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[Colf 'sloffen'](#)

Posted by ancientgolf under [Colf](#)
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Some time ago we were made a present of ancient 'sloffen' (plural of one 'slof') as they are called in the Netherlandish language. Sloffen are the metal club heads of the colf clubs used in the ancient golf related game of colf. This game was played in the Low Countries between the 13th century and the beginning of the 18th century.

These club heads were mainly made of a lead-tin alloy, although also copper and bronze were used.

No information exists about the locations where the sloffen were found, nor their age or where they were used.

However, after closer look we found the following.



The larger damaged slof was made of a lead-tin alloy. The club head is 9 centimetres long, 3.5 centimetres high and weights 250 grams. The loft of the face is approximately 10° – 15°. The shaft probably made of ash is missing, completely mouldered after hundreds of years. The club head with the ash shaft was used by an adult who was right-handed. When and where the colf club was used cannot be decided on examining the club head. At the end of the back of the slof near the connection to the shaft a small simple line decoration is visible.

There were two main periods in which this game of colf was played: on land in the period between the 13th century and 1550 and in the second period on the ice of frozen canals, harbours, ponds, rivers, etc. during the Little Ice Age between 1550 and 1700. After 1700 the long game of colf was replaced by a short game played often indoors and called 'kolf'. The requirements for this short game needed for bigger and heavier clubs (and balls).



The little 'slof', also made of a lead-tin alloy, measures only 6 centimetres and the height of the face is 2 centimetres. The weight of the 'mini' slof is only 75 grams. Here also the ash shaft has completely mouldered away. The loft is very upright, nearly as a 'putter' in golf. At the back of the little slof a simple decoration is visible.

It is clear that the slof when fixed to the shaft was used by a right-handed child. It cannot be concluded by examining the slof if the young boy or girl played colf on land or on the ice. So the age of the slof cannot be defined. The find of this little slof shows that colf was not only played by adults, but also by boys and girls.

Till the beginning of the 18th century the game of colf has been very popular in the Low Countries. This is shown by regular finds of such metal club heads during archaeological excavations and by people who are looking for metal objects in the fields with their metal detectors.

If you want to know more about club and balls used in the ancient game of colf and in the game of kolf, why don't you pay a visit to [the web museum of the KNKB](#) (Royal Netherlandish Kolf Society). Be patient. It is a very big museum.