



Thanet Activities

J. M. Wallace, Captain P. M. Spence, and G. C. Belloe, competitors in the Royal Cinque Ports Golf Club Scratch Challenge Cup at Deal



Football Clubs Play with a Smaller Ball

Lord Westmorland (an Arsenal Director), S. H. Day (Corinthians), Frank Hill (Arsenal), and Basil Foster (Corinthians), representing their clubs, which met at Stoke Poges. The Corinthians won by 13 matches to 3

F. G. L. Fairlie on Golf

The E.G.U. Again

THIS week I will continue to deal with the remaining half of the letter sent to my Editor by the English Golf Union, the first half of which I discussed on this page last week. I will start by again stressing the fact that I challenge the statement made by the English Golf Union that my views are not the views of the thousand-and-twelve golf clubs affiliated to the English Golf Union. By silence they may have consented to the Standard Scratch Score and Handicapping Scheme, but a very large percentage of their members are definitely opposed to any interference in the good old ways, and, I may add, I have not had one single letter criticising my criticisms.

THE following appears in the letter: "The Standard Scratch Score and Handicapping Scheme was introduced in 1926, and was an attempt to introduce a common basis of handicapping throughout the British Isles. Handicapping at that time was in a state of chaos, handicaps being allotted according to the particular views of each Club Handicapping Committee as to what represented a good player. As these views differed widely in different Clubs a man often had a handicap of 4 or 5 at one Club and was rated at Scratch at another Club. As a result, Open Handicap Meetings were often conducted under somewhat farcical conditions, a competitor's chance of winning being estimated, not according to his ability to play to his handicap, but according to the Club to which he belonged."

WITH regard to the claim that handicapping before 1926 was in a state of chaos I can only say that, although erratic, it was in nothing like such a state of chaos as it is at the present time. I will admit that the Handicapping Scheme of the English Golf Union is in its infancy, but all that it will do, as I have pointed out before, is to infuriate golfers who find themselves suddenly jumped from single to double figures, and golfers who have only just left the limit and are extraordinarily pleased and satisfied by this great achievement. They are not likely to be very pleased with the English Golf Union when they find that they are dumped back again. These two classes of golfers form by far the largest percentage of the members of

any golf club, and the result is that the majority of players are very much displeased with the English Golf Union. It is perfectly true that a man who was, say, four at Sunningdale, may have been allotted to scratch at Midwinkle, but it is equally true to say that he was only hurting himself, for when he entered an Open Handicap Meeting he was forced to play from his lowest club handicap: in other words, his vanity cost him four shots which might have proved very useful to him. There were, of course, certain individuals who resigned from the clubs where they possessed low handicaps in order to exploit their pot-hunting proclivities with the higher handicap, but I resent that type of person playing at all. In the old days, if he did that once too often he did not play again. Yet all that the English Golf Union wants to do is to make it less likely that he will be found out and, therefore, more likely that his presence will ruin otherwise pleasant meetings.

THE next paragraph reads as follows: "I think you will agree that in other games and sports where Open Competitions under handicap are held such a position would not be tolerated. Could Racing continue if the various Stables were allowed to fix the handicaps of their horses according to their own views? Under the Scheme the English Golf Union, as an entirely independent and unprejudiced body, fixed the Standard Scratch Scores of the courses and the Club Handicapping Committee allotted handicaps to their members according to their performances in Medal and other competitions in comparison with the Standard Scratch Score of the course."

THE next paragraph is important. Please read it carefully, particularly up to the first full-stop:

"The Scheme was a complete success, although naturally enough there was at first a certain amount of old-fashioned prejudice against it, and practically all the Clubs in the country in due course applied for and were allotted a Standard Scratch Score. The medium and long-handicap

players were among the strongest supporters of the Scheme, because they felt that for the first time their handicaps were allotted on a fair and understandable basis, and knew that their handicaps would be accepted without question by any other Club which they visited. Mr. Fairlie's views were fairly common seven years ago, but they seem somewhat out of date now."

A CLAIM is made that the Scheme was a complete success. This is about as inaccurate a statement as could possibly be made. I make so bold as to say that the Scheme is a failure, for it has done nothing but annoy, and the handicap wangler will continue to wangle for as long as he is not found out. The claim is also made that practically all the clubs in the country in due course applied for and were allotted a Standard Scratch Score. Well, if the English Golf Union say so, I suppose I must accept their word for it, but I do not know of any case where a club applied for a Standard Scratch Score. The method used was that the English Golf Union said that they would like to send officials down in order to fix a Scratch Score and would the clubs help? In some cases they did: in others they left it entirely to the officials, and were, frankly, not in the least interested. The English Golf Union goes on to say that the medium and long-handicap players are amongst the strongest supporters of the Scheme. I have not met a single one—and I have met plenty—who has had a good word to say of it. The views of these people make me realise that my own are not so much out of date as the English Golf Union seem to think.

The last paragraph in the letter reads: "It may interest you to know that the Standard Scratch Score and Handicapping Scheme has been adopted by many of the Golf Unions of the Empire and by the French, Italian, German and other Golf Unions."

I HAVE now given the views of the English Golf Union and answered them, and I know that I am speaking for my Editor as well as for myself when I say that should the English Golf Union desire to answer any new point which I may have brought out in criticising their letter, this page of THE BYSTANDER is, within reason, open to them.