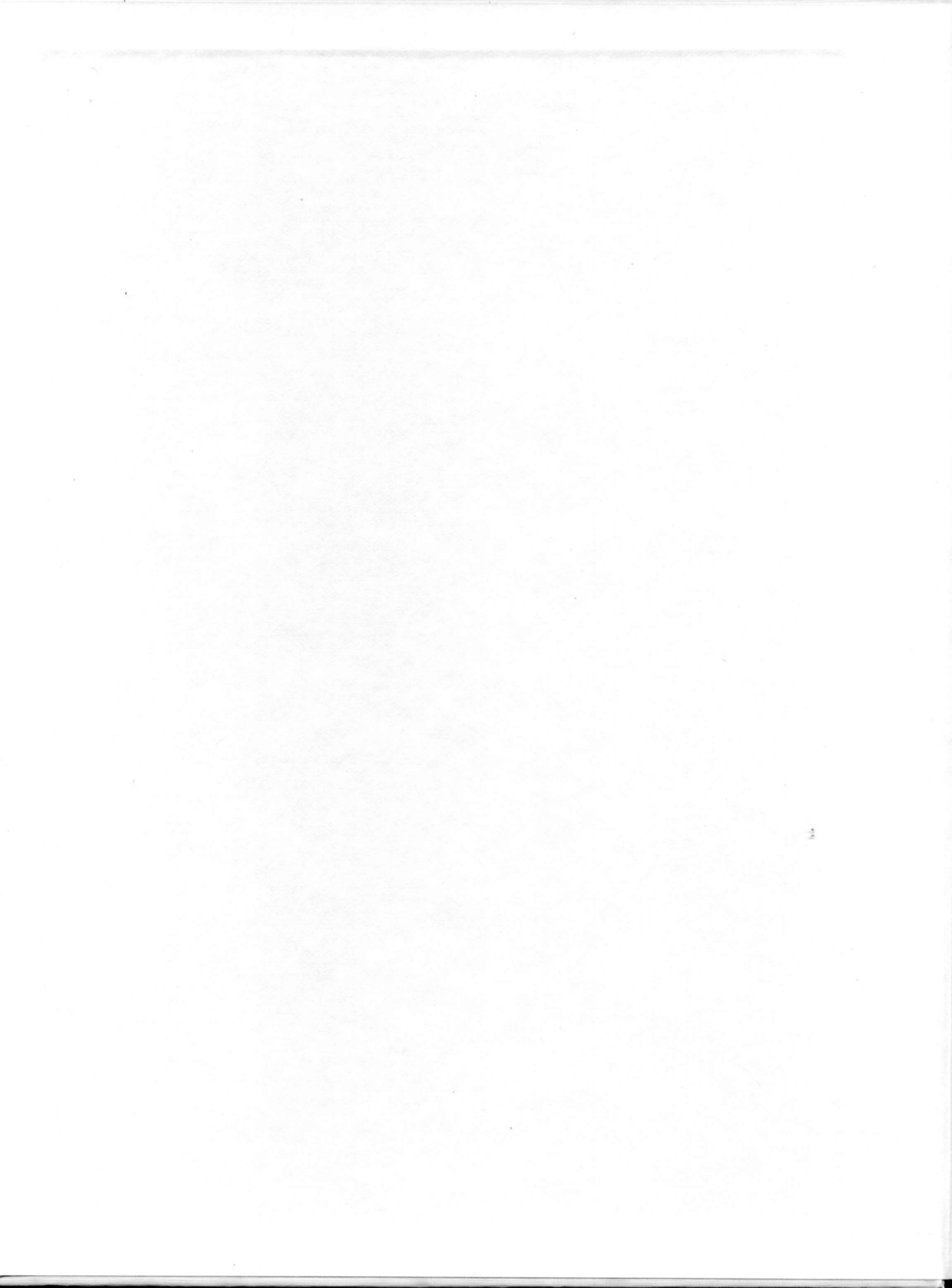


Steven J.H. van Hengel **Early Golf**







Early Golf

door: Steven J.H. van Hengel

Twee opmerkingen over dit boek

Een verbetering

Sedert hoofdstuk 4 – over de in 1297 te Loenen gespeelde colf/kolf-wedstrijd – door de thans overleden Steven J.H. van Hengel (1925-1985) werd geschreven, zijn de gegevens waarop zijn stelling was gebaseerd nader onderzocht.

Tijdens dit onderzoek vonden we ook een, aan Van Hengel onbekend, document uit 1689 waarin, naast andere zaken, feesten en spelen in het algemeen te Loenen werden geregeld.

Beide onderzoeken hebben tot resultaat dat de veronderstelde vroege datum en plaats (1297, Loenen) voor een colf/kolf-wedstrijd niet ondersteund wordt door feiten. Zie: Golf Journaal, december 2002/januari 2003, p. 48-49.

Het inmiddels oudst bekende schriftelijke teken over het colf-kolf-spel in de Lage Landen vinden we terug in het boek Merlijn van Jacob van Maerlant en is te dateren in 1261*.

Een toevoeging

In 2002 is een nieuwe tekst bekend geworden die aangeeft dat colf/kolf in de Lage Landen een grote verspreiding had. De tekst komt voor in een boekje dat in 1545 werd uitgegeven door een Nederlandse schoolmeester. Het boekje werd gevonden en gepubliceerd door Heiner Gillmeister, verbonden aan de universiteit van Bonn (Duitsland).

Het is een cursus Latijn uitgaande van gehele zinnen, zoals: *Latijn op reis*. De zinnen konden gebruikt worden in het alledaagse verkeer binnen de Latijnse School; hier waren de leerlingen namelijk verplicht onder elkaar Latijn te spreken.

Een van de hoofdstukken gaat over tijdens het kolven te voeren gesprekken. Het is getiteld *De clavis plumbatis*: Over (het spel met de met) lood verzwaarde stokken. In het boekje wordt de stok aangeduid met het Nederlandse *kolve* en het spel met *kolven*. De voorgeprogrammeerde zinnen, door leerlingen onder elkaar te gebruiken tijdens verschillende spelsituaties, laten zien dat *kolven* met vroeg *golf* te vergelijken regels had.

De tekst maakt duidelijk dat in de eerste helft van de 16^e eeuw *colf/kolf* een gewone tijdspassing in de Nederlanden was. Zie: *Encyclopaedia Britannica* 2002, trefwoord: Sports/Golf, p. 151.

Dr J. Ayolt Bongers

16 november 2007

- Gecorrigeerd en aangevuld door Do Smit, november 2016*

Early Golf

by: Steven J.H. van Hengel

Two remarks concerning this book

A correction

Since chapter 4 – about the first game of *colf/kolf* being played in 1297 at Loenen – was written by the late Steven J.H. van Hengel (1925-1985), the evidence for his assumption has been analysed in detail.

Apart from this re-investigation we also found a document dated 1689, unknown to Van Hengel, in which, among other things, festivities and the playing of games in general at Loenen were regulated. From both findings it follows that the suggested early date and place (1297, Loenen) for the game of *colf/kolf* is not substantiated by facts. See: *Golf Journaal*, december 2002/januari 2003, p. 48-49. The now oldest known written sign on the *colf/kolf* game in the Low Countries can be found in the book *Merlin* by Jacob van Maerlant (1261)*.

An addition

New (since 2002) evidence for *colf/kolf* being widespread in the Low Countries is found in a printed booklet edited in 1545 by a Dutch schoolmaster and traced by Heiner Gillmeister from Bonn University (Germany).

It is a Latin course with complete sentences, some sort of *Latin for travellers*, to be used in everyday situations for schoolboys of the Latin School, who were obliged to speak Latin during school.

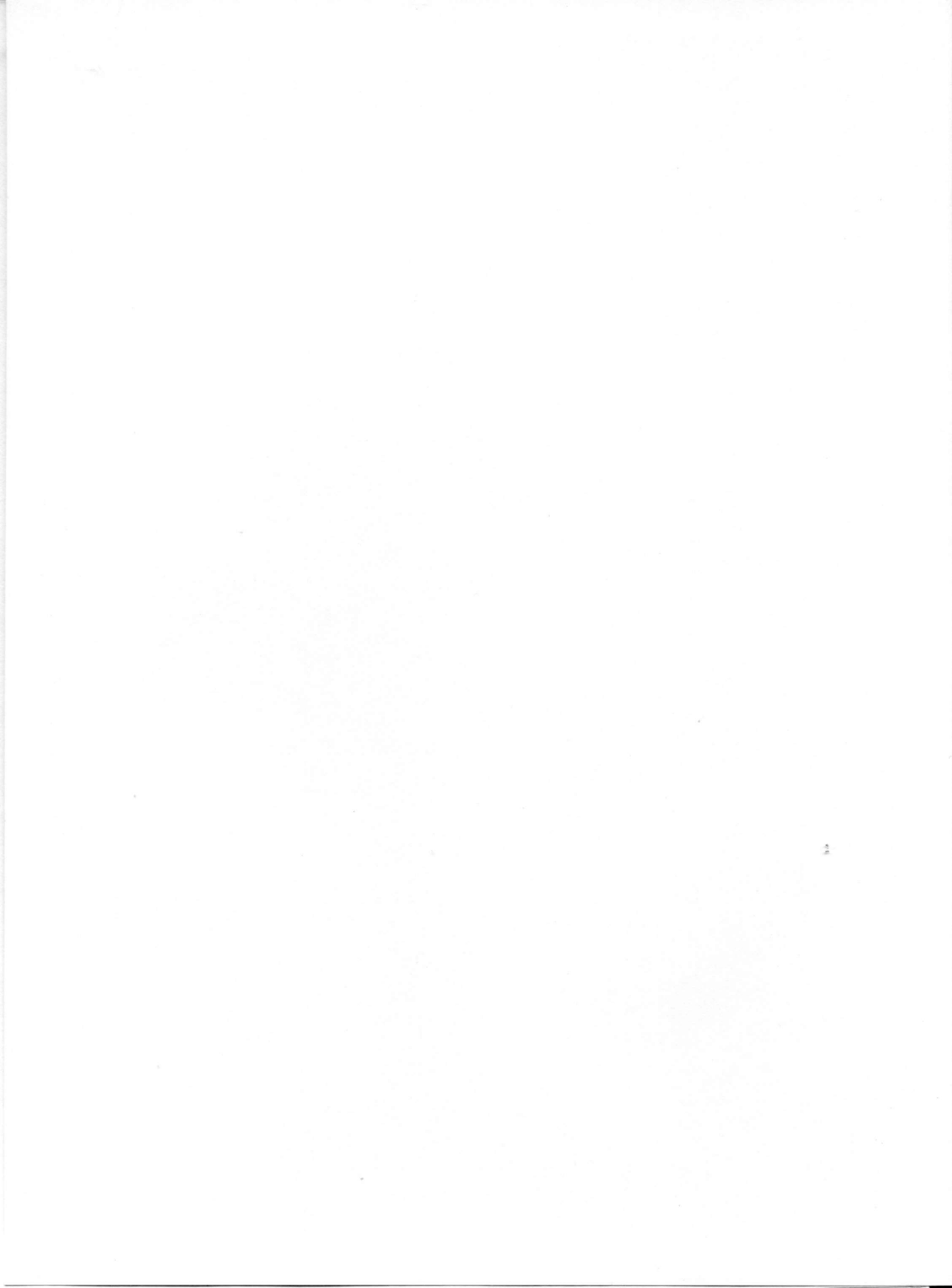
One of the chapters (situations) is titled *De clavis plubatis*: 'On the (game with the) leaded clubs'. In this booklet the club is called a *kolve* and playing the game: *kolven*. Sentences, used in different situations, demonstrate that *kolven* has rules comparable with those of early *golf*.

From this text it is clear that in the first half of the 16th century *colf/kolf* was an accepted and common pastime in the Netherlands. See: *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 2002, heading: Sports/Golf, p. 151.

Dr J. Ayolt Brongers

November 17, 2007

* Corrected and added by Do Smit, November 2016



EARLY GOLF

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by

Steven J.H. van Hengel



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Detail from a painting by Hendrick Avercamp (1585–1634), Gemälde Galerie, Dresden.

Foreword

My mind, like everyone else's, was once subjected to the process of formal education. It must have been a frustrating business for the series of teachers, crammers, lecturers and tutors toiling to implant knowledge on that arid, barren plot.

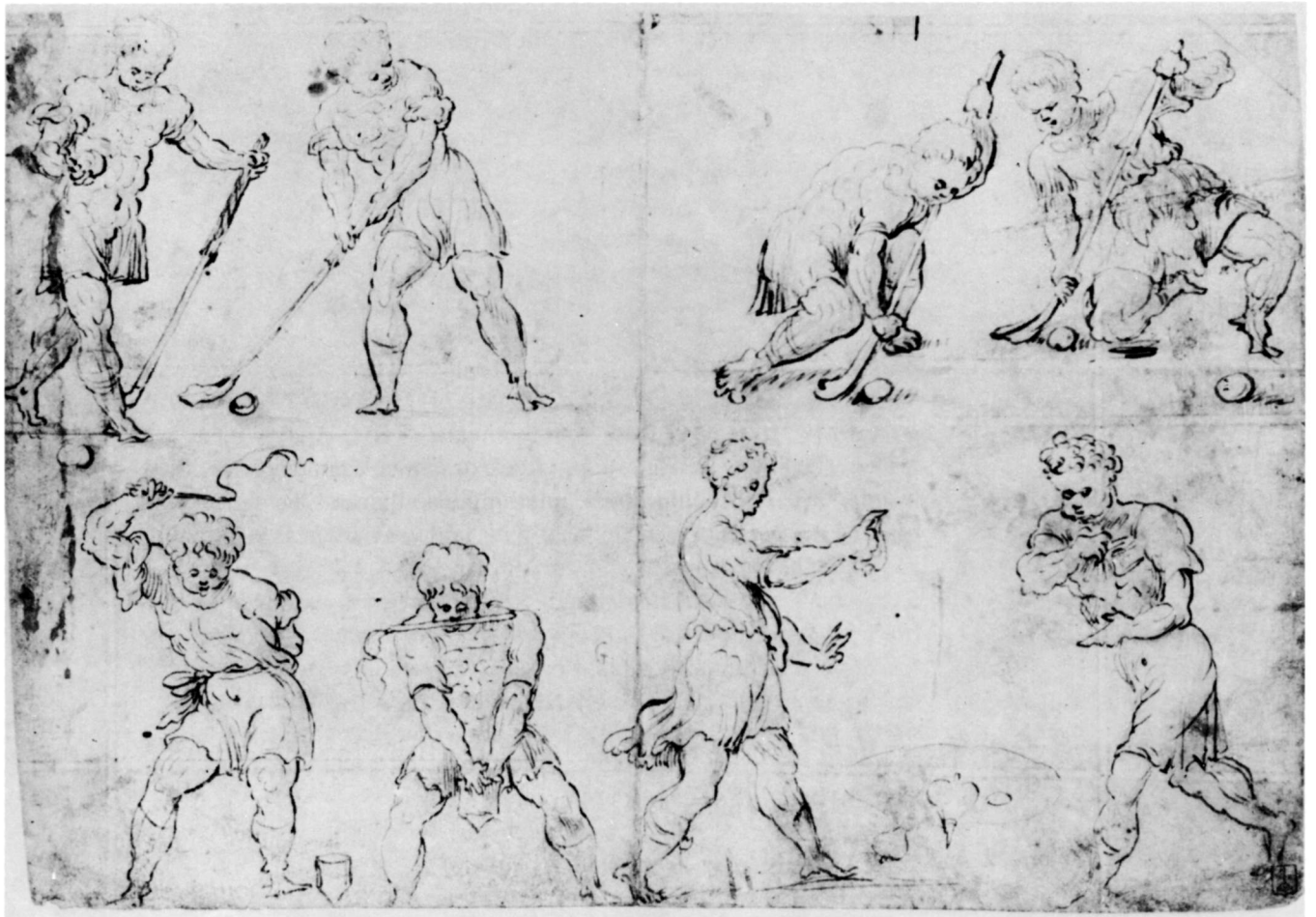
In the intervening years such shrubs of knowledge as were painstakingly nurtured have been subjected to drought. Integral calculus and related mathematical specimens withered immediately. Latin was eaten by caterpillars. History and geography were blighted by frost. My mind became a dustbowl, infested by weeds of inconsequential knowledge which seeded from the bird droppings of experience. Only one plant survives from fifteen years of compulsory education, a casual remark by my law tutor: 'The secret of being a good lawyer is not knowing the law but knowing where to look it up.' That struck me as an admirable philosophy for life.

As a specialist writer on the game of golf I have acquired an extensive library of books, magazines and newspaper clippings. The contents are catalogued and indexed. Therefore I am an expert. Well, not quite. The totality of knowledge about golf is not yet documented so, in order to sustain the pose of an expert, I need access to genuine experts, people who actually know about golf. In the field of early Dutch golf, and that means early golf no matter how those nationalistic Scots may squirm, the ultimate authority is Steven van Hengel. Like all good historians he has the soul of a detective. When his researches turn up a clue he examines it with scholarly suspicion. He sniffs it, holds it up to the light, taps it with a pencil and tries it on the tip of his tongue. As often as not he instantly exposes the clue as a charlatan. Some of his most interesting and valuable work has been in proving the fraudulence of 'facts' which we card-index experts have regarded as cornerstones of golf history. But if this clue is not what it purports to be, then what does it in fact signify? The detective has his lead and the hunt is on, delving into mediaeval archives, checking and cross-checking every point. Eventually, and the process may take years, he nails the true facts and judgement is pronounced *ex cathedra*.

Every fact which is hall-marked 'S v H' carries a guarantee of proof, it is unalloyed by guesswork and speculation. You can therefore well imagine what a boon it is to an expert such as myself to be able to feed on his scholarship. Now this book makes public gift of his life's work. I just hope that it is an interim volume for one thing is certain: the detective will never give up his search for the truth about golf.

Peter Dobereiner
August, 1982

10 Study of colf-players and
others, abt. 1550
Lambert Lombard
(1505-1566)
pen-drawing, 19.8 x 28.9
cms
Inv.Nr. 2138
Musée de l'Art Wallone,
Liège
(the sketch may date from
his Antwerp period)



Introduction

The title of these writings has not been chosen lightly. It is not 'The earliest golf' or 'Origins of golf' simply because it is improbable that the exact point of origin of golf will ever be found. When my first writings under this title appeared 10 years ago they created somewhat of a stir. It had never been realized that consequential research could bring so many facts about early golf to light. Until then readers had to go by the few facts which had been found in Victorian days and which had inspired the most fantastic stories of the writers of that period. They even inspired the creation of a game in the Low Countries called 'Het kolven' which never existed in the form in which it was described. As for Scotland the legend was formed that the game originated by shepherds shooting pebbles into rabbit-holes with their crooks. Strangely, there were shepherds who shot pebbles with their crooks, but not in Scotland but in Western Germany. The hunting laws of 1338 of Dreieich near Frankfurt am Main stated that the local shepherds had grazing rights into the forests there as far as they could shoot a pebble with one stroke. The length of these 'drives' was marked by permanent stones, the 'Hirtensteine' (Shepherd's stones). Some of these may still be found today near Frankfurt golf club. In the introduction to the first article about early golf I said that piecing the early history together was rather like composing a jig-saw puzzle with quite a few pieces missing. Research went on and in the last 10 years many of the missing pieces have been found.

