

L. A. Open and Weather Calls For Greensman's Foresight

By ARTHUR LANGTON

GREENKEEPER Bill Stewart had golfing conditions of the Hillcrest layout where Mac Smith won his third Los Angeles open, excellent, actually even better than they appeared. Greens from a distance had a black or purplish hue which is the characteristic shade of Washington bent during this season due to cooler weather. The putting surface however, was unimpaired although very fast, causing the downfall of several striving players.

Another feature which caused the expiration of many who aspired on the greens was the surrounding topography. The Hillcrest course is molded over some low-lying hills midway in that twenty-mile stretch which separates Los Angeles from its ocean front, so that it is almost impossible for the player on this course to avoid taking inspirational views of the Angel City, the ocean and the hills of Hollywoodland. These scenic features would not have been significant if they all occupied the same geometrical plane or if they stuck to one plane without wandering off into various picture postcard poses. But they do not and many players on reaching the greens with a commendable score would take a delightful look at the surroundings, estimate the pitch of the green, then putt, only to find that the ball fell away in a totally unpremeditated direction, much to the delight of gallery dubs. Possibly the breathtaking beauty of the surroundings temporarily intoxicated the players, but more probably it was optical illusion. Many of the golf courses hereabouts are that way. Artificial horizons on every green would do wonders towards keeping the players on the level.

The fairways presented a slightly blotched appearance which partly belied their fine playing qualities, the blotches being due to Bermuda grass gone into hibernation, a condition beyond present control. But in spite of these discolorations the fairways provided uniformly good lies. The winner and his score testified as to the technical perfection of this background.

Casual observation upon the Los Angeles

Open, pertaining to greenkeeping and other matters, would indicate that this tournament was all of what the magazine *Time* would be pleased to call a Hollywood success. Stars of the first magnitude pushed and were pushed around in their attempts to gain vantage points from which to view the active participants. Most of them evinced more interest in the goings on than they displayed at football games throughout the past season. Douglas Fairbanks, Harold Lloyd, and Jack Rose of the cinema clan dismounted from a small dirigible during one phase of the activities and proceeded to play a threesome in the tournament without benefit of qualifying. Deponent sayeth naught of their score. One could always identify cinemactors and actresses; they were the ones most embarrassed when within range of the cameras of which there were all kinds present from the box variety to those synchronized with sound apparatus. There was also a radio microphone present into which visiting and local celebrities could and did step up to and say, "Hello folks."

A large and formidable fence made the business of policing the property a fairly simple one. Even this usually prosaic task was made more picturesque by employing nattily attired and mounted patrolmen. So effectively was the course guarded that even Bill Stewart, local guardian of the green, had difficulty in gaining admittance without paying a fee on the first morning of the big event. All other groundsmen were provided with cards identifying them as employees.

The entrance fee was nominal, being 50 cents on the first day, Saturday, \$1.25 on Sunday, and \$1.50 for the finals on Monday. Compared with this the parking price of 50 cents seemed rather steep, especially since parking was not allowed near the grounds on the only street in the vicinity.

Galleries Behaving Better

The galleries were very well behaved, having after a few years become trap, green, tee, but not competitor conscious;



For the first time in 50 years of the weatherman's records, snow appears in L. A. district. Three inches of "most unusual" precipitation cover the Oakmont C. C. course at Glendale, Calif.

glad handing individuals still insisted upon making themselves known to players with whom they had a slight or theoretical acquaintance. There seemed to be a minimum of rushing to gain vantage points, probably because there was plenty of room on the course where galleryites could watch proceedings and be out of harm's way. However a rope barrier had been very wisely erected around every teeing ground. A chalk line had been drawn around the apron of every green and behind this the galleries were supposed to stay. This they ignored, but they kept off the greens even when breaking for the next tee. Control on the fairways was obtained by ropes in the hands of three or four men. The all-important ninth and eighteenth greens were situated in hollows from the banks of which spectators could obtain an unobstructed view.

It is not an unmixed blessing that California tournaments come when they do, at least from the greenkeeper's standpoint. The courses are not at their splendid best as they are during the spring and early summer and there is always the danger of heavy rains coming down such as was the case at Wilshire last year and at Agua Caliente this year. Indeed, it has already been indicated how it rained a week previous to the Los Angeles Open, and less than one week later the ground was covered with snow, for the first time within the memory of most residents. Imagine the consternation of the hard working

chamber of commerce if it had been forced to postpone the tournament because of snow. Imagine the glee in Florida.

