

ON FOURSOMES — CITATIONS FROM THE AUTHORITIES

By Mr. Recorder Weir

FOURSOME — *Definition*: "A match in which two play on each side; those on a side playing alternate strokes with the same ball.—*Badminton's Glossary*.

I think it is to be regretted that the old-fashioned foursome, in which the respective partners play together with the same ball, has so completely lost favor of late, and that it has been superseded to a large extent by the four-ball foursome. To my mind the old foursome provided a much more interesting and enjoyable game than its successor, and tended much more to the cultivation of good qualities in a golfer. It brings golfers together on the most intimate and friendly relations. You can pay a golfer no higher compliment than to say that he is a good foursome player, for such a one must not only be a good golfer, and a steady one, but a man of the serenest and even most delightful temperament. You must always feel that you cannot play in the company of such a man too often, either with him or against him.—*Harry Vardon*.

Foursomes are a pleasant modification of the game of golf. The dourness of attitude towards an opponent—the grim Carlylean earnestness—is in no way the appropriate mutual manner between partners. There should be between them that sympathy and unity of purpose which are essential to the success of partnerships, and not the least enjoyable foursomes are

those between a good and an inferior player against two others of similar relative merit—a style of match peculiarly productive of good fellowship and pleasant variety.—*Horace G. Hutchinson*.

Some of the foursome rounds played by a first-class and a very inferior, but steady, player have been holed in very nearly as few strokes as the first-class player is capable of when playing his single ball. The inferior player will often play a little above his true form, in consequence of the confidence he derives from a knowledge of his partner's skill, and by dint of unenterprising and patient prudence will often avoid perils which might have brought down the long driver's arrogance in sorrow to the niblick. Therefore it is that a partnership of a scratch player with one to whom he would give a stroke a hole is commonly victorious over a combination of two players to each of whom the scratch man would allow a half.—*The Badminton Book on Golf*.

The old-fashioned, or two-ball, foursome makes a really fine and enjoyable game. It brings golfers together on even more intimate and friendly relations than usual. Partners in a foursome see very deep down into the human nature of each other. They are overwhelmingly conscious of each other's faults and weaknesses. They are enormously dependent upon each other. At the same time I advise

the young player to resist the temptation to take part in too many foursomes to the neglect of ordinary match play in singles; the sense of responsibility is frequently a little too much for the nerves.—*Harry Vardon*.

The foursomes won by a professional of such outstanding genius as young Tommy Morris almost transcends belief. He summoned to his side the lame, the halt and the blind, or rather they summoned him and contrived to hold his own almost with the best amateur talent of the day.

It is not good policy to interfere with your partner, unless he definitely asks your opinion; leave him to play his own game without remark: his ways may not be your ways. He may give you a cold shudder by calling for his play-club at ninety yards from the hole, but you cannot judge others by yourself; he may prefer that particular weapon when you would take your lofting iron, and though clearly wrong for most people, for him it may be right.—*H. S. C. Everard*.

It is scarcely necessary to say that falling foul of your partner on account of his bad play is a deplorable mistake; the very most you are at liberty to do by way of relief to ag-

grieved feelings, pent up to explosive point, is to make a sort of safety-valve of your caddy, into whose ear you might perhaps whisper that Mr. Smith seems a trifle below his game to-day; the caddy will not care much, but for the moment you will feel more at ease.—*Ibid*.

In the foursome it is necessary to use to the full not only judgment as to one's own powers, but consideration for the ability, or lack of ability, of one's partner. The weaker player must humble himself so as not by his foolishness to render unavailing the skill of his partner, and the stronger must trust to the support he can get from his feebler fellow. Then will the two work together for their mutual profit.—*J. L. Low*.

The perfect partner, without letting you know it, looks upon himself as the backbone of the game, on you as the flesh which may err. He plods on while you miss—plods on still when you are brilliant. If you are efficient, he lauds you; if variable, he says nothing; if hopeless, he smiles and says: "It can't be helped." To him you are the chances of the game.—*Sir Walter Simpson*.

