

"TAM" Gets Golf's Biggest Crowds and Nelson Golf's Biggest Prize

★ George S. May's All-American tournaments appear to be solidly entrenched as a major golf event after four years of ballooning popularity since their premiere in 1941.

The true picture of this rapid climb is best shown by attendance as estimated for each year by sports writers and other experienced observers. The inaugural meet set a new American record for golf-tourney attendance, drawing 41,000 spectators. The Sunday crowd alone totaled 23,000. Attendance in 1942 zoomed to 62,000 including a Sunday total of 30,000. Last year the total rose still higher to 67,000, the Sunday count to 32,000. This year the attendance for each day, Monday through Saturday, exceeded that of the corresponding day in 1943, and the total would doubtless have topped 85,000 except for the double disaster of a rainy Sunday and the lack of an Open tie and play-off.

Recipe for a Supergolfmeet

Mr. May's formula for drawing crowds is briefly this: He holds the admission price to one dollar—an absurdly small sum by comparison with pre May admission charges at major meets—and gives a whale of a lot for that dollar, i.e., a colorful three-ring performance starring the nation's best available pros, amateurs, and women players.

High quality of All-American fields may be judged from winner and runner-up lists which include Byron Nelson, Open winner in 1941, 1942 and 1944, with Ben Hogan, Clayton Heafner and Ed Dudley respectively as runners-up; Jug McSpaden, Open winner in 1943, with Buck White in second place; Bud Ward, Dale Morey, and Ed Furgol, Amateur winners respectively in 1942, 1943, 1944; Art Doering and Skip Alexander, leading amateurs in the Open of 1941 (tied); Frank Stranahan, Art

Doering, and Earl Christianson, leading amateurs respectively in the Opens of 1942, 1943, 1944; Patty Berg, Women's Open titleist in 1943; Betty Hicks, Women's Open winner in 1944 and runner-up in 1943; and Dorothy Germain, Women's Open runner-up in 1944.

In order to attract these stellar casts, Mr. May dishes out prize money in king-size chunks, upping the ante as required to make each of his meets the richest of the year. The total purse was \$11,000 cash in 1941, \$15,000 cash in 1942, \$10,000 in War Bonds in 1943 (not much competition in that year), and \$42,500 in War Bonds this year (\$30,100 in cash value). In 1945, with more and richer meets in prospect for competition, he plans to tack on another \$10,000, raising the total purse to \$40,100 in cash, \$12,500 going to the Open winner.

Reflecting the combined effect of large prizes and the ever-growing prestige of the All-American tournaments, the number of contestants increased year by year from 300 to 354 to 405 to 648.

Other Success Factors

As major causes for success of the May meets we have stressed the low admission price plus quality and variety of entertainment. This is not the whole story, of course, for there have been other important contributing factors:

Living up to his reputation as a business engineer, Mr. May has run his tournaments in smoothly businesslike fashion, reducing frictions and confusion to a minimum. Written instructions for the guidance of his helpers in the 1944 tournament filled five large loose-leaf manuals and covered 472 items, arrangements for parking of cars being one item, handling of players' hotel reservations another, etc., etc.

Throughout the past four years Mr. May

Left: View of double decked permanent grandstand behind 18th green. Temporary bleachers of greater capacity bordered east side of green. Right: Mr. and Mrs. May watch pro stars from first tee.





Left: Tam O'Shanter, within Chicago City limits, had its parking lots taxed to capacity. Right: Although Tam's crowds are big, the galleries get a good break due to the fine work of the Marshalls.

has continually improved the course both scenically and as a test of golf. On new trees and shrubs alone (more than 2,000) he has spent more than \$35,000.

Near perfection has been achieved in marshalling, based on extensive study of the problem, so that milling crowds have been handled to their own satisfaction as well as that of the players, despite the huge attendance.

Needs and desires of galleryites have been further cared for in such details as grandstands for the foot-weary; numerous concession tents, comfort stations, and public telephones; admission of the general public to the clubhouse; and introductions through amplifiers of each player as he started, with a brief resume of his golfing career.

May's Tourneys Are Big News

Mr. May's three-decker golfing spectacles have received ever-increasing attention from press, movies, and radio as they grew in popularity and newsworthiness. Among recent examples are "Don't Feed The Golfers", the story of Tam O'Shanter and George S. May in the SATURDAY EVENING POST; LIFE's well illustrated story of the 1944 All-American tournaments; newsreels of the event made by Fox Moxietone and Universal; and the daily NBC sportcasts by Bill Stern from Tam O'Shanter during the tournament.

August 20th through 25th, 1945, are the dates already set for next year's All-American three-ring golf extravaganza at Chicago's Tam O'Shanter.

Diegel Accents Hands' Importance

★ Ask Leo Diegel what he considers the most important part of a good golf swing, and the Philmont veteran will unhesitatingly declare, "the hands."

For Leo, who has been head man at the spacious Philmont club since 1934, is thoroughly sold on the part played by the hands. "They're really what count," he says. "A good golfer can play around most courses flat-footed or while standing on one leg, but by using his hands correctly he can still get around in low figures."

Leo cites an example. "One of the greatest golfers I ever played with was Commodore Heard, of Houston, Texas. He was short and stocky, standing only about five feet, six inches. He used a three-quarter swing with a slightly closed face.

"The Commodore looked little like a great golfer, but his long, accurate game enabled him to beat the best of the professionals. He shot a 68 on his 68th birthday and seven years later, when he was 75, he got around in just 75 strokes. Correct hand action had a whole lot to do with Mr. Heard's success.

"And even yet, although I haven't seen him for over a decade, I think of the Commodore whenever I give a lesson to a 100 shooter who is inclined to be a bit wild, and try to teach the pupil his swing.

"There's another great Houston golfer who is a fine model. Youngsters who have any golfing ambitions would do well to copy his swing. I refer to Jimmy Demaret—whose swing is a dream."

Diegel gives more than 700 lessons at Philmont each year. One of his teaching accessories is a large, life-size mirror. Last season Leo also hit upon the idea of encircling golf club grips with an ordinary piece of garden hose. "It helps to loosen up pupils who are too tense and makes their swing more rhythmical," says the Philmont pro.

He started a junior class several seasons ago and, aided by Matt Kowal, his assistant, devotes two hours every Saturday morning to the youngsters. About thirty children are in the class. They are drilled on the fundamentals.

But the backbone of Philmont, as of most other clubs, are the business men,