Golf Clubs Make It Hard for Women to Play

Restrictions on Saturdays, Sundays, and Holidays Are the Rule at Most of the Organizations Round About New York

ALTHOUGH golf has been called a royal game, its privileges, in this country at any rate, do not appear to descend in the female line. The Sally Bane line is heir to this lamentable and honorable sport. In spite of the fact, or perhaps because of the fact, that thousands of women play golf in groups of clubs within a fifty-mile radius of Times Square, certain restrictions have had to be thrown about their use of the courses. This may be one of the next points of attack on the 'vacation front.' Some women would doubtless insist that they and their sisters have no more right to play, week by week and month by month, than others have, and insist that they are just as much entitled to the enjoyments of the game as any other members of the public. Nevertheless, the fact remains that restrictions are imposed on a number of the clubs that women may join, it does not appear to have been occasioned by any concern over the unlimited usage of the course.

Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays are the days when members and visitors of any complete or partial host upon the fair sex in relation to the golfers, and it is probable that the women may come to watch but not to remain to play, to peruse the old caddie. The reasons behind this prohibition is not far to seek. These are the days on which the hired business men feel it--and unjustly--his peculiar prerogative to rest and recreate. Obviously, if he is a golf player and prefers to lose other forms of outdoor sport, he wants the links to himself and the rest of the game for a part of the day. The result is a host of women and caddies from all over the town, and a dense crowd of the links.

These are not clubs, indeed rather a large number, in which no attempt is made to limit the play. In some cases this is due to the fact that there are few women members and they do not serve to crowd the facilities of the course. In other cases it may be a matter of convenience when it is most in use. In other cases the lack of restriction appears to be due to the recognition of expected rules on the part of the women members, and their habits of allowing the men to get ahead or play through without interference. Several clubs set aside special days in each month for the use of their female members or for visiting women. The variations in the treatment of the subject are of the widest, but they are not the less interesting on that account.

It would not be difficult to show that the strictness of the limitations upon women golfers varies directly with the skill-avantage skill of the men in the club, but it is true that many of the players consider that the courses in clubs most of whose members are in the expert class. For example, the Garden City Golf Club, which numbers in its membership men such as pro and club professionals as W. Z. Truitt, George T. Breckaw, J. M. Ward, and W. B. Ebbett, to mention but a few, allows women to play on Monday and Friday mornings only and limits this privileges with the proviso that they are to start before 11 a.m. Both a woman as women on the same is entitled to play Saturday or Sunday in unheard of. In this most masculine of golf clubs women are not permitted to enter the clubhouse of the club house, although they may make themselves at home on the verandas. There is nothing about these restrictions at Garden City which is meant to be uncivilfulness or unpleasant. They arise from the fact that it is strictly a golf club—not a general country club—in the first place, and, secondly, from the general character of the membership, which is made up of men who wish to play golf undisturbed by any interfering element.

Another of the Long Island courses, that of the beautiful Piping Rock Club at Long Valley, is also rather strict about its links. Women may not play on week days before 11:30 in the morning or after 2 in the afternoon. Nor may they play at all on Saturdays or Sundays unless they are accompanied by a member. This does not leave a very large part of the week open to the feminine members of the club, but it has the effect of giving them the course very much more to themselves on the weekdays, and is likely therefore to be appreciated by the more courteous.

At the Great Neck Golf Club, at Great Neck, L. I., there are no set rules. The men have the right of way, however, and the women make no difficulty about letting the men go through on the crowded days. In fact, the women at this club have a little organization of their own which makes it its business to police the course and see that the men are able to play through when the fairway is congested. By so doing they have probably earned sufficient gratitude from the members of the starier sex to protect them for all time from any adverse legislation. This club has about forty women members.

Just to show that the clubs known for their keen golf are not always to be found in the column of restrictions against the women, the Baltusrol Golf Club, at Baltusrol, N. J., may be cited. There are no restrictions, although among the low handicap men who make it their home club of the course are such as Bob Lock, H. N. Cook, E. P. Rogers, and C. E. Vinine, Jr. This lack of pre}

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women are permitted to play on the week days at will, but must limit their Saturday use of the links to the morning hours, and may not play at all on Sundays or holidays. The Richwood County Country Club at Staten Island, on the other hand, has no restrictions governing its women members.

