

American Courses in "Almost Too Good Condition," Says Briton

By **STANLEY ANDERSON**

(Columnist of Golf Monthly, Edinburgh)

WHEN I arrived in this country in December I came from a tired and exhausted land and from a much knocked about but not defeated London. It is not my first visit to the States, I was here 10 years ago, but then I came on a holiday and with no serious intentions except to enjoy myself. This time, my visit is for another purpose. I have come to write articles for the British press on the American way of life. This has kept me very busy and I am greatly enjoying studying the psychological difference between our two peoples. However, everyone must relax occasionally and this I have done as often as possible on the golf courses of the West Coast.

I do not suppose that anyone, unless they have experienced playing golf in Great Britain and in the States, can possibly realize the great difference that exists therein. From every standpoint the sport is not conducted in the same manner. From

a business viewpoint alone there is simply no comparison. Golf in this country is a real business. Those who make their living out of it see to it that it is, and conduct it in a very businesslike way. The club-houses are like fashionable hotels. In England they are more like country inns and they have not half the conveniences that you have. The professional in this country holds the social position that he should. He is virtually a member of the club and granted the privileges that go with it. In Britain he is a servant of the club and is not considered anything other than that. This, of course, is quite wrong and will eventually change.

In my book which I have just completed on life in America, I've given over a whole chapter to the much debated subject of class distinction. I have never heard of an American professional leaving his country and going to Britain to make his livelihood, but there are many cases the other way

The "wild and woolly" natural look of characteristic British courses would appal many American players who want the rough eliminated. Note the near border of the 14th at St. Andrews. No notion of "winter rules" softening shows here.





Back of this crowd rushing to the 4th green at St. Andrews you can see enough to give you an idea of the uneven terrain of fairways at the famed course. Wind and fog sweep from the sea in the background. Hardy people, those Scots.

around. The reason is obvious. Here the professional is free, he makes his business pay well and he is on the same footing as anyone else. The whole system, from the caddie to the manager of the country club, is excellently worked out in this country and though golf here can be very expensive, there are plenty of public courses where the not-so-rich can play in comfort and at ease.

U. S. Course Condition Amazes

A great deal more money is spent here on the upkeep of the courses than in England and in my private opinion they are almost in too good condition. For that reason, I do not think that Byron Nelson or any other American professional will win the British open championship at St. Andrews this July.

The Royal and Ancient have kept their course in good condition, but the climate in Scotland is very different from yours over here and the powers that be in that august city do not water their greens. There can be no pitching up to the hole and stopping

as there is over here. American entrants will find the going tough. The fairways are undulating and the greens true and hard as rocks. It may, too, be a shock to some of them to learn that St. Andrews only has 12 greens—6 out, 6 in. That may sound extraordinary, but some of the greens are so large—sometimes half an acre—that they serve 2 holes. It will be confusing at first, but no doubt they will remember that when Bobby Jones appeared at St. Andrews early in his career, he announced it was the worst course he ever saw. However, later he came to love it and said it was the greatest golf course in the world.

Suggests American Promotion

Most Americans, like any other sensible people, like to make money, but the American business man has so far not thought of going to England to promote a real money tournament. The prizes that the golf kings here make are colossal by our standards and make our professionals'

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The hillocks and pits that provide testing shots for the player who wanders off line, and even the contour of the comparatively level 10th green at St. Andrews are "nature in the raw" to furnish real golf.



green velvet carpet. The shade tree chapter by Pascal P. Pirone and the flower and plant chapter by Henry M. Biekart are two that are not only especially good for the home dweller but contain some useful information quite a few greenkeepers and pro-greenkeepers will welcome. The chapter on "Your Home Setting" by Charles H. Connors contains excellent simple landscaping design pointers most course superintendents could apply to advantage at their clubs.

Midwest Turf Foundation

At the annual meeting of the Midwest Turf Research Foundation held March 18 at Purdue University, Lafayette, Ind., secretary G. O. Mott reported a steady growth in membership with the organization now embracing more than 100 golf clubs in the midwest states. 1945 officers, headed by A. L. Brandon, St. Charles, Ill., were re-elected as were directors with the addition of Neil Ransick, Secy. Cincinnati Golfers' League. The program of turf experiments will be extended during 1947 under the guidance of the research program committee composed of agronomists from the various state agricultural experimental stations.

American Courses

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mouths water. It would give British golf a good "kick in the pants" and wake up those who now promote our tournaments if an American business man were to go to England and stage a first class tournament with prizes of the same magnitude that are given to American contestants over here. It should, incidentally, turn into an excellent gamble for the promoter himself. I know the entry would be enormous and the interest the general public would take equally big.

During the war, we had to make our clubs pay as best we could. Due to the fact that many of our members were abroad in war service, the financial income was, with few exceptions, very much smaller than in previous years. Means were tried to meet the money shortage and I do not know whether it has been this country's experience also, but the takings at the bar in nearly every case were practically quadrupled during the war years. It was this experience that made the golf club proprietors realize that there was a great deal of money to be made out of the social side of golf—much more in fact than from the ordinary revenue from the golf course itself. Because of this our clubs are



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coming round to your way of doing business. Incidentally, an enormous amount of money was unexpectedly made by seaside courses selling their over-abundance of sand. This surprised them a great deal as I daresay it does you.

The GI Bill of Rights is indeed a remarkable one, for it seems to me to provide for practically every idea and wish that the young American may have. I was playing golf with a well known professional the other day and he was telling me that he had had a request from an American boy now discharged to become a golf professional. He wished to serve under this famous man and learn from him the art of the game and the art of being a successful golf professional. The arrangements have now been made and the boy has started his career. He is doing all this as the result of government aid. This serves him well and also the professional who has taken him on. It makes me think too that any young man today who intends to take up golf as a career should first realize that it is not a get-rich-quick process which some of them seem to imagine, but a definite process of learning, working and eventually conquering. Here again is an opportunity for an American business man to open a school for would-be professional golfers and run it much in the same line as a theatrical agency, drawing his percentage from the successes that he turns out.

Hard working authors like myself have to pay our agents for representing us! So I do not see why such an arrangement between professional and his agent should not work very advantageously for both sides.

Plan Service on Study of Members' Needs

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go back to carrying single again. That situation probably will work itself out. In increasing numbers members prefer to carry or wheel their own bags rather than have a half a caddie who's always on the other side of the course with the club they need.

I think all clubs will have to make closer tie-ups with schools to help solve the caddie supply problem.

The rearrangement of the shop to give it a bright new look of the first peace year is going to be something for every pro to consider. We have a great improvement in Cherry Valley's new golf shop. It's close to the first tee and the club cleaning shop is under the same roof. Our old club cleaning department was 100 yds. from the golf shop.

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