

THE ART OF CURLING

A Winter Game for Golf Clubs

AMONG certain of our northern golf clubs curling has taken a firm hold and the golfer who has been initiated into this most perfect of winter games no longer regrets the loss of his golf. Among certain of the clubs it has been an established sport for years, notably at The Country Club, Brookline, the St. Andrews Golf Club and the Mohawk Golf Club. Anyone who has watched a game in progress and noted the enthusiasm that is ever present, must have been profoundly impressed with the fact that here is a game well worth while. With the object of suggesting a solution of the winter problem which most northern golf clubs have to contend with we give below, with the kind permission of the American Sports Publishing Company extracts from their pamphlet on curling.

"Scotland's Ain Sport," the roarin' game of curling, has been practiced for generations in the United States, but to Michigan belongs the distinction of the oldest organization devoted exclusively to the pastime. This is the Orchard Lake Club located near Pontiac, and organized by the brothers Peter and George Dow in the year 1842. In the East the sport is by no means of recent origin, for there are authentic records that as far back as 1825, Scotchmen belonging to the St. Andrew Society used to curl. A favorite resort for the curlers in those days was a stretch of water, running where Canal Street now stands, and from which the busy thoroughfare subsequently took its name. Here on frosty afternoons the men from the land-o'-cakes would gather "uptown," as the place was then called, for a couple of hours bonspiel. No definite code of rules then existed and it was not until the formation of the Grand National Curling Club in 1867, that the proper by-laws and playing rules were drafted. It is not exactly known how long the curlers frequented the "Canal," but eventually the spread of the city drove them further north, and their next rendezvous was the Conservatory Lake at Central Park. This, too, has been long abandoned, and while some emigrated to the covered rinks of New Jersey, others have made Van Cortlandt Lake their headquarters, where now all the big matches take place.

During the first two years of the Grand National Curling Club there were no big prizes, and the first trophy of note was the Gordon Medal for the champion rink match in 1869, and without a single omission it has been played for annually ever since. The annual match for the Dalrymple Medal between the North and South of Scotland was instituted in 1871, and the initial appearance of other leading trophies have been: 1876—Interstate Match, New York vs.

New Jersey, Hamilton Medal; 1877—Scots vs. All Other Nationalities, McLintock Medal; 1884—International Match, Gordon Medal; 1885—Champion Club Match, Mitchell Medal.

In Canada the game has been known since 1807, and is to-day played from the Pacific to the Atlantic, and from the International Boundary to the Yukon. In the Northwest the sport is controlled by the Manitoba Association, which is composed of about one hundred curling clubs. Winnipeg, the capital, is styled the curlers' paradise, for here every winter there is a monster bonspiel, and on more than one occasion as many as 125 rinks have participated. Curlers come from the East and the West, and some for a distance of 3,000 miles. In the early days of the Scottish settlers in the West, men curled with wooden blocks instead of stones. These blocks were soaked in water for months and then allowed to freeze hard, and tradition has it that they slid along the ice with as much velocity as the granite. Iron "stones" are used at the present day in Quebec, the claim being advanced that they are less affected by change of weather and always run truer than stone. This style of "stone" has been tried at Manitoba and rejected, where now only Ailsas Crawfordjohns and the keen class of red stones are in fashion.

In Scotland the sport is controlled by the Royal Caledonian Curling Club, organized in 1838. Of late years it has become popular in England and Ireland, and clubs have been formed in Russia, Switzerland, Sweden and Norway.

HINTS TO BEGINNERS

The first and most important move for a man about to indulge in the game is to provide himself with a good pair of curling stones. In the selection of these the chief point to remember is to get a *true stone*; that is, one not affected by change of temperature, one that will not be dull when the ice is dull and keen when the ice is keen. It must be equable in mood and keen at all times. Another important thing about the stone is its polish, and the curler should particularly see that his stone is highly burnished. The careful curler never allows his stone to lose its gloss or brilliancy. If these little things are observed the heaviest stone can be easily manipulated, while if neglected, the lightest stone becomes dull, stubborn and unmanageable. The beauty of a stone, too, has to be taken into account, because in handling a nice stone there is some additional incentive to better work. Therefore the prospective curler should procure the handsomest stones he can get and fitted with as fancy and ornamented a handle as his means will afford.

GOLF ILLUSTRATED



CURLING ON WIMBLEDON COMMON. SWEEPING A STONE



STARTING A STONE FROM THE TEE

G O L F I L L U S T R A T E D

As the rink game is in the hands of a skip, it is essential that he should have a thorough knowledge of the rules and finer points of the game, along with being a man of imperturbable temper, never showing the least anger to his men. When a mistake is made he should not blame the player whose fault it happens to be, but he should shoulder the responsibility himself; nor should he grow boastful in the moment of victory nor sulky in defeat. His business is to be cool, prudent, and watchful, always by the side of the tee, coaching his men in every shot. The rink contest being a case of four against four, the skip should be fully alive to each player's strong points and be ever ready to utilize them. It has always been found to be a good plan for skips to let the man with the heaviest stones take the lead and draw to the tee. Then the rest of the rink should protect him, that is, if the opposing side has not dislodged him, and the work of the third player should be some cannon or angular wick shots.

A very important feature of the game is position, or what is otherwise known as *fitting the tee*. It means that the player places himself in such a position at the hack or crampit that his eye can travel along a central line to the further tee. His right foot should rest easily on the hack or crampit, and no matter what sort of a shot the skip asks for the player should be able to deliver it. Awkwardness of position at the hack should never trouble a player; the only object to bear in mind is to have full command of the stone and to be able to perform as the skip demands.

But of all the critical points to be kept in mind by the curler the most vital is the *twist*, or in other words, the ability to impart a rotary motion to the stone as it travels along the ice toward the tee. This

faculty has been truly regarded as the acme of the curler's art. It is the accomplishment which shows the difference between a really scientific player and his less adept brethren of the broom. When the skip calls for "in turn" or "out turn," the keen player is always able to respond with the required twist and to make the stone curl against the bias altogether. Even when a straight shot is wanted it is useful to be able to give it a slight curl, to work it against a rough or soft spot in the ice where with the out-and-out straight shot it might fall away out of its true course. The player who is not able to give his stone the twist and who has all the time to fall back on the straight shot is but the merest kind of a novice and is forever at the mercy of his opponents.

The swing or method of delivering the stone is a point that requires attention. A player should give the arm a fine, loose sweep, the stone at the same time descending a semi-circle in the air. If this is done the stone will take the ice smoothly and not with a bang. As the stone descends the left knee should be bent while the body should receive a forward motion and the arm should follow the stone as far as possible. If this hint is carried out the stone gets a sort of a swift push on the ice instead of being flung against it. Sometimes a heavy stone descends too rapidly at the moment of delivery and the impetus is likely to carry the player off his feet. Should this happen the player should quickly stick his left foot out in front and it will keep him from losing his balance. In their efforts to make effective shots players are often seen to fall on all fours in delivering the stone. It is a practice that should be avoided, as it is not only clumsy but dangerous, and altogether an unsightly feature of a very clean sport.