



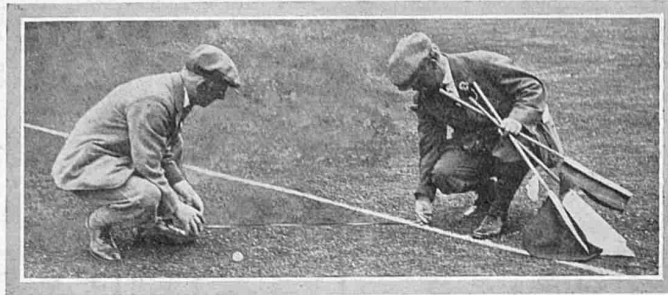
THE GOLFER

By "Follow Through."

FOR the third year in four the Open Championship Cup has gone to America, and Walter Hagen, twice in three years, is the man who has done the damage. To win the open championship at all is a sufficiently glorious feat, but to do so in the manner adopted by Hagen is all the more remarkable. It would be absurd flattery to say that Hagen was playing better golf than anyone else at Hoylake. He only just managed to qualify, and in the championship proper was in terrible trouble time and again. But of his spirit, of his tremendous courage, and of his will to win there can be no possible doubt. He did exactly the same thing when he won his first British championship at Sandwich in 1922, and anyone who saw him play then must have realised that he was the best "championship player" living. Only in one department of the game can it be said that he is actually the best "shot-maker," but that department, luckily for him and unluckily for everyone else, is the most important of all—putting. Put his ball four yards from the hole in a round in which all is going smoothly and well, and he is very nearly as likely as anyone else to miss the putt; but give him that putt to hole when things are going badly, or when the championship rests on the holing of it, and you may bet your bottom dollar—he certainly would—that he will hole it.

That is the sort of man Hagen is, and so small wonder that he has done so well. He missed several drives at Hoylake, he lost a ball, he had terrible lies in bunkers and in long grass, but none of these affairs worried him in the least. A missed drive, a half-hit iron shot or an inaccurate pitch are to him only an incentive to regain the lost half or full stroke on the green, which, more times than not, he will succeed in doing. Britishers are reputed to have a great admiration for what is called the "bull-dog" touch; well, if ever there was a golfer in the whole history of the game who deserves to be called a bulldog, it is the American, Walter Hagen. You simply cannot get him to see bad in the game where he yet hopes that good may come, nor to despair when he insists on being cheerful. His putting is, of course, one of the wonders of the world, a gift that many would give a fortune to possess just for one week. It is all so deliberate, though not overslow, that after he has sunk putts on three or four greens, you begin to think that he simply cannot miss one. It is a sad business that the Americans have so consistently got the better of us, but if they are to do it, there is none more worthy of the honour than Hagen, and I am sure that no one who was at Hoylake and saw him do it would grudge him the fullest and most sincere congratulations.

Duncan in the end started favourite,



LONG DRIVING AT HOYLAK: MEASURING THE LENGTH OF A DRIVE.

with Hagen, Mitchell and MacDonald Smith close up to him, and for a very long time it looked as if he must win. He was playing so tremendously well, so very easily, and with the run of the green often against him, that it was natural to hope that any moment he would produce the "crazy stuff." As a matter of fact,



THE LONG DRIVING AGGREGATE WINNER: J. SMITH, OF CANTELUPE, THE WINNER AT HOYLAK WITH A TOTAL OF 728 YARDS 2 INCHES FOR THREE DRIVES.



THE WINNER OF THE LONGEST DRIVE BY AN AMATEUR: MR. TOLLEY AT HOYLAK.

With 257 yds. 1 ft. 2 in., Mr. Tolley made the longest drive by an amateur in *The Field* Competition at Hoylake, though the actual winner was Bingham, of Stourbridge, with 263 yds. 1 in. The longest drive on record is the one of 445 yds. made by E. C. Bliss in 1913, downhill at Herne Bay.

he did give us some abnormally wonderful golf in his third round, but he had one or two pieces of cruelly hard luck that spoiled what would have been an astonishing round. That seemed rather to knock the stuffing out of him, for although Duncan would never give up trying he was obviously going out for everything in his fourth round, and so lost any chance that he had of finishing at the top. As it so happened Hagen took 77 to the last round and a score of 74 would have done for Duncan to tie with him, and 74 was nothing to Duncan in the way that he was playing.

The golf seen, however, conclusively proved that so far as producing the shots is concerned Duncan is the best living, unless Mr. Bobby Jones be granted the honour of sharing that position with him. For Mitchell, it is hard to say anything except once again to express astonishment at how on earth he comes to fail. Watch Mitchell playing and it is hard to see how he can possibly go wrong. His methods seem almost fool-proof, and his tremendous length makes the game so absurdly easy for him. But miss shots he does, and this championship meeting in particular was a fiasco so far as he was concerned. E. R. Whitcombe made a most gallant effort to keep the cup in this country. His fourth round, after a hideous start, was really wonderful, and he must be considered unlucky to have come so very nearly only to fail. That he is every bit good enough to win a championship there is no doubt, and either he or his brother, C.A., is quite capable of winning more than once.

Apart from Hagen, perhaps, J. H. Taylor achieved the greatest triumph of all. For two rounds he was well in the running, after having led the field in the qualifying rounds, and only the physical strain in the end kept him from achieving what surely would have been the greatest and most popular victory of the century. It was the common agreement of all the more experienced competitors at Hoylake that with each year the championship is becoming

more and more of a test of physical endurance and less and less of a test of golfing skill. Hoylake has been lengthened considerably, and with so much long grass on each side of the fairway, golf was too much like hard work to be pleasant.

But if the professionals will drive so far the courses must be lengthened. A special word of praise is due to Mr. Cyril Tolley, who, although he slightly fell off from a good start, well maintained the repute of modern amateur golf. Had he maintained the form he showed in the second of his qualifying rounds, when he returned a brilliant 72, there might have been a different story to tell, and the trophy might have travelled south instead of to the Far West.