

Golf as a Game for Women



Miss Gertrude Kountze

Miss McShane

Miss L. ...

ALITHE, lithe body in graceful action, a woman's face fired with the glow of health and exertion and toned with the rich brown born of a daily sun bath, and as a resultant of these things a feminine heart in the attitude of perfect comradeship with all companions for the time being—that is why men like to see a woman play golf. And, therefore, may it not be also the initial motive at least of her devotion to the game?

There is no time when a woman is so entirely a good fellow as when she is on the links. Shorn of all the frivolous frippery of a society life, she is her real self from top to toe. When she doffs the stilted, stiff and rigorously uncomfortable gowns of afternoon and evening functions in town she casts aside at the same time the habitual mask of false pride, exaggerated reserve and extreme propriety. With the loose waist, short skirt, broad shoes and bare brown arms she has donned also a demeanor of friendliness, a disposition of sunny open-heartedness, a tone of sincerity, that make her more lovable in a minute than all her parlor graces would in a year. A girl cannot play the game and be unwholesome or unattractive. Nature does its work, and well.

No prettier sight exists than a girl golfing. Every outline is a curve, every movement a rhythm. There is not an angle in the picture. A graceful, well proportioned man playing in form is acknowledged to constitute a pleasing figure, but in comparison with him the girl is a vision.

Her clothes do it. It is exactly the same principle which applies in dancing. A woman waiting is a dream, a floating cloud of beauty, a fitting zephyr, seeming not to move, yet moving. A man may dance just as smoothly, but the bends of his knees and the twists and turn of his ankles and the contortions at his waist are plainly visible, and these sharp corners mar the picture. With the woman, all this motion that creates good dancing is hidden. Only results are apparent; none of the "means by which" are visible.

And so with golfing. The woman goes to a tee and addresses her ball for a drive. Then she swings and on the up-stroke her left knee turns away in; so does her left toe. She bends at the knees, twists at the waist, and curls her arms around her right ear till the club lies parallel behind her head. The ensemble forms a posture that she would never choose as the acme of grace. It is extreme, even strained. How she would look in that position if bereft of skirt and waist?

But these two garments save the situation. They do more; they enhance it. The



Mrs. Sprague

Miss Nellie McShane

Mrs. Bancker

OMAHA WOMEN WHO TOOK PART IN THE PLAY FOR THE FOYE CUP AT THE COUNTRY CLUB LINKS—Photos by a Staff Artist.

swing seems the height of free and graceful movement. The follow through is still more attractive to witness. "Elbows up" is a motto which all conscientious girl golfers endeavor to realize in their long shot play, but it is hard, for they have never had them up before. That is just why a woman with her elbow as high as her shoulder and her forearm lying straight back on a horizontal line along the club handle forms so fascinating a picture of healthy ease and freedom of movement.

After all, the grandest thing about golf is the fact that there is one game, one real royal sport, not tiddlediwinks nor cards nor croquet, but a game of noble proportions and vast possibilities, that there is one such game that all women can play. No other sport ever filled the place taken by golf, in fact, there was never before such a place in a woman's life. Tennis, it is true, was played somewhat by women, but even in its zenith the feminine devotees of this game were few, and necessarily so, for it is far too violent. Many men cannot stand tennis, and it is only a certain rare class of women who can play it.

So it seemed that the great majority of

women were destined still to be spectators and not participants. But golf came in and relieved the situation in a most happy manner. It was clearly a good woman's game, and to that fact can be largely credited its permanent popularity and its marvelous rush westward when once it had landed on American shores. Men were willing to do for their wives and daughters what they might not have taken any trouble in for themselves, and golf clubs were established far and wide primarily because the women wanted them. After that they flourished and were successfully maintained from an additional reason as well, because men learned the glories of the game.

From the first stage of golf in this country women have been scarcely behind the men in their progress. The United States Golf association was organized on December 22, 1894. The next October the first national championship for men was played. In one year more the women commenced their national championship tournaments, and since that time these honors have been even more bitterly contested than those for men.

Miss Beatrix Hoyt, the girl who held the

championship for three successive years, won the first national contest of this kind. This was played in 1896 at the Morris Country club in Massachusetts. Miss Frances Griscom, the 1900 champion, was also a participant. These are the only two women who have played in this national tourney through every year of its progress.

In 1897 Miss Hoyt won again, and also in 1898, Miss Griscom taking fourth honors both times. The next year the contest was held at the Philadelphia Country club links and it proved the Waterloo of each of the veterans, both going down in the first round, while Miss Ruth Underhill won the championship. Then last year Miss Griscom finally secured what she had struggled for so long. This fall many of the same contestants were again in the race, Miss Hoyt, Miss Griscom and Miss Genevieve Hecker being most prominent.

