

# Skating, Skiing Do Not Harm Turf

SKIING and tobogganing cause little if any damage to turf provided the areas which are used are kept covered with snow. The injury which does occur is usually due to someone's shuffling across a piece of exposed turf when the surface soil is thawed. Occasionally small areas which have only a thin covering of snow in the morning become bare or nearly so during the middle of the day. If a thin layer of snow is immediately shoveled over such areas it will protect the turf and greatly improve the slide.

For skiing, a long hill sloping towards the north or northeast is ideal. Skiing usually results in more injury to young trees and shrubby than to the turf on a golf course. Therefore, any low trees and shrubs which are near the principal skiing areas and are likely to be largely covered with snow should be marked as clearly as possible.

## Turf Unaffected by Ice

Where winters are mild to severe it is possible to use turfed areas for winter sports without any serious injury to the grass, provided proper drainage precautions are taken. It is frequently believed that a sheet of ice will kill turf and that therefore the idea of a skating rink on a turfed area should be tabooed at the outset. Actually, grass is seldom injured merely by a cover of ice. The injury that is sometimes observed associated with ice sheets is usually caused by standing water rather than by the ice and is particularly likely to occur in low-pocketed areas.

The growth of snowmold fungi is encouraged by water and thrives on heavily fertilized grass that is kept covered and wet in the winter. It is therefore important that ample provision is made for the draining of flooded areas when thaws take place. During the warmer periods in winter these fungi may develop on the grass under the ice. To prevent such disease attacks it is well to avoid the application of fertilizer in late summer or fall on areas which are to be flooded.

An application of corrosive sublimate or calomel at the rate of 3 or 4 ounces to 1,000 square feet would furnish additional insurance against possible injury from snowmold. The fungicide may be mixed with sand or screened topdressing and applied uniformly over the area just before

starting to build up the ice sheet. This latter step is not necessary on well-drained areas or where the turf is composed of disease-resistant types of grasses which have not been over-fertilized. Any slight injury to the turf can usually be taken care of by spring seedings.

Any reasonably flat area on golf courses, lawns or parks where water is readily available may be flooded to make a skating rink. The ground should be well frozen before starting to build up the sheet of ice. Not only does this protect the grass but it increases the chances of getting good ice without the formation of troublesome air pockets or shell ice. If there is snow on the ground it should be removed before the area is flooded. Boards 8 to 10 inches wide make a sufficiently high outer wall to the rink to build the ice against, and are easily removed when the ice begins to melt. Packed wet snow may also be used as an outer wall against which to build the rink.

## Spray Lightly and Often

Better skating ice is made by frequent light spraying than by heavy flooding. Each successive layer of water should be sufficiently thin to freeze rapidly and not run off the area, since it is this process which causes "shell ice." Every effort should be made to keep the ice free from leaves, cigarette butts, sticks or other dark objects since they absorb the light and heat from the sun and may "burn" holes through the ice.

When such skating rinks are established in public areas such as golf courses and parks it is well, when possible, to have separate rinks for hockey and general skating. Where those who are using the rinks are sufficiently interested in figure skating to justify special consideration, special hours may be reserved for figure skaters or one section of the rink may be set aside for their use.

The establishment of skating rinks on golf courses and parks will do much to stimulate off-season interest in the clubs and parks. In order to continue to attract the skaters, however, the ice must be kept in good condition. Imperfections in the ice due to cracks, "warts," "blisters," etc., should be remedied by filling, planing, spraying or any other satisfactory method.—*Timely Turf Topics of the USGA Green Section.*