No effort has been made to relate the early history of the game to even earlier Persian, Egyptian, Greek or Roman games or to 'Cambuca'. This could not be anything else than a speculation. Even if these games were played with a club and a ball they may equally well have been fore-runners of hockey or polo.

Research was not only done in the Low Countries but also in Scotland and England. A tribute should be paid to Ian Henderson and David Stirk for what they have achieved and may be found in their books 'Golf in the making' and 'Royal Blackheath'. The reader who possesses this book as well as the other two disposes of all the known historical facts about golf. Seeing the amount of work which was put into the research on both sides of the North Sea it is unlikely that much more will be found than is available at this time.

These lines are based on extensive investigations. Even so, the

research, involving some 7000 man-hours, should not be considered exhaustive.

It is disappointing that all the work done in Scotland has not unearthed more data about the game called 'Goff'. Little is known about its character other than that it was played with some club and some ball. It seems safe to assume that it must have been something similar to 'colf' as described here.

Tribute must also be paid to the cordial assistance given to the writer by many keepers of records and curators of collections of pictures and prints. Without their generous help these lines would never have been written.

Hopefully the reader will enjoy reading about those enthusiasts of 700 years ago and later who laid the foundations for what is – by now – the World's largest sport.

S.J.H. van Hengel
Bentveld, July 1982

The second edition

The first edition of this book having been sold out, the second edition is now published. It has been amended with such facts as have been found since the first publishing. A chapter on the earliest golf in the United States has also been included.

S.J.H. van Hengel
Bentveld, March 1985

The game of colf

Rarely, in the course of human history, has so much been written by so many on so few facts as on the history of golf in the Low Countries. There are, by now, some 4500 books on the game. Most of them commence with some history of golf; in virtually all of them one reads something about Dutch golf in the early days. If not copied from an earlier account, most of these writings are based on very few facts and on the evidence of some of the well-known pictures. Sometimes the wildest conclusions are drawn from an odd fact or two. In time this has led to the theory that there must have been something called 'Het Kolven' and the term has come to lead a life of its own.

Very few writers have mustered the courage to undertake more profound research on the subject. In fact for all the English-speaking writers there was a language problem but, even if there had not been, the search for the facts is not an easy one. There is all the more reason, therefore, to pay tribute to the late J.A. Brongers who, up to his untimely death in 1954, did most valuable research. From where he left off the search continued and by now has led to a fairly clear picture. We shall divide the history of golf into three categories:

the history of the old long game in the Low Countries from about 1300-1700 AD hereafter to be called:

COLF: the history of the short game which developed out of the long game from 1700 to this day and is still played in Holland called: KOLF; and finally the history of what commenced in Scotland somewhere around 1450 and developed into the worldwide game of today GOLF.

Indexes to old records are rarely based on the development of sport. It is however a fortunate circumstance that the city- and country-magistrates did not favour the game in view of the damage caused by the players! The main cause must be looked for in the balls then in use. The wooden and leather balls of the earliest days had a tendency to veer off their intended line of flight with such results as broken windows in houses and churches, injuries to passers-by etc. With great zeal the authorities endeavoured to move the enthusiastic players, who could not be made to stop their game altogether, out of the cities and onto the ramparts sur-

rounding them, where the chances for misfortunes were slighter. In some cases indeed, players enjoyed a certain measure of protection when playing there.

Thanks to the many ordinances made (the Register of Sources at the end of this account is only a selection) we can trace the game and its development quite easily as long as city ordinances were made. This takes us to the beginning of the 14th century as before that time there are hardly any ordinances of this nature. Fortunately too the game proved attractive to many artists in the 16th and 17th centuries and even earlier and study of the many works of art from that period has produced useful data. Finally the research was extended to other sources. Records of Guilds, inasfar as these are still available, proved to be another useful source, mainly in connection with the manufacture of playing materials. Street names, name-stones on houses, tiles and many other artistic products provided more information.

Two further remarks must be made. In the search for the origin of any historical topic one should concentrate on the facts one can find. Many ordinance books have disappeared and it may well be that the game was played somewhere at an earlier date than can be proved now. In other cases the problem is simpler. If in a series of ordinances in the same place the game appears at some period, and other similar ordinances of earlier dates do not mention it, it is fairly safe to assume that it was not played there before the first traceable date (e.g. 1-6). In this account colf is mentioned as being played somewhere and at some time only if this can be established by documentary or iconographic evidence.

There is absolutely no doubt that colf was an early form of golf, as will appear later in this account. Medieval spelling is all but uniform. In the records it may be found as: spel metten colve, den bal mitter colven te slaen, colven, kolven, colffven, colfslaen, colf te speelen, cloten mitter colve, doen mit colven etc.

The present account is based on research in 4 national record offices, 46 city record offices, 10 other public and private collections of documents and libraries, 55 public and private collections of pictures and prints (both at home and abroad) and a fairly sizeable volume of literature. The writer does not pretend to have completed his work to the full.

The Low Countries and Scotland

Nobody knows who invented the game. It is unlikely that this puzzle will ever be solved. To find an answer one would have to find the first game and the persons who invented it.

The mere fact that records of the game or pictures can not be found at a certain time or at a certain place is in itself no evidence that the game was *not* played there.

Keeping to the records and pictures: these are decidedly older and more numerous to the east of the North Sea than to the west (illustrations 1 and 2). As far as pictures are concerned, the first picture in Scotland on which golfers may be seen dates from 1746. In the Low Countries there are known to be more than 450 pictures prior to that date and commencing around 1500.

This may not be more than half the total.

Let it be said again that for a critical historian this is not an argument for or against the points of view of either party to the discussion. Documentary evidence in Scotland begins in 1457, in the Low Countries around 1360. There are a great number of references of the early days in that area.

When looking at the maps showing the early development of the game it is curious to note that all the places where golf was played in Scotland are on the side facing the Low Countries.

Golf did not in fact reach the west coast of Scotland before about 1850. Also all the places where it was played in Scotland were ports which traded across the sea with the Low Countries.

One thing, however, is certain. There has been considerable interaction between players in the Low Countries and players in Scotland. From 1485 – and maybe earlier – to well into the 17th century there was a massive export of balls from Holland and Zeeland to Scotland (BB) while around 1650 Scottish wooden clubs were exported to, and used in, Holland (A). Regular contacts between the two countries afforded plenty of opportunity for exchange.

The relationship between Scotland and the Low Countries is a happy one and of very long standing. Never, in the long and turbulent history of Europe, have the

countries been at war. They are probably the only two countries that can state this.

The oldest ambassadors from Holland to Scotland must have been the fishermen. In their frail vessels they followed the shoals of herring along the East coast of Britain in the late summer and early autumn. This took them all the way up to the Shetland Islands and the Orkneys where ancient separate Dutch churchyards bear witness of the risks involved in fishing for herrings. Part of their catch was sold in Scotland.

It may not be common knowledge but to this day the coat of arms of the kingdom of Scotland and the county of Holland are absolutely identical: gules a lion rampant dexter on a field of gold.

There is a series of relationships between the sovereign houses on both sides of the North Sea.*

Equally there was a steady development of trade across the North Sea from the Middle Ages onward. In that period Dutch merchantmen were regular callers at Scottish ports and their counterparts frequented virtually all the ports in Holland and Zeeland. From early on they also visited the two great annual fairs, at Easter and at All Saints Day (the 'cold' market) at the city of Bergen op Zoom on the Scheldt. Exports of golf balls from there to Scotland shall be mentioned later. On the West side of the North Sea there was the Senzie Fair at St Andrews in Fife. This annual fair was held for 15 days in April from before 1350 until 1581, reaching its peak as a trade fair around 1451. It was located in the Priory grounds, probably near the Sub Prior's house: Senzie House.

In the 12th century the fair was visited by many merchants from the Low Countries as well as France, Norway and other commercial centres, who sold their goods there and the harbour was filled with between 200 and 300 vessels from these countries.

Unfortunately, since St Andrews was not a Royal Borgh but a Bishop's Burgh, no customs or excise records were made. (The Saint Andrews Society of St Andrews)

It remains a puzzle whether balls from Brabant were sold at the fair. As from 1400 onwards the chances are there.

On the 18th October 1578 a noteworthy treaty was concluded between the city of Veere and the kingdom of Scotland. Thereby the Scottish wool staple was es-

established at Veere and privileges were granted to the Scottish merchants residing there.

A 'Conservator' (today he would be a consul general) was to be appointed at Veere to look after the Scottish interests arising out of the agreement. Veere's merchantmen were first mentioned in Scotland in 1471 but must have sailed there much earlier.

Diplomatic relations between Scotland and the 'Republic of the United Six (later Seven) Provinces of the Netherlands' were fostered by the Scottish king's envoy in The Hague and the 'Agent' of the Republic in Edinburgh from about 1580.

Not only was there trade both ways: from 1574 to 1826 Scottish mercenary soldiers served in the forces of the States General in considerable numbers. This again led to numerous marriages with Dutch women. Marriage registers, such as are left, in the Netherlands between 1574 and 1665 record some 4800 marriages of that nature. One a week! On Adriaen van de Velde's painting of 1668, now in the National Gallery in London, two Scotsmen in kilts may be seen playing golf on the ice north of Haarlem.

These were probably two of the mercenaries.

* In 1162 Ada, sister of King William 'the Lion' of Scotland (1143-1214) was betrothed to Florence III Count of Holland (1140-1190), a happy marriage until Florence's death in the Holy Land in 1190 while on crusade. Ada outlived him by at least 15 years. She died after 1205. Their marriage had a curious consequence.

When William the Lion's last issue in the straight line, Margaret 'the Maid of Norway', died in 1290, lateral succession to the Scottish throne became effective. The then reigning Florence V Count of Holland (1256-1296) could – and did – claim the throne of Scotland through his great-great-grandmother, the other valid claimants being John Balliol and Robert Bruce, with lesser claims.

Edward I of England favoured John Balliol 'Toom Tabard' (Empty Coat) however. In 1296 Florence V was murdered in the same year in which John Balliol died and so Robert Bruce, after a bitter war with Edward I was king of Scotland in the end.

Thus a personal union between the two countries was not realized at the time.

When Henry Frederick Stuart (1594-1611) was born as first son and Crown Prince to James VI & I Stuart, King of Scotland (1566-1625) the king invited the States General of the young 'Republic of the United Six Provinces of the Netherlands' to stand godfather over his eldest son. At the christening at Stirling Castle on Friday 9th September 1594 an embassy from the States General under the leadership of Walraven, Lord of Brederode, Vianen, Ameyde etc. Advocate (President) of the States of Holland and one of the last (bastard) issues of the house of Holland attended to assume its responsibilities. The gifts to the child at that occasion evidence the cordial relationship:

1. Two fair large cups of gold;
2. A golden coffer containing a 'letter of obligation' (bond) assuring the young man of an annual 'pension' as long as he lived from thereon of 5000 guilders (then set at £ 500 Scots – a truly princely sum). The bond was superscribed by the two ambassadors and 'divers other chief governors' and the money was payable to the Scottish 'Conservator' at Veere (to whom we shall revert later);
3. Divers other presents;
4. A portrait to be painted of him by a Dutch painter who was in the embassy. He was brought along specially for that purpose. Painters were virtually unknown in Scotland at the time.

Henry Frederick died at the age of 17 in 1611.

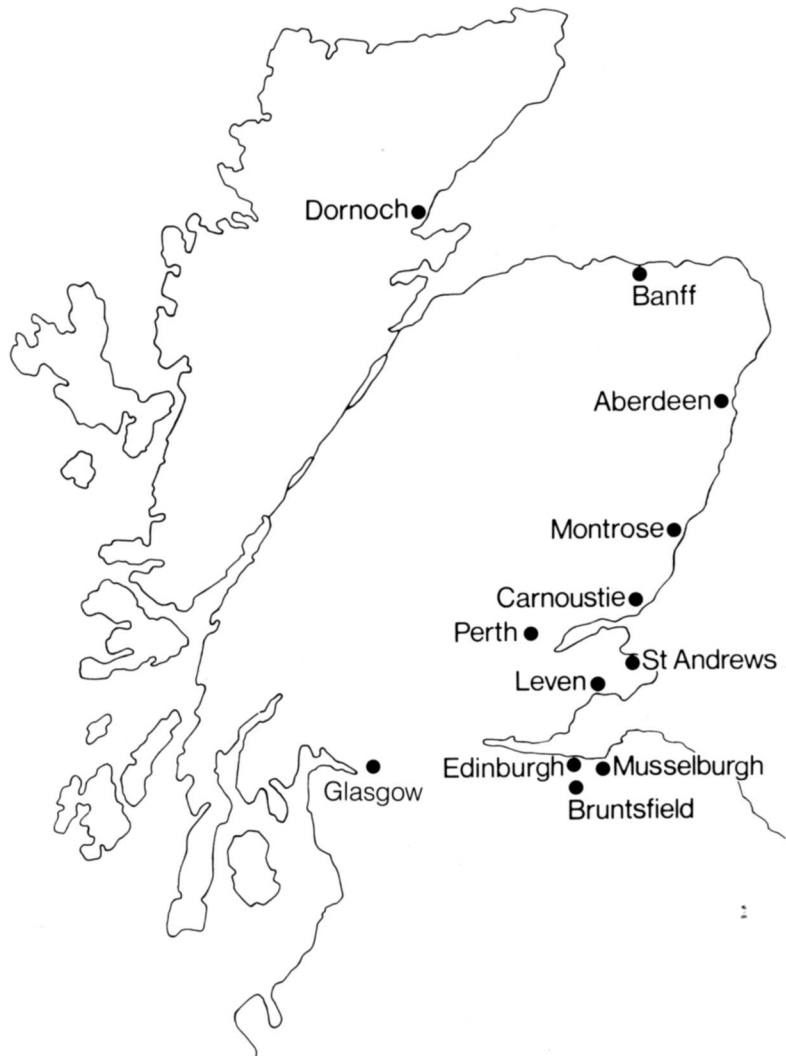
Mary Stuart, daughter of his brother Charles I king of Britain (1600-1649) married William II Prince of Orange and Stadholder of the Netherlands (1626-1650) in 1641 when she was 10 years old and he 15. In 1650 Mary gave birth to a son William III (1650-1702).

In 1677 William III Prince of Orange married Mary II Stuart, elder daughter of James VII & II king of Britain (1633-1701).

Through this marriage he eventually became king of Britain in April 1689. He was then William III Prince of Orange, Stadholder of the Netherlands, William II king of Scotland and William III king of England.

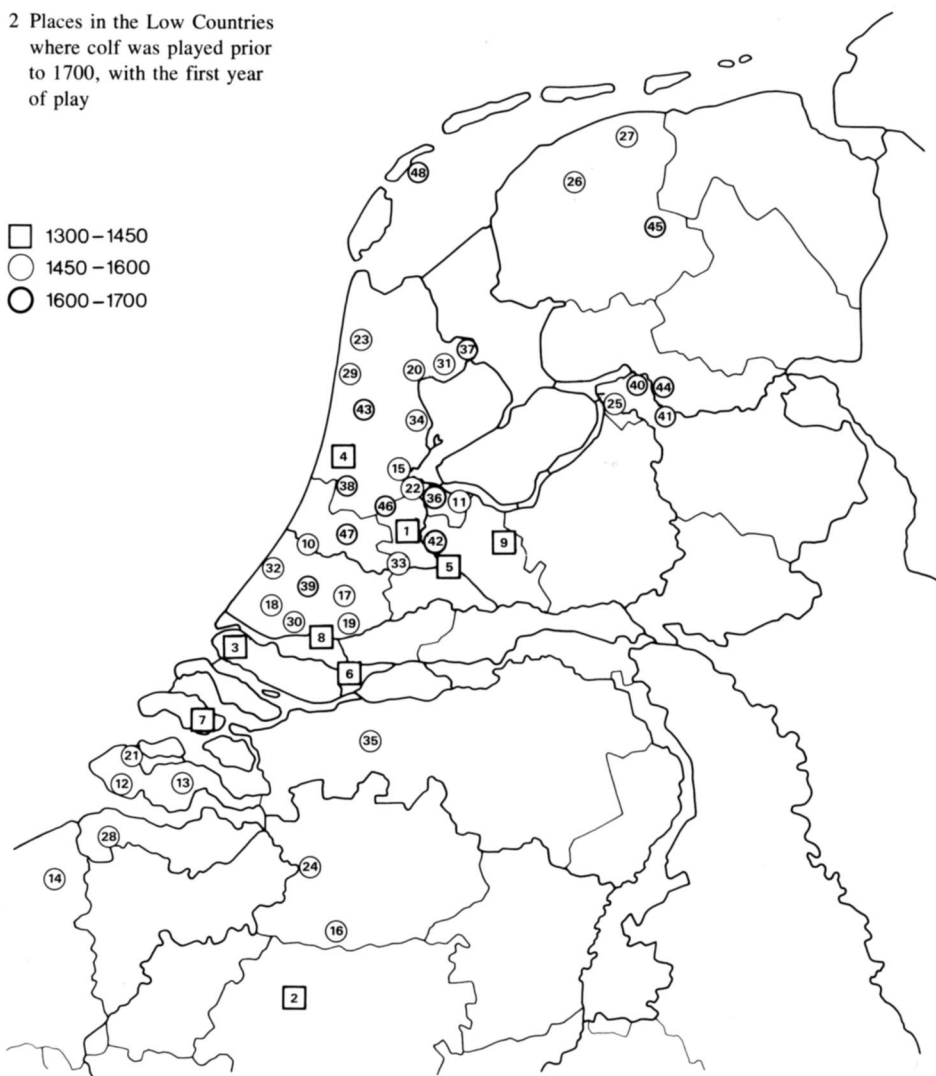
And so, for a brief period of 13 years, it came to a personal union between Scotland and the Netherlands at the end of the 17th century after a missed chance at the end of the 13th century.

1 Places in Scotland where
'goff' may have been played
prior to 1650



2 Places in the Low Countries
where colf was played prior
to 1700, with the first year
of play

- 1300–1450
○ 1450–1600
○ 1600–1700



- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1 1297 Loenen aan de Vecht | 26 1566 Leeuwarden |
| 2 1360 Brussel | 27 1571 Dokkum |
| 3 1387 Brielle | 28 1578 Aardenburg |
| 4 1390 Haarlem | 29 ca. 1580 Egmond |
| 5 1399 Utrecht | 30 1581 Schiedam |
| 6 1401 Dordrecht | 31 1581 Westwoud |
| 7 1429 Zierikzee | 32 1583 's-Gravenhage |
| 8 1431 Rotterdam | 33 1583 Woerden |
| 9 1436 Amersfoort | 34 ca. 1590 Edam |
| 10 1454 Leiden | 35 1595 Breda |
| 11 1456 Naarden | 36 1606 Muidenberg |
| 12 1461 Middelburg | 37 1612 Enkhuizen |
| 13 ca. 1469 Goes | 38 1625 Haarlemmermeer |
| 14 1477 Brugge | 39 1628 Zoetermeer & Zegwaard |
| 15 1480 Amsterdam | 40 1634 IJsselmuiden |
| 16 1481 Mechelen | 41 ca. 1640 Zwolle |
| 17 1488 Gouda | 42 ca. 1650 Oud Zuilen |
| 18 ca. 1500 Delft | 43 1650 Fort Orange en het dorp
Beverwyck, Nieuw Neder-
land (Albany, N.Y., U.S.A.) |
| 19 1517 Gorinchem | 44 1653 Hasselt (Ov.) |
| 20 1531 Hoorn | 45 1654 Beesterzwaag |
| 21 1548 Veere | 46 1659 Ouderkerk aan de
Amstel |
| 22 1550 Muiden | 47 ca. 1660 Nieuwkoop |
| 23 ca. 1550 Alkmaar | 48 1691 Vlieland |
| 24 1553 Antwerpen | |
| 25 1561 Kampen | |

Origin

Much has been written about the origin of the game. Before going into this we should try to establish a definition of what can be considered a forerunner of the game.

