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The Use of the Grounds for Winter Sports

By Sherrill Sherman, Yahnundasis Golf Club, Utica, N. Y.

Naturally the title of this article restricts the discussion to those clubs that are prevented by climatic conditions from the use of the golf course for golf in the winter months. As cities have grown and crept closer and closer to the club grounds the sum necessary to start and equip a club with all that the modern member demands, or even to continue the further development from the days of cheap land and building, is great. With this big investment, it would seem the part of wisdom to utilize it for the benefit of the members every month in the year, for the reaction to the continuous outside use is the better support of the club house and the consequent increased revenue. In proportion as the full use of the club's facilities is made by all its members the better the club spirit will be. A question often arises with clubs where the climate prevents year-around golf, what should be done to furnish outdoor activities for the members and so hold their interest and patronage. The answer, I believe, for those clubs who are situated in the northern climate where the cold weather means snow and ice for at least two or three months, with reasonable consistency, is to avail themselves of the opportunities of year-around service to their members by the furnishing of facilities for the winter sports.

And the first question to be answered is "How accessible is the club in the winter for its members, either by automobile or trolley, for without accessibility it can hardly be a success." And if the reply is favorable that a majority of the members can reach the club readily and easily, then surely winter sports should be encouraged. If it is possible to locate the facilities near the clubhouse or entrance to the grounds, so much the better, for the easier they can be reached the greater the patronage will be by the members.

In reply to the query what are the winter sports that are possible to develop by the average golf club, I shall answer by merely listing them here as skating, including hockey, skiing, tobogganning, snow-shoeing and curling.

With questions of accessibility and sports settled the next question is one that is of vital importance in the consideration of the whole plan and that is "What will it cost for these different sports?" In all of them the layout can be simple or elaborate, as the club feels justified in spending money. The longer the season and the greater attendance, the more expense would be warranted to be incurred. This also will vary with the winter and the location of the club, in a snow-belt or otherwise.

Most clubs carry their greenkeeper on the payroll throughout the whole year, whether the clubhouse and grounds are kept open or

everything closed. Generally for the protection of the club house from dampness and cold a moderate fire is kept and the greenkeeper takes care of it and acts as watchman for the property. With this expense anyway the additional outlay, besides the original moderate investment in equipment the first year, would not be great. The number of men needed would vary as the rink was large or small, and also with the extent to which the other facilities were developed. Normally, three men should be sufficient, besides the greenkeeper, and the cost per week could be readily figured when the local rate for labor is known. The cost of the water used would not be large. The lighting bill would depend on the evening use of the rink, and the coal to heat the skating house would probably be a little more than a ton a month, unless the skating house is quite large.

Skating would be probably the leading sport, for it appeals and can be partaken in by both the old and the young, the women and the men. Once learned, like swimming, it is seldom forgotten. It is much better for the average golfer to keep himself in condition for the coming summer's golf than a comfortable chair about the bridge table. Ordinarily the tennis courts are located close to the clubhouse and these, with their level surface, can be flooded to form the rink without damage to the courts. As water is piped to the courts for spraying in the summer, the supply for making and keeping up the ice on the rink is at hand without additional outlay. The tools required are few, simple and inexpensive, such as snow shovels, ice scrapers, armored hose, snow scrapes, and six (6) inch-boards for the side of the rink to build the ice against.

For the sides of the hockey rink two-by-four stakes driven into the ground, preferably before it is frozen, form the supports to which the side boards, to the height of three (3) feet or three feet six inches, are nailed. Where the ice surface is sufficiently large it is a good idea to have a half sized hockey rink for the boys from 10 to 14, where they can safely play and learn the game without danger of injury from the older players. Hockey goals can be made at little cost from piping and cord netting. It is well to have at least six (6) or eight (8) fifteen-foot high poles about the sides of the rink which will carry the electric lights to light the skating surface for night skating. Several chairs, with wooden runners, are a great help to the beginners in learning to skate and for the younger children to play with. When tennis courts are used, there is no danger such as is always possible when the frozen surface of a pond or small lake is used, that an air-hole or thin ice makes possible a wetting or sometimes a more serious accident. As skating is done during cold weather it really is necessary that a heated house of some kind should be convenient to the rink in which skates can be changed or the skater enter to be warmed. Toilet facilities should be provided, and when the attendance warrants small lockers, for nowadays even the children have the skates attached to their shoes. Besides plain skating, with snap the whip and tag, amusement and enjoyment is furnished by fancy skating, races in classes to fit all ages and skating abilities, and hockey games. It adds to the pleasure, if a music machine, such as a victrola, is in the skating house wired to carry its music to amplifiers on the outside which will carry the sound to every part of the rink. Where possible, it is well to supply light refreshments in the skating house for the crisp weather and winter exercise brings real appetites.