Floods Threaten

With pick and shovel, sand bag and wheelbarrow, greenkeepers whose courses have arroyos running through them, as there is at Hillcrest, are on the fighting line more than ever this rainy season striving to hold back the floods which threaten. Oceanographers said that this year the precipitation surely would be far below normal because the temperature of the ocean was considerably above the point where it should be even for the occurrence of normal rains. Apparently everybody was resigned to another dry year; that is, everybody except Jupiter Pluvius, and he was interested neither in predictions nor the temperature of the Pacific or any other ocean. He started early and has been at it more or less ever since, fortunately letting up for the playing of the Pasadena and the L. A. Opens. So far the rain has come in a steady stream and very little erosion has taken place on golf courses at least. What fills the local greenkeepers with trepidation is the fact that the heavy floods have yet to come and that this year so far is a replica of the one which happened sometime in the eighties when over 30 inches of rain fell, most of it within one week. Following this storm old timers say that one could sail in a small boat all the way from close to Pasadena to the ocean thirty

miles away over land which is now occupied by golf courses among other things.

Just within the past 5 years a little heavier than ordinary rain swept several acres of ground from the course of the San Gabriel C. C. and caused the officials of that course to have a concrete flume constructed through their property. It was noticeable at Hillcrest that Bill Stewart had been banking his few hundred yards of wash with everything except the cutting machinery just in case a flood came. It would be to Hillcrest's advantage to put a flume through now before real damage is inflicted.

However, the worst has not yet happened and so far the golfing year has started out auspiciously in California, if interest displayed in the Los Angeles Open is any criterion.

Prospect of Green Section Money Shortage Alarms

COMMENT ON WHAT USGA reduced income might mean to Green Section activities, as made in January GOLFDOM has aroused some far-sighted club officials to a studious consideration of what the USGA is up against in its efforts to maintain and extend its valuable work.

Indication of how ably the USGA officials are handling this job comes from the 1931 annual report which shows that although the association's usual chief source of income dropped \$33,292.15 from 1930 figure, the turf troubles of 1931 and the other additional work of the Green Section necessitated an increase of \$5,114.24. The section's importance plainly is recognized.

USGA annual dues of \$30 to many clubs represents what is paid to have the services of the Green Section constantly available. Other valuable and necessary performances of the USGA are to this good sized group of clubs much in the nature of a welcome and appreciated bonus. In all cases, however, it is undeniable that the service of the Green Section in bettering the standard of course maintenance has been one of the biggest bargains in the field. To the average metropolitan district golf club member, the cost of his club belonging to the Green Section is about a dime a year.

Some of those who have expressed a deep interest in vigorous continuation and extension of the benefits of the Green Section have suggested that a revision in the method of charging for USGA membership

be made, with the larger clubs paying more for the availability and service of the Section. The suggestion is one that probably is based more on good sportsmanship than on a strictly hard-boiled business platform as some of the 9-hole clubs where the finances are nip-and-tuck may, in proper spirit, make disproportionately large demands on the Section for service.

One comment points out that under the present set-up there is no provision by which a club may pay more than \$30.00 to the USGA for Green Section and other services, even if desiring to do so.

The contrast between the American method and that of the British is interesting. Even in these times a number of the British clubs support their national green section work to the extent of \$50 annually per club. In addition, many British sectional organizations and greenkeepers' groups supply substantial financial assistance to the national research program. In the U. S. the attitude is the reverse. Many who are acquainted with the expense and time of agricultural research marvel at the work the USGA Green Section has been able to do for the limited money it has had at its disposal.

According to the remarks club officials have made about the Green Section's financial future as it was considered in January GOLFDOM, the Section most certainly rates so high in results and appreciation that there should be no difficulty in arranging an acceptable and adequate financing basis regardless of the USGA tournament income.

WHITE MFG. CO. BOUGHT BY NEW ALLIED INTERESTS

Chicago, Ill.—The White Mfg. Co., formerly at 2037 Carroll ave., and later at 14 E. Jackson blvd., has been dissolved. Taking over its office and other facilities is a new organization known as Allied Golf Corp. James White, formerly president of the White Mfg. Co., no longer is connected with the company.

A new line of Allied clubs and bags is announced for 1932, having as a leading feature a line of clubs exclusively for the pro and sold with the policy of putting the pro on a competitive basis with other retail outlets of golf clubs and bags.

Company is represented in the east by Frank McDonough, the midwest by H. J. Foley, the south by James T. Lawson and in San Francisco, Los Angeles and Portland by Curley-Bates Co. Jack Redmond, trick shot exhibitor, is demonstrating the Pro-Allied line during his exhibitions and to the pros along his line of march.