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GOLF FOR THE BEGINNER



THE timid man who has mowed a large field with a dull club for the first time, golf is an overgrown game of hide-and-seek which is played in

a reformed cow pasture with clubs and a vocabulary. A golf course consists of eighteen four-and-a-half-inch holes of the best quality, carefully concealed about a one-hundred-and-eighty-acre field. The object of the game is to put an undersized ball into each of the holes in succession without breaking a blood vessel. Kicking out the ball, or attacking it with a knife is forbidden. One must do the trick solely by striking it with the club, counting each stroke doggedly and in a rich, redolent undertone.

The clubs which are used in herding the balls over the course are many in number. There is the driver, which is used for driving the small rubber tee into the ground; the loftier, which raises small chunks of sod over trees, bunkers, and other obstructions; the cleek, for weed-clipping; the niblick, for throwing sand at an adversary; the mashie, for pounding the ball into the earth, and the midiron, for punishing it until its maker would not recognize its battered shell. Other useful clubs are the brassie, the putter, the excavator, the whacker, the digger, the smasher, the chopper, and the caddie driver. The latter is a common club, not turned up at the end, and is to be used to keep the caddie awake. A caddie is a parody on a small boy, who carries the clubs and helps lose the ball. Expert golfists can drive both a ball and a caddie over the course at the same time without help.

All of these clubs are finely made; most of them with iron heads, fitted to little hickory handles. They are excellent for beating carpets, doing light garden digging, mowing weed patches, killing chickens, and repelling burglars. It is a point of honor with a golfer, however, to use them only upon the golf course where their limitations are pathetic. A golfer will spend half an hour digging up a small patch of ground with his clubs when he could have done it in two minutes with a spade.

Other instruments which are very useful in playing the game are a long slim-waisted bag, with a handle for carrying clubs, cash registers at each tee for tabulating the strokes, a pair of hip boots for pursuing the quarry into the water, a rake, a scythe, a red flag to stick beside your ball so that it will not crawl away when you take your eye off of it, and a funnel to assist in chasing the ball into a hole. Extra balls are most conveniently carried in a small push-cart. You can do without some of these articles, possibly, but not without great inconvenience. It never pays to skimp while playing golf.

The rules of the game are very simple. You must hit the ball with your club. After you have hit it, you must find it, of course, before you hit it again. It will take you several weeks to master these

two rules. After driving the ball, you must hit it wherever it lies. Good lies are as important in golf as in fishing. Losing a ball costs you two strokes and fifty cents. Hitting a caddie with a ball is justifiable homicide.

Preparing a golf course is a difficult and expensive task. In the first place one must have a field in which the face of nature is considerably wrinkled. The wrinkles help to conceal the holes. In case they are not present, they must be supplied by building miniature mountain ridges and scooping out ravines. A little water on the course adds much to the interest of the game. By driving the ball into a pond occasionally, the golfer keeps it clean. Having distributed the eighteen holes judiciously so as to keep them so far apart that the first stroke leaves the ball three hundred yards short, and yet so near that the last stroke puts it fifty yards beyond the hole, the expert will add a nineteenth hole. This should be large enough to hold several hundred golfists and enough high balls to go around several times.

The proper course consists of two greens—the fair green and the putting green. Most of the playing between holes is supposed to be done on the fair green, which is kept nicely mown and turfed. Muscular novices, playing on the fair green, have been known to knock sections of turf one hundred yards at one stroke. A novice, if he choose, could frequently hole a piece of turf in three or four strokes; but, absurdly, the rules oblige him to cling to the ball and take the regulation thirteen every time.

The putting green surrounds the hole. It is smooth and covered with velvety grass and is a beautiful place to lie down and die after you have played "ring-around-the-hole" with your ball for a few minutes.

Even when a golf course is erected as prescribed above, it is by no means complete. The most costly work is yet to come. It must be seeded down with golf balls. This is a job which cannot be done by mere hirelings; neither can it be done in a day. It takes at least a month of hard, devoted work by the whole membership.

As every one knows, it is no trick at all to lose a small rubber ball in a quarter section—particularly when it has lost the first bloom of youth. A mere child can do it. An amateur can go out and lose \$3.50 worth of balls without even working up a perspiration. In fact, most of the beginner's time is spent in poking around in the grass, trying to find the ball that he has just succeeded in hitting with a club. This makes golf discouraging at first and leads sarcastic people to hint that it is best played by a retriever pup.

The new golf course is especially well equipped for receiving balls and not giving them up. Day after day you will go blithely out, your bag stuffed with small rubber pellets and return discouraged, after a weary afternoon of hunting, with no balls at all. However, in a month or