

IT is not too much to say that the unparalleled incidents in the 'Varsity golf match have not only shocked all golfers, but the great body of sportsmen who are sticklers for tradition and the observance of established custom in the conduct of games. I have heard some caustic comments of the action of the rival captains in contracting out of the recognised rules of golf, and the drawing up of a special code of their own, rules which, as it turned out, proved farcical in their working.

A cricketer of no small repute has told me, with a touch of scorn in his tone, that what

The Comic 'Varsity Match. AN EXPERIMENT THAT FAILED.

BY A ROVING PLAYER.

no concern to him when 'Varsity golfers go to Hoylake and play a game of their own,

supported when put to the acid test of practice. The elaborate plan which the captains devised,

Nothing was done, so we had the strange spectacle of a championship club, legitimately proud of its great traditions, permitting its links to be used for comic-opera golf. There is something to be said in the way of excuse for the two captains, who in an honest endeavour to deal equitably with an unusual situation, fell into the common error of concluding that theory and practice are identical.

They are, of course, nothing of the kind, what on paper seems eminently feasible is not always supported when put to the acid test of practice. The elaborate plan which the captains devised, a scheme whereby certain bunkers were classified as out of bounds territory, and others as non-penalty areas, might have been acceptable for a sort of armchair golf, but for practical purposes, when two sides battle for supremacy in an encounter of no small importance, it was a ghastly failure. Many of the spectators who went to Hoylake to witness the struggle became so confused that interest was lost and they left.

There was so much lifting and dropping, and going back to play another ball, that it became absolutely impossible to tell how many shots had been played and which side had won the hole. The referee in one match gave five decisions in six holes; and I very much doubt whether, if called upon to do so, he could have satisfactorily explained any one of them. As he was not, it is to be presumed that in unravelling the puzzles luck was with him.

There were many amazing situations. For instance, there was the case of an Oxford player who, having been in four bunkers in the process of playing one hole, finally holed a niblick shot, to win the hole in 5, which, in the ordinary course of events, he would have lost in at least 8. Then we also saw the Cambridge captain produce the most perfect topped shot imaginable attempting a long pitch over a bunker. The bunker, deemed to be an out-of-bounds area, gave Mr. Prain the opportunity of playing another shot, which he placed near the flag, and then holed the putt for a 4, to win a hole which he ought really to have lost.

And so the farce went on, but I do not suppose that, on balance, one side reaped any advantage over the other. What was wrong with playing the match under the recognised St. Andrews rule governing casual water in a hazard, the player having the option of dropping behind under the penalty of one stroke, I am at a loss to understand. However, I do not think any future 'Varsity captains will dare to risk another such revolutionary experiment.

The results of the two days' play showed Oxford to be the better team, winning 12 matches out of 15. Oxford had gained a lead of three points in the foursomes on the first day, and by lunch time on the second, with Cambridge leading in but two matches (and in both of those only one up) there was no doubt as to the result. E. Martin Smith and R.B. Beare eventually managed to win their two games for Cambridge.



THE IRISH AMATEUR CHAMPION WINS THE CAMBERLEY HEATH MIXED FOURSOMES FOR MID-SURREY: MAJOR C. O. HEZLET DRIVING FROM THE 10TH. Major C. O. Hezlet and his partner, Miss Rhona Rabbidge, representing Royal Mid-Surrey, beat St. George's Hill (C. Shankland and Mrs. A. C. Johnston) at the 36th hole in the final of the Camberley Heath mixed foursomes inter-club tournament. On page 46 Miss Helme describes this event

happened at Hoylake is tantamount to two captains going to Lord's and agreeing, because the ground is not in normal condition, to eliminate wides and byes and to turn the blind eye to throwing.

And in this connection many people are asking "What on earth was the Royal Liverpool Club, the owners of a championship links which has produced some of the greatest golfers the world has ever seen, doing to permit such a travesty of a game on historical ground?" It is a very pertinent question, and one the answer to which does not, I am afraid, leave that august body, the Royal Liverpool Club, free from adverse criticism. I was pained and surprised at the comments of one very well-known golfer, an international player and an ex-champion, who told me that "It is no business of the club what the 'Varsity teams decide to do. The course has been given to them for the purposes of the match, and the method of deciding it concerns them and them only. If they elect to kick the ball round the course, that is their affair."

I beg leave wholeheartedly and emphatically to disagree. Does this golfer, who, I have every reason to know, would sooner cut off his right hand than play round Hoylake, or any course for that matter, under rules of his own making, suggest that if the authorities at Wimbledon lent the centre court for a lawn tennis match, they would permit it to be played under conditions which brought ridicule not only on the game, but on the club—conditions such as, for example, the lowering of the net by six inches and the non-recognition of service faults?

Of course, he would not agree to such a travesty, and yet, apparently, it is a matter of

which, by the wildest stretch of the imagination, cannot be called golf. Hoylake's concern in this matter does not end here. I am in agreement with a member of the club who is of the opinion that in two other respects the Royal Liverpool Club showed a strange lack of foresight and enterprise.

First, when it was obvious that the course could not be got in fit condition, because of the abnormal amount of water in a good many of the bunkers, the 'Varsities should have been given the opportunity of going elsewhere, if they so desired. Secondly, some attempt should have been made to get rid of the water, which, I was informed by a civil engineer, would have been a simple matter if a pump had been brought into operation. An old fire engine would have performed the work in the space of a few hours.



ONE OF THE SUCCESSFUL ROYAL MID-SURREY PAIR IN THE CAMBERLEY FOURSOMES: MAJOR HEZLET'S PARTNER, MISS RHONA RABBIDGE.

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