

WOMEN'S GOLF

Conducted by DOROTHY CAMPBELL HURD

Mrs. J. V. Hurd will always be glad to receive items of news, snapshots of current events, notices of forthcoming meetings, etc., from her readers for Women's Golf. All communications to be addressed "Mrs. J. V. Hurd, c/o 'Golf Illustrated & Outdoor America' " 389 Fifth Avenue, New York

NOW that the season has come when several important tournaments are taking place it may be that a few hints for championship competitors would not be amiss. There are two classes of golfers who enter in tournaments, those who go with the intention of doing their level best to win and those who go to meet their friends and have a good time. Of course, the players who enter with the intention of sparing no effort to finish near the top want to have a good time too, but to them the golf is the primary consideration and it is to them that I venture to offer a few hints which I have found to be helpful in the tournaments I have played in.

The sad cloud of war which has spread its dark shadow over Europe has made it necessary to stop all competitions in Great Britain and, at the time of writing, will probably result in the Canadian Championship being cancelled, but in the United States there are many clubs which are holding their chief competitions of the year during the next few weeks.

When getting ready for a tournament it is surely worth while to give a little thought to being prepared for any contingency which may arise, to have one's clubs in good order and to pack an assortment of clothes for all kinds of weather. At this time of year the changes in the temperature are very marked and it is annoying to start for a tournament with things which are suitable for sunny skies and then have to play through days of driving rain. The brightly colored silk jerseys which have been so fashionable lately are not practical for protection in a sudden shower, they cling so closely that they impede the swing and have a fatal habit of transforming much of their gaudy coloring to the wearer's shirt waist. A thick woolen jersey or light rubber coat are really essential in a golfer's outfit, as the slight stiffness which comes after a wetting often plays havoc with her game.

After the heat of the August sun has gone Autumn dews are hard to dispel and many a game has been lost by the wearer of rubber soled shoes not being able to get what the Scotchman called: "A gude grip o' the ground." Thick leather shoes with hobnails may not be quite as comfortable but they have the advantage of giving a firm stand in either dry or wet grass. Not every one has got the resourcefulness or the assurance of the championship competitor, who on being caught in the rain wearing tennis shoes, sent one of the gallery running back to the club house to fetch her hobnailed ones and then calmly sat down on the bank of a bunker and changed them.

It is far from a wise plan to wear golf shoes with ordinary heels one day and tennis shoes the next, as the result is an almost certain slice from the first few tees, the half-inch of difference in the height of the heels causing this almost invariably.

As most golfers find some difficulty in getting accustomed to strange clubs it is wise to look after one's weapons very carefully on the journey to a tournament. We are not all gifted with the disposition of a certain player who was drawn to play against a friend of mine in a recent championship. My friend, without exerting any special effort, found herself at the ninth hole to be in the somewhat embarrassing position of dormy nine. At the tenth hole her opponent after taking three shots in a bunker without extricating the ball said sadly—"You see I am handicapped by having left my clubs in the train at Grantham Junction." On my friend expressing her sympathy and also a little surprise that she did not take care to have her own clubs on hand for such an important occasion her opponent in the bunker replied as loftily as want of breath would admit "Ah! but I have a soul above that."

The risk of splitting a shaft too badly to admit of its being spliced is minimized by a player rubbing in a liberal supply of olive or sweet oil into her clubs a few days before the tournament begins. Even the best clubmakers seem to find difficulty in getting shafts exactly alike, and the smallest difference in the weight, thickness, or amount of spring in a shaft will sometimes throw a player right off a favorite club.

Some people carry two complete sets of clubs with them but that is scarcely necessary, although the player who has been lucky enough to exactly duplicate her brassie or put iron would be wise to take them with the others.