Golf is a game in which a player, standing alongside the line of play, strikes a ball with a club:

- a. for the lowest number of strokes from one point to another; or:
- b. for the greatest distance for an agreed number of strokes.

As soon as we widen this definition many games without any clear relation to it would come into the sphere. On top of this we should define the game as a long game (distances of 100 meters and more).

Keeping the game thus defined we can well discard all the conjectures about Persian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman and other games often tentatively brought into the discussion. They may equally well be the forerunners of hockey, polo, lacrosse etc.

There are in fact only two older games which may be considered as forerunners: Mail (*Palle-maille*) and Chole (also: *Chouler à la crosse* & *Crosse*. The latter not to be confused with *Lacrosse*).

Mail is a game in which a wooden mallet is used to strike a wooden ball in the same manner as in colf and golf.

It existed in various forms in the Middle Ages. The most refined form, with 58 rules, reached its Zenith in the 17th century in France, the Low Countries and England. (B and C). It was played up to World War II in the vicinity of Montpellier in France.

Chole is a field game in which a wooden ball is struck with a club with an iron head, somewhat spoon-shaped. A Leyden ordinance in 1455 refers to it as 'smashing with spoons' ('smacken mit lepelen'). (60). It is still played today in the south of Belgium along the French border during autumn and winter. Its rules are rather different from the rules of colf and golf. The most probable course of events is that colf developed out of using the clubs of the latter game with some of the rules of the former, particularly 'Mail à la chicane'. Such mixing of games and rules was fairly common. There is enough evidence that on the four Mail-courses which were constructed in Holland in the

17th century (the Hague, Amsterdam, Leyden and Utrecht) colf was often played. In fact at the end of that century the shortened Mail-course formed the basis for the playing-court of the later kolf. Ordinances in Antwerp refer to colf and mail in the same places in 1597 and 1613. (14 and 15).

Finally 'kaatsen' (hand-tennis, palm-tennis, *jeu de paume*) must be mentioned. This game, now only played in the Netherlands (Friesland), Belgium and Southern France was once enormously popular all over the Low Countries and France. In the overwhelming majority of the ordinances it is mentioned side by side with colf. It had the same unpleasant consequences for public order and security. Colf, in the beginning, was played with wooden (elm or beech) balls and in fact these were used well into the 17th century. As late as 1642 they are still mentioned in an Antwerp ordinance (16) and they may also be found on pictures of that period. Kaatsers never used wooden balls as far as is known. They were too hard and might well have damaged the hands of the players who struck (and strike) them with their bare palms.

From early on they used white leather balls stuffed with cow hair, identical to those used today. Considering that kaatsen and colf were often played in the same places, it is not too wild a supposition that the colfers adopted the white ball of the neighbouring kaatsers. The first ballmakers are also mentioned in connection with kaatsen. (72).

Looking at the kaats-ball of today and comparing it with colf-balls used in the 16th and 17th century, one finds that both are put together in the same manner. Experiments with replicas of clubs made about 1600 and this type of ball have shown that they keep better to the line of play than the wooden balls. They were considerably more expensive so the colfers must have adopted the kaats-balls only as far as they could afford them. An illumination in a Book of Hours dating back to about 1500, now in the British Museum, shows a four-ball in progress with three brown balls and a white one. The adoption of the kaats-ball must therefore have taken place before then.

The beginning of colf: the 13th century

In all probability the first traceable game of colf took place on Boxing Day of the year 1297 at Loenen aan de Vecht in the Province of North Holland (then the County of Holland).

This was both a historical and a symbolic beginning. At nearby Muiderberg Florence V, sovereign Count of Holland and Zeeland, was murdered on 26th June 1296. Much has been written about that event. The chief criminal in that murder, or rather manslaughter (because the premeditation required for murder has never been established) was a young nobleman, Gerard van Velzen, Lord of Kronenburg. (95, HH and PP) Kronenburg was a manor partly combined with Loenen aan de Vecht. The castle of Kronenburg was a solid tower-fortress which had then been recently rebuilt and there the conspirators fled after the crime.

The sequel has never been fully clarified. The castle was besieged until famine forced its surrender, presumably on 26th December of that year, exactly six months after the siege had begun.

The story has it that Gerard and his fellow conspirators were broken on the wheel in front of the castle when they came out.

Thus compensation for the murder had been achieved and, as far as medieval justice went, that was the end of the case. The game of colf must have been started to commemorate the triumph of justice.

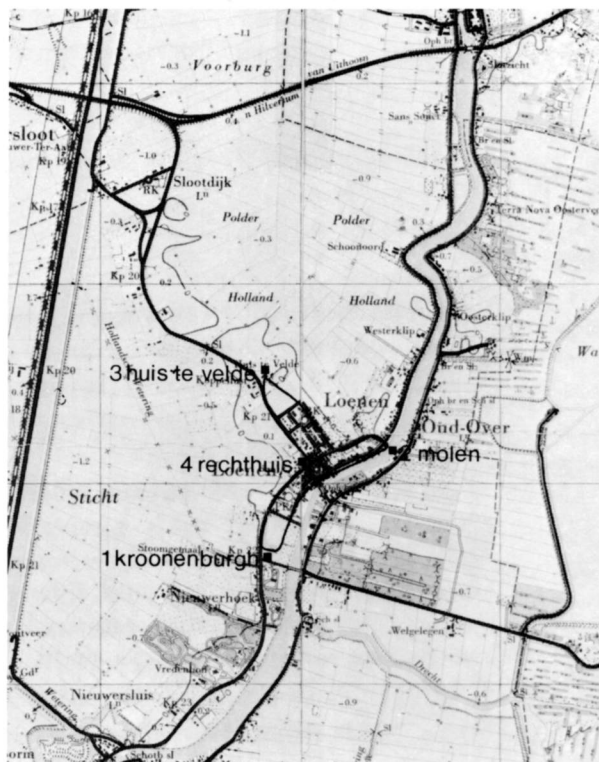
The game continued to be played each year on Boxing Day for almost 550 years until 1831. (K & DD) Then the castle was demolished and so one of the 'holes' disappeared. The evidence for the origin of the game is scanty but there is plenty of medieval symbolism in it to make up for it.

The game would be called an eightsome in modern terms.

Four players with wooden clubs on each side struck a

wooden ball in turn for the minimum of strokes for each 'hole'. The game commenced in front of the courthouse of justice in Loenen, continued eastward to the castle of Kronenburg: to the kitchen-door of the castle, possibly the door where the besieged had come out. There the Lord of Kronenburg (the chief culprit's heir) forfeited a cask of beer to the winners of the first hole and apples were showered on the spectators—doubtless a symbolic reminder of the siege.

Thence the next hole ran along the Vecht river to the mill (a manorial possession) and again to the door of it. The miller did not have to pay up for he was a co-villager. The third hole ran north-east from there to the castle Huis te Velde, Gerard's other castle on the opposite side of the village. The target was the front door and again the winners received a barrel of beer and there were apples for the spectators. Finally, from there the fourth hole ran along the highway southward into Loenen and to the door of the Courthouse. In ad-



3 Map of Loenen with the colf
course first used on Boxing
Day 1297

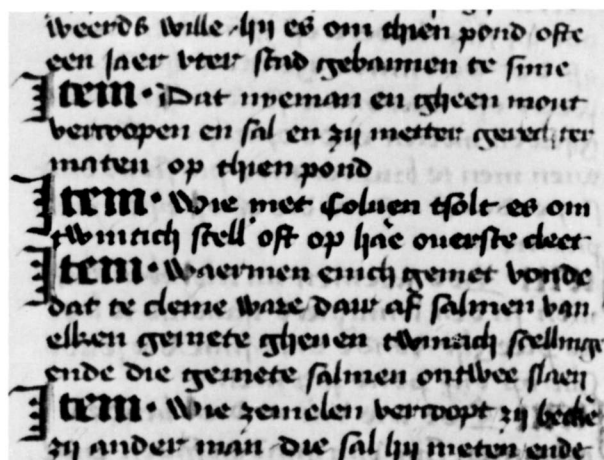
dition the Lord of the Manor had to pay compensation for all the breakage and damage arising out of the game! (K).

Although the exact evidence for the origin of this game cannot be found, the clear symbolism, so important in those days, provides a reasonably safe basis for the date.

Moreover we can learn something about the nature of the game. The course, which can be traced to this day, measured some 4500 metres for the four holes. Going by the results of experiments conducted with wooden clubs and balls it has become clear that one could

carry some 100 metres with a good stroke. Assuming that balls would not always have been holed (or rather: 'doored') with the first attempt, the score must have been something like 60 to 70 strokes.

Considering that the game can hardly have commenced before 1297 and not much later either because then there would have been a different background which would have been of more interest at that moment the dating seems safe. The choice of the game of colf for commemoration of such an important event shows that it must already have been popular at the time.



4 The oldest written reference to colf in the Southern Netherlands Ordinance Book of Brussels, 1360
Inv.Nr. A.V.B., A.A.,
Cartularium II, fol. 215v
City Record Office Brussels

The 14th century: the first charters

In 1360 the Magistrates of the city of Brussels issued an ordinance: 'Whoever plays ball with a club, that is at 20 shillings or at their upper garment' (Item wie met colven tsolt es om twintich scell' oft op hare overste cleet). Brief and clear! (35).

This is the first of an endless series by which scores of cities in the Low Countries tried to ban the game within their walls because of the breakage and damage resulting from it. The size of the fine in this first ordinance indicates the gravity of the offence in the eyes of the magistrates. Confiscation of clothes and otherwise were a method of collecting the fines. They could be redeemed later against payment of the amount due. On Saint Barbara's Day (4th December) 1387 Albrecht of Bavaria, Regent of Holland (for his mad brother William V) sealed a charter for the city of Brielle. It was an anti-betting ordinance of that city ('any game . . . for money, whatever it may be called'). (29). Four exceptions were made to the general prohibition, however:

kaatsen, backgammon-by day and not by night-, *to play the ball with the club* ('den bal mitter colven te slaen') *without the fortifications of our afore said city*, and shooting with the arch.

Whether these four exceptions were inserted by the city or by the Regent, because they were the four games popular at the court of Holland, cannot be traced. The Counts of Holland were notorious gamblers!

Whatever else, the charter shows that the game was accepted, even with betting, as long as it was played outside the city's walls.

This ordinance is even more typical and more specific than the earlier one from Brussels. The game, which was too popular to stop it, had to be dislocated from the cities and to be transferred to places where the chances of damage to persons and property were minimal. And damage there was. Many ordinances are

quite specific about it: Streets were blocked and good people injured. We can read that windows were smashed (D), mud and dirt were thrown against buildings by the clubs, persons using My Lord's streets were struck in their faces, against their bodies and against their legs (91 & 92), grass and crops were damaged, cows were chased away (66) . . . and all of this is but a small selection!

Play commenced right in front of the door of a player's house: in the 17th century one even sees children commencing their play in the hall and nobody seemed to worry about the damage. Breaking of window panes and church windows, some of them with stained glass, is most frequently encountered. (e.g. 84).

Before leaving Brielle let us mention that a wide and long street there was named Kolf-alley (now Kaats-court) and that it had an inn at one corner called 'The Club' ('De Kolf').

The desire of the magistrates to push the colfers out of the city is quite understandable!

'Twenty days into February in 1389 after the reckoning of our Court' (The Court of Holland used the Easter Style at that time: today we call this 1390) the



5 Roundel in a stained-glass window in Gloucester cathedral, England depicting in all probability a French 'chouleur'; abt. 1350

same Albrecht, who had recently succeeded his mad brother as Count of Holland, sealed another charter. He wished to display his gratitude to the city of Haarlem for services it had rendered him. He hoped moreover that they would render him still more services, as becomes clear in reading through the charter. (53).

He granted to the city 'the course', which they had already been using, 'for eternity'. It was a strangely shaped piece of land and therefore difficult to describe in the charter. It reads that the grant concerns 'the course that lies without the Forest Gate towards the forest, as big and as small as it lies there in these days'. In a way it was a planning permission in a modern style. The course was destined as 'a playing field' - 'for eternal days'. The term 'course' was only used in connection with kaatsen and colf at the time. That it was used for colf is clear from a later charter dated 22nd August 1497 concerning the mowing rights of the course and sealed by Philip the Fair of Burgundy, then Count of Holland. (54). Haarlem is a city where one finds few ordinances against playing colf in the city.

This is not surprising when one considers the magnificent course they possessed just outside the city gates. On 12th December 1483 the Mayors of Haarlem had already granted the mowing rights of the course to the 'Masters of the Hours' of the parish church (now the Cathedral) 'provided that, notwithstanding this privilege, the course remains lying there as a playing field

in accordance with the charter'. From the same document we learn that the course had been mown by the city's archery companies before then. (54).

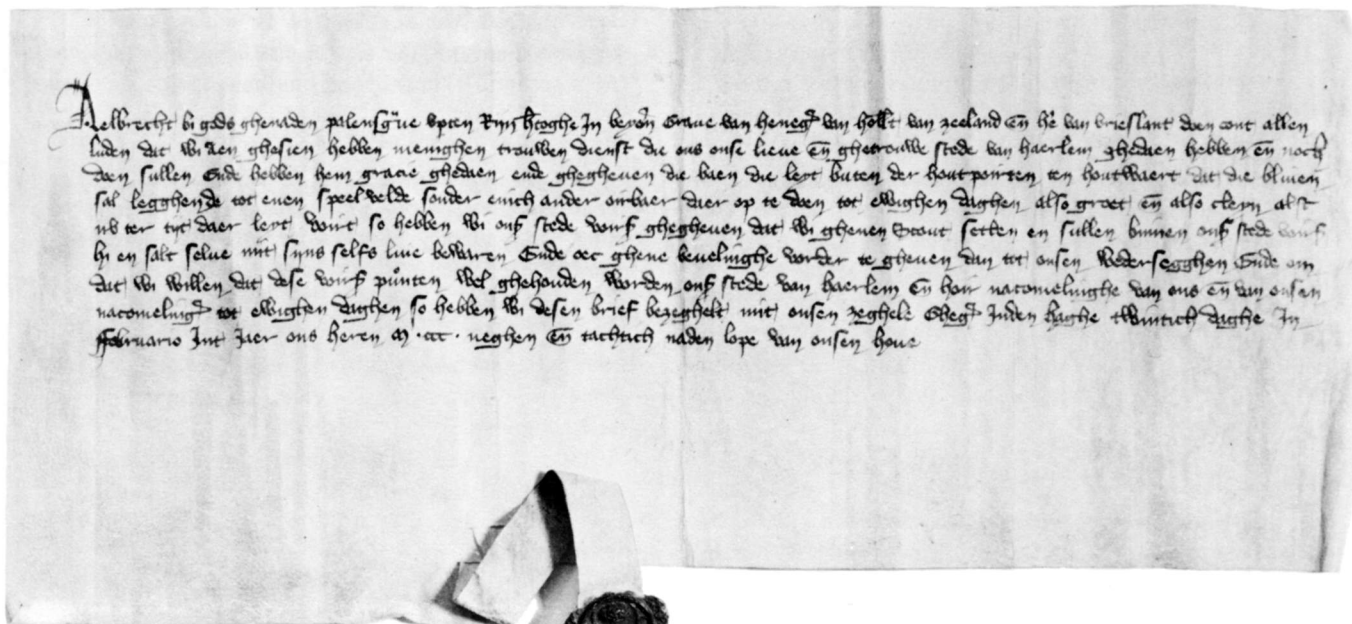
This was the ordinance which Philip the Fair confirmed in 1497. (54).

So Haarlem was unique in having a mown public golf course as early as the 15th century. Later on, when the game became still more popular in the 17th century, another colf-field was set up at the other side of Haarlem, outside Cross-gate.

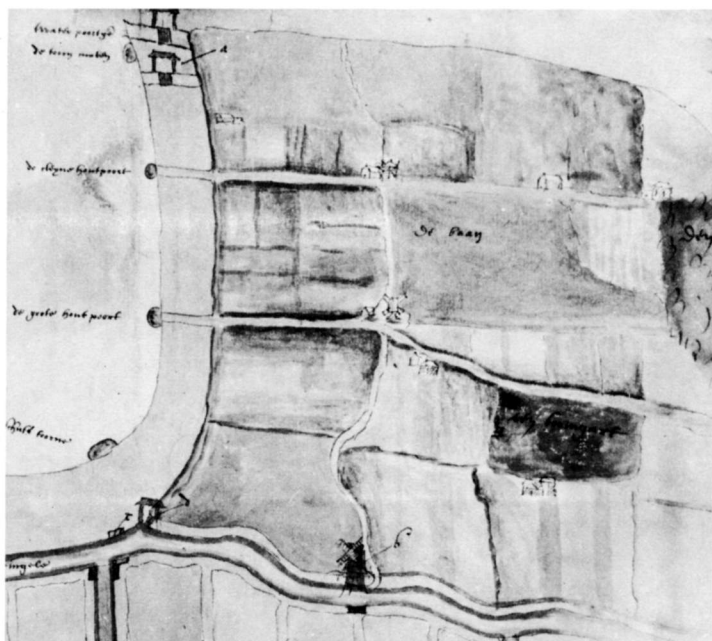
If Haarlem calls itself the City of Sports today it can proudly point to the possession of the world's first public golf course at such an early date.

6 The oldest written reference to colf in the Northern Netherlands
Charter of the City of Brielle, sealed by Aelbrecht of Bavaria Regent of Holland on the 4th December 1387
City Record Office, Brielle

The image shows a page from a historical Dutch manuscript, likely a charter or ordinance. The text is written in a Gothic script, characteristic of the late 14th or early 15th century. The parchment is aged and slightly discolored. The text is dense and covers most of the page, with some marginalia. The script is a formal Gothic bookhand, with clear, sharp letters. The text is written in a single column, with some lines starting with a large initial letter. The overall appearance is that of a well-preserved historical document.



Aelbrecht di gods gheunden palen ghe open sijn heerde in den omme van henege van helle van zeeland en he van dreslant den ont allen
 luden die wi den ghesien hebben menigken trouwen dienst die ons onse lieue en ghesconde stede van haerlem ghesien hebben en noch
 den sulen ende hebben hem grane ghesien ende ghesien die dien die leet daren der houtporten en houtbaert dat die bluen
 sal legghende tot enen speelvelde sonder enich ander omme die op te den tot eldighen dighen also gract en also clem al
 us ter tye daer leet dant so hebben wi onse stede van f. ghesien die wi ghesien want setten en sulen binnen onse stede van f.
 hi en sal selue mit sijn selve linc bekenen ende oer ghesene bekeninghe vander te ghesien den tot onsen heder-scachten ende om
 die wi willen dat dese wint pinnen sel ghesonden worden onse stede van haerlem en kon nacomelinghe van ons en van onsen
 nacomelinghe tot eldighen dighen so hebben wi desen brief beghelt mit onsen rechtelc oer den heder heder dighen in
 februarij int jaer ons heren m. cc. neghen en tachtich naden loze van onsen houe



7 Charter of the City of Haar-
 lem sealed by Duke Ael-
 brecht of Bavaria, Count of
 Holland (1330-1404) on the
 17th Feb. 1390
 Parchment and seal in green
 wax, 14 x 31 cms
 City Record Office, Haarlem
 Inv.Nr. Mr. A.J.E., 1-41

By this charter the count of
 Holland presented to the city
 a playing field in the Haar-
 lem Forest to be used for a
 colf course. The field had a
 length of about 320 m.

