

On the Golf Links

This paper has been appointed the official organ of the Ladies' Golf Union, New Zealand branch.

Secretaries of ladies' golf clubs are invited to forward official notices, hand-caps and alterations, results of competitions and other matters of interest, to reach the publishing office not later than the Saturday prior to the date of publication.

AUCKLAND.

(By Our Special Correspondent.)

Middlemore Park.

THE Captain's Prize competition has as usual drawn a large entry—twenty in the A grade and thirty-two in the B. This is not quite such a large field as last year, but judging from the keenness of the entrants, some good games should result.

The fields for the matches this season have not been nearly so large as was the case last year, which is hard to understand, as the course is playing better than ever before. The fairway has been improved with the recent cutting, and the new holes opened this season for the first time have added a good deal of variety. A new departure, and one that will prove a great help to players, is the close cutting for about twenty yards in front of each green on the direct line of approach. Players found themselves much hampered in the past by the long grass immediately surrounding the green, especially the few temporary greens which were inclined to get fiery.

The last of the new greens has been sown at Middlemore, making five this season. When these are ready for use about August, members and visitors will have little to complain of as to greens. All the greens put down this season are of the hummocky type so popular on courses in England at present. The second green is a good sample, and judging from present appearances the player who holes out in two when on the green will have cause to congratulate himself.

A start has been made with the permanent tees, the tenth which has been formed for some time is now being added. The others will be done as quickly as possible.

The experience of one of the boy members of the Auckland club at present spending most of his holidays at the links seems to show that some of the players at Middlemore are decidedly erratic. In five days no less than fifty balls were retrieved from the various traps by this ardent golfer. It will be a comfort to those who contributed to this harvest to hear that as soon as some of the urgent permanent work is finished steps are to be taken to thin out the gorse, etc in the gullies and on the banks of the various creeks.

A fairly strong team has been got together to go to Cambridge on June 1. It can hardly be said to be thoroughly representative. A great many members seem to think that inter-club matches are a fine thing and good for the game, but when it comes to making a trip for the purpose of playing such a match, very few of them seem to be able to spare the time to go. It is a great pity more players don't make an effort to play in these matches, as there can be little doubt that playing against strangers is a fine thing for improving the game. The annual matches played in the South have done a lot toward raising the standard of the game there.

The New Zealand Championship.

The fixing of the 23rd September as the date for the opening of the New Zealand championship meeting has been adversely criticised in Auckland. If the date is adhered to, several of the regular attendants from Auckland will be unable to make the trip. There seems a fair attendance from Auckland will be made to have the date brought back to about the 9th, which will be in line with the dates chosen for some years past.

A Fine Performance.

Mr. H. B. Lusk, of Christchurch, playing Mr. P. Upton on Tuesday last, held out the course at Middlemore in 76, made up as follows:—

Out—4, 3, 6, 5, 4, 5, 4, 5—40.
In—3, 5, 4, 4, 4, 5—36.
This card works out to 3 up on bogey from scratch, which must be accounted a fine performance when it is remem-

bered that several of the temporary greens are in rather poor order, making putting very difficult.

The Captain's Prize.

Conditions were ideal on Saturday, and players in the opening round of the captain's prize had everything in their favour. No less than five matches ended all square, at which the handicapper should feel pleased. Several good performances were put up during the afternoon. MacCormick, playing the last nine in 39, was too strong for Tonks. Bamford and Colbeck had a strenuous game which was remarkable in that there were no less than six stymies to be negotiated. Upton put up a good fight against Burns, and, finishing in good style, squared the match. The other games in the A section provided interesting tussles, though not quite as close.

In the B grade most of the players were very evenly matched, and the eighteenth green saw the end of quite a number of hard fought matches. The closeness of the finishes on Saturday promises well for the succeeding round. All the games that finished square on Saturday must be replayed before next match day, to enable the next round to proceed. Lawrence is to be congratulated upon his victory over Stringer. Stringer showed good form, going round in 87, but this was not good enough to win, as, notwithstanding two very inferior eights, Laurence was round in 88, and his one-stroke handicap helped him to a 3 and 2 win.

His Excellency the Governor was at Middlemore on Saturday, and indulged in a foursome during the afternoon.

CHRISTCHURCH.

(From Our Special Correspondent.)

