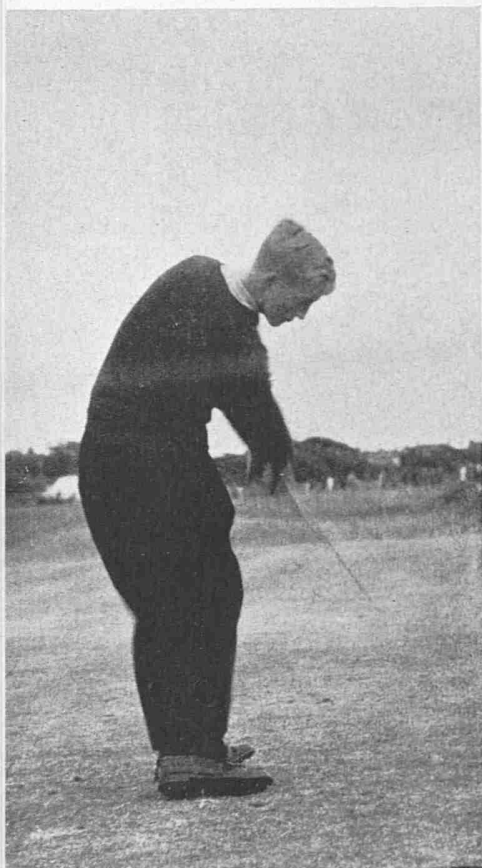


REFLECTIONS ON THE AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP



RODNEY FOSTER, 20 year old son of a Leeds Surgeon, has very fast arm and hand action.



THE CLUB HOUSE at Hoylake. The putting green lies before the building.

THE AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP at Hoylake was not considered a success from the various home angles but as it turned out, the final of the premier amateur event in Britain, was good entertainment. The thrills only ended on the 36th green, when the 31 years old American, Richard Davies, an estate agent from Pasadena, California, jumped for joy on holing out his yard putt to beat 23 years old John Povall, from Whitchurch, Cardiff, by one hole. The only gesture of any sort he had made all week.

The shirt sleeved gallery, which had grown during the day to around 2,000 as supporters of John Povall swelled the numbers of spectators, saw the match fluctuate from 4 up for Davies to 2 up to Povall, but in the end it was Davies who played the precious final holes the best (scores 75 to 76).

Seven Handicap Stuff

The finalists began the day as if they had ended their gruelling week already and were just too tired to produce even reasonable golf, and their morning scores on an almost still sunny morning were "seven handicap stuff," not of championship calibre, being 81 to 82 strokes.

After lunch, when Davies began 2 up, Povall played better and won 4 out of the first five holes to give hopes of a home win. Once again, however, Britain failed and the Cup went to America, in the hands of a keen amateur golfer who on his own admission "comes about 4,001st" in the list of golfing talent at home.

How the home seeds all fell away so easily in the week—not one reached the last eight—was a mystery to me and to The Championship Committee. The excitement had gone out of the event when Joe Carr was beaten, for Joe can be counted on to entertain the crowd, but he left on Wednesday, beaten by great golf by Brian Chapman. Chapman (needing a 4 for an approximate 67) beat Joe Carr (needing a 4 for a 69) by 3 and 1 but had taken so much out of himself during the week that he ran "out of gas" in the next round.

There is no doubt that to play eight rounds of cut-throat match play golf in a week is a test of endurance, and on a long

course like Hoylake, one has to be tough just to walk the distance.

All sorts of stories are heard at Championships; one concerned a revision of the formula for finding "The Amateur Champion"—a 36 holes of qualifying with 32 players going forward, to replace the huge field of 256 players beginning match play on Monday. How to get the public back to follow Amateur golf, was a question which was being asked in official circles, for early in the week, nobody came to watch and with players pulling their own trolleys, it looked like Captain's Day at any golf club.

Gleam Of Hope

Gerald Micklem, head selector, was clearly puzzled about the results of the week. His best amateurs had failed, but there was a gleam of hope. If Richard Davies had won a place in the next American Walker Cup side surely one of our players should win a point.

Davies is a most charming person but his golf method is very suspect. He is erratic and can never be otherwise with the grip he uses. His left hand is forced over the shaft to show four knuckles and his right hand is then forced over the left to the limit. The result being that he pushes at the ball. This method perhaps has its advantages for certain short shots to the pin for he plays them well, but when he tries to hit the ball, the shaft tends to slip out of his hands, causing a mishit. I have rarely seen as many mishits in a top class event as I saw in the final. On every hole one of the players at least seemed to "mishit" the ball.

There was no rough at Hoylake, the dry cold weather in May had held "things" back and with little wind during the week and the huge greens slow and soft, the course played easily. When the greens hold any shot and it takes a wind to make courses testing, the moment has come not to rely on the wind but to toughen up the courses on the American Plan.

They prepare their courses specially for Championships and reinstate them if the clubs desire after the events. Modern equipment and soft greens have made many courses gradually obsolete. St. Andrews Old Course alas, is no test without wind to-day when the greens are holding—the scores alone show that the top tournament pros are averaging under 70 strokes per round and there are only two short holes. It is a pity to see our former outstanding tests of golf reduced to pitch and putt tests.

Right Temperaments

Bruce Critchley, Rodney Foster, and of course John Povall, showed they have the right golfing temperaments and considerable golfing skill; we shall surely hear more of these younger players before long in international golf.

The club house of the Royal Liverpool Golf Club has been modernised, some £18,000 having been spent on it. Without altering its façade too much, the balcony on the first floor has been incorporated into the restaurant and behind the two sets of new windows on the ground floor lie new lounges. Amateur golf is very much alive, the standard of play is good, but a few personalities would draw the crowds.

Henry Cotton

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