8 Map of the South Wall of
 the City of Haarlem and
 surroundings. On this map
 the course ('de baan') may
 be seen, 1542
 Pen and brush in waterco-
 lours on paper, 31 x 42.5
 cms
 City Record Office, Haarlem
 Inv.Nr. 429-2 Top. Atlas

15th century: Growth

In the course of this century we encounter references to the game of colf in ordinances of no less than 14 cities in Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht and Flanders. The map shown as illustration 2 makes the important role of the county of Holland abundantly clear. No fewer than half the cities (7) lie in that county. The 7 others are spread as follows: 3 in Zeeland (Middelburg, Zierikzee and Goes), 2 in Flanders (Bruges and Malines) and 2 in Utrecht (the city of Utrecht and Amersfoort). 28th September 1401 saw the completion of the ordinance book of the city of Dordrecht. Paragraph 204 leaves little doubt:

'Playing of ball-games

'Furthermore nobody shall play any ball games whatsoever, 'on the wide streets at the Gate-side nor at the Land-side (the two districts of the city) 'nor in churchyards, nor in churches, nor in cloisters, not to throw balls, nor to play balls with the club, at 1 pound, to be encashed straightaway wherever it is found.'

Again, the height of the fine and the specific details in the prohibition give a good impression of the enthusiasm for the game in Dordrecht. (45).

In the same year one can find the following passage in the ordinance book of the city of Utrecht:

'Furthermore the Council forbids . . . neither to play with the club nor to play tennis (probably: kaatsen) on Oudwijk field.'

The city fathers cannot have had much success with their ordinance, for three centuries later the Utrecht mail-course was constructed on that same field. This magnificent course, with its lanes and trees, so much caught the fancy of Louis XIV of France during his visit to Utrecht that he regretfully remarked that he would have transported the entire course to Paris had it only been possible. (LL).

An ordinance of the city of Zierikzee of 1429 enacts 'that nobody . . . strikes the ball on the streets with clubs with lead or iron heads.' For the first time this shows that two types of club were in use. (101).

In Rotterdam an ordinance of 28th July 1431 provides for compensation for damages to stained-glass windows. (84).

The magistrates of Leyden forbid play of colf inside

the city on 8th March 1454. (60). Here play on ice is mentioned specifically for the first time. For play in the vicinity of churches and churchyards the fines were doubled.

My Lords of the Court of Justice of the city of Amsterdam in their ordinance of 29th December 1480 refer to the game of colf rather disdainfully as 'mischief'. Play clearly went on in the Nes – a long and straight street. Players who played there would do so if apprehended- at the forfeit of the clothes they wear'. (8). They were left naked in the streets. In other cities measures did not go quite so far, but confiscation of hats, coats and garments as tokens was fairly common. (92).

A few years later, on 9th January 1484, Middelburg issued an ordinance of discipline for the Chamber of Poets (Rederijkers). They were allowed to walk the streets in long capes. If, however, one was found playing colf in his cape he would forfeit it. (77). In Gouda too, lead-headed clubs are mentioned in 1488. (49).

In 1500 play was permitted in Delft for grown-ups ('persons who were their own masters') inasmuch as they played in places where it was permitted (no further details) and provided that the bet on the game was no more than a modest consumption at the pub, in accordance with the social status of the players. (38). Gradually the authorities discovered the wisdom of assigning certain places for play rather than attempting to forbid it altogether. In Antwerp the Castle Square served for a course (15) and in Leyden it was permitted in 'enclosed grounds'. (60).

In this same period we also find evidence that there was a sufficient volume of play to keep artisans employed in making clubs and balls. On 11th March

9 Page from a Flemish Book of Hours depicting a four-ball of colf players at putting with three wooden balls and a leather one and presumably iron clubs, abt 1500 by courtesy of the British Library, London

KL	Septē. 12 f Oct. m. a. n. i. c.
ber: 1 g	
xxx: hūa xxx	a Lamberti.
16 f Egion:	9 b
5 g	c
a	17 d Vig.
13 b Cleuthen	6 e Adathi:
2 c	f Adania.
d	14 g.
10 e	3 a
f Nat. m.	b firmine.
18 g Adriani;	n c
7 a	d Cosme & da.
b	19 e
15 e hugois	8 f Michaelis
4 d	g. Ieronimi
e Exalt. aue.	phē.



1437 (again: *secundum cursum curiae*!) the 'Law and Council' of the city of Middelburg resolved that 'John the Ballmaker' who had rented the house 'In de Harsert' from the Marquess of Veere and 'organised kaats-games and other mischief' there would not enjoy the exemption from excise which the Marquess himself enjoyed. (72). An ordinance of the same city dated 22nd December 1474 concerning the St Nicholas- or Merchant's-guild states that citizens, male and female,

who sell clubs and balls, will come under this guild inasmuch as they sell more than he or she makes in his own house.' (75).

In 1461 the Magistrates of Bergen op Zoom decreed that at the weekly market 'the ball-people with their balls' should post themselves along the Grebbe (a canal) from the bridge in front of Master Arent Goes' house towards the public convenience further along. If they did otherwise it would cost them 16 groats. (20).



11 Hugo Grotius (1583-1645) at the age of 4 with a leaden colf-club and a leather ball, 1587
pencil-sketch after a lost painting of Jacob Willemsz. Delft I (abt. 1550-1601)
private collection

16th century: Further growth and extension

At the beginning of this period we find the first pictures of colfers. This statement may be criticized inasmuch as there is a picture of a man playing with a ball and a club in the stained glass 'Crécy' window of the cathedral of Gloucester in England which is of an earlier date.

Although this man has the stance and the grip of a colfer the ball is too big and the club is too coarse for that game. The window, placed there around 1350 AD, served to commemorate the men from Gloucester who fell in the battle of Crécy (1346) and the siege of Calais (1347). The roundel with the image is one of several in that window, depicting scenes seen in France during the campaign. In all probability this was a man playing *chole* in France.

Let us return to 1500. At that time it was customary to decorate the pages of Books of Hours, missals and breviaries for persons of repute with secular pictures, often landscapes with scenes from everyday life. In these pictures we find the first colf-players. In the magnificent Book of Hours in the British Museum, there known as the 'Golf Book', we find four colf-players near a hole. One of them is putting while kneeling.

This was a popular style of putting in those days and there are several examples of players depicted that way. They play a four-ball with iron-headed clubs (the construction of the heads makes it unlikely that these were made of lead). Three of the four balls in play are brown (wood) while one is white (leather). In other religious books we find similar scenes.

Towards the middle of the 16th century we find the first pictures of colfers playing in the winter. It should be realized that, for a very practical reason, most of the play went on from autumn until spring. In the summer it was difficult to locate balls since there were no mown courses (except in Haarlem).

This is why there are so many winter and ice-scenes. The conclusion that colf was *only* played on the ice is quite wrong, however. In Scotland, too, early golf was an autumn and winter game. For the same reason. Other seasons are depicted just as well. An anonymous painter painting the castle of Egmond and its surround-

ings around 1560 shows us some colf players in mid-summer.

Towards the end of the 16th century a series of very attractive children's portraits with colf-clubs and balls commences. The first of this series, of which only a pencildrawing remains, has been attributed to Jacob Willemse Delff I.

It shows the great lawyer Hugo Grotius at the age of 4 with a club in his right hand and a leather ball at his feet. (Y).

One often wonders why the subjects were only children, all of them between the age of 2 and 12. At the time there was war in the Low Countries, for the Eighty Years War against the Spaniards was raging. Under the circumstances it was childish for a man to be painted with attributes of a game in his hands.

One sees them always in the posture of valiant soldiers or earnest merchants waging economic warfare, which was as important then as it is now. War stopped in winter, however, so in that season one also sees grown-ups in the snow or on the ice, playing their favourite game of colf.

The 16th century led to a wider spread of colf. Outside its traditional home counties we find it in Friesland, in Leeuwarden and Dokkum (65 & 66) and at Kampen. (56). Inside the old territories it became even more popular. Sailors played their part in spreading the game and pictures show that it was played right beside the ships on sandy beaches.

Looking at the hundreds of city ordinances one finds them to be repetitions of the earlier ones with some slight amendments. Some cities tried different methods to stop the game where they did not want it. In Veere clubs were confiscated in addition to fines. (97). Only the city of Schiedam assumed a more positive attitude. In an ordinance of 1550 players were allowed to play 'on the long earthen wall from the mill right up to the bridge.' If they played there nobody was allowed to hold them up. (87).

About this time the effect of the Reformation becomes noticeable.

When the mighty abbot Hendrick van Kessel of the huge convent of St.-Boniface at Dokkum braces himself to pull the magistrates of the adjoining city of Dokkum before the Court of Friesland at Leeuwarden, because they had shown themselves 'unwilling and lac-

- 12 Maurits de Héraugières at the age of 2, 1595 with a leaden club and a leather ball
Adriaen van der Linde (?-1609)
oil on panel, 85 x 66 cms
private collection



13 Portrait of a young man
Slijper at the age of 7, 1612
unknown painter, North
Netherlands school Enkhui-
zen
oil on panel, 121 x 78 cms
City of Enkhuizen



14 Portrait of a young man with
a golf-club, 1615
unknown painter, North
Netherlands school
oil on panel, 106 x 66 cms
Museum 'Het Markiezenhof'
of the City of Bergen op
Zoom

A. J. 596.

ATLAS. 2



15 Portrait of 2 children, about
1635
painter unknown, environ-
ment of W. de Geest
oil on panel, 33 x 28 cms
Kennemer Golf & Country
Club, Zandvoort



king' te forbid their citizens and skippers to play colf within the boundaries of his convent, the Reformation reaches Dokkum in 1580 and he loses his authority. (66). In Schiedam (88) and Woerden (99) play during the time of religious services is prohibited. If in earlier days play was forbidden near the churches because of the noise and the chances of damage and breakage it was now felt that it would be better if the players listened to sermons instead of playing colf.

The increase of play led to an increasing demand for clubs and balls. Around 1520 Clubmakers' Alley (Kolmakerssteeg) in Leyden got its name, which it still carries today.

Clubmaking in and around Leyden was a thriving craft from then on and led to the formation of a guild of clubmakers in the next century. As late as 1800 an inscription on one of the houses in Clubmakers' Alley read 'Praise God above all, here one sells you club and ball'!

Ball-making had commenced in earlier days at Middelburg, Bergen op Zoom and Steenberg, but now the village of Goirle in Brabant and the cities of Delft and Amsterdam joined them as ball-making centres. In Goirle the first ballmaker is mentioned in a document of 1552(48) but there must already have been others. From then until 1800 practically the whole village lived off the making of balls: the inhabitants of Goirle are locally known by their nickname of 'ball-stuffers' (ballefrutters) to this day. We shall revert to the methods of ballmaking in due course. All that remains of the craft today are a few ballmakers in Friesland who make the same balls by the same me-

thods for the kaatsers there. When in 1588 Sebastian van Warendorp, an army commander of the Duke of Parma in the Spanish war, appeared with an army before the village of Tilburg near Goirle he held Tilburg to ransom for 12.000 balls, to be supplied at short notice.

If not-Tilburg would be burned down. Tilburgers did not make balls but their neighbours in Goirle did. In their plight they went there and the Goirle villagers told them not to worry.

As a first instalment they went round the village to collect the available stock of balls and returned with 6500!

A system of apprenticeship was known: in 1560 a master-ballmaker, Frans Peterssen, sues his former apprentice Jan Cornelis Geryts Hermanssen in court for failure to pay him the two Rhineland guilders which he had agreed to pay for his training during which ti-



16 Marie Allegonda van Camstra at the age of 9 in 1670 with a leaden golf club and a wooden ball
Julius de Geest
oil on panel, 108 x 87 cms
private collection
(the coats of arms in the painting are those of her grandparents, left to right: van Camstra, Juchema, Aebbinga and van Bronckhorst)

me his master had 'washed and wrung him and had given him soup'! (48).

There are indications that ballmakers from Goirle went to Rotterdam and Delft and this may well have been the beginning of ballmaking there. Brabant was then a dominion of the Netherlands and tariffs made sales from the dominion to the 'United Provinces' all but easy.

The city fathers of Delft were more concerned with pollution.

In 1586 they ordained that ballmakers were not to wash the 'hair serving for the balls' in the city waters any more, since they 'infested and spoiled' them. To prevent further 'uncleanliness and putrefaction' they

were instructed to wash their hair henceforth in the canal outside the city, by the plague-hospital, known by the name of Korstangien. There the putrefaction seemed to make no difference! The washing was (and still is) done to rid the hair of cow dung. (40).

In Amsterdam the ballmakers lived outside the city on the Margrietepad – probably for the same reason.

The ballmakers of Delft united in a guild: the St Michael's or Ballmakers' Guild. This guild included buttonmakers as well as ballmakers for buttons were also stuffed with hair. Although the guild dates from the 17th century, at least on the evidence of charters which have been preserved, its name suggests that it must date from before the Reformation. (44).



17 'Summer', playing monkeys
Justus Sadeler (1583-after
1620) after Pieter van der
Borch (1540-1608)
Engraving, 23.9 x 30 cms
National Cabinet of Prints,
Amsterdam
(the colf-ball is teed up on a
'peg'-type tee)

The 17th century: The zenith and the end

In the course of the 17th century the game reached its zenith. We find the game being played in more and more places (illustration 2).

It seems somewhat superfluous to mention the multitude of ordinances bearing upon it: the register at the end shows a selection of them.

The passion for colf went so far that players took their clubs and balls with them when going abroad. There is a pendrawing of Cornelis Poelenburgh, then in Rome where so many Dutch painters went to improve their skill. It is dated 'in Rome, 1622' and shows two players: one has landed in the rough and the other is giving him a 'line' in the same manner as this is done today.

Knowing that Cornelis teamed up with Paul Bril, then 68, and Bartolomeus Breenbergh, then 22, it is not so difficult to recognize Bartholomeus as the player in trouble and Paul Bril as the helper to get out of it. The ruins of ancient Rome provide a scenic background. A drawing of Gerrit Berckheyde of about 1660 shows two Dutch colfers playing on the market at Cleve in Germany. (V)

The game even went across the Atlantic. The 'Small Bench of Justice' of Fort Orange and the village of Beverwyck (now Albany, N.Y.) saw fit to issue an ordinance in 1659 for that area, forbidding colf along the roads at a fine of 25 guilders. The reasons – you could guess them by now! – were damage to window-panes in houses, the chance of hurting passers-by and the blocking of streets. (W).

In the first half of the 17th century several cities started to construct mail-courses (malie-banen). Anything French became fashionable and so the authorities may have hoped that the game of mail, which was restricted to the course on which it was played, would replace the more roving game of colf (but it did not). The following courses were built:

1609	The Hague	length	1073 m.
1637	Leyden	length	696 m.
1637	Utrecht	length	752 m.
1651	Amsterdam	length	650 m.

Beside the mail-course in The Hague there was also an ample mail-field. This field, which is still in existence, had two trees at one of its long sides to serve as targets.

A mail-course consisted of a long and not too wide stretch of level ground with low boards on either side and a decorative post at either end, some distance from the high end-boards (Rabat).

In the middle of the course was a small iron gate (Archet) through which the ball had to pass on its way from one post to the other. The game, played with flexible wooden mallets (Maille) and wooden balls, had no less than 58 rules, some of the rather similar to the rules of golf today. (B,C,K,CC,GG, & LL). Enthusiasm for playing mail has never been very great.

Why should it have been? Colf clubs and balls were by then much better implements than their equivalents for mail. Although the regulations for the mail-courses specifically forbade the playing of colf there, the authorities may well have turned a blind eye to the trespassers. (At least it kept them out of the cities!) In some cases where a specific colf-field had been designated there were other drawbacks. In Naarden there was an official colf-field, mentioned in the ordinance-book of 1623, but since in the same book there is a passage reading that carcasses of dead animals were to be buried there it is easily understood that the colfers sought their pleasure elsewhere. (81-83).

Including the mail-courses there were by that time 9 cities in the Low Countries that had provided some sort playing area for colf: Antwerp, Amsterdam, Delft, Haarlem, The Hague, Leyden, Naarden, Schiedam and Utrecht.

The increase in the number of players led to an increased demand for clubs and balls. Except for an odd ballmaker in Rotterdam balls were still only produced in quantity in Goirle, Steenberghe, Bergen op Zoom, Delft and Amsterdam. Some impression of the volume of production may be derived from some of the transactions on record. Bergen op Zoom registered a transaction of sale of 40.000 balls in one deal as early as 1502. (23).

In 1631 three ballmakers at Goirle committed a consignment of 17.700 balls, which they and their apprentices had made, to a waggoner to be taken to



18 Winter landscape with a colf-player gone through the ice, Jacob de Gheyn II (1565-1629) after Roelant Saverij (1576-1629)
Engraving, 11.2 x 17.7 cms
Inv.Nr. OB 5718
National Cabinet of Prints, Amsterdam



19 In Rome, 1622
Cornelis Poelenburgh (abt. 1586-1677)
detail from a pen-drawing of 18.7 x 31.15 cms
Inv.Nr. A 24
National Cabinet of Prints, Amsterdam
(the figures are probably Bartholomeus Breenbergh (left) and Paul Bril (right) painters who where then in Rome with Poelenburgh)



20 Zijl-gate at Haarlem, abt. 1617
Jan van de Velde (1593-1641)
Engraving, 9.8 x 19.7 cms
Inv.Nr. OB 5720
National Cabinet of Prints, Amsterdam

Maastricht to be sold in the market there (probably for export to Paris). (48). In Brabant balls were produced by individual masters with apprentices. In Delft the ballmakers were united in a guild: a charter of that guild dating from 1626 restricts the number of apprentices to each master-ballmaker to one. (44). When production of balls in Delft proved insufficient to meet the demand they were contracted from Goirle. A contract of that nature was registered before the Sheriffs of Tilburg in 1669. Two citizens of Delft bought the entire production of 9 master-ballmakers of Goirle for a period of 9 years. The contract contains many interesting details. An apprenticeship at Goirle lasted two years at that time; in Delft three. (44 & 48). The museum at Goirle possesses two sets of ancient ballmaking tools and some old balls.

Clubmaking is more difficult to trace. It is certain that most of the clubs came from in and around Leyden, where the master-clubmakers formed guild in 1660. (64).

The clubs they made were of the type which had a head of lead cast around the end of the shaft. This type of clubs is already mentioned in 1429 (101) and was thus in use for more than 250 years. Clubs with iron heads also existed, probably made locally by the blacksmiths after the lead-head models. Finally wooden clubs were imported from Scotland. (A). Whatever type one chose, one played with one club only. On none of the hundreds of pictures does one see a player with more than one club.