On Saturday last a bogey handicap was the order of the day at Shirley. All medal and bogey handicaps are now divided into two classes, seniors and juniors (handicap 10 or over). The senior class was headed by J. C. Temple, who was all square from the 5 mark, and the junior by Dr. F. L. Scott, who was 3 up from 12. E. Boulton (11) was 1 up, and L. B. Andree (10) and L. W. Harley (9) were all square. The back-markers did not figure very prominently, the best of them being H. E. Wright (plus 2), who was 1 down. Wright has been playing very consistent golf this season, and he should figure well at the N.Z. championships, if he finds it possible to attend.

Tuson Cup.

The match for the Tuson Cup between Wellington and Christchurch will be played at Shirley on May 25th. The Christchurch team will be much the same as the one which played Dunedin, excepting that Lush, who is still up North, will not be available. H. E. Wright will, however, be able to play in this match. It has been under consideration whether to add to the singles or four-ball match to be played in the morning. Such a match would add to the interest of the event, and would probably be a desirable alteration. The return match will be played at Heretaunga during October. So far the Christchurch Club has won the only match played at Christchurch, and Wellington the two matches played at Heretaunga.

Four-ball Matches.

One of the most interesting matches in golf is the four-ball best-ball match, when the four players are of about the same strength. The position that gives rise to infinite possibilities is created when one of the partners holds a half safe, and the other can go out for big things to win. Some very exceptional best-ball scores are thus made. The chief drawback to a more extended adoption of such games is that they certainly tend to block the course. The rules provide that a match playing two balls

has the right to pass, but players, especially long handicap players, are often too diffident in asserting their rights, and the four-ballers are often too averse to being passed. Four good players can, if they try, keep their place on the course, but many long handicap men are now playing four-ball matches, and they are certainly very slow as a rule. The vogue of the four-ball is now so great at Home that the rules now provide for such matches. There is an impression abroad that three-ball and four-ball matches have no standing on the course, but to my mind this is quite a mistake. The fact that the rules contain provision for such matches effectually proves that they have standing. It is, of course, provided that a match playing two balls can pass a match playing three or four, but that does not deprive them of standing. The single player and the match playing odd holes has no standing, but that is all the rules provide for. Apropos of this, I was playing in a three-ball match recently, and we were playing the 16th hole, when a gentleman and a lady walked across from the clubhouse and played from the 17th tee. One of them lost a ball in the rushes ahead, and when we arrived at the tee one of us teed up and, calling fore, drove. They were still looking for the ball, but we heard the gentleman tell the lady that we had no right to pass them—I presume because we were a three-ball. If players would follow a common-sense plan and let a match playing faster go through, a lot of trouble would be saved.

HERETAUNGA.

I have seldom enjoyed a day's golf more than one I had at Heretaunga last week. The weather was perfection, and the links looked at their best. One can hardly imagine a more beautiful place, and the view from the clubhouse on a fine day is perfect. The running streams, the vivid green of the grass, relieved here and there by the presence of sheep, the beautiful bush and the grand isolated kahikatea make a memorable picture. Then again the pretty houses, now becoming quite numerous, and their well-kept gardens add to the effect. The birds that throng the streams seem quite accustomed to the passing stranger, and resent very little his efforts to locate his errant ball. The rain of the previous week had softened the course considerably, and very little run could be got on the ball. This had the effect of putting some of the two-shot holes out of reach, but that must always be the case where they are full length. If the links at Heretaunga are no softer than they were last week, the authorities need have no doubts as to the success of the next N.Z. championships. They tell me an elaborate scheme of bunkering is under consideration. The bunkering already done is effective as far as it goes, though I personally prefer side bunkering to barriers across the course. Still, where there is no rough in front of the tee some such scheme to secure an effective carry is necessary. The worst of it is that the very bad ball escapes by being too short, and the one a bit better has far the worst of it. The difficulty and expense of getting sand must create a severe problem for the committee to solve. Shirley is fortunate in that one only has to dig a hole and a very effective sand bunker is made.

The Ladies' Championship.

I see that the ladies are to fight out their championship at Nelson this year. I have heard very high commendation of the Nelson links from several sources. The country is evidently very suitable for golf links, and if the club is ever strong enough financially to bring the course to a high standard of excellence, it may be a very convenient additional course for the men's championships. Two Christchurch players of standing are now settled at Nelson, Messrs. Jim Wood and C. Treweek, and they, both as players and as men of long experience, will be acquisitions to Nelson golfing circles.