Any one who does not want to take the trouble of oiling her clubs can have them varnished by the professional and at the same time can have the faces of the wooden ones filed to remove all dirt, grass, etc. Quite often one runs across players who complain bitterly that they are losing all the distance they once had from the tee without any apparent cause and on looking at the faces of these wooden clubs they will be found to be covered with a year's accumulation of almost imperceptible mud and grass juice which has formed a film on the wood, making the ball slide off the club in a way that takes yards and yards off even a well hit drive. For that same reason it is a good plan to carry a cube of chalk on a wet day. In

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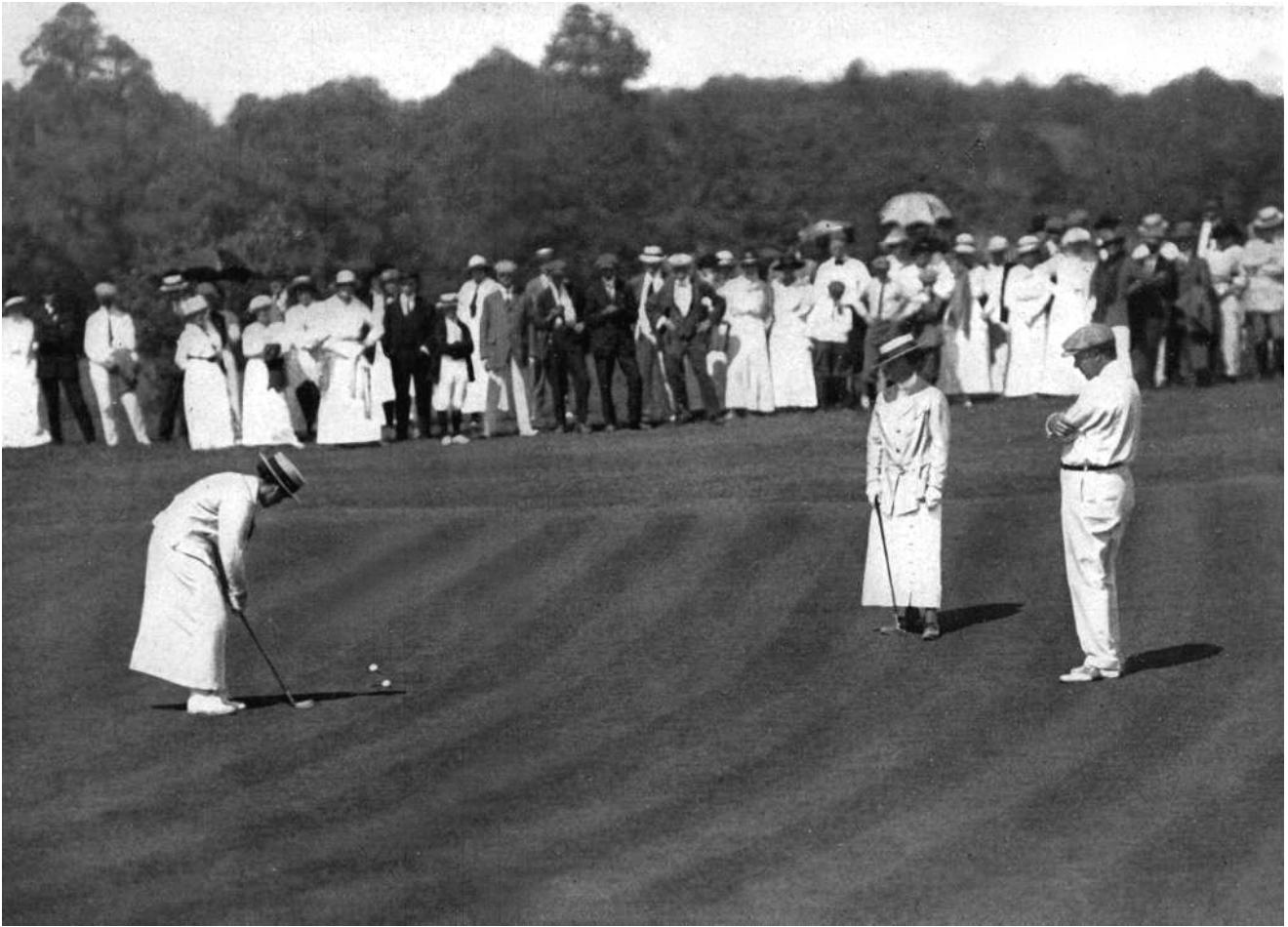


