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The game has taken on a new impetus this year throughout the state. The annual championship was held in August over the Mount Anthony course at Bennington. Frederick Herreshoff, Ekwanok, is the present holder of the title. More players than usual entered this year's event from the state clubs.

The team match is responsible for the increase in activity among the smaller clubs in the northern part of the state. Keen rivalry exists between the Waubunakee Country Club,

Barre, Montpelier, and Rutland Country Clubs, and Old Pine Golf Club. The number of inter-club matches has more than tripled this season. Each of these clubs holds a local championship tournament in addition to many cup competitions and sweepstakes.

The Waubunakee Country Club, of Burlington, is doing much for the game in that vicinity. A particularly strong effort is being made to get the younger members of the club interested in golf. A professional is regularly employed by the club. Among the other attractions is an excellent buffet, making it enjoyable to play until sunset, have dinner on the broad veranda of the clubhouse and talk golf all the evening.

THE ART OF GOLF

By Sir Walter Simpson, Bart.

ANNOTATED BY THE HON. MR. RECORDER WEIR.

PART II.

CHAPTER IX.

OF PUTTING.

(Continued.)

Although every golfer theoretically accepts it as politic to play for the back of the hole, yet few putt as if they thought it was. The majority treat the hole as a place more difficult to get into than it really is. Now the fact is, that (from short distances) the hole is pretty big, and from all distances it is capable of catching a ball going at a fair pace. I admit that more putts of over two yards must be missed than are held, because a putting green is not a billiard table; but many more would go in than do if

players credited holes with a little of that catching power which they really possess. Some one says I mean nothing more than that a putt should be played "for a foot past," as the caddies advise. I do mean more. I object to that phrase. It should stand "Play to be in and at the proper pace—namely, so hard that, if straight, you are in; if not straight, that you will be, not one, but two feet past." With this faith in the hole, putts of a yard or under are very easy. Any pace between what will take the ball the exact distance, or two feet past, will do. Practically, in other words, the player does not require to think of the pace, and can give all his at-

tention to direction. The putter who plays thus boldly has much to endure in the way of persecution and ridicule. If, from a distance, he strikes the hole and fall in, it is called a fluke. His short putts are laughed at as gobbles. He is assured that had they missed they would have been out of holing. There are two answers; first, they do not miss the hole; second, if they did, they would only be out of holing for the dribbler who sneers at them. It is the inveterate practice of dropping putts over the edge of the hole which makes it necessary to discuss and study the line so carefully, and causes the power of calculating the effect of the minutest undulation or obstruction to be highly necessary. A man whose habit it is to play for the back of the hole at all times will seldom have any difficulty about his line. He will not require to crouch down and take note of obstructions which are scarcely visible. Anything that will turn his ball aside, and compel him to play with bias, will be visible to the naked eye. There will be no need to settle whether he is to take his caddy's line or his own—whether he must start an inch to the right, playing weak, or two inches to the left, playing weaker, or off the heel, or off the toe. Of course, it is very pretty to see a ball meandering into a hole; but, in most cases, it is quite an unnecessary treat, given gratis to the onlookers. Consulting with caddies has much to do with each putt being treated as if it were a thing by itself. If their advice as to the line and strength be followed, and the putt comes off, it is supposed (and they like it to be supposed) that there was no other way of doing it. Naturally, too, they do not advise the easiest way. A roundabout road is more interesting to them, and adds, moreover, to their

importance. The simple-minded caddy, who always sticks down a pointer in the direct line between the ball and the hole, is credited with doing so from lack of understanding of lines altogether. But his advice is nearly always the soundest.

Many players acquire faith enough to play for the back of the hole by using a cleek or an iron for short putts, and they then maintain that these clubs have the quality of keeping the ball true to its line. The putter will do the same thing if used with equal confidence, and that without the risks of either lofting or of those due to using an awkward, ill-balanced club, which an iron or cleek with its face turned in undoubtedly is.

If there are few who play for the back of the hole in ordinary circumstances, there are fewer still who do so when the only line is curved. If there is a moundlet which will cause the ball to diverge to the left, few go to the right just enough to make up for this. They set themselves to dribble the putt very far to the right, giving the unevenness of the ground as much say in the matter as they can. Anybody will boldly play along the top of a ridge when the hole is at the end of it, but most men prefer, to the detriment of their putting when it is on the side of one, to climb high up and drop down, to running quickly along the lower slopes.

In putting there is much to think about, and much more not to be thought of. With long putts, the great stumbling-block is the strength. Before taking his stance the player knows his distance from the hole and the nature of the ground. One glance more after he has done so is sufficient to assure him that he is aiming in the right direction. Looking back and

forward between the ball and the hole will tell no more about the distance, but will only distract him from applying the force proportionate to it. For short putts which ought to be holed, the same holds good, except that starting the ball in the exact line is, or ought to be, now more a difficulty than the strength. Some fix upon a spot to play over before addressing the ball, others after; the most diffident get their caddy to point it out when they are about to play. But, however it is come at, there should be no hesitation. There is the line now for strength and accuracy. To take another look at the hole, to think "Perhaps I am not aiming quite straight," will certainly prove fatal. You will give an involuntary pull or push, or dribble hesitatingly up to the lip. But with faith in your line, your stroke delivered, you will look up and likely see the ball disappear down the middle—like a rabbit, perhaps, on account of the determined energy of your faith—perhaps by the side (a hole is very large if played at boldly), on account of some bias in the ground not noticed, and best unnoticed, but down all the same.

When a putter is waiting his turn to hole-out a putt of one or two feet in

length, on which the match hangs at the last hole, it is of vital importance that he think of nothing. At this supreme moment he ought studiously to fill his mind with vacancy. He must not even allow himself the consolations of religion. He must not prepare himself to accept the gloomy face of his partner and the derisive delight of his adversaries with Christian resignation should he miss. He must not think that it is a putt he would not dream of missing at the beginning of the match, or, worse still, that he missed one like it in the middle. He ought to wait calm and stupid till it is his turn to play, wave back the inevitable boy who is sure to be standing behind his arm, and putt as I have told him how—neither with undue haste nor with exaggerated care. When the ball is down, and the putter handed to the caddy, it is not well to say, "I couldn't have missed it." Silence is best. The pallid cheek and trembling lip belie such braggadocio.

So far as I have been able to judge, the keenest and most scientific analyst of Putting is Jack White, Open Champion 1904. In a little book, the "Art of Putting," he and Mr. Travis have very concisely said all that need be said by way of precept, but White's observations seem to me to be particularly replete with practical wisdom in this delicate part of the game.

(To be continued.)

