

British Golf Carries On

By HERB GRAFFIS

LONDON—British golf will experience a tournament revival in 1945 that according to promise of discussions in mid-October will return the British open and amateur to the calendar of championships. The English Golf Union plans to hold the Victory English amateur championship next year. The Ladies Golf Union and the Professional Golfers Assn. also are confident of renewing their championships next year.

There has been some talk of the English amateur being changed from match play as it was before the war to stroke play. Pros who have been queried on the type of play their championship will have are unanimous in favor of retaining match play. They are the older men and naturally would favor the system that was in vogue before the war virtually halted pro golf competition with the exception of exhibition matches for war funds. Younger pros have had very little play or practice during the five years Britain has been at war. The majority of them have been away in combat operations and the remainder have been assigned to home defense or factory duties by the nation's comprehensive draft of manpower under 50.

British newspapers carried a few paragraphs of their very tight sports section space on the American pros' controversy about their PGA championship being switched to a medal play event. The defeat of Nelson in the final of this year's American pro championship was considered a sharp upset by British pros who've had an opportunity to watch Byron in action. They regard him as the peer of the world's golfers but don't believe that the loss of one match by even the best of players should be considered as valid reason for altering the character of the title tournament. They ride along with Hagen's expressed view that match play is a tougher test of championship ability and temperament than medal play.

It's the opinion of several of the older British pros that the American PGA by relinquishing match play championships would make the pro title competition definitely a second rater to the National open whereas now the different styles of play make the two events equal in testing championship calibre.

About the capacity of British championship golf to come back on a basis comparable to that of American scoring, the older British pros are not entertaining any optimistic thoughts. They are in-

clined to believe that it will take at least five years after demobilization to develop British amateur or pro talent to the point where it can crowd the better American players. British women, like the men, have been so deeply engaged in war work that they are lucky to get a round at remote intervals. This, despite the British conviction that holidays out of doors are a necessary part of living, even under the enemy's bombing and cross channel gunfire.

There has been practically no golf for younger boys and girls in England and Scotland during wartime hence a generation has been skipped in developing British golfing talent. Nevertheless, the zest for the game seems to have continued and may result in British golf giving more planned attention to the encouragement of youngsters' golf than has been given the kids' department of the game in the past. British pros hope that this will be the case. They have seen in the swings of American soldier and sailor golfers, who manage to get a few rounds played on English and Scottish courses, indications of a higher standard of play than was apparent in prewar days when the visiting American businessman was taken by his host to a British course. This, the British pros are certain, is due to the American pros' activities with childrens classes about which the Scots and English have learned by letter from friends in pro golf in the states and by golf magazine references.

Possibly this hunch is stronger than actual extent of kid lessons in the U. S. warrants. Many American young men who have had opportunities to play in Britain picked up their games by imitation of some American pro rather than by class or individual instruction.

American airmen have been the most active visiting golfers in Great Britain, primarily due to so many air establishments being located not many miles from golf courses and secondarily due to golf being ideal compensation for long trips in the cramped quarters of planes and the mental strains of aerial warfare.

War in the air is reflected on British courses by craters where enemy bombs have been jettisoned or dumped in bad aims, and by heavy poles being set in the fairways to prevent use as enemy plane landing strips. These poles have made obsolete that line about there being no haz-

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ards in the air. What makes these poles, and other obstacles placed for protection against enemy planes, a painful hazard is that when balls bounce from them into the gorge of the rough chances for finding the balls aren't any too good. The rough has grown exceedingly thick during the sharply reduced wartime maintenance.

At many of the courses members handle most of the maintenance that is done. They usually work in teams responsible for several holes per team. Competition between these maintenance teams is keen. Old men and occasionally boys handle what paid maintenance work is done. Sheep pasturing on British golf courses is a general thing. Sheep don't seem to have done much damage that can't be quickly repaired. Liquor, food and labor shortages have hit clubhouse operations hard. In some places veteran stewards of the clubs get up early and help mow greens to keep the courses as attractive as possible.

Play on the Old Links at St. Andrews has been fairly heavy this past year with American pilgrims to the shrine coming in the conventional brown or blue to hack at the holy land. The American kids have taken a tremendous liking to the Scots who the Yanks say are the Texans of Britain—if they are for you the sky is the limit and if you get in wrong with them, heaven help you. Scotch and English clubs and members have utterly amazed the American kids in most instances by the cordiality of their welcome. The American lads expected the Britons to be stand-offish people who would give them a high nose and a glassy stare through a monocle when the boys came as strangers hoping for a round of golf.

The ball situation is far worse than it is in the United States. In a junky looking store window near Waterloo Bridge in London one morning I saw two dirty badly used golf balls displayed. Passing the same place that afternoon I noticed the balls were missing. I asked the man in the dingy little shop how golf ball business was with him. He said he could sell all of any sort he could get.

The London Daily Mail started a rush on sports shops in London by printing a small item reporting that reconditioned golf balls were available. What the Mail neglected to print was that an old ball had to be turned in for each one secured. In fairly rare cases it is possible to get reconditioned balls from pros without turning in an old ball.

British pros are looking forward to a boom market after the war and expect that they'll come in for a large percent of new business which may develop as a result of golf courses being made features of recreational areas now being planned for municipalities.

Some famous courses have been abandoned during the war, but the British climate and soil are so favorable to growth of golf turf that golf authorities believe these courses can be quickly restored.

Just as in the United States there is talk about excess trapping being eliminated in postwar course remodeling. Trap design also is to be changed to provide for far more machine maintenance than was customary prior to 1939. The British are expecting some decided changes in mower design and construction as a result of the more extensive use of gasoline power in view for peace years.

Notwithstanding dreary views some economists and financiers take at the postwar prospects of British wage-earners, pro and amateur golf enthusiasts believe that there'll be a lot of golf played by British common people after the war in making up for the sunshine lost during five years of long hours in factories and offices and of blackouts, to say nothing of what the men and women now in uniform will want as recreation to balance the tough years they've had.



Chicago Service Men's Center was richer by \$6,750 when George S. May (left) president of Tam Shanter CC Country Club presented Mayor Edward J. Kelly with the entry fee check from the All-American Golf Tournaments held at Tam late in August. A total of 648 men and women golfers participated in the All-American Tournaments and their entry fees totaled \$6,750, which constituted the largest single donation ever received from the golfing sport, according to Mayor Kelly.