All these national championship tournaments have been match play, the qualifying round only being medal play. It is a remarkable fact that in each of the five contests from 1896 to 1900 Miss Hoyt has won the gold medal for lowest score in this qualifying round. She was for four years

the only contestant to go below 100, but in 1900 Miss Griscom took a 96 to Miss Hoyt's 94.

But there are now scores of big tournaments in addition to the national event, and the number increases each year. Women having championship ambitions in their favorite sport can easily be satisfied in whatever portion of the country they chance to live.

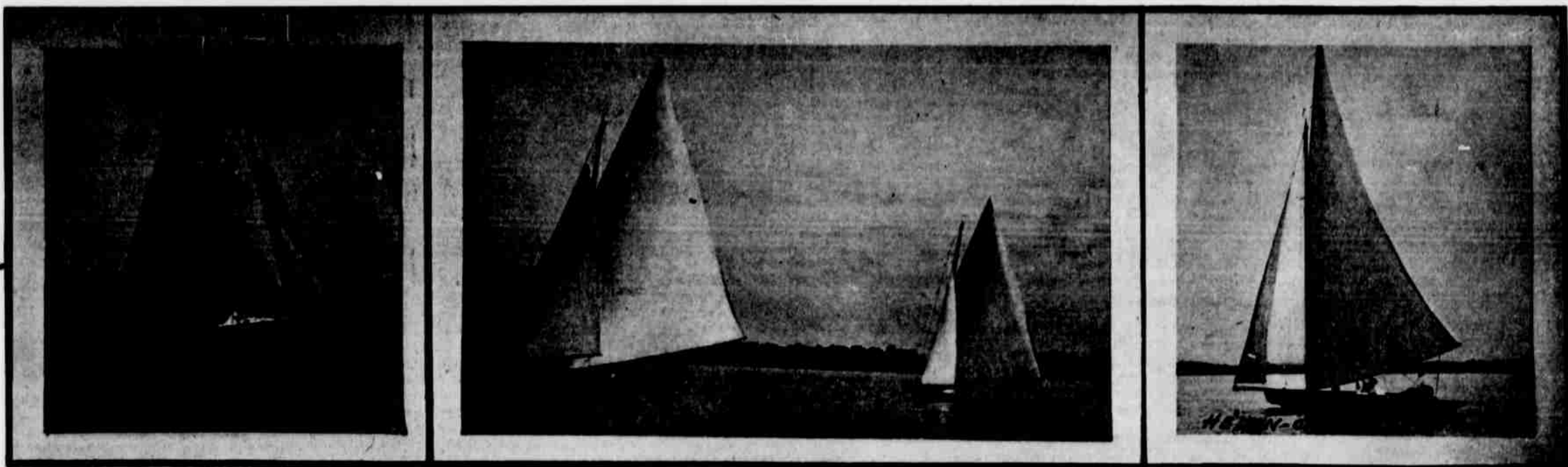
In Omaha there is an enthusiastic little company of feminine golfers who are in the game strictly on its merits and their own, and who are accomplishing wonders considering the fact that they are novices. As the player of the longest experience and practice among them, Miss Gertrude Kountze is just now the star scorer and some of her work ranks squarely up with that of women golfers anywhere.

William J. Foye, the western champion, has recently added zest to the women's game and at the same time recognized their golfing merit in a manner they most richly deserved by offering a handsome trophy known as the Foye cup, which is confined strictly to women's competition at the Country club.

This cup is played for once each month of the golfing season. Handicap medal play rules the contests, of which two have been held. Miss Margaret Wood won the first in August. Miss Gertrude Kountze took the second in September, she not having been entered in the initial competition. One more tournament for this cup will be held this year, some time during the present month. Next April they begin again.

Then, besides this, there is the Omaha Woman's cup, a semi-annual prize, play for which is also governed by medal handicap rules. This cup was established in 1900 and was first in competition in October of that year, when Miss Belle Dewey won it. Then last June Mrs. E. H. Sprague attained the honor, and last Wednesday Mrs. Charles E. Kountze added her name to the two already graven on the cup.

So, both women's trophies are anyone's prizes so far, as to gain permanent possession of either it is necessary to win it three times in succession. That is certain to prove a difficult task for anyone, for handicapping is most uncertain, and that fact, added to the general unreliability of form and play and luck, leaves even a two-time winner on most doubtful ground when it comes time for her third attempt. Again, a woman who wins any of these contests finds her handicap at the next one still more rigid, it being evidently considered that she alone of all the players has improved during the interval. So a feminine cup winner has her troubles and it becomes a harder task each time she takes the palm.



REGATTA AT LAKE MANAWA FOR THE TRAMWAY CHALLENGE CUP—Photos by a Staff Artist.