Photo by Henry Steffen

MISS ROSENTHAL HOLING OUT ON THE SIXTEENTH GREEN IN THE LADIES' CHAMPIONSHIP
In her match with Mrs. Barlow

a downpour of rain a ball will stay on a chalked club for quite an appreciable fraction of a second longer than on a wet one and are not all the shining lights of the game anxious to impress on us at the present time that the keeping of the ball and club together as long as possible is the very heart of the secret of success. Any wrappings that have come loose ought to be renewed as it is a maddening thing to have several inches of string hanging off a shaft. New grips ought to replace any that have become sprung with wear except, of course, in cases where the player likes to rub pitch on to the leather. While speaking of grips it is well to remember that the rubber ones which have become so popular of late years are a broken reed to depend on when they are wet. It is not so very long ago that the Hon. Osmund Scott and Mr. A. C. Barry met in the final of the British Championship at Prestwick and the latter won a victory which was largely attributed to the bad effect the rain had on the former's rubber grips. He had had infinitely more experience than the young St. Andrews College boy and was the possessor of a far greater number of strokes, but this was of no avail on a day when the rain soaked his club handles until they turned completely round in his hands. For the

same reason it is necessary for a player who wears gloves to always carry a spare pair with her, for wet gloves or wet leather is a combination which will discourage even the cleverest of golfers.

No golfer, unless compelled by circumstances, would ever start playing in a championship without having had a few practice rounds on the course—three or four at least. The player who arrives a whole week before would do well to guard against the error of playing thirty-six holes every day while she is there. It is very tempting to see a good course in perfect order waiting to be played on especially when there are so many other competitors there with whom one has only the annual chance of playing. It is much better to be content with one round every day and not to take that one round too seriously. There is many a favorite for championship honors who has used up all her game the week before a tournament in trying to beat her fellow competitors by substantial margins or to materially lower the record of the course. It is a wise golfer who limits himself to one round every day and then devotes an hour or so to practicing different strokes.

It is always wise to take a little time to find out which kind of approach is the one that pays best on a

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Photo by Edwin Levick
Mrs. G. M. Heckscher driving in the Ladies' Championship

course. One player may have the best success by using the running-up shot to every green which is not guarded by a bunker, another may find that a pitch and run brings her a larger average of dead approaches, while a third may find that the best plan for her is to take a niblick and pitch right on to the green. If the course is one where the distances are deceptive, and this sometimes seems to be the case without any rhyme or reason, it is worth while to study the lengths of the approach shots and make up one's mind decidedly which are the best clubs to use. I remember once being very much struck by the businesslike attitude of a would-be champion with whom I was playing a practice round before a tournament. When we had finished a certain hole she said thoughtfully, "I have had to approach that hole every time from the right side so I shall bring out half a dozen balls this afternoon and practice the shot from the left in case I should ever pull my drive next week." Needless to say this persevering player won the championship a few seasons later and thoroughly deserved it too, as she put her mind right on to getting the best results she possibly could. Yet there are people who say that golf is a game of chance and not of skill.

It always looks like an odd coincidence that the winner of the qualifying round seldom follows up her success by taking the championship, but it is not as much a matter of chance as it appears to be. There is a great deal more strain in a medal round than in an ordinary match and it quite frequently happens that a player who creates a new record on a course one day

will succumb to a greatly inferior golfer the day after. She has taken so much out of herself to do a very good score that she is incapable of sustained effort for some days after.

Quite often too one of the best entrants for a championship will beat very heavily three or four quite good players in succession who would have been quite as effectually disposed of by a smaller margin, and then finds at the end of the week that she has overdone her golf in the effort. I do not mean by this that any golfer however good should be careless and take things too easily when drawn against a player of larger handicap, but what I mean is that one should always keep a little of one's nervous energy, which is the producer of one's best golf, in reserve.

In the excellent book "Ladies' Golf" written by Miss May Hezlet she lays special stress on the fact that if two players are equally matched that the more resolute of the two will always win. In her own case her great success (she was three times British Champion and five times Irish Champion) was due not only to a determined disposition but to the fact that she could always bring out her best game at the crucial point of a match.

