



A RECENT PHOTOGRAPH OF MISS CECIL LEITCH
Who recently won the British Women's Championship by defeating Miss Gladys Ravenscroft

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

THE game of golf has made such rapid strides in favor with the women of America during the past ten years that there is surely no chance of mistake in forecasting that it will be even more popular in years to come. Gone are the days when women were content to play a lady-like travesty of the game for the sake of sociability and with no real keenness for the sport. One has only to pick up any golf periodical to be immensely struck by the large number of women's competitions which are held each month, comprising open tournaments, invitation tournaments, team matches, intercity matches, and a thousand and one others of varying importance.

In the East each large city has its association, which in every case is an organization which includes all the clubs in the district and increases local interest in golf tenfold by arranging interclub matches during the season. In the West the interest is just as keen and the Western Championship has been inaugurated for players who are not able to attend the National tournament in the autumn.

Practically every city has doubled the number of golf courses in its immediate neighborhood in the last decade and the many public courses, which have been started lately, put golf within reach of almost any woman who is fond of outdoor sport.

Although the climate does not admit of playing all the year round, as is possible in England, yet the golfers of America can lay claim to one great advantage over their cousins across the water and that is their universal privilege to play on the best of the courses. There are many women players in England who can drive two hundred yards and use their iron clubs like professionals who nevertheless are obliged to play year in and year out on ladies' links which probably do not allow of their once using a wooden club, or indeed admitting of one-half of the shots which they are capable of playing. In America there is little and indeed practically none of this handicap for women players and as a rule they have equal rights with men.

The custom of going South for, at least, part of the winter is growing every year and gives the Northern player a chance of keeping in practice and of learning to play certain shots which never could be picked up in the North—shots which require the very nicest judgment. The rubber-cored ball, too, has been a great factor in popularizing golf for women and for several reasons. There is less effort required in hitting a modern ball than the old-fashioned gutty,

getting out of bunkers is an easier matter than it used to be and throughout the game there is much less jarring of feminine wrists and arms. Besides that, the new ball has done wonders in reducing the disparity in length from the tee and has made it possible for the scores made by women of Championship class to be appreciably nearer those made by the very best amateurs.

For those players who cannot go South in the winter the Indoor Golf Schools which have been established in all the large towns are a very useful substitute. Even if there is something of monotony in playing repeated shots into a net it is much better to do that than lay aside one's golf clubs altogether. It is almost unthinkable what bad tricks of swing and body can be acquired if golf is completely abandoned—tricks which only the cleverest of teachers can detect and correct for us. Incorrect timing, dropping the right shoulder, bending the right hip inwards, getting the hands in front of the ball, all these are the common outcome of a winter without one's favorite sport. Even swinging at a cork placed on a mat is better than nothing, although it is a pastime which requires a certain amount of perseverance.

There is another thing which would be of great benefit to those players who seriously aspire to championship honors and that is, to enter the British tournament. Miss Griscom, Miss Bishop, and the Misses Curtis are the only American Champions who have tried to win the British Cup. The reason usually given is that players from this side find thirty-six holes a day too much for them and that it militates against their giving an exhibition of their true form.

Of course thirty-six holes every day does mean a good deal of walking, but then it is an open question whether on springy seaside turf and with sea air to buoy the players up it really means more than half the corresponding amount of walking in America. There are certain strokes which can be learned so much more thoroughly on British courses and it is often said that both the Misses Curtis added greatly to their assortment of shots by playing in the ladies' championship.

The visit of Miss Ravenscroft to this country has given a great impetus to the interest taken in the best class of golf. The fact that Miss Hollins pressed her so closely in the final of the National tournament argued better than anything else that the American players have brought their game up to a much

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higher standard than it reached even five years ago.

In days gone by there was a feeling that any golfer who meant to reach the top of the tree *must* begin to swing a club as soon as she could stand—or as it was expressed, to cut her teeth on a cleek! This idea was probably fostered by the fact that Mrs. Ross, as Miss May Hezlett, and Mrs. Cuthell, as Miss Rhona Adair, both started to play on the links at Portrush when they were little more than babies. It was the same in the case of the best known Scottish players who entered quite important competitions when they were small children and so the idea became pretty prevalent that this was the absolutely necessary training for a champion. This was rather discouraging to players who lived in places where children were not admitted to the golf clubs and had to wait until they had reached more mature years before they could take up the game.

It was, therefore, very encouraging to hear from Miss Ravenscroft that she began to play only a few years ago and that she regarded assiduous practice as a much more necessary factor towards making a great golfer than even starting at a very early age. Although there is a certain halo of romance over the stars of yesterday it is questionable whether any of them could have equaled the wonderful 75 Miss Ravenscroft made on the No. 2 course at Pinehurst last March so that anything she may have to say on the subject can be taken as being very much to the point. Particularly does she insist on the importance of concentration and on bringing all one's shots up to the same level. Very excellent advice in these days when there is such a vogue for long driving.
