USGA Changes Open Pattern for 1953 Trial

At Dallas, the USGA released a statement advising that after the usual 36-hole sectional qualifying rounds for the 1953 Open at Oakmont, 300 qualifiers will play 18-hole rounds at the Pittsburgh Field Club and Oakmont courses, to narrow the field down to 150, including the defending champion.

Prize money will be increased from $15,000 to $20,000. The additional qualifying rounds at Pittsburgh will mean more of a gate which should care for the increase in prize money. With the practicing that contestants want to do in getting the range of a National Open championship course, the 1953 trial arrangement undoubtedly will mean that any tournament circuit event playing the week end before the Open starts won't have much of a field.

The USGA release:

"The form of the Open Championship will be changed in the following particulars on a trial basis in 1953:

1. After the usual 36-hole sectional qualifying rounds, 300 players will be qualified (instead of 162 as at present). The present exemptions from sectional qualifying will be continued.

2. All of the 300 except the defending Champion will play a 36-hole Championship qualifying competition, one round each at

the Oakmont Country Club and the Pittsburgh Field Club, Pittsburgh, Pa., on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 9 and 10.

3. As a result, 150 players, including the defending Champion, will qualify to compete in the Championship proper at the Oakmont Country Club on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, June 11, 12 and 13. The form of the Championship proper will be the same as at present.

4. Prize money for professionals will be $20,000 (instead of $15,000 as at present).

The changes were prompted by a desire on the part of the United States Golf Association to reduce what is considered the present excessive premium on qualifiers' places in the sectional rounds. For example, for the 1952 Championship 1,664 players competed for 133 places in the sectional tryouts.

"John D. Ames, of Chicago, is Chairman of the USGA Championship Committee."

The release added:

"The USGA has accepted an invitation from the Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N. J., to entertain the 1954 Open Championship. Dates will be fixed later. This will be the first Open to be played in the New York Metropolitan section since 1936, when Baltusrol was the location.

"Baltusrol has two courses which would be used if the revised form of the Open described above is considered successful in its 1953 trial."

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