The securing of a good caddie is a most important factor towards success in a tournament. It is dreadfully annoying to have a boy who lags behind and has to be repeatedly told that he must make haste and keep up with the players. Perhaps, however, the ignorant kind to be met with on most American courses is really less trying than the semi-professional species found in Scotland. These are generally very scornful towards the mediocre class of golfers and almost aggressively disappointed when the player they carry for does not do as well as they expect. A friend of mine who plays a steady game of the ten handicap calibre had a caddy in a championship who was very anxious to carry for one of the probable winners. Unfortunately he had carried for a very well-known golfer in a practice round and every time my friend sent away what she considered was a nice drive he pointed to a spot fifty yards further on and said: "Miss H. drove as far as that yesterday." At the end of the round the harassed lady paid the boy off and told him that she would not require his services any more, which surprised him very much. I remember once having a boy who gave me the line of my putt on every green until I told him firmly that I must be allowed to choose my own. He submitted, but at the next hole when I asked him for my iron to play an approach, instead of the mashie he was holding out to me, he put the mashie in my hand and said very positively: "I'll give your way *on* the greens but not *through* the green!"

In a book which was written a few years ago called "Golf in the Year 2000" the hero, who awakes from a sleep of over a century in length, found on starting for a round of golf that he was attended by an auto-

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matic caddy on wheels which ran peacefully and silently behind him, attracted by a magnet which was fixed on the back of his coat. There was no lagging behind, no superfluous advice offered, no perilous swinging of cherished clubs, in fact none of the drawbacks we have to put up with at present. This would certainly be ideal, but unfortunately no genius has yet come forward to invent such a boon for golfers.

Golfers as a rule are a most superstitious band, really quite as bad as people who hunt, and they are generally supposed to be the chief offenders in this respect. Just as I have known men who would turn their horses' heads round and ride back from a meet if a magpie should fly across their path, so have I seen golfers take the most absurd ideas into their heads about the things which would bring them good or ill luck. Once at a championship in the South of England I heard the mother of a prominent golfer complaining very sadly in the dressing room of the club that her daughter had not put on a fresh collar for four days: "And" she added plaintively, looking round for sympathy "all I could do this morning was to make her *turn* it." But a thoughtful voice from the corner said slowly: "I think that it was very rash of her to even risk turning it."

Some players imagine that they cannot putt across their own shadows and the idea has become so firmly planted in their minds that when they have to do so they hit the ball in an uncertain manner which sends it far off the right line. Others say that they cannot win unless they wear a particular shade of tie or belt and there are many who carry around mascots without which they profess to be followed by the worst possible luck. Now all those superstitions are very detrimental to a person's game and it is much better to case them aside and determine to play one's best whether the sun be in the East or the West and whatever color of tie we are wearing.

There is one thing, however, that a player who is anxious to win a championship ought to refrain from doing and that is talking to other people on the way around. Even at the risk of being thought unsociable it is better to leave chatting to one's friends for another time. Golf is such an essentially psychological game that nine-tenths of all successful shots are made when the player's mind is concentrated absolutely on the business in hand. The everywhere popular "Chick" Evans would probably have reached the very top of the golfing tree before now if he had curbed his friendly talent for talking to acquaintances between strokes. Often in an important match he will walk for a little way with some one whom he knows and then play the next shot in a most disastrous way. His mind has, for a moment, lost its grip, and it takes some minutes to re-adjust it again. Of course it is not necessary to fly to the other extreme and stalk along grimly as though on the way to execution, it is possible without that to convey to people that you do

not feel conversationally inclined. I was playing in a tournament once with a friend who had four strokes in hand to win a beautiful silver rose bowl when she was playing the eighteenth hole. Just as she was taking careful aim for her approach a stout old lady accompanied by an asthmatic pug-dog toddled up behind her and said "My dear how *is* your mother"? After assuring her on the score of her parents' and all her other relations' health, my friend sent her chip shot into a trap guarding the green and then took four more to extricate it.

If there is any shot which a player is uncertain of it is well to practice it for a few minutes before starting each round. But it is well to make the minutes few, it is a mistake to play one shot over and over again until the confidence gained degenerates into staleness. Above all do not grudge spending a few minutes in practising the lofting of stymies, it is a most valuable shot to have ready and one that is easily forgotten. It is a stroke which looks a great deal harder than it really is, especially when played with a niblick, and is one that only requires great



MRS. C. A. VANDERBECK
A semi-finalist of the Ladies' Championship

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confidence, along with a certain nicety of calculation.