The lead-headed clubs made and traded in Leyden had to be stamped with the stamp of the city where they were made and the stamp of the master who had made them. (64). There is one clubhead of that type in a private collection in Haarlem. The city-stamp is defaced but the master's stamp is a very clear capital letter 'D'. Sadly, of all the thousands of clubs made, not a single complete specimen has survived. Only a few clubheads remain.

The end of the game of colf: 1700 AD

And then, almost exactly at 1700, the game of colf – which had enjoyed such an immense popularity over such a wide area for over 400 years – comes to an abrupt end.

No more ordinances against playing it, the mail-courses are closed: in short it disappears without a trace in a matter of years. It is not easy to find an explanation for this phenomenon. Social historians like the famous Le Francq van Berkhey (H) could not find one. Neither could the anonymous author of 'A Treatise on Kolf' in 1769 and 1792 (F & G), both of them living one or two generations from the end. In the 19th century Jan ter Gouw (P) ascribes it to the more effeminate and refined way of life of the 18th century and the concurrent rising interest in indoor games such as billiards and the like. Manly sports disappeared. 18th century clothes were indeed more delicate than their earlier counterparts and there is no denying that one could well become soiled in playing a good game of colf. So we must accept it at that.

It is in fact a miracle that golf, now the world's biggest sport, survived the 18th century at all. Contrary to what used to be common belief in earlier days, recent research in Scotland has established that golf was never a very popular sport there before the arrival of the gutta-percha rubber ball in 1848. (UU). In fact it never reached the west coast of Scotland before 1850. Had it not been for the few golfing societies, all of them formed by freemasons, who thought the game a good exercise before sitting down for their sumptuous meals, (between them not more than 500 players at any one time between 1750 and 1850) there would have been no golf today. (UU).

At the end of this account it may be useful to sum up the facts about the game of colf and its implements.

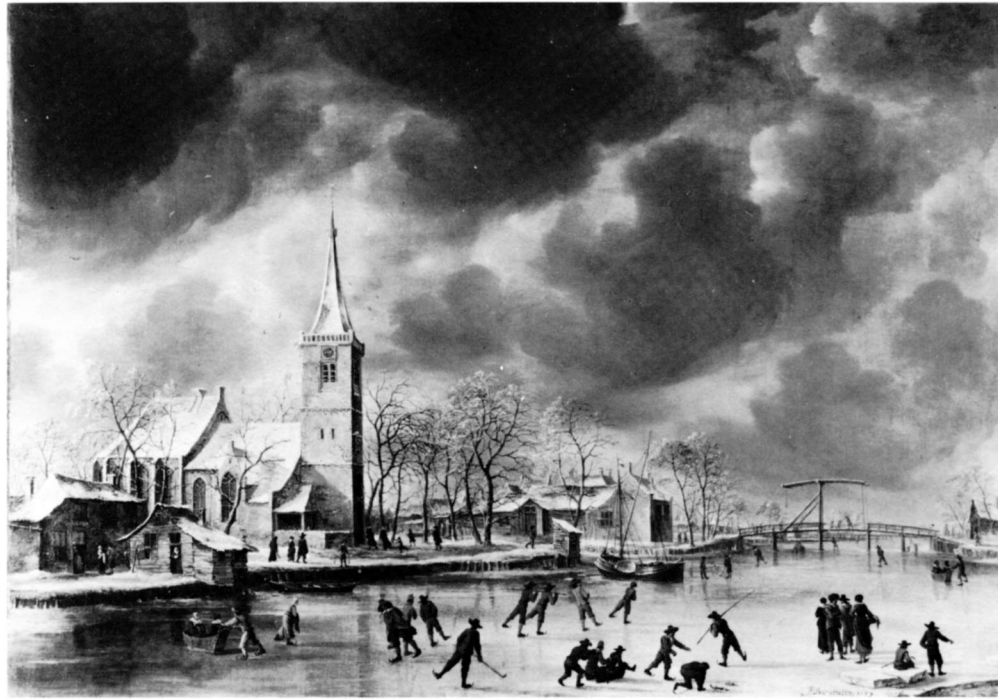


21 Winter landscape
After Jan van de Velde
(1593-1641) (?)
plate, Delft china, diam. 21
cms
Inv.Nr. EV 130 C
Royal Musea for Fine Arts
and History, Brussels

22 Pointed dish with border
motives after Jan van de
Velde (1593-1641), colf
players on the upper left-
hand side, 1633
Engraved silver, diam. 29.8
cms
Inv.Nr. MBZ 205
Museum Boymans-van Beu-
ningen, Rotterdam



- 23 A view on Ouderkerk aan de Amstel in Winter with colf players on the Amstel river, 1659
Jan Abrahamsz. van Beerstraten (1622-1666)
oil on canvas, 95 x 132.5 cms
Inv.Nr. A 7450
Amsterdam Historical Museum, Amsterdam



- 24 View on a canal in winter
Aert van der Neer (1603-1677)
oil on panel, 35 x 47 cms
Inv.Nr. NK 2494
National Service of Spread National Collections, The Hague
on loan to the Museum 'het Catharinagasthuis' of the City of Gouda



26 Silver tazza depicting the winter with a colf-player with club and ball, 1627
Adam van Vianen
(1569-1627)
silver-gilt, height 17 cms,
diam. 18.5 cms
Inv.Nr. 19505
Centraal Museum, Utrecht

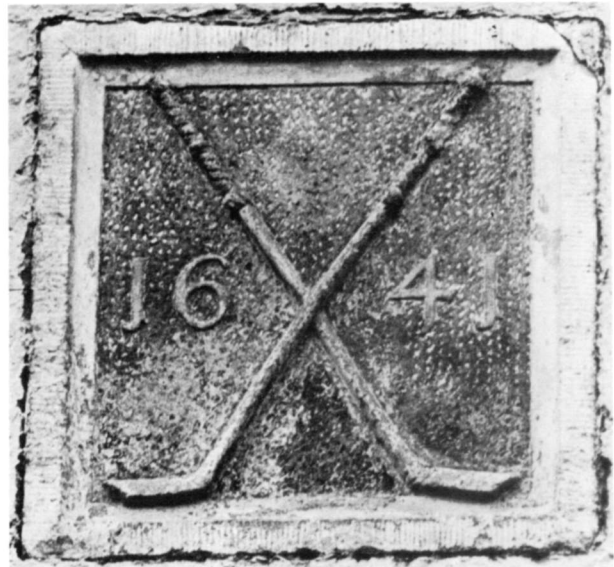


25 Colf-players on the ice, abt. 1640
Gerard ter Borch Jr.
(1617-1681)
drawing, 16.5 x 20.8 cms
Inv.Nr. A 794
National Cabinet of Prints, Amsterdam
(the putting player has taken off his hat and put in under his knee to protect it from the cold)



▽ 27a Name-stone, about 1610 in the front of a house at the Groote Oost and the Schoolsteeg, Hoorn

▽ 27b Name-stone, 1641 in the front of the house called 'de Kolf' (the colf-club) on the Oude Langedijk No. 7, Delft





DE HAARLEMMEER MEER. A. 1625.

28 Haarlem Lake anno 1625
 Simon Fokke (1712-1784)
 after Hendrick Avercamp
 (1585-1634)
 Engraving, 20 x 30 cms
 Historical Collection on
 Sports J.A. Brongers Mu-
 seum Flehite, Amersfoort

29 Winter landscape
 Hendrick Avercamp
 (1585-1634)
 pen and water-colour,
 17.6 x 30.3 cms
 Teyler's Museum, Haarlem
 Inv.Nr. Ox 7
 player using a 'Scottish
 cleek'



30 Winter landscape
(young colf-player run over
by a sleigh)
Philips Wouwerman
(1619-1688)
oil on panel, 35 x 47 cms
Sotheby's, London; July
1981



31 Winter landscape
Aert van der Neer
(1603-1677)
oil on canvas
Christie's, London; May
1978

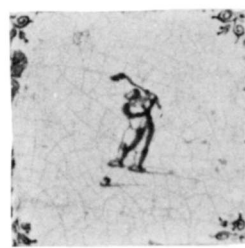


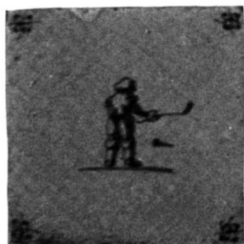
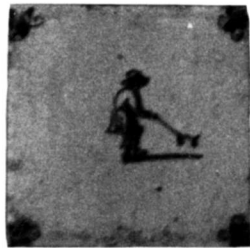
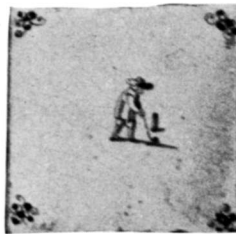
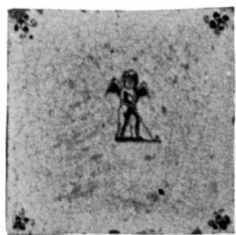
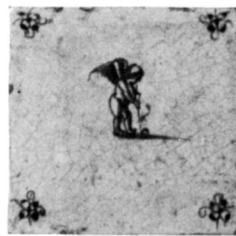
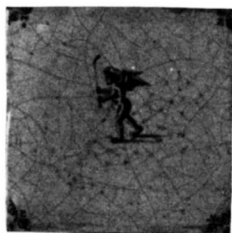
32 4 tiles; 1-1st half of the 17th century, 2-about 1650, 3 & 4-2nd half of the 17th century

33a-d A collection of tiles from the 17th to the 19th Century in chronological order Historical Collection on Sports J.A. Brongers Museum Flehite, Amersfoort













- 35 A St Nicolas party abt. 1670
(detail)
Jan Steen (1625-1679)
oil on panel, 58.5 x 49 cms
Inv.Nr. 1826
Museum Boymans-van Beu-
ningen, Rotterdam
(the young man proudly dis-
plays the wooden colf-club
and leather ball (with ball-
mark) which he has just re-
ceived)

- 36 'The Kolf-player', although
this etching is known as
such throughout the world
the player is in fact playing
a different game called
'Beugelen' ('at the hoop')
which had nothing to do
with colf, 1654
Rembrandt Harmensz. van
Rijn (1606-1669)
etching 9.5 x 14.3 cms
Inv.Nr. B 125/1
National Gallery, Amster-
dam





34a Winter landscape, 1668
Adriaen van de Velde
(1635-1672)
oil on panel, 30.4 x 36.4
cms
By courtesy of the Trustees
of the National Gallery,
London
(the scene is a view on
Haarlem from Spaarndam
along the Spaarne river.
The two colf-players on the
ice are Scotsmen and must
have been mercenary sol-
diers)

34c Stoneware plaque, Makkum
abt. 1800
54 x 45 cms
private collection
(the scene is the back-to-
front reproduction which
hails from an engraving of
Jacques Aliamet who made
it after the painting of
Adriaen van de Velde on
this page)



34b 'Les Amusemens de l'Hiver',
abt 1760
Jacques Aliamet (1726-1788)
engraving, 31 x 37 cms
(after a painting by
A. van de Velde, cf. 34a)
the engraving was made as
seen on the painting which
resulted in showing the sce-
ne back-to-front once printed
a method devised by Jean-
Philippe Le Bas of whom
Aliamet was a pupil;
private collection



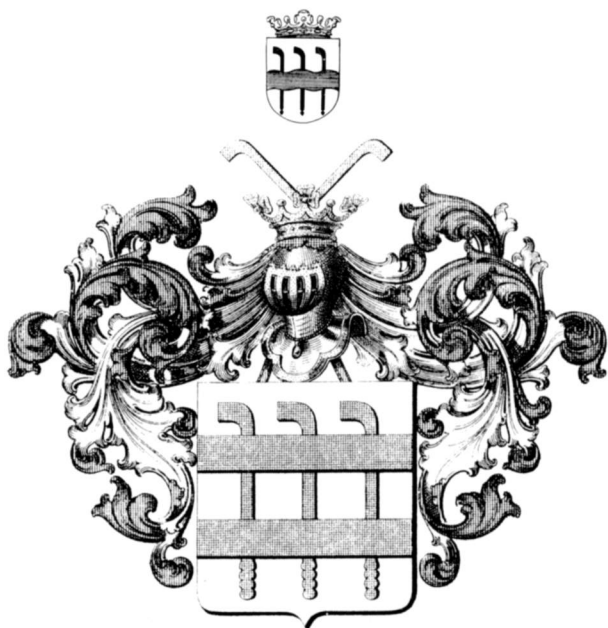
▽▽ 37 A colf player with a leaden club on the ice, abt. 1700
Romeyn de Hooghe
(1645-1708)
Engraving 16 x 11.8 cms
Inv.Nr. A 8711
National Cabinet of Prints,
Amsterdam

▽ 38 De Kolf (The club), 1712
Jan Luyken (1649-1712)
Engraving, 15.5 x 9 cms
private collection
(This engraving hails from the book 'Man's Commencement, Middle and End'. A ball teed up on a mound of snow can be seen)

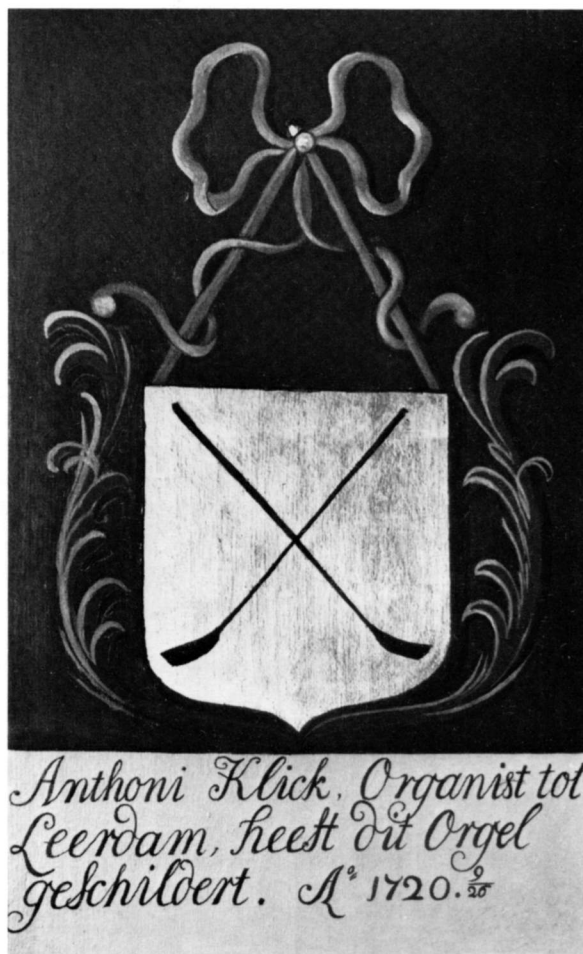


- 39 A fire on the Leidschegracht
at Amsterdam, abt. 1690
Jan van der Heyden
(1637-1712)
Engraving, 32 x 24.5 cms
Inv.Nr. FM 2301/16
National Cabinet of Prints,
Amsterdam





41 Coat of arms of the Van Balveren family (below) and of the Borough of Wamel (above). The latter was derived from the former



40 The coat of arms of Anthoni Klick ('Cleck') on the organ of the church of Culemborg. Klick who hailed from Hoorn was organ player at Leerdam and other places in the area. The inscription records his painting of the organ at Culemborg on the 26th September 1720

The nature of the game of colf

A section from the poem 'The winter of an Amsterdam citizen' ('s Amsterdammers winter) from J. Six van Chandelier's book 'Poesij' (Poetry) of 1657 is very revealing. Translated it reads:

The golfer ties his ice-spurs on
or finds something rough to stand on,
for skiddy ice, if snowless
laughs and jests at smooth soles.
When the sides have been drawn he
braces himself and strikes his ash
weighted with lead or his Scottish cleek of boxwood,
three fingers wide, one thick
with lead in it at the feather ball,
invisible from the driving point at its fall,
but noted by ball-markers (fore-caddies),
and colfing on, striking a post,
or striking for the furthest, stroke by stroke,
for 'whities' (agreed targets) or a gallon (of beer) in
the pub,
notching (the strokes) on a slender branch
which each sticks into the front of his coat.
For he who does not mind his tally-rod
shall erase the score altogether (be disqualified).

Between this and the observation of some 500 pictures
the following facts can be established.

The game of colf

The game consisted of driving a ball with a club over
a long distance. There were two types of play: hole by
hole for the lowest number of strokes per side (match-
play) and striking for the longest distance for an
agreed number of strokes (flag-match).

There were singles, foursomes, four-balls and even
eightsomes, as can be deducted from many pictures.
Sides were drawn.

Handicaps

Handicaps, in the form of an allowance of a number
of strokes, were agreed before the beginning of a
match.

Holes

Holes consisted of a hole in the ground (as early as

1500), a small post-sometimes decorated-, a tree, a
door; in winter on the ice sometimes even an empty
dinghy frozen in the ice, or anything else considered
suitable, as may be seen on the pictures.

Scoring

Scoring was done by notching a stick kept by the
player. (See the above poem).

Rules

Failure to keep proper score led to disqualification.
(See the above poem).

Clubs

Four types of clubs were in use: always a single club
per player

- A rather coarse all-wooden clubs in the very early
days;
- B clubs with forged-iron heads since at least 1429;
- C ash and hazel-shafted clubs, with leaden heads cast
on, since at least 1429. In later days many of these
were stamped with city- and clubmaker's-stamps;
- D Scottish cleeks (Schotse klieken): wooden headed
clubs imported from Scotland from about 1625, the
heads being made of boxwood weighted with lead,
three fingers wide over the top of the clubhead and
one fingers over the face.
(Clubs made by Hugh Philp and others in the first
half of the 19th century still complied with this
specification). Players using 'Scottish cleeks' may
be seen on some of the paintings of Hendrick Aver-
camp, himself a colfplayer, dating from between
1625 and 1630 (cf illustrations 28 and 29).

Balls

The earliest balls were made of wood, elm and
beechwood.

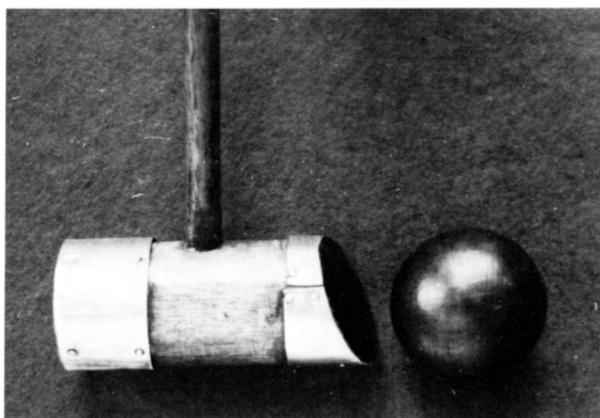
These wooden balls, being cheaper than the later ty-
pes, remained popular well into the 17th century. They
are still mentioned in an ordinance at Antwerp in
1642. (16).

White sheepskin ('Bazaan') leather balls, stuffed with
cow's hair, were made from around 1425 and traded
on the weekly market of Bergen op Zoom prior to
1461. While originally made for kaatsen they were
adopted by the colfers and used by them before 1500.