Friday night seemed to work out as the best night for carnivals and special programs. It is quite often the family night, with no school on Saturday when the parents have a real time in going out with their children. The different stunts that can be run off are races, fancy skating exhibitions, fancy costume parties, with prizes for the best or funniest dress, or any interesting suggestions from members that can be worked out. Where there is sufficient demand a skating instructor can be obtained and classes held for fancy skating.

When one has skated sufficiently the natural thing to do is to go to the clubhouse for something to eat and something warm to drink. The winter sports will increase the patronage of the restaurant, and the House Committee would be wise to cater to their special desires, with menus that can be served with reasonable rapidity, with leading items for party nights, such as sausages and pancakes, or sausages and scrambled eggs, with coffee, tea and cocoa. Cinnamon toast, ice cream, different varieties of pies, cakes and candy will fill the bill especially for the children. Of course this does not prevent the supplying, by *a la carte* order, to the members whatever their special desire in delicacies might be at that particular time. The new loud-playing music machines also allow dancing when the crowd has come indoors for refreshments and will make the time seem short before service begins.

For snowshoeing and skiing, the natural slopes of the club's ground furnish the proper facilities. Where it is desired by the wishes of the members a simple ski jump can be built on one of the steepest hills on the course. As an added inducement, the club should have for rental to the members at a nominal fee skis and snowshoes. Tobogganning is a most exciting and exhilarating sport which can be partaken in by a crowd, for toboggans can be obtained that will carry several people. Toboggans also should be kept for rental to the members. Where the natural hills are not steep enough or where the ground is level, an artificial toboggan slide can be built to give the necessary speed to satisfy the cravings for this excitement and exercise. While it is no effort to go down, one earns the pleasure by the walk back. It is possible to have horses or a tractor to draw the sleds or toboggans back up the hill.

Curling should certainly be indulged in by the members. It is the great Canadian winter game and it is spreading rapidly in the United States. It is a wonderful sport for skill and interest, with team play a very necessary factor. Aside from the upkeep of the ice, there is practically no expense to the playing of the game. The stones or irons, which are used, could be purchased by the club and would last indefinitely. The cost of the season's brooms for the sweeping along of the stones would be nominal. Like golf, it adapts itself to many years of play and in this game the skill of the older man is very often more than a match for the strength and energy of the younger man. In some of the golf clubs, rinks have been maintained and curling has interested the members for years, as the Country Club at Brookline, Massachusetts, and the Mohawk Golf Club, at Schenectady, to mention only two which have played the game for sometime. It can be played outdoors or indoors, if a long, narrow building without heat is provided.

In all these sports the competitive spirit can be utilized to increase

the interest in them of the members. Club teams, both senior and junior, can be formed for games with neighboring clubs or teams of equal ability.

In this short sketch I hope that I have been able to clearly state the advantages to be gained by a club and its members, and that this will induce more clubs to provide the needed facilities. In this way a modern winter playground can be provided at one's own door and no longer will it be necessary to forego these sports and their attendant benefits if one is unable to spare the time for trips to Lake Placid or Switzerland.

Leipzig, Germany

United States Golf Association Green Section,
 Pennsylvania Avenue Station, Washington, D. C.

Gentlemen: There is considerable interest in Germany in the work of the Green Section of the United States Golf Association, as well as in the booklets issued by this corporation. For this reason we would beg to ask if it is possible for German clubs or perhaps for the German Golf Association to become a member of this Green Section so as to receive the publications on greenkeeping issued. Should this be possible, we, the publishers of the only German golfing magazine would be grateful to know if you would grant us permission to reprint articles of special importance to German conditions.

We hear that a French club has become a member of your Section, so that it would, perhaps, be possible for Germany likewise to enjoy the results of your researches.

Very faithfully yours,

(Signed) "Deutscher Golf Verlag,"
 Limburger, Manager.

The Green Section Appreciated

By Edward J. Poor, Salem Country Club, Salem, Mass.

An appreciation of your efforts to aid golf clubs in establishing better courses and superior turf, with consequent increased pleasure to the members, is decidedly in order as a result of what has been accomplished at our club by strict adherence to a policy of following the advice of the United States Golf Association Green Section, as published in *THE BULLETIN*.

The Salem Country Club's new 18-hole golf course was constructed during the summer of 1925; fairways were seeded, and creeping bent stolons planted on greens and tees in September of that year. The course was opened for play on August 1, 1926, and has proved very popular—the number of players on some days running up to two hundred.

Naturally, the fairways are not yet covered with seasoned turf, but with the exception of a few holes, they are in very fine condition. We have every right to expect that after topdressing and fertilizing this fall we will have first-class fairways next summer. The greens (the backbone of every course) have been a genuine surprise and delight, and our tees are in every way as good as our greens. We have been told by most every skilled golfer who has played the course that they are superior to any they have played on. We have repeatedly