General Notes.

Mr. Harry Gillies, of Hamilton, has laid out an 18-hole course on his property, some two or three miles from Hamilton. I am informed that the country is river sand, and entirely suited for the game, and that the laying out has been done with care and skill. Hamilton is more than fortunate. Some weird-looking balls are to be seen in use nowadays. Dimples, stud-markings, some marking and stars are among the curiosities. Which of them will survive?

The creek at Shirley has accounted for a goodly number of balls, but the streams at Heretaunga must be paved with them.

CAMBRIDGE.

The following is the result of last week's monthly medal competition:—E. J. Wilkinson, 96 gross—14 handicap—83 nett (winner); A. H. Nichol, 94, 10—84; K. Caldwell, 97, 13—84; Rev. Father Murphy, 107, 22—85; N. Banks, 101, 16—85; J. Bryce, 107, 18—89; J. Banks, 99, 10—89; R. Muir, 104, 14—90; S. Dunbar, 110, 16—94; T. Middleton, 110, 14—96.

A match was played on the Cambridge links last week, between teams chosen by the captain and secretary. The following is the result, the captain's players being mentioned first in each case:—A. H. Nichol lost to J. Banks, 3 and 2; M. Wells lost to J. Wilkinson, 2—1; N. Banks won from R. Muir, 2—1; O. W. McBride was all square with T. Middleton; Father Murphy and S. Dunbar were also all square; W. R. C. Walker lost to E. Caddy, 2 up; J. T. Hindmarsh lost to J. Kinnear, 5—3; Miss R. Taylor beat Miss Wells, 3—2; Miss Cox lost to Mrs. Croxford, 2—1; Mrs. Bunyard lost to Miss Willis, 2—1; Mrs. H. L. Nixon beat Mrs. Asher, 2—1. The secretary's team thus won by 6 to 4, two being halved.

On Monday last the weekly sweepstake medal handicap was won by M. Wells, with the good score of gross 90, handicap 14, net 76; R. Muir being runner-up with 103, 14—89.

WANGANUI.

A medal match was played on Thursday. The following are the results:—Class A: Miss Hawken, 1; Mrs. D'Arcy, 2. Class B: Miss C. Nixon, 1; Miss Lambert, 2.

The bogey competition, played on the Mororo links, resulted in a win for J. Soler (ser), who finished 2 down. K. J. Williams was next, 3 down, and T. Roberts third.

CARTERTON.

The first medal and shield competition for this season took place last week. Best cards were: W. Benton, gross 103, handicap 17, net 86; F. Bladen, 91, 4—87; J. T. Bicknell, 93, 4—89; B. Speedy, 94, 5—89.

OTAGO.

The monthly medal competition was played on the St. Clair links last week. The following are the best cards handed in:—

Gold Medal.—W. D. McCarthy, gross 85, handicap 8, net 77; D. M. Irvine, 91, 14—77; W. S. Ferguson, 96, 16—80; D. McFarlane, 94, 13—81; H. H. Jackson, 97, 15—82; H. D. Brewer, 98, 15—83.

Silver Medal.—E. J. Hocking, 95, 23—72; J. Lethbridge, 108, 27—81; F. J. Anderson, 108, 27—81; F. Leonard, 104, 21—83; T. E. Roberts, 107, 23—84.

MANAWATU.

Excellent weather prevailed for the golf match between the Wanganui Golf Club and the Palmerston North Club last week at the links at Hokowhitu. The match resulted in a win for the Palmerston Club by nine matches to three; one being halved. The results are as follows, Palmerston players being mentioned first in each case:—

A. Barrard beat J. Harold, O. H. Druce lost to J. Saunders, A. Scriver beat H. Meldrum, L. Seifert lost to H. D'Arcy, W. Strong beat J. Howorth, D. G. Moore beat G. Harrison, W. Seifert lost to K. Cameron, J. Slack beat M. Payne, A. L. Stedman beat D. Ritchie, H. G. Moore beat K. Bates, Dr. Wilson beat H. Bayley, L. A. Abraham halved with T. Jones, F. McHardy beat S. Rankin.

Golf is increasing in popularity in all parts of the Dominion, the latest town to form a club being Taumarunui.