

# Strong and Weak Points of the American Game of Golf



"CHICK" EVANS, "FOLLOWING THROUGH"



GETTING AN EARLY START



BY J. B. SHERIDAN.

**G**OLF is a good game, but it takes too long, too much time to get to the links, then three hours to play any sort of a game. Golf is a game that calls for the utmost deliberation. You can't play golf in a rush. It also calls for a large investment in clubhouses, links and the upkeep of same. Therefore golf is a game for the well-to-do; in fact, for the leisure classes.

There are people who are satisfied to play golf once a week. You can't play much golf once a week. You may bash around a course, but you won't be playing golf. Good golf calls for constant practice. In fact, when a man wants to play good golf he must give all his time to it. Some crack players take up business and try to divide their time, half to business, half to golf. I do not know what business does under such conditions. I do know that golf suffers from half-timing. No man can play good golf and have any business or other worries on his mind.

Golf has done great things for nervous business men, men who can afford to give every afternoon to it. These fellows are well-to-do, their businesses are so arranged that they do not need all their time, and the open air and walking helps neurotics very much.

But these old boys do not play much golf. They batter around the courses, get the fresh air, restore shattered nerves, etc. All of which they could do by merely taking walks through the country. But they would not take these walks. The little white ball takes away the aspect of work in walking, and a contest with another

old chap for a dollar a hole gives zest to the afternoon.

Young men of the valetudinarian sort may play golf in Europe. Few young men play golf in America. The young American must work. Work and good golf are bitter foes.

Therefore golf does not hold the young American; I doubt that it holds the young Englishman, either, though the juvenile Briton is much less given to serious work than the young American. Cricket and football had the call over golf in England in the days before the great war. So did tennis.

## Can Play Lone Hand.

Golf has one great advantage. You can play it alone if you must do so. It is probably the only outdoor game that a man can play alone. Two make great golf. Four is more than enough. In baseball, football, cricket, tennis, etc., you need from two to thirty companions to make a game. In golf you can make a game all by yourself.

They say that golf is the poor man's game in Scotland, where there are great public links like those at St. Andrews and Carnoustie on the Firth of Forth. The long twilight gives the workman a chance to play golf after hours. It is possible to play up to 10 p. m. Thus the artisan can get daily practice at golf in Northern European countries. The early darkness, we have no twilight in the United States outside of the extremities of the Northwestern states. It is dark with us at 7:30 p. m.

It is not easy to exaggerate the great value of that long twilight to athletics in Europe. It has made the Scotch and Irish most surpassing athletes. There is no Sunday play at anything in Scotland but whisky

drinking. The Sabbath is rigidly kept. But the long twilights give the Scotch daily practice in the sports in which they excel. The long twilight has had a deal to do with the hardness which is proverbially Scotch, in making the men whom the Germans call "the women from hell."

Deprived of a leisure class and of a long twilight, golf in the United States has been more or less restricted to the well-to-do; in fact, to the rich country clubs, which expend from \$100,000 to \$500,000 on golf links. It costs from \$50 to \$250 a year for membership dues in these clubs. Some of the initiation fees run up to enormous proportions. One club had an initiation fee of \$1,000. There are other clubs where all expenses are prorated.

## Public Links Not Best.

There are, of course, public links in the great cities over which one may play for nothing. These links are largely patronized on Saturday afternoons and Sundays, with a scattering of players, mostly women, during



FINDLAY DOUGLAS—ONE OF THE FIRST GOLF CHAMPIONS OF THE U.S.

golf. Playing golf means membership in a country club, which will cost you, in all ways, \$100 a year. It means ownership of a motor car to get to and from the club, and it means being able to spend at least three afternoons a week away from business.

Now most men do spend two afternoons a week, Saturday and Sunday, away from business. But they can't give all of these free afternoons to golf. They have other calls upon their spare time, motoring, fishing, hunting, social duties, and very often business will in one way or another obtrude itself on leisure.

