

PGA Rocked by Disputes Over Tournament, Membership Rules

Three bombshells were dropped into the PGA tournament picture in May, causing more furor than had been experienced at any time since George S. May decided to cancel the annual \$200,000 Tam O'Shanter extravaganzas in the spring of 1958.

Involved in the fireworks were the Caucasian clause in the national PGA constitution, a conflict of dates in the scheduling of a regular PGA circuit tournament and an international event, and a protest made by 26 circuit players over exemptions for the 1961 National Open to be played this month at Oakland Hills in Birmingham, Mich. Questioning of the Caucasian clause arose over the playing of the 1962 PGA Championship, and the conflict of tournament dates involved the simultaneous playing in June of the Memphis Open and the International Golf Assn's Canada Cup matches in Puerto Rico.

The PGA Championship, scheduled to be played at Brentwood CC, Los Angeles, July 26-29, 1962, will be played elsewhere. The event was withdrawn from Brentwood by the 13-member PGA executive committee as the result of a dispute with California attorney general over a Negro player, Charles Sifford, who would not be permitted to attempt to qualify for next year's Championship because of his race. The PGA constitution violates California law, said the attorney general, because membership in the professional golf organization is restricted to Caucasians.

Ruled Against Negroes

Exclusion of non-Caucasians was reaffirmed by the delegates to the 1960 annual PGA meeting, held in Scottsdale, Ariz. Admission of Negroes to the pro organization, it was decided, is contingent upon members of that race establishing sufficient clubs of their own to merit recognition of their professionals by the PGA. At that time it was said that there are only about a half dozen private clubs in U. S. employing Negro pros.

However, following the imbroglio with California legal authorities, the PGA's executive committee recommended rescinding the Caucasian clause from the organization's constitution. This again will be voted on at the 1961 meeting, to be held Nov. 2-10 in Hollywood, Fla.



Carolinas section of the PGA has presented a plaque to Gen. George H. Decker (center), Army chief of staff, for his "contribution to golf" while he was stationed at Ft. Jackson. Gen. Decker was responsible for layout and construction of the Ft. Jackson course. With him are Mike Serina (l), pro at the fort, and Joe Davis, pres. of Carolinas PGA.

The dispute over the schedule conflict between the Memphis Open and the playing of the International Golf Assn. matches was brought to a head when sponsors of the Memphis event demanded that all PGA tournament champions of the last 12 months take part in their tourney. Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Stan Leonard, who had not made commitments to play at Memphis, were threatened with fines and suspensions if they skipped this event to represent U. S., South Africa and Canada, respectively, in Puerto Rico. Sam Snead, the other U. S. representative selected for the IGA matches was not involved in the dispute because the tournaments he had won in the previous 12 months weren't PGA co-sponsored.

Players Side In with Sponsors

Bob Rosburg of the PGA tournament committee said that his group was backing the Memphis Open sponsors. He inferred that the three above players were primarily obligated to play in U. S. tournaments in preference to international events because practically all of the money they have earned has come from stateside tourneys.

The fracas between the backers of the Memphis tournament and the IGA was settled late in May, probably to the real satisfaction of nobody, when Palmer, Player and Leonard decided to pass up both the Canada Cup matches and the Memphis Open. A PGA tournament bureau rule permits any player to skip a regularly scheduled U. S. Tourney as long as he doesn't take part in a simultaneously

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PGA Rocked by Disputes

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scheduled counter attraction.

The protest of the 26 circuit players to the USGA covering exemptions in the National Open was directed, for the most part, toward automatically seeding foreign players into sectional qualifying rounds without their first passing the local qualifying tests. Actually, those who protested the exemptions were slightly confused as to what qualifying round the foreign players are exempted from. Their protest specified "exemption from the sectional qualifying round" when it should have stated "local qualifying round."

However, the USGA straightened out the record by stating that foreign players "unless otherwise exempt, must compete in the sectional qualifying." The USGA justified permitting foreigners to skip the first, or local qualifying round, since only players of acknowledged skill are invited to try for places in the final Open field of 150, and because these players have to travel great distances at considerable expense to compete in the USGA event.

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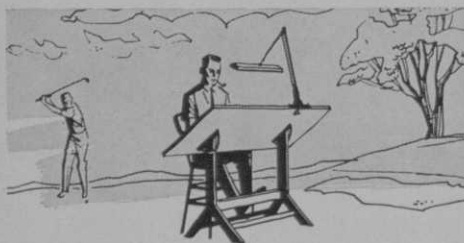
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There is a suspicion that the circuit protestors, even though they confused "sectional with local" in their petition, aren't yet completely satisfied with the USGA's system of exemptions for the Open. The tournament regulars are quite well convinced that they are the men who bring them in at the gate and, as a result, more of them should be directly seeded into the main event.

Hallowell Resigns

Charles Hallowell has resigned from the USGA green section. The Jenkintown, Pa. office that he supervised has been consolidated with the office at Rutgers U. The Mid-Atlantic area is being serviced by the USGA's eastern agronomists, J. B. Moncrief and A. M. Radko.

Chicago Fixture

Officials of the Western Golf Assn. have announced that starting in 1962, the Western Open will be permanently played in the Chicago area.