- 42 Two chole-(also choulette- or crosse-)clubs, 20th century
ash shafts and forged iron heads
length 102 cms, weight 550 and 540 gms
private collection
These clubs, like mail-mallets, had a dual purpose, the side of the head could be used for driving and putting and the end for 'lofting' (as illustrated). One of the clubs is left-handed the other right-handed.
This type of clubs is still used playing 'crosse' – the former chole – in the vicinity of Mons in Belgium.
The shape dates from the Middle Ages



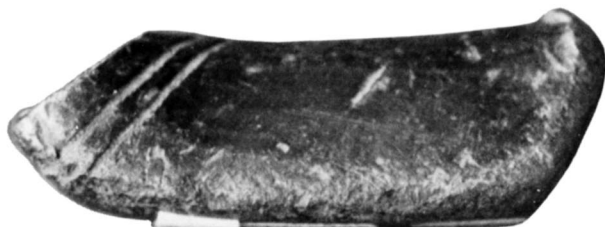
- 43 Replica of a 'Mail' mallet with matching ball, 2nd half 17th century
Club: hazel shaft and walnut head armed with brass, ball: elm
length of club 107 cms, weight 410 gms
diameter of ball 5 cms, weight 65 gms
private collection
The clubhead could be used by both sides, the one side being used for driving and putting, the other side for 'lofting'
This club and ball are of average weight, heavier and lighter sets were also made



The first traceable shipment of these balls to Scotland dates from 1486 when one 'Ritsaert Clays' (Richard Clay?) paid 6 groats toll to the toll-station at Bergen op Zoom after the 'Cold Fair' (one of the two annual fairs there, this one around All Saints Day) for exporting one barrel of balls in the ship in which Per Bolle was master. (BB) In the following spring, after the Easter fair, 'Jan Berke' (John Berwick?) who is described as 'Thomas Wynant's man' paid likewise 16 groats for exporting 2 pipes (large barrels) of balls. Although the toll-registers are incomplete, further exports of balls to Scotland may be found: 1494-6 barrels, 1495-2 barrels, 1496-5 barrels.
At the revision of the toll-tariff of the Great Zeeland Toll by Charles V in 1519 the tariff was set at 2 groats for a small barrel of balls. (BB).
These must be the transactions which James VI of

Scotland refers to in 1618, when stating that 'no small quantitie of gold and siluer is transported zierlie out of His Hienes kingdome of Scotland for bying of golf ballis.' (RR).

A conservative estimate of the annual production of this type of ball between 1500 and 1600 would be about 500.000 a year for kaatsen and colf jointly. 4 different types of templates were in use for the manufacture of the cover of these balls. The sections of the cover were sewn together leaving a small opening ('the mouth') and the whole cover was then turned inside out. The cover was subsequently stuffed with cow's hair and the opening sewn shut.
During the manufacture the cover was kept moist as this facilitated the turning and also, when drying up after the stuffing, caused the cover to shrink. This ensured maximum hardness of the ball. When still wet it



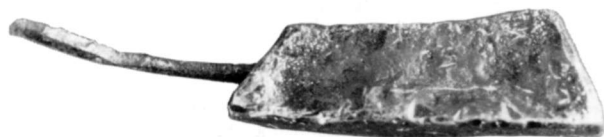
46 5 heads of golf clubs

<i>Provenience</i>	<i>length</i>	<i>Weight</i>	<i>Age</i>
1 Amsterdam	10.6 cm	240 gms	17th century
2 Amsterdam	9 cm	165 gms	17th century
3 Noordeinde	10.5 cm	322 gms	17th century
4 Reimerswaal	8.4 cm	260 gms	15th/16th century
5 Reimerswaal	7.5 cm	215 gms	15th/century

(No. 3 bears a number of stamps showing a crowned shield with the initials C S P; No. 5 bears a stamp showing a ten-pointed star)

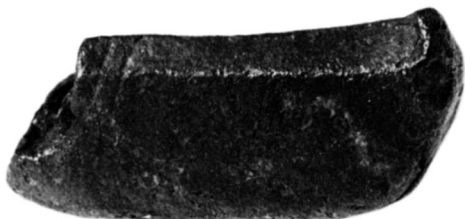
private collection

47 2 heads of golf clubs, Bentveld, 15th-century
length 9 & 9.4 cms, weight 535 & 605 gms
private collection
These clubs had iron connecting pins for connecting the head tot the shaft.

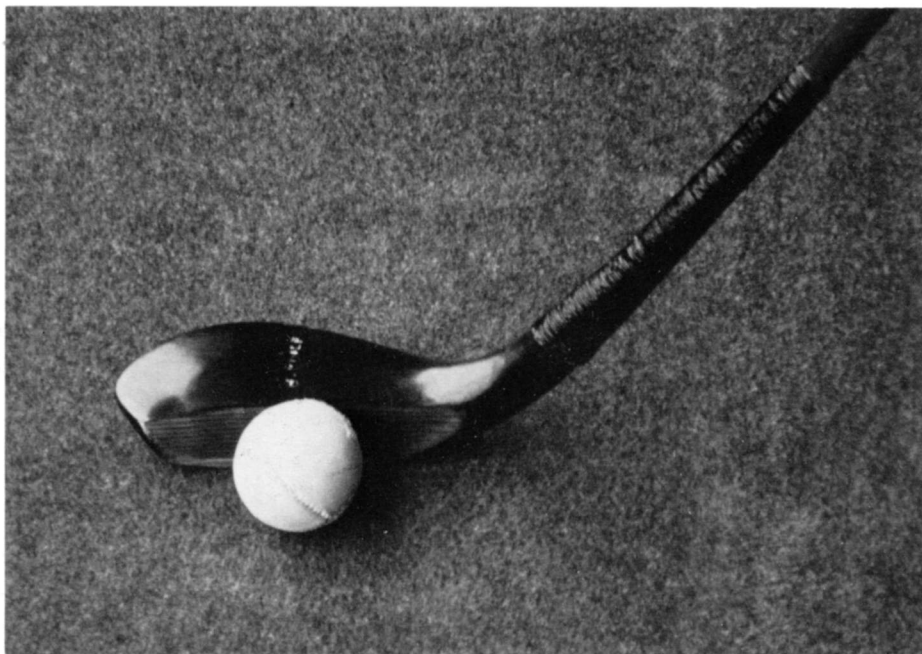




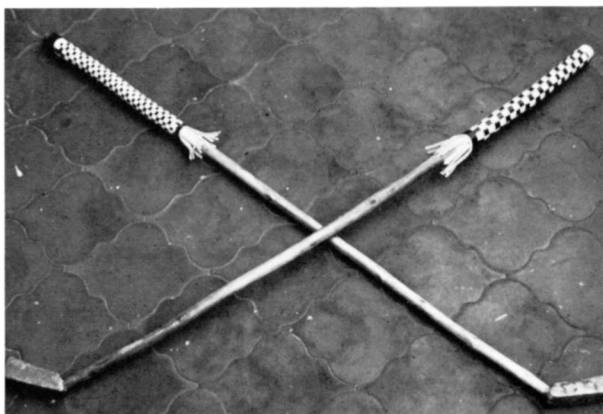
- 44 4 heads of golf clubs of around 1600, Amsterdam they are made of lead and tin lengths 10.4, 8.1, 6.1 and 7.4 cms Cat. Nrs. 861, 863, 864 and 862 Amsterdam Historical Museum, Amsterdam (the top three are a men's, boys and children's size)



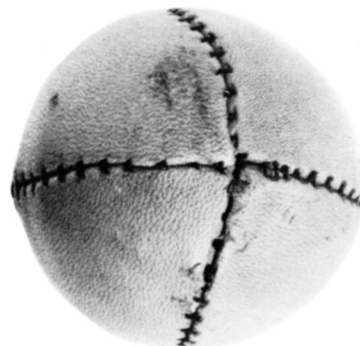
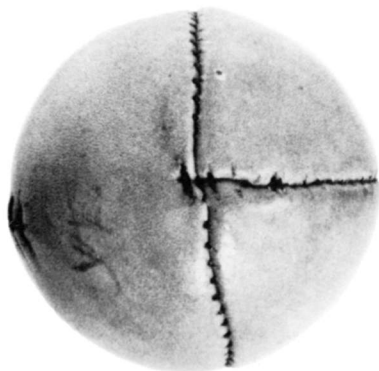
- 45 Head of a golf club, with stamps, one of them a rose, the other a capital letter 'D', found in the 'Kenaupark' in Haarlem 2nd half 17th century lead, 4 x 9 cms, 225 grms private collection By ordinance of the magistrates of Leyden for the clubmakers' guild at Leyden in 1660, clubs sold in that city had to bear the hallmark of the maker and the city where the club was made



- 48 The 'Scottish cleek' (Schotse Klick); replica Clubs of this type may be seen on paintings of the 17th century (cf. 28 & 29). In 1657 they were described by J. Six van Chandelier as made of boxwood filled with lead, three fingers wide over the top and one over the face. Clubs made by Hugh Philp and others up to 1840 still conformed to this specification. They must have existed since about 1625. Their early makers in Scotland remain unknown. private collection



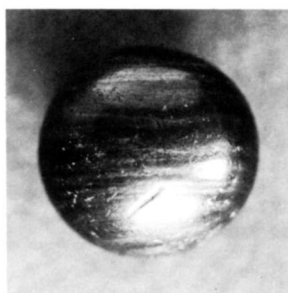
49 2 replicas of lead-headed colf-clubs around 1600, made after clubheads of that period, the shafts are ash and hazel, the grips woven white and black leather length 110 cms, weight 230 gms
private collection
(clubs of this type are already mentioned in an ordinance of the City of Zierikzee in 1429)



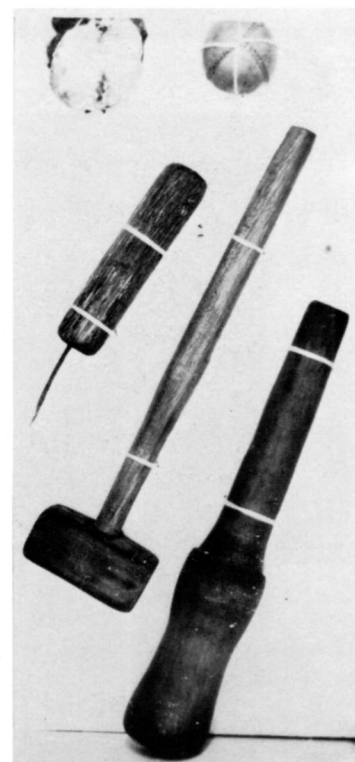
50 2 white leather balls filled with cow's hair, composed of 2 and 4 parts diameter abt 4 cms, weight abt 22 gms
private collection (balls made by Mr. I. de Haan of Peins)

These balls were produced in West Brabant from the 15th century onwards and exported to Scotland from Bergen op Zoom around 1490 and maybe earlier. They are visible on illustrations 9, 11, 12, 13, 29 and 34.

51 Colf-ball, 1589 Amsterdam elm, diam. 5 cms, original weight 40 gms (by conservation with beeswax the ball now weighs 80 gms)
private collection

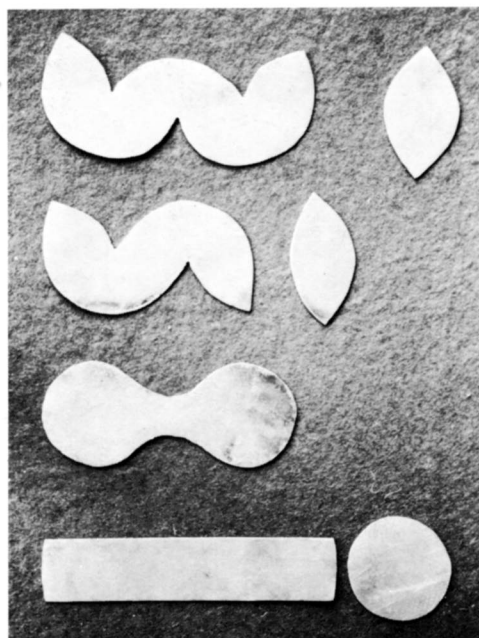


52 Ball making tools from Goirle in Brabant
The awl and the broken ball are old, the other tools are replicas, the mallet and the shaping mould were used to shape the balls after stuffing (this was done shortly after the hair had been stuffed into the **wet** cover)
The ball was made in Friesland after the Goirle method
Inv.Nr. A-173
Historical Society 'De Vyer Heertganghen', Goirle



53 5 replicas of templates for the cutting of leather ball-covers
brass

From the various paintings and prints it proved possible to establish that 5 types of cover were in use, the second from the top is still used today for making balls for 'kaatsen'. There was a sixth type used in Goirle, instead of 4 quarter sections (top right), balls made of six similar but narrower sections were also known
private collection



was rolled over a board with an implement a like potato-masher with a round concavity at the end to get the balls perfectly round.

The same balls are still used by the kaatsers in Friesland today and are still produced by some ballmakers there in the same manner.

Balls stuffed with feathers are first mentioned in 1657. A ball in a painting of Jan Anthonisz van Ravesteyn dating from 1626 shows a regular pattern of punches in the cover rather like the indents on a present-day golf ball, probably to improve its flight in a straight line.

Ballmaker's marks can be discerned on balls in paintings of about 1600 and later.

Tees

Although balls were put on a mound of soil most of the time a 'peg'-type tee can be seen in an engraving of Jan van der Borch of about 1590, and on a 17th century tile.

Fore-caddies

Fore-caddies (ballemerkers) were known in 1657.

Shoes

There is no evidence of special shoes, but in 1657 ice-spurs were worn in winter on the ice to prevent slipping and soles of shoes were roughened for the same purpose.

Greenkeeping

The colf-course in Haarlem was regularly mown in 1483 and probably much earlier than that.

Epilogue

If the old game of colf faded out inexplicably around 1700 it did not take long to replace it. Within twenty years a new game was born. A reduced size mail-course of about 20 metres length was constructed, with two posts at the either end and a new short game KOLF commenced its life. Most of these new courses were built near public houses and it was not long before a great number of them were covered by roofing. Eventually clubs and balls were adapted to this new game. They became larger and heavier and in time the game developed into the indoor precision-game which is still played today.

In 1981 the Kolclub 'Utrecht', part of the ancient St Eloy's or Blacksmith's Guild of the city of Utrecht, celebrated its 250th anniversary as a kolf club-still occupying the original covered kolf-court which is now part of the St Eloy's Guesthouse (hospital) but belonged to the long disappeared adjoining public house 'De Hollandsche Tuyn' (The Holland Garden - a heraldic device) in earlier times.

The game of kolf

The exact origin of the game of kolf is as difficult to determine as that of the game of colf. The period of uncertainty falls between 1700 and 1730. 1730 was the year of formation of the still existing kolf-club 'Utrecht'. This club has always been part of the St Eloy's or Blacksmiths' Guild of Utrecht. The kolf-court originally belonged to the adjoining public house 'The Holland Garden' (a heraldic device) on the Bouterstraat. When the public house was closed the court was simply connected to the 'guest-house' (hospital) on the other side, which belonged to the guild. There it is to this day. This club provides us with a firm date.

For the remainder conclusions have to be drawn from some data.

An anonymous author, writing under the motto 'Concorde nous guide' wrote a 'Treatise on Kolf' in 1769 (F). A second enlarged edition appeared in 1792 (G). He does not mention anything about the origin of kolf. Nearly all kolf-courts were constructed near public houses.

The layout of the course is simply a shortened mail-course without the 'Archet' in the center. The rules of kolf as they appear in the 'Concorde' books show a marked relationship with the older rules of Mail, be it in a version adapted to the shorter form of play. The most essential difference with Mail is that the ball reaches a destination after having ricocheted from the posts rather than the posts being the ultimate destination.

This lies in the nature of the short game. All in all we are lead to suppose that the game was conceived in a public house, perhaps by some former colfers who could not forget their old long game and a sympathetic publican who thought of making up for the loss of turnover which he had sustained when the colfers stopped playing.

The game of colf had always aroused a lot of thirst. Already in 1500 the magistrates of Delft had ordained that colf for grown-ups was admissible inasmuch as they played for 'a modest round' (of drinks) 'according to the (social) condition and status of the players'. (38). In 1762 the same magistrates ruled that the keepers of kolf-courts had to be in possession of – or immediately

apply for – a license for extensive dispensing of liquor. (43).

The publican of 'In the white dog and the black one' in Rotterdam left no doubt about his intentions. His pub-sign read:

Lovers of kolf, here hang club and ball,
for the Rotterdammers, for them all,
who wants to play kolf, let him come hither,
but bring your ducats and balls with yer.

The confession of a player on the wall of a kolf-court in The Hague is also rather revealing:

One plays kolf cheaply here, and sweats here for the joy

As playing ball makes purse and body sweat.

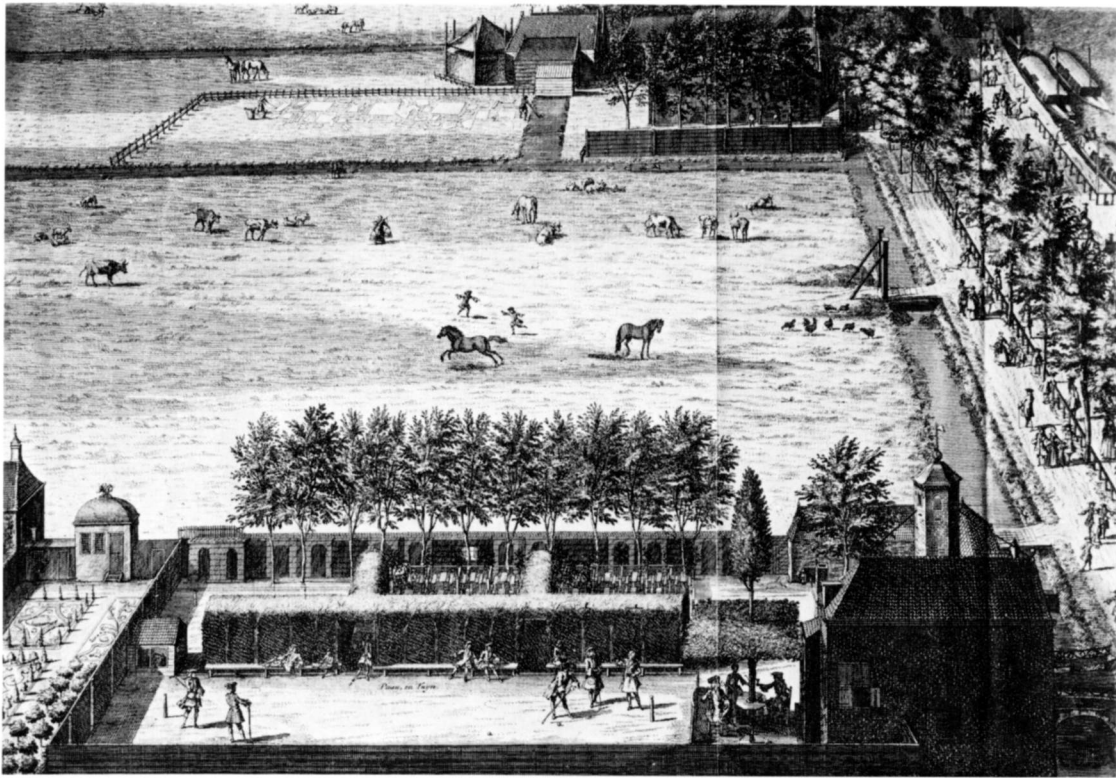
I am a fool no more, nor buy my sweat so dear

But love, in modesty, wine women and good fare.