For all these reasons golf in America is confined to men who have "made their pile" and to men who do not care much about making money and who have independent means or who manage to play a good deal while living life. Lawyers and doctors are confirmed devotees of the golf links. At some of the more modest golf clubs, where the initiation fees are not sky high, and where the annual dues are moderate, you need no other introduction than to call the first man you meet there "Judge" or "Doctor." These professional men do take life rather easily. But to the bulk of hard-working, hustling Americans, particularly to the young man who has his own way to make, golf is a stranger.

## Golf Best Understood.

It is a charming game for the valetudinarian, for the man who has "made his pile" and who has shattered nerves and a bad stomach to cure, for the old boys who have done their work in the world, and for women. College professors, too, find a great comfort and diversion. That is why golf is such a well-written game. Some of the best minds in the great universities of England and Scotland have given themselves to the study and explanation of golf. The result is that, of all games, it is best understood, best explained, best written and best understood.

It may be said here that if baseball was as well studied, as well understood and as well explained as golf the national game of the United States would be improved many hundred per cent.

Golfers know how to connect cause with effect. They know how a ball should be hit to make it do certain things. They study and correct causes of failure. They can explain just why certain things occur. They have a school of mechanical investigation. They have produced a certain style of play which secures the best possible results.

Baseball has not done any of these things, because baseball is a young game where golf is an old game, and baseball is the game of young men, of mere boys, who do not connect cause with effect, while golf is the game of older men, who are concerned to know the whyness of the what.

Of course, the older men teach the younger men who play golf. The result is that young golfers like Chick Evans know a great deal more about the fundamentals of the game they play than young baseball players like



A HANDSOME GOLFER—MRS. D.R. CALHOUN.

George Sisler know about baseball.

In other words, baseball is all action and no study. Golf is study first and action afterwards.

Let us contrast the cases of Chick Evans, great golfer, and George Sisler, great young baseball player.

Sisler has one great weakness at the bat, balls pitched low and outside of the plate.

Evans had one great weakness as a golfer, pitching short approaches with his mashie.

Sisler has been playing ball for ten years, yet is as weak in his weakness as he ever was.

Evans, by careful study, immense practice under professional supervision, has conquered his original weakness with the mashie until he is today one of the strongest men with that club in golf.

There can be no doubt that Sisler could learn to hit balls pitched low on the outside corner of the plate, provided he gave enough practice at hitting such pitches.

But they don't teach a baseball player such things. They pander to his strong points, follow the line of least resistance and sedulously avoid cultivating the weak points.

Originally Chick Evans was weak on his mashie shots. Practice has made him perfect in this department of the game.

George Sisler has been weak on low balls on the outside corner. By failing to practice on such balls, by failure of his manager to see that such balls are pitched to him in practice, and that he hits at them correctly, Sisler is still weak on low balls pitched on the outside corner of the plate.

These two cases show the difference

of study and investigation that is given on golf and baseball. Baseball is merely a rough and tumble game, everyone playing on his natural abilities, on his strong points and suffering from weakness in his weak points.

## Variety of Strokes.

Golf is a thoroughly investigated game. Splendid minds have given to research in golf. The result is that golfers know how to make many dozens of strokes, have strokes for scores of different plays. The baseball player has but two strokes, full swing and bunt, for all sorts of pitched balls. There is no doubt that the baseball player should have four major strokes, cut, drive, swing and bunt, and many variations of each.

It is essential that a man shall be planted firmly on his feet when he hits anything, a golf ball, a baseball or a punching bag. Boxers acknowledge this fundamental fact when they insist that a man shall "set" himself to hit.

Every golfer knows that the position of the feet while swinging at the ball is of the uttermost importance. The right foot must be firm on the ground while the golfer is swinging. The left foot may pivot, but it must not at any time leave the ground.

The same thing holds good in baseball. A man may move before he starts to swing, but he must have his rear foot solidly on the ground when he hits.

Golfers know that the spine should be held rigid and the head steady while they are hitting. If the head moves, the eyesight is impaired. Baseball players know nothing about the importance of maintaining a rigid spine and steady head while in the act of hitting.

The Way to Earn Money Is to Work for It, but That Hardly Comes Under the Classification of High Finance.