

Match Play Championship

THE *News of the World* 39th P.G.A. Match Play Championship was concluded during a week of lovely golfing weather, dull and almost windless, except for the final day, over the Royal Liverpool Golf Club's wonderful course at Hoylake, and a new champion, Harry Weetman, put his name on this coveted trophy.

I am not sure that the post-war tournament professional likes the match-play type of event very much. He prefers the long-drawn-out 72 holes of medal play, which, twice a year, is even drawn out over 90 holes, but to me there is much excitement and even more for the gallery, in the hand-to-hand, fight-to-the-death battles over a round of golf.

Several things stand out in my mind as I look back on the Match Play Championship week. Very few matches indeed needed extra holes to decide them. The play in general was brilliant over a course only some 300 yards shorter than its very longest, and many scores were in the 60's or heading that way had the rounds been terminated.

The improvement shown by thirty-year-old Harry Weetman, who seemed to lose almost overnight his erratic driving and errors in judging his second shots, and to become an experienced campaigner with the courage of a lion and a superb putting touch, was the week's sensation.

The greens were holding so well and were running so truly that some amazing chipping and putting were seen. Crowd-control was good and the adequate score-boards spaced at such crucial points as the 5th, 9th and 15th and, of course, the 18th, inter-connected by "walkie-talkie," kept the huge crowds informed of the state of the battles as they progressed.

With the complete eclipse of the then selected eight Ryder Cup players by the end of the fourth round, one reporter said, "The selectors had better begin their job over again." This was a bit hard, but I am sure that match play for many does not come easily. Dai Rees, in a seemingly easy section of the draw, has not been playing in his best form this season and was beaten by Reginald Knight, of Wanstead, in the fourth round.

Weetman's Enormous Power

Harry Weetman, who has established himself this week as one of our best younger players, fought his way through a tough section of the draw. He beat Jack Hargreaves at the 19th only; F. Van Donck, T. H. Cotton, W. Smithers and A. Waters. In every round he played as well as we had always hoped he might one day when that enormous power of his was correctly harnessed.

The semi-final match against Smithers he ended with a beautiful birdie 3 on the home hole for a 1 up win, holing a 7-ft. putt after Smithers had scrambled a 4, holing from 9 ft. after a poor, pulled second shot and a miraculous recovery from a ball buried in the sand in the wing bunker of the green.

James Adams, of Wentworth, forty-one years of age, contested the final for the third time and for the second successive time on this course where he was formerly professional. He fought his way to the final by beating successively W. Lees, J. L. Black, J. Panton, J. A. Ballingall and S. King. Adams, now in the region of 16 stone, still has a beautiful long, free swing where he keeps both his feet almost flat on the ground, his double-jointed left wrist permitting a most extravagant cock of this joint. Curiously enough, Weetman, too, plays most of his shots with his right heel glued to the ground.

Adams has played some wonderful golf this week and against Sam King in a happy friendly match he needed two 4's for a 67 when the match ended. Starting back with four 3's, he made little headway, for King

put in two 2's in this same stretch. Robert Halsall, of Birkdale, created a minor sensation in beating Tom Halliburton and Richard Burton in successive rounds. Adams was beaten in the final in an interesting match—at least it was very interesting until the eighth hole in the afternoon and it could have run either way. The guesses of the spectators were no better than mine, but Weetman took control.

Weetman was 2 up at lunch, after being 3 up at one stage, only to see that lead fade away, losing five holes out of six from the 8th to the 13th, but when he collected a birdie 3 at the opening hole after lunch to be 3 up it looked bad for Adams. Then suddenly, with a birdie 3 at the 5th and a bad 4 by Weetman at the 7th, Adams was then just 1 down, and as Weetman had fluffed his 5-yard putt at the 7th, hitting it halfway to the hole, it could be translated to read that the younger player was not liking Adams's pressure.