Publicans also provided prizes in the form of silver kolf-balls and the like to lure the players to their courts.

The game, thus developed, grew tremendously popular within a short period. 'Concorde's' first book of 1769 lists no fewer than 190 kolf-courts in and around the city of Amsterdam (F), 31 of them covered. In the second issue, 23 years later, there are 165 courts in the same area, 45 of them covered. The total of all the listed courts in that issue is 350, 149 of them covered. The listing is far from complete. Kolf-courts could be found in other provinces, like Zeeland and Friesland, as well. In Goes in Zeeland, for example, there were at least two kolf-courts with the public houses 'Prinses Marie' and 'De Prins van Oranje'. Two posts of the latter court date from 1772. On early 18th century pictures players can be seen playing kolf with clubs and balls of the colf type. Gradually clubs became heavier and balls became larger the better to meet the requirements of the new game. In the long run the two posts which used to stand straight up were put in an inclined position (towards each other). 'Concorde' praises sajet balls (tightly wound crude wool) covered with leather and sewn with copper thread for their resistance against disintegration when becoming wet on an outdoor court. There were other balls stuffed with hair (like the old colf balls) or with tightly wound feathers. Clubs had iron or brass heads.

Concorde shows a preference for long courts of 33 to 39 meters length. He thought that a good court should



54 View on Amsterdam from the Amstel river, 1740
Adolf van der Laan (1648-
after 1755)
Engraving, one sheet out of
a birds-eye view of Amster-
dam
Inv.Nr. d'Ailly 193
National Cabinet of Prints,
Amsterdam
This presumably is one of
the first pictures of a kolf-
court as developed after
1700. The inn on the right is
'De Pauwentuin' (The Pea-
cock Garden)



55 The kolf-court behind the
Stadlander-Inn at Amster-
dam, 1755
N.M. Aartman (1713-1760)
pen and brush, 29 x 40.5
cms
City Record Office, Amster-
dam (Topographical Atlas)



56 View of the Kolf-court near
the Groote Huys op Zuyd-
wind at 's-Gravezande, 8th
January 1749
Aert Schouman (1710-1792)
drawing
private collection

measure at least some 24 to 27 meters. Many were shorter though and today's standard length for a court is 17.5 meters.

The growth of the new game between 1730 and 1800 may well be called spectacular. After 1800 the decline sets in.

The introduction of the rubber ball around 1840 did not help.

In 1841 the first warning against the game becoming extinct was given. Many of the covered courts were converted into banqueting and theatre halls. Billiards replaced kolf.

The only province where the game of kolf continued was Noord-Holland.

On the 13th May 1885 Dr. G. C. van Balen Blanken founded the Netherlands Kolf Union at Haarlem in an effort to rally the remaining kolf-players and stem the decline. 9 kolsocieties joined the Union at its founda-

tion. Three of these still exist today: 'de 4 Enen' at Spanbroek, 'Op Maat' at Zuid Scharwoude and 'Over de Helft' at Nieuwe Niedorp.

In a later stage the old Utrecht club also joined the Union.

Today the number of players is slowly increasing again and 20 clubs are united in the Union.

The beaten-earth and cement courts have been replaced by artificial fibre courts. Clubheads are now made of stainless steel. The division of players into two 'classes', sajjet and rubber, has disappeared.

One technical problem confronts today's kolf players. A rubber ball improves for play by age. After about a century the bounce in the rubber has vanished and it rolls more gently than before. In the delicate game of kolf this is of great importance. No method has been discovered to speed this process of ageing up. So the sajjet-balls may well be in the majority in the end.



57 A kolf-court with two players and a pipe-smoking spectator, 18th century Amsterdam assays, re-as-sayed at Gouda, no master's mark silver miniature, 3.4×8.6×3 cms
City Musea of Gouda, Gouda

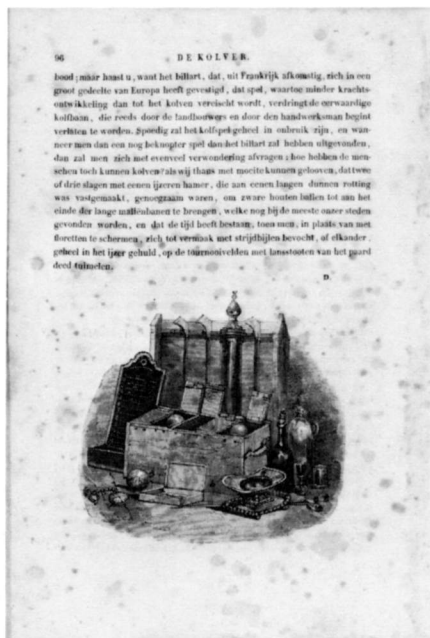
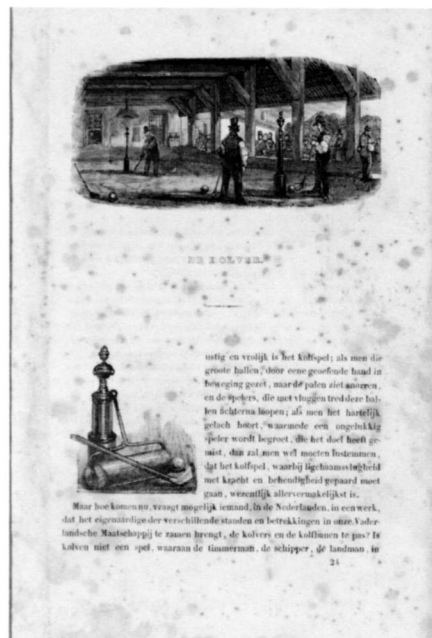


58 The New Netherlands, French, American and English Kolf Game
A theatre-play in three acts edited with D. Schuurman, Amsterdam, 1782
Title-page engraved by J.C. Schults (1749-1812)
16 x 9.7 cms
Historical Collection on Sports J.A. Brongers, Museum Flehite, Amersfoort
The scene of the play is two kolf-courts. The English side is beaten by a French-Netherlands side and makes off.
The allegoric background is the effort of the patriotic party (in politics) to reduce the English influence in the Netherlands

59 Playing card depicting a kolf-court, 18th century engraving
7 x 4.8 cms
Historical Collection on Sports J.A. Brongers, Museum Flehite, Amersfoort



60 Three pages with illustrations of kolf from the book 'De Nederlanden' (The Netherlands), The Hague 1841 by Henry Brown
23.2 x 16 cms (each)
Historical Collection on Sports J.A. Brongers, Museum Flehite, Amersfoort



61 A pre-2nd World War kolf match on the court at Lopik Archives of the Netherlands Kolf Union



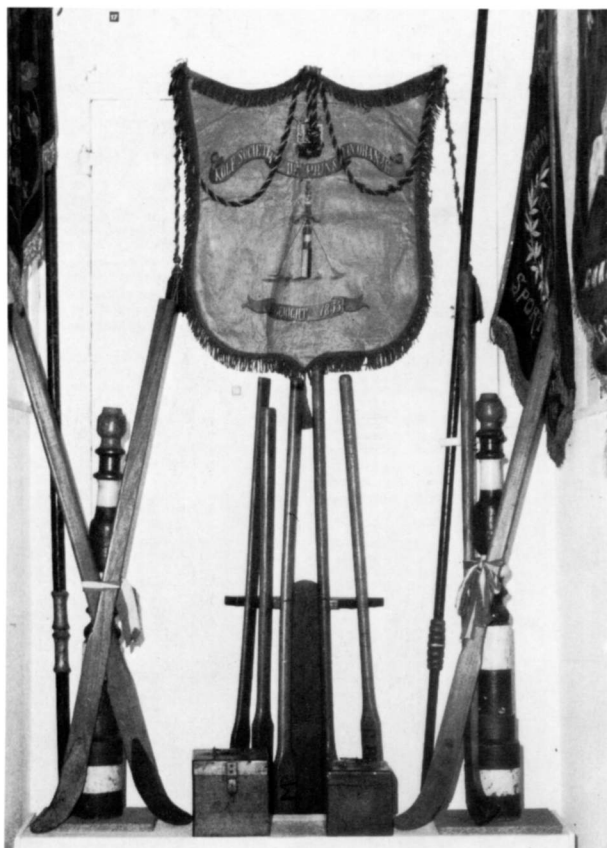
62 The kolf court of the Kolfclub Utrecht at the St. Eloyen Gasthuis (hospital) at Utrecht in 1913 and 1981



63 Two kolf posts from the kolf-society 'the Prince of Orange' in Goes, 1772
Wood, with painted red white and blue stripes
Both of them having a brass band inscribed: 'Anno 1772 Hubertus Simons'
height 98 cms
Inv.Nr. 3723
Museum voor Zuid- en Noord-Beveland, Goes
Standard of the kolf-society 'The Prince of Orange', Goes, 1855 (?)
impregnated paper on a cloth base
75 x 59 cms
Inv.Nr. 3496
Museum voor Zuid- en Noord-Beveland, Goes
The standard shows the coat of arms of the city of Goes, a kolf-post and clubs and balls, the inscription reads: Kolfsociëteit De Prins van Oranje. Opgericht (established) 1855)



64 kolf prize, 19th century
Small sajete ball mounted in brass filigree with imitation diamonds and mounted on a chain
diam. 5 cms
Historical Collection on Sports J.A. Brongers, Museum Flehite, Amersfoort



REGLEMENT OP HET KOLFSPEL.

ZOO ALS HETZELVE DOOR GEHEEL HET RIJK HEEN WORDT GESPEELD.

Verklaring van eenige woorden en spreekwijzen, bij het spel in gebruik.

- 1.) *Streeper*: men verdeelt een spel in eenige deelen; doorgaans in 5; dus moet iemand even zoo veel maal gewonnen hebben, zal hij het spel winnen: elk speldeel noemt men een *streepe*.
- 2.) *Boven*, is de plaats in de baan alwaar men begint te spelen. — *Beneden of onder*, is het tegenover gellegen einde der baan.
- 3.) *Uitspelen*, is bij den aanvang van 't spel, of speldeel, den bal van boven naar beneden slaan.
- 4.) *Smijten*, is een bal die op zijde, meer of minder achter of ook geheel achter het stuk ligt, en met welken echter het stuk geraakt moet worden, om hem tevens naar beneden te doen loopen. — Op die wijze een bal naar beneden te brengen noemt men *smijden*.
- 5.) *Trekbal*, is een bal welke aangelagen moet worden, zoo dat hij 't verst of verder dan een andere terug loopt. — Naar mate hij daartoe meer of minder gunstig ligt, noemt men hem, *goeds of slechts trekbal*.
- 6.) *Trekken*, is het gemidd aanstaan, om den bal 't verst of verder dan een andere bal te doen terug loopen.
- 7.) *Er is mag, of geen land achter*: dit wordt gezegd wanneer een getrokken bal zoodanig komt te liggen, dat een volgende nog, of niet verder, kan komen.
- 8.) *Slaan krijgen*: van dien een streepe heeft verloren zegt men: *hij heeft slaan*.
- 9.) *Overhalen*, is wanneer iemand die, als men uitscheidt met spelen, minder of 't minst heeft verloren, met een ander die meer of 't meest heeft verloren, nakolft, om 't geen beide zouden verloren hebben.
- 10.) *Geriten*, is bij aanhoudendheid met een' geweligen slag den bal naar 't stuk drijven; dus in alle gevallen zonder voorzigtig overleg spelen.
- 11.) *Op zijn oude huisjes spelen*: zoo noemt men het voorzigtig en met overleg spelen, met in achtname van alles dat gedaan kan worden om het spel te winnen.
- 12.) *Partij*: elk spel noemt men partij: zoo zegt iemand die, bij voorbeeld, drie spellen heeft gewonnen: *Ik heb drie partijen gewonnen*. Wanneer er drie spellen gespeeld zijn, zegt men: *Wij hebben drie partijen gemaakt*.
- 13.) *Kajfrik*: men zegt van een' speler dat hij *kajfrik* is, wanneer hij een spel verliest, zonder een enig streepe gewonnen te hebben.

- 14.) *Kolf aan 't stuk*, is als men, zijn bal slaande, tevens met den kolf het stuk raakt.
- 15.) *Maters spelen*, is als 4, 6 of 8 personen 't zamen spelen: 2, 3 of 4 van hun zijn en blijven dan boven, en de overige beneden, elk aldaar zijn 't waarnemende. Men speelt dan ook met zoo vele ballen als er maters zijn.
- 16.) *In slag spelen*, is als 4, 5 of meer personen ieder voor zich zelfven speelt, dat is, ieder met een' bal, zoo dat hij denzelven moet naloopen, en hem onder en boven spelen.
- 17.) *Mis ploegen kolven*: als een gezelschap uit vele personen bestaat, verdeelt het zich in twee of drie partijen, die men *ploegen* noemt: deze ploegen spelen beurtelings, ieder, naar onderling goedvinden, 2, 3 of meer spellen na eikander.
- 18.) *De nader hebben*: dit wordt gezegd van den geen' wiens bal, na 't uitspelen, beneden 't verst van het stuk ligt.
- 19.) *Op een' goeden bal spelen*: dit doet de geen die niet het stuk tracht te raken, maar door matig nacht te slaan, zijn bal op eene plaats tracht te doen komen, gunstig voor den volgende slag, door hem zeiven of door zijn maat te doen, om te trekken.
- 20.) *Bal opbreken*, doet de geen die zijnen bal opneemt, wanneer hij de bepaalde streepjes gemaakt, en dus voor 't onderhanden zijnde speldeel, afgedaan heeft.
- 21.) *Rabat*: is het schot boven en onder achter het stuk.
- 22.) *Rabatteren*, is als men den bal van achteren tegen het stuk slaat, zoo dat dezelve tegen het rabat stuit, en daardoor vooruit komt.
- 23.) *Opfluiten*, is als een partij aan 't spelen is, en een of meer personen verkiezen met deze te spelen, zoo wordt aan hunne zijde met een' kolf tegen 't zijfhot van de baan geslagen, en gezegd: *Dit 't voor de haan*.
- 24.) *Straf kolven*, wordt gezegd, wanneer opgefluit is geworden, en de opfluiters weder worden opgefluit, 't zij door geheel vreemden, of door de geenen die voor hen de baan hebben verlaten.

SPEELWETTEN.

- ART. 1.) Den bal niet rakende, of slechts op den kop, zoo dat dezelve zich alleenlijk een weinig beweegt, geldt echter de slag.
- 2.) *Maters spelende*, en een bal niet over de helft van de baan gebragt hebbende, slaat de geen die den bal alzo gebragt heeft, nogmaals: maar als de bal over de helft van de baan ligt, slaat de maat.
- 3.) Met 3 of 4 maters spelende, zijn de twee die met hunnen bal de streepjes gemaakt hebben er af, en de 2 laatste overblijvende maters spelen om de beslissing van 't spel.
- 4.) In slag spelende, gaat ieder die de bedongen streepjes gemaakt heeft af, en de twee overblijvende beslissen 't spel. Ieder zoekt doorgaans op zijn kolf aan hoeveel streepjes hij gemaakt heeft.
- 5.) Verkiezen 6 of 7 personen gezelschappelijk te spelen, zoo spelen 5 van dezelve, en 1 of 2 rusten: in gevalle van 6, gaat die verliest af, en wordt vervangen door den gerust heeft. Rusten 2, zoo gaat de verliezer af met den geenen die na hem de minste streepjes heeft gemaakt, en de rustende vervangen hen.
- 6.) In slag spelende zijn alle die bij het uitslaan het benedenstuk raken, er af, en tellen een streepe. Is er slechts een die, uitslaande, het benedenstuk niet geraakt heeft, die verliest het streepe.
- 7.) Alle bij 't uitslaan beneden mis geslagen hebbende, zoo blijft de geen die alleen aldaar, voor den tweeden slag, misflaat, slaan; en slaan 3 of 3 mis, die kolven door, terwijl zij die aangelagen hebben er af zijn.
- 8.) Spelen slechts 2 of 3 personen 't zamen, zoo speelt men van beginne af aan door; dat is, voor dezen geldt ART. 6 en 7 niet.
- 9.) In alle gevallen geldt de beurt-orde van beneden te slaan, naar dat de ballen verre van het stuk liggen: die het dicht bij 't zelve ligt slaat eerst, en zoo vervolgens. In gevalle van verschil, worden met een kolf, of met een lat, de afstanden gemeten; doch niet met een touw, om dat hetzelfde meer of minder gerukt kan worden.
- 10.) Worden getrokken ballen gemeten zoo moet, wanneer de ballen binnen het tegenoverstaande stuk liggen, de meting geschieden van het stuk af op 't welk is getrokken; doch liggen de ballen achter het tegenoverstaande stuk, zoo geschiedt de meting van het daar achterstaande rabat af.
- 11.) Wanneer alle de ballen zoo sterk uitgespeeld worden dat zij beneden het stuk raken, en, terugfluitende, ook het bovenstuk aandoen, zoo begint een ander spel.
- 12.) Zoo hij die den nader heeft voor zijn bal, en de ander voor zijn bal, beiden slaan, en wordt daarin vervangen door den geenen, die onmiddellijk vóór hem de beurt had. Speelt een der andere spelers vóór zijne beurt, zoo geeft dit hem die den nader heeft het regt om tweemaal te slaan.
- 13.) Ligen 3 of meer ballen rondom het benedenstuk, zoo moet onderling overleg gekomen worden, om dezen of geenen speler strafloos vóór zijne beurt te laten slaan, ten einde de overige ballen niet geboost mogen worden. Ligt een bal den geenen die slaan moet in den weg, zoo mag hij denzelven laten wegnemen, maar de plaats waar die bal gelegen heeft, met een' natten vinger merkende.
- 14.) Wordt iemand bal bij 't uitslaan gehouden vóór het stuk, zoo mag hij verlaan. Wordt zijn bal achter 't stuk waarop hij speelt gehouden, zoo mag hij ook wel verlaan; maar moet slechts op een' goeden bal spelen; echter mag hij het stuk wel van achteren raken; maar raakt hij het van voren zoo geldt dit niet.

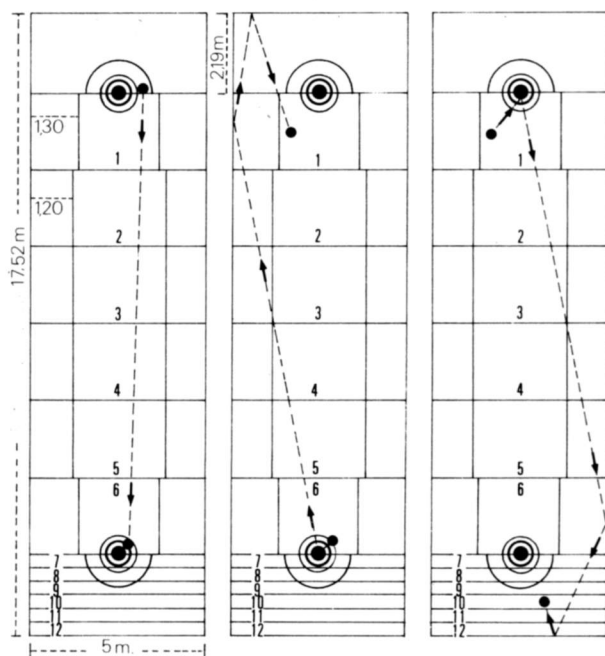
'T tweede kolfspel mag den spelters veilig wekken;
Mag tot verpozing van den speler verstreken,
Dan, dat geen wistertij 't vermaak daarvan vergaft.
'T geen door den verlijkt speler ook niet gebeuren zal.

