fee club should sell golf for about 25c a day to all those

under 18 years of age from Monday to Friday and 50c on Saturday and Sunday. High school kids can afford to pay 25c but it is doubtful if they can or will invest 50c to play three or four hours after school or even all day during vacation. The result is that they do not play and possible future supporters for the game are lost. A 50c rate for Saturday and Sunday would permit the young boy who has to work most of the week to get in a day of golf at a fee he can stand out of his weekly wages where a \$1.00 or \$1.50 charge would probably bar him. He would never acquire skill in his youth so would be lost to the game later in life when he might take it up for a few brief years and then quit in disgust, like thousands of others do annually on account of their inability to "give the old ball a ride" in a fair percentage of the attempts made.

HOLLOW FORK TECHNIQUE

By A. LOWELL
EASTMAN

*This club has brought about great improvement
in its greens through sustained forking program*

THE successful maintenance of golf greens demands that the turf plant retain undisputed possession of a soil which is constantly in a fine state of tilth. Very little difficulty is experienced in cultivating the average garden crop, but to cultivate sod land without completely destroying the crop itself is quite another problem.

Bearing this fact in mind, it would seem essential that golf greens be established on soils possessing unquestionable qualities for remaining in friable condition. Yet many greens are constructed with apparent neglect of this fact. To save on hauling costs, materials which may be had in the immediate vicinity are used regardless of their ability to remain in good tilth. This practice has resulted in the complete rebuilding of greens so constructed, or in less severe cases, the necessity of cultivating benefits.

Most loam soils are capable of satisfactory crop production providing cultivation has a place in their management. This fact has been clearly demonstrated in many instances where golf courses have been constructed on farm land whose soils produced abundantly only to fail miserably when planted to grass simply because cultivation ceased on the establishment of turfed areas—convincing evidence that

cultivation is a major factor in the successful management of any soil.

Most greenkeepers realize this need for cultivation when normal maintenance practices fail to give desired results and resort to the use of spiked rollers, or, in extreme cases, strip off the turf and spade up the underlying soil, incorporating soil-building materials, a most effective but always expensive method.

The need for a turf cultivator which could be applied without destroying the surface has been met in the development of the hollow-tined perforating fork, a hand tool which will actually fork or cultivate to depths up to $4\frac{1}{2}$ in. without disturbing the surface and with little interference to play. These tines permit the removal of cores of soil, leaving deep, well-defined holes for the reception of topdressing materials.

In September, 1933, the Suffield (Conn.) CC undertook a cultivating program using the hollow-tined forks, which pro-