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GOLF

BY VERDANT GREENE

While no attempt will be made at rationing golf on municipal links in this country for another season, at least, it is predicted the plans being adopted in that direction by several British clubs, occupying property of their own, will ultimately be forced upon American public courses. Monifieth in Forfarshire, with 1500 members has thus far taken the most drastic steps. Each member is being supplied with a card bearing his name and a serial number which carries one hundred spaces. Hereafter players must produce the card, a la meal ticket whenever he wants to play around and have one of the spaces stamped by the starter before he can be sent away. When all the spaces have been stamped, the member will have exhausted his season's ration of golf under the regular conditions. Probably the spaces are to be stamped rather than punched, since if the latter method was followed a golfer with hob-nailed shoes might accidentally step on the card and exhaust his entire year's credit by perforating all the numbers at once. There is, however, one means by which the Monifieth gluttons for recreation can overcome restriction. When they have had one hundred rounds each—which the committee regards as good value for their subscriptions they can engage in further rounds by paying one shilling sixpence each time, which is slightly higher than the subscription rate. If a player forgets to bring his card before he has exhausted his subscription, he can play on depositing a shilling and sixpence, which is held as security against the production of his card for stamping.

It is the aim to reduce the volume of week-end play so as to give a better chance to the average subscriber who suffers at the hands of the more ardent golfers. The trouble, unfortunately, is intensifying for just the same reason on the other side that it is here, although slightly in advance of this country. As times goes on courses are of necessity moved further and further from town which makes the players increasingly dependent on trains and motor cars. The members who make even a reasonably early start find that all the caddies have been commandeered by people either living near by or staying over night in the neighborhood, or those reaching the course by private conveyance just in advance of those dependent upon train and bus schedules. Some of the English courses have already introduced rules that local residents must start first Saturdays and Sundays and that the other times should be apportioned equally between players arriving by motors and train, the plan being put in operation at an hour when non-residents are due. Something along the same plans have been suggested in the Metropolitan district, where transportation is of necessity more congested than anywhere else.

Late copies of Australian papers received state that J. H. Kirkwood, the Antipodean open title holder, (a home-bred, by the way), hopes to visit this country following his appearance in the British open, next May. Recently an

American golfer who had seen the Australian in action declared he would be the sensation of this year's United States open championship, should he start under reasonably favorable conditions. To establish a new mark for that Australian contest and at the same time be five strokes under a man who once won the title and has proved runner up seven times, constituted Kirkwood's double achievement last year. Australian stars have cut a great figure in American tennis, but no Australian golfer has ever put in an appearance.

Next to Kirkwood and D. G. Souter, the seven time runner up, the greatest foreign card who could be secured for this country would be Arnaud Massey, French pro, the only outsider who ever captured the British open. The average Frenchman, as predicted 15 years ago, when golf got its real start in that country is not of the temperament for best results in the sport, all the Gallie titles again being won last season by players of other nationalities, as was the case in 1914, the last year before the break caused by war. Massey, however, is in a class by himself, as he would have demonstrated more clearly, but for the world conflict. Strictly speaking though, Massey is really a Basque almost as much of a Spaniard as a Frenchman, since he was born in the mountains dividing the two countries.

It is as much of an advantage to get in on the ground floor of a sport as on a financial deal. H. L. Fitzpatrick, who died, in New York, last week, was the first golf reporter in America. The past ten years he had been almost out of sight, emerging in August, 1919, when he wrote regarding the national amateur championship at Oakmont, for a Pittsburgh paper. It was then predicted that it might be his swan song and so it proved. He was then just passed sixty years. Unfortunately Fitzpatrick did not sense his opportunity as the nestor of American golf writers. He outlived Reginald Mayhew, another New York reporter by only about a month. While Mayhew was enough of an Englishman to have a weakness for golf writing, he was better known in Kennel-dom, being a breeder of dogs, thanks to the able assistance of Mrs. Mayhew. Ralph Cracknell of Boston, another English writer on golf died about the time the war opened. Cracknell was a news reporter when that sport was taking a rest on this side, but eventually he got into golf upon which he became posted before leaving England. Jack Hiseox, Philadelphia's first golf reporter finally went into automobiling, but dropped out of sight almost ten years ago, although his death has never been noted. Joe Ryan, a pioneer golf reporter in Chicago gradually drifted into motoring and finally became a moving picture house proprietor. He has been dead so long that to the rising generation of players his name is not even a memory. Ryan was the only one of the four deceased mentioned to acquire a competency, a slice of which he left to his assistant, Walter Birmingham, who soon dropped the golfing end of his labors. With the death of the foregoing four closes what may be termed the first volume of golf writing in the United States.



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