It is good thing to always carry a book of rules in the pocket of the caddy bag. There are so many rules now and such radical changes have been made in them during the last few years that it is almost impossible to keep them firmly in one's mind. If any discussion arises it is much more satisfactory to be able to settle it at once instead of playing the rest of the round without knowing the exact score. Most professionals keep small books of rules, and even if a player feels that she knows all the penalties off by heart sometimes her opponent is better satisfied if she sees them in black and white.

It is a good plan to make up one's mind about which make of ball to use and stick to it. Some players always carry two kinds, one to use against the wind and one to use with it. That is, of course, entirely a matter of taste although the advantage gained through the green is probably nullified in putting as it is a difficult matter to putt successfully with balls of different weights. Even if a light ball carries further than a heavy one when the wind is behind, it has the drawback of a corresponding liveliness of an iron club, a thing not greatly to be desired. The very small ball which has been on the market of recent years has many advocates but its disadvantage is clearly seen when it finds a bad lie—there is such a small proportion of surface to hit, which makes it much harder to pick up than a larger ball.

It is an open question whether practice swings are helpful to one's game. If an extra swing is taken before each stroke it results in the player having to use practically double the amount of exertion in every round. Professionals seldom do it and yet their game does not seem to suffer from the omission.

One thing of paramount importance in golf is never to become discouraged even if everything seems to go against you. Luck generally breaks pretty evenly in eighteen holes and any bad fortune encountered at first is nearly always equalized before the game is ended. If a good drive should finish in a little scrape which some one has made in the fairway do not feel put out because you cannot use your brassie but play the best iron shot you possibly can and try to keep from feeling aggrieved because your opponent has got a good lie from a poorer shot. A piece of bad luck like this is often cancelled by a good putt. If, on the other hand, you allow yourself to feel annoyed a series of bad shots will surely follow. In the same way if you should miss a short putt or duff an iron shot efface it from your mind and concentrate your attention on making the next stroke just as well as you can. It is really wonderful how many victories can be won by players who force themselves into having a resolute, cheerful frame of mind. Even mental grumbles at the result of a shot have a very deteriorating effect on the quality of one's game. The advice to live each day as though it were the last can be

applied successfully to golf holes—each hole ought to be played as though it were the only one without thinking of those which we have passed or those still to come. Each shot should be made to the best of a golfer's ability whether she is three up or three down. If she is three up and four to play in a championship final she would be wise not to send mental telegrams to her friends telling them that she is champion at last. Her absorption in the pleasure with which her friends will receive the news may result in her opponent winning on the home green. It is better to postpone thinking how glad everyone will be until you really hole the putt which gives you the match.

Above all do not be too serious over the game. In spite of this being a supposedly enlightened age there are some people who make themselves a perfect nuisance to their friends by taking their games as a matter of life and death. As the man in the play said: "There are surely more things in life than chasing a quinine pill round a ten-acre lot."

DIVOTS FOR DUFFERS

If you are in the habit of sustaining yourself during a match with chocolate or compressed beef tablets be sure to offer some to your opponent as it will impress her as well as the gallery with your kindness of heart. Also the chocolate and compressed beef tablets may disagree with her.

Do not even say "Hang" under your breath when you miss a shot as it will convince your opponent that you are becoming rattled and will give her fresh confidence. Also you will be reported on the club house veranda as having said something much worse.

It is not necessary to spend the night before a championship match in taking practice swings in your bedroom. A would-be champion chipped a corner off a bureau doing this lately and was charged as much by the club authorities as though she had taken the whole suite away with her.

Don't crouch on the ground and study your putts as though they were rare geological specimens. There may be some interested spectators who want to catch trains.

It is unwise to ask the woman in the canary-colored jersey who wavers uncertainly on every tee to please stand still while you are driving. Keep your eye firmly on the ball and make up your mind that these things will be different when women get the vote.

Be sure to smile cheerfully and gallantly when you are four holes down and wear a correspondingly chastened expression when the four holes are to your advantage. Be very careful about remembering this or the sweetness of your disposition may be questioned.

If you have a choice between a stout caddy and a thin one, unhesitatingly choose the slimmer of the two. You are less likely to be penalized by hitting him.