Adams In Trouble

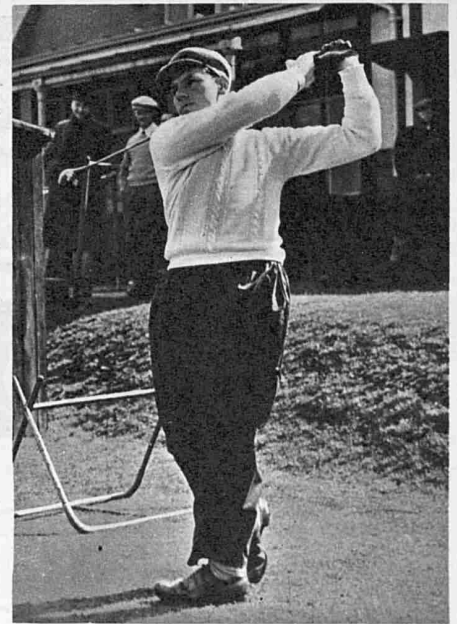
But the next two holes decided the issue. At the 487-yard 8th Weetman's second was 2 yards from the pin and he did not have to putt. Adams was in trouble all the way, then after a drive of over 300 yards at the 9th (it has to be a good golf ball to take such pounding), a 60-yard pitch put the ball a yard from the flag. This swung the match the other way again and from these blows Adams never recovered. Weetman was 73 to 74 in the morning round and three under 4's after lunch on a testing, much cooler golfing day with a fairly strong easterly breeze.

This loose-limbed, thirty-year-old golfer has "arrived." Since July his improvement has been most marked and I included him in my selection for the Ryder Cup team when the first players were announced. He has an ugly style but his iron play with the shorter irons in particular is bold and forceful. He attacks the flag all the time. I think he will improve more yet.

James Adams is again runner-up, qualifying once more for the title of champion runner-up, as for the third time he has failed to win this title when contesting the final. He has been chosen to join the Ryder Cup players as a result of his past week's showing.

Reginald Knight got a big hand for beating Dai Rees, who is not altogether happy about his game just now. John Panton beat Max Faulkner, who has not recaptured his Open Championship form. He has been relaxing since July, except for a visit to Spain and Sweden. I cannot help but feel that Wally Smithers, old as he is by international standards, is as brave a match-player as we have in the pro. ranks. He is perhaps too old to send to the U.S.A., as we are, after all, sending our players for experience. A win is not possible, it must be recognised.

There was one incident in the morning round that changed the run of the match, and in this Weetman was lucky—he had a



HARRY WEETMAN, winner of the P.G.A. Match Play Championship at Hoylake. Henry Cotton describes him as having "the courage of a lion and a superb putting touch."

big share of luck during the week. Winners, of course, usually do. This incident was at the long 511-yard 14th hole: after three shots Weetman lay 4 yards short of the pin. Adams had to play; he was some 30 yards from the flag in 2 and his beautifully-judged run-up going to finish by the hole-side, hit Weetman's ball squarely, killed his shot and sent his opponent's ball up to some 7 ft. from the hole; his lay 8 ft. away. Then he missed the putt and Weetman holed, so a probable 3 down became a mere 1 down.

Whatever happens in the coming Ryder Cup match—and we shall not win many points—I am certain of one thing: that Harry Weetman will be a new golfer when he returns: a better one even than now.

Henry Cotton

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ILLUSTRATED NEWSPAPERS GOLF MEETING: Mr. W. C. Nisbett, Managing Director of Illustrated Newspapers, presents "The Sphere" Challenge Cup to Mr. E. T. M. Smalley at the Royal Mid-Surrey Golf Club. Mr. Smalley had a most successful day, for in the afternoon he and Mr. P. H. Hogg won the bogey foursomes. We were particularly pleased to welcome to the meeting many old friends of "Sport & Country," including Mr. G. H. Gascoigne and Mr. G. W. Pangbourne, who in partnership won second prize in the bogey foursomes, Mr. Neville Gascoigne, Mr. R. H. Dolton, Managing Director of Alfa-Laval, and Mr. E. A. Smee.