There is a large woman membership at the Hackensack Golf Club at Hackensack, N.J., in fact, about 275 women belong to this club, although by no means are all of them active golf players. In spite of this large feminine representation the men members have been audacious enough to enact strict rules which forbid the use of the course by women on Saturdays, holidays, or Sunday mornings.

At the Haworth Club, at Haworth, N.J., the men are very gallant. Not only have they no rules which keep women from playing on the days when the men are home from business, but it has come to be a rather general custom for those men who have golf-playing wives to play a round or two early in the day on Sunday with their male rivals and then go round later in the day with their better halves. This arrangement is said to cause general satisfaction and keep the club in a harmonious state. However that may be, it is an interesting variation of the restriction question.

Some of the other New Jersey courses are not so liberal in the matter of golf for women. At the Morristown Field Club, for instance, women may not play on Sundays. At the Canoe Brook Country Club at Summit they are permitted to play on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays, but not before 10 in the morning or after 2:30 in the afternoon, while at the Country Club of Glen Ridge, which has about forty women members, the general custom is for them to let the men play ahead on the crowded days, although there are no fixed rules. At the Essex County Country Club, at West Orange, on the other hand, there are no restrictions of any kind against members or the wives of members. There are a number of women in the club who hold the golf privilege independently.

Although it has one of the most popular and, therefore, crowded courses in the Metropolitan district, the Englewood Country Club imposes no restrictions on its 115 associate women members. In addition to this membership it has some thirty or forty "house" members, who may play on weekdays only on payment of the course fee of $1. In spite of its lack of restriction it may be assumed that the sprinkling of women is rather slight at Englewood on those many Saturdays and Sundays in the season when players, in order to get a round, are sent off in pairs every five minutes, beginning surprisingly early in the morning.

At the Deal Golf Club, at Deal, N.J., women are especially asked not to "take a time" at the start. Any member may bring a woman guest on Saturday or Sunday, and any associate woman member may play, but in either case they are requested not to specify a particular hour or minute for starting, but just to come along and take their turn as they may find it.

The Arcoia Country Club at Arcoia, N.J., is among the most hospitable in the vicinity to the ladies. Not only does it not legislate against them if they are members at the week-ends or on holidays, but it sets aside Friday of each week as a day on which any women in the Metropolitan district may play over the course without charge. This applies, of course, to non-members, and is a rather unusual provision, especially when it holds good so many times a year.

The Morris County Golf Club at Convent, N.J., has had the misfortune to lose its clubhouse by fire, and this causes a practical difficulty which prevents it from taking care of women players for the most part. Before its loss, however, it had a rule which permitted visiting women to play on the third Tuesday of each month, and it never imposed restrictions as to play on its women members.

The Plainfield Country Club at Plainfield, N.J., extends its prohibitions to include junior members of both sexes. The juniors may not play after noon on Saturdays, nor at all on Sundays. Adult women may play on these days provided they are full members, otherwise they can play only if accompanied by a full member or a man. At the Scarzades Golf and Country Club at Hartsdale in Westchester there are no restrictions on the play of women, but across the Connecticut line at the Wee Burn Golf Club at Noroton women are not permitted to play on Saturdays between the hours of 12 and 3 or on holidays until after 2:30 o'clock.

And so it goes all through the long list of clubs which demonstrate the popularity of golf heretofore.

A bit of mathematics could easily show that there are more than a hundred women in the metropolitan district alone who could make the leaders of a decade ago look to their laurels, while the recent championships, with their starters close to a hundred in number, show the true enthusiasm for golf which the women of this country are exhibiting. This is indicated even more strongly, however, by the multitude of women not of championship or near championship calibre who are seen regularly on the links. They are getting a lot out of their golf in enjoyment and wholesome exercise, and even the Chairmen of the greens committees who feel called upon to rule them off the course on the busy days would hardly deny that they are contributing a lot to the game as well.

At any rate they are quite undaunted by Saturday and Sunday rules, these women golfers. And by accepting the situation resulting from congested courses and the habit American men have of crowding all their sport into the week-