- ART. 15.) Is 't stuk beneden met den tweeden slag geraakt ende bal wordt gehouden, zoo mag men, des-verkiezende, ook verlaan; maar als dan het stuk niet rakende, geldt het eerste raken niet, en de bal wordt voor mis te zijn gehouden.
- 16.) Die een bal welke boven, dat is met den laatste slag, getrokken is voor het stuk waarop getrokken is, houdt, blijft slaan; doch gelchiedt het houden achter 't stuk zoo wordt het niet geteld.
- 17.) Gelchiedt het houden in ART. 16 gemeld, met den bal die om 't laatste streepe trekt, en het dus verliest, zoo krijgt de houder de partij aan; dewijl dit echter eene hardheid is, wordt er gemeenlijk met hem om gekolfd, namelijk de houder speelt met dien gehouden is om betaling der partij.
- 18.) Die zijn bal opbrekt alvorens 't mag geschieden blijft slaan; zoo blijft ook slaan de geene die den bal van een ander opbrekt.
- 19.) Die met zijn bal dien van een ander raakt, zoo blijven de beide ballen liggen ter plaatse alwaar zij zich bevinden. Treft den geraakten bal het stuk, zoo geldt dit bij den eigenaar des bals voor aangelagen te hebben.
- 20.) Die den bal van een ander raakt zoodanig dat dezelve buiten de baan springt, blijft slaan.
- 21.) Die zijn eigen bal, het stuk af of niet geraakt hebbende, buiten de baan slaat, blijft mede slaan.
- 22.) Kolf aan 't stuk blijft slaan.
- 23.) Twee trekballen die even verre komen te liggen, kunnen op nieuw getrokken worden, en ieder kan dan zijn bal naar goedvinden vóór het stuk leggen. Men mag ook, des verkiezende, van voren af aan om het streepe kolven.
- 24.) Een bal die naar boven getrokken is, mag niet verlegd worden, zoo hij vóór een' bal die gespeeld moet worden ligt; wel zoo hij achter denzelven ligt, mis weder de plaats merkende. In 't eerste geval mag men vóór onder den bal die gespeeld moet worden een pijpenteeltje leggen, waardoor hij over den hinderenden bal heen springt.
- 25.) Niemand mag zijn bal verleggen om een' vrijen slag te krijgen, zonder toestemming van geheel 't gezelschap.
- 26.) Die rabatteert blijft slaan; doch wanneer het stuk van voren of op zijde geraakt is, zoodanig dat de bal uitspat, het rabat raakt, en daardoor voorwaarts komt, wordt niet voor rabatteren gehouden.
- 27.) Wanneer opgefluit wordt moet het onderhanden zijnde spel eerst uitgespeeld worden; voorts wordt weder de werkelijk spelende afgesproken wie met den opfluiters of opfluiters zal of zullen doorspelen; verkiest niemand het te doen, zoo wordt de baan verlaten; maar wordt de opfluiting aangenomen, zoo moet om een gabele flesch gespeeld worden.
- 28.) Wanneer opfluiters spelen, en er weder anderen komen die opfluiten, moet de verkiezende partij voor dezen de baan verlaten; doch kunnen, des verkiezende, terstond weder opfluiten.
- 29.) Niemand mag in de baan zijn dat de werkelijk spelen; die dit weigert, dus in de baan blijft, en dan een bal houdt, verbeurt een halve flesch wijn. Maar die buiten de baan tegen het beschot slaat, en een bal houdt welke anders buiten geïsprongen zoude wezen, verbeurt niets; doch die den bal heeft geslagen blijft slaan.

De speler moet zich naar de wet van 't spel gedragen.
Dien valt er geen verschil; den valt er niet te klagen;
Hij die de wet, als zucht tot wisten, weierlegt,
Da, door elke weigering, zich 't gezellig spel onzegt.

65 Rules and Laws of the kolf game about 1800

66 Diagram of a kolf game
left to right: 1st, 2nd and
3rd stroke



67 Three kolf-clubs, abt. 1900,
1918, abt. 1900
elm, elm and ash
133 x 17.6 cms, 126.7 x
18.5 cms, 126.5 x 11 cms
Kolclub Utrecht in St.
Eloyengasthuis, Utrecht
The club on the left is in a
green cloth cover, the club
in the center is for play with
rubber balls, the right-hand
club is for play with sajat
balls



68 Three kolf balls, one re-
cently made and two older
ones

The two older balls on the
left are 12 cms in diameter
the right one 10 cms

Kolclub Utrecht in the St.
Eloyengasthuis, Utrecht

The two older balls are filled
with wound sajat (wool)

Their leather covers are
sewn with copper thread, the
seams cross on one side but
not on the other

The modern ball's cover is
glued to the core



69 450 kolf-courts in 1792 –
and 16 in 1982



- 1 Amsterdam (212)
- 2 Utrecht (21)
- 3 Rotterdam (107)
- 4 Den Haag (25)
- 5 Leiden (46)
- 6 Haarlem (12)
- 7 Weesp (6)
- 8 Montfoort (5)
- 9 Buiksoot (6)
- 10 Nieuwendam (4)
- 11 Schellingwoude (2)
- 12 De Rijp (1)
- 13 Goes (1)
- 14 Amersfoort (1)
- 15 Bergen op Zoom (1)



- 1 Wieringerwaard
- 2 St. Maartensbrug
- 3 Oud Karspel
- 4 Bargingerhorn
- 5 Noord Scharwoude
- 6 Zuid Scharwoude
- 7 Nieuwe Niedorp
- 8 Hoogwoud
- 9 Berkhout
- 10 Andijk
- 11 Grootebroek
- 12 Venhuizen
- 13 Wijdenes
- 14 Krommenie
- 15 Wormer
- 16 Utrecht

70 Map of golf courses in Holland and Belgium today

- number of holes
- in construction
- ★ planned



Early Golf in America

The first traces of golf in the United States may be found around the present city of Albany N.Y. In the early part of the 17th century the Dutch West India Company established their first settlement in the 'New Netherlands' at the southern tip of Manhattan Island and sent Henry Hudson up the river, which now bears his name, to find out what other possibilities there were. Eventually, since the main business in the first years consisted of buying beaver skins from the Indians and selling them various European products, a small fort, named Orange, was set up further inland along the river, just where Albany is today. A village grew around the fort, appropriately named Beverwyck, and still later the efforts of the W.I. Company to attract settlers bore fruit in that Kiliaen van Rensselaer established such a settlement on both sides of the river around the fort and the village. Both the fort with the village and the manor of van Rensselaerswyck had their own court of law, the 'Small bench of Justice of the Fort Orange and the village of Beverwyck' and the 'Manor Court of Rensselaerswyck'. Both kept records and here we find the first mentionings of colf. The first entry is in the Records of the Manor Court and dates from the 13th December 1650. From the records we can reconstruct what happened on the 12th December of that year: After the game of colf that was the cause of it all the following persons were at the house of Steven Jansz, carpenter, who also ran an unlicensed gin shop there, in Rensselaerswyck:

Steven Jansz, carpenter and his wife

Teunis Jansz, sailmaker (a brother?)

Jacob Jansz Stol, ferryman on the river

Philip Pietersz (Schuyler), gunstockmaker

Gijsbert Cornelisz, innkeeper

Jacob Adriaensz witnesses, nothing to do with the others
Claes Adriaensz

The course of events was most likely as follows: Philip and Jacob Stol, who were good friends, had played colf against Teunis and Gijsbert, the losers to pay for the brandy of the winners. Since the brawl began by an argument between Teunis and Steven Jansz's wife over the marking up of the brandy which had been ordered, Philip and Jacob must have won the game. Jacob Stol, a notorious fist-fighter who had already been to court

before, underlined the arguments of his partner Teunis by striking Steven Jansz and Gijsbert who came to his rescue with his colfclub. His partner Philip then came to assist Jacob Stol and struck both Steven and Gijsbert with his fists. Gijsbert fell to the ground and was wounded.

Jacob and Claes Adriaensz, who were also present in the house, were only witnesses to the brawl and were heard separately in court.

The court, presided over by Brandt van Slichtenhorst, director of the colony of Rensselaerswyck, hears the suspects and the witnesses on the 13th December and defers the case until to following 5th January. On that date Jacob is fined 20 guilders or 2½ beaver-skins. Philip who had been confined to the fort in the meantime, which he could only leave against bail, asked for a deferment of his case and got it. His case is never heard of again, which is not so surprising since shortly after that date he married Margaretha van Slichtenhorst the daughter of the director of the colony and president of the court. Ironically, in later years, he gives the date of the fight as his wedding date. It is a unique feature that, thanks to the fight and the ensuing court case we can identify the players and even reconstruct the sides. Play would have been with lead-headed clubs and leather balls-stuffed with hair-which were in fashion in Holland in those days and were probably brought from there. 9 years later, on the 10th December 1659, the 'Small Bench of Justice' issued an ordinance prohibiting colf within the fort and along the streets of the village on complaints of the inhabitants about breakage of windows and imminent injuries to passers-by.

The fine was set at 25 guilders, even higher than Jacob Stol had to pay in 1651. (W)

So Albany can beat any other part of the United States in regard to claims about the earliest golf there.

The next mentioning of golf is in Charleston, S.C. in 1743 when 8 dozen golf clubs and 3 gross golf balls were shipped there from Leith in Scotland. (RR)

Appendix I

Ballmaking

1428 Bergen op Zoom

on the 26th November Cornelis Boele, ballmaker is entered in the register of citizens

1437 Middelburg

Jan the ballmaker (Jan die balmakere)

1461 Bergen op Zoom

on the 3rd November the magistrates resolve that henceforth the ball-men (sellers of balls) shall post themselves along the Grebbe(a canal) on the weekly market

1474 Middelburg

on the 22nd December the magistrates resolve that manufacture of clubs and balls and selling of the same shall come under the St Nicolas-or Merchants' Guild

1475 Bergen op Zoom

on the 28th April Peter Alste(e)n, ballmaker undertakes to supply 300 balls a week at 14 groats a hundred to Willem Woutersz van Beyeren

1476 Bergen op Zoom

on the 11th October Jacob the ballmaker acts as guarantor for the entry of Lambrecht Jansz, weaver in the register of citizens

1485 Bergen op Zoom

on the 14th October Jan Hermansz, ballmaker is entered in the register of citizens

1486 Steenberg

on the 6th July Catlijne Aernts daughter widow of the late Nout Cornelisz is owed 24 shillings by Jan van den Stapele, taylor and his wife, of Bergen op Zoom for balls supplied

1486 Bergen op Zoom

when sailing to Scotland in the ship of Per Bolle after the Cold Fair (early November) Ritsaert Clays (Richard Clay?) pays 6 groats toll for the export of one barrel of balls (abt. 6000)

1487 Bergen op Zoom

when sailing to Scotland in the ship of Hanne Maes after the Easter Fair Jan Berke (John Berwick?) pays 16 groats toll for the export of two pipes of balls (abt. 20.000)

1494 Bergen op Zoom

toll is collected for the export of two barrels of balls

(abt. 12.000) after the Easter Fair and 4 barrels of balls (about 24.000) after the Cold Fair

1495 Wouw

on the 17th February an entry at Bergen op Zoom shows that Nicolas Bau, ballmaker is residing at Paris at the time

1495 Bergen op Zoom

toll is collected on the export of 2 barrels of balls after the Easter Fair (abt. 12.000)

1496 Bergen op Zoom

toll is collected on the export of 2 barrels of balls (abt. 12.000) after the Easter Fair and 3 barrels of balls (abt. 18.000) after the Cold Fair.

1502 Bergen op Zoom

on the 9th May Cornelis Jansz, carpenter undertakes to supply to Claus Laureysz, merchant 40.000 balls at 13 groats a hundred before the Cold Market

1505 Bergen op Zoom

on the 9th May Jan Clausz ballmaker is entered in the register of citizens (Merchants' Guild)

1510 Bergen op Zoom

on the 16th August Michiel Jacobsz, ballmaker is entered in the register of citizens (Carpenters Guild)

1515 Bergen op Zoom

on the 26th January Michiel Jacobsz, ballmaker is guarantor for the entry of Cornelis Willemsz, from Steenberg, labourer and ballmaker in the register of citizens

1517 Bergen op Zoom

on the 16th January Michiel Jacobsz, ballmaker is guarantor for the entry of Mercelis Willemsz, from Steenberg, ballmaker (brother of Cornelis?) in the register of citizens (Labourers' Guild)

1518 Bergen op Zoom

on the 5th March Cornelis Willemsz, labourer undertakes to supply to Jacob Laureysz, ballmaker 300 minus 25 balls at 5 shillings

1518 Steenberg

on the 11th March Claus Laureysz, ballmaker buys a piece of land

1519 Brussels

on the 19th November Emperor Charles V (titular Count of Holland and Zeeland) issues a new tariff for

the Great Zeeland Tol, in which:

Balls, kaatsballs, a small barrel (abt. 2000)..2 groats

1524 Steenbergen

at the Easter Fair Mels Claesz buys in the public house 'The Red Tower' at Bergen op Zoom from Michiel Jacobsz, ballmaker 3000 pounds of ballhair (stuffing) at 20 shillings per 100 pounds. (this is the equivalent of some 1407 kilo's and sufficient for the stuffing of about 60.000 balls)

1537 Haarlem

the ballmakers are granted a charter which joins them with the shoe-makers-or St.Crispins-guild

1540 Bergen op Zoom

Claes, ballmaker rents a piece of land on the ramparts, behind his house (for the washing of ballhair?) from the Marquess of Bergen op Zoom on the 12th February at 6 shillings per year

1543 Haarlem

a census mentions two ballmakers one of whom is Frans Hendrikszoon living on the 'Klein Heiligland'

1543 Amsterdam

Cornelis, ballmaker

1552 Goirle

Laureys, the ballmaker

1553 Goirle

Antonis Aertdsen, the ballmaker

1560 Goirle

Frans Petersen, Master ballmaker sues his apprentice Jan Cornelis Geryts Hermanssen for failure to pay him the agreed 2 Rhineland Guilders and that while he had washed and wrung him and given him soup

1567 Amsterdam

Govert Aertszoon, ballmaker and Jacob Pieterszoon, ballmaker

1583-1601 Amsterdam

in this period 16 ballmakers are mentioned in the marriage registers of the city

1585 Amsterdam

Jacob Meynertz, ballmaker

1586 Delft

ordinance against the ballmakers washing the hair for the stuffing of balls in the city's canals

1588 Tilburg

Sebastian van Warendorp, commander in the Spanish army holds Tilburg to ransom at 12.000 balls to be delivered to him at Eindhoven within two weeks.

When the Tilburgers went to Goirle that village supplied them on the spot with their running production: 6500 balls

1610 Amsterdam

the ballmakers live at the Margrietenpad outside the city walls (today: Elandsgracht)

1617 Rotterdam

Antonis Wouterssoon, ballmaker, from Goirle; Jan Adriaanszoon Verschueren, ballmaker

1626 Delft

ordinance of the magistrates on the St Michaels Guild (ballmakers and buttonmakers) restricting the number of apprentices (apprenticeship: 3 years). Amplification of this ordinance in 1650

1631 Goirle

three ballmakers committed a shipment of 17.000 balls to a waggoner to take it to Maastricht and sell it on the market there.

They had manufactured these balls with their families and apprentices.

1634 Amsterdam

1 ballmaker

1656 Delft

Jan Peter Otten, ballmaker, from Goirle

1665 Goirle

a list of 24 ballmakers and some ballseamstresses

1669 Goirle/Delft

contract between Gijsbert Janssen Velsen and Roelandus van Edenburg, notary and 11 master-ballmakers at Goirle purchasing their entire production over a period of 10 years.

An apprenticeship at Goirle lasted 2 years at the time.

71 Places where golf-balls
where manufactured and ex-
port centres



Appendix II

Clubmaking

1464 Ghent

Jan de Colfmakere (John the Clubmaker) joins a crusade

1474 Middelburg

selling of clubs, inasmuch as not made at home comes under the St Nicholas- on or Merchants' Guild

abt 1520 Leyden

Clubmakers' Alley (Kolmakerssteeg) receives its name. As late as 1800 a sign on one of the houses in this street read: Praise God above all, here one sells you club and ball.

1540/44 Leeuwarden

Evert Dircx, clubmaker, born at Jorwerd Jan Claes-zoon, clubmaker, from Cornyum

1585 Amsterdam

Claes Dircx, clubmaker

1634 Amsterdam

Cornelis Evertssoon, clubmaker

1646 Amsterdam

Evert Cornelyss (son of Cornelis E. 1634?), clubmaker

abt 1650 Haarlem

a clubmaker lived on the Zijlweg near the Zijlgate. A sign on his house read:

Here one makes clubs fine and noble.

Play colf with pleasure, not with brawls.

Plays for a pint or a gallon

but leave the farmers turnips alone.

Let the winter be cold and hard we play the ball just the same.

1659 Leyden

on behalf of the clubmakers, Thijs Pietersz Groenendaal and Aert de Noorlander request the magistrates to be incorporated into the chair-turners' and weelwrights' guild and ask for protection from the increasing competition from the surrounding countryside (the request is refused)

1660 Leyden

the magistrates grant a charter for the formation of a guild of clubmakers and club-sellers

1665 Amsterdam

Thijs Cornelisse Backum, clubmaker



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R.A. (Rijks Archief) – National Record Office
K.b. (Keurboek) – City Ordinance Book

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- 5 Kb. 1618, fol. 35, Inv. Nr. 28
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Dokkum – cf. R.A. Leeuwarden

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From the moment of its first publication in the autumn of 1982 this book occupies a unique position amongst the 4500-odd books on golf. It is the only historically correct account of the development of golf in the Low Countries, commencing in the year 1297. Leaving legend and lore apart the many medieval facts and records go back much further in time than anything produced on Scotland. The book is also unique in that it includes a chapter on relations between Holland and Scotland, a much neglected field in golf history. The second edition has been augmented by a chapter on the earliest golf in the United States and by such historic facts as have been found since the previous edition was published.

Steven J.H. van Hengel F.I.B. (Fellow of the Institute of Bankers, London) is a retired banker. He was born in Amsterdam in 1925 and educated in his native country, Austria and Switzerland, depending on the place of residence of his parents. He is one of the few Fellows of the Institute of Bankers whose native tongue is not English. He is a director of a variety of Dutch and international companies.

His golfing interest started when he commenced playing at the Kennemer Golf & Country Club at Zandvoort in 1947. Eventually he became involved in the direction of golf on a national and international level. He is a member of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, an honorary member of the Netherlands Golf Federation and a member of the Golf Collectors Society.

While playing he developed an interest in the historical background of golf, the more so since in most golf books there were but cursory comments on the history of golf in the Low Countries. Research in his own country had only been done by his friend J.A. Brongers who died in an aeroplane crash in 1954.

In 1982 the result of 30 years of research was first presented to the public in Holland and Belgium in the form of an exhibition under the title COLF-KOLF-GOLF accompanied by a sizeable illustrated catalogue.

Mr. van Hengel is a regular contributor to periodicals on golf and history both in his own country and abroad.

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Detail from a painting by
Hendrick Avercamp (1585-1634).
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