

How Golf Business Was In Its Early Days

SOMEHOW THERE CAME to light around Golfdom's offices a July, 1899, issue of *Golf* and copies of *Western Golf* for May and July, 1899 and August, 1900. They present a lot of interesting reminders of the growth of the game as a business. They also have many indications of the soundness of that old paradoxical proverb: "The more things change, the more they are the same."

With all the talk there has been lately about how Nelson, Hogan and Snead compare with their illustrious predecessors, you may be amused to see how a similar topic was treated by Dr. J. G. McPherson, St. Andrews, Scotland, in the 16th installment of an article of The Royal and Ancient Game, which appeared in July, 1899, *Golf*. Under the installment heading "Skill vs. Force," the Doctor begins:

"I know I am now on dangerous ground. I am to bring out one of the points of contrast between golfers of the old school and modern golfers. Skill, wood, style, hole-playing and fame are characteristics of the players 40 years ago; force, iron, dash, record-breaking are the features of the present-day players. Of course the lines are not rigidly drawn; but they represent generally the two schools.

"Now Dash and Brilliancy"

"Now the wooden clubs have to yield to a great extent to the iron and brassie after the tee stroke is off. Look into a fine Bennet of Birmingham bag in any match and you see some 5 or 6 iron weapons of all kinds, a brassie and one wooden driver; in the olden times there was no bag, and the caddie carried 5 wooden clubs and 2 iron ones. Forty years ago the style was determined by caution and nerve; now dash and brilliancy guide the player. Then real golf was played for holes, man against man; now scoring rules, and record-breaking against the field is the mania. Too many now go in for pot-hunting and certainty in betting;

Quite a difference between the oat burning fairway watering equipment advertised during the late nineties and today's modern systems.

whereas the real amusement, delight and charm was in the fame acquired by conquest. Skill was the prevailing feature with the old golfers; now it is more force."

That was in Vol. 5, No. 1 of the magazine which proclaimed itself "By appointment an official bulletin of the United States Golf Association."

Pro Problems 47 Years Ago

In the same issue, *Golf*, after telling of Vardon's third win of the British open, said: "The story about a strike of the professionals for higher prize money on the eve of the Open Championship was without a grain of truth."

Golf's editor and publisher, Josiah Newman, went into the pro situation, suggesting a professional golfers' organization which eventually was formed some 21 years later. Newman wrote:

"When the famous Scotch amateur, Lawrence Auchterlonie, came to this country to become a professional it was with the idea in mind that all honest men were considered equals. 'I was well brought up and considered myself a gentleman when at home,' said Auchterlonie to a friend recently, 'and it cut me to the quick to see how little courtesy was shown to a visiting professional at a certain club.' The stranger had to play a 36-hole match and during the luncheon interval had to actually ask the favor of a bite to eat." * * *

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"The above sentiments closely resemble the remarks which have been made in my hearing by a number of gentlemen who have taken up golf as a profession. There is no amateur in the country who does not desire to see a better class of professionals engaged in the sport than the men who I last month advised to wash their faces. * * * At one time a member of the golf profession was quite as welcome to the clubhouse as a member of the theatrical profession. A number, however, entirely forgot their position as employees and their self-respect, and the whole body were immediately looked upon as a necessary evil. * * *

"I have in mind an American Golf Professionals Association whose chief aim should be 'to maintain the integrity and good standing of the golf profession.' There are in my mind 40 or 50 men who would be admirable founders of the society, and they might elect from their members a membership committee, an employment committee, a committee of management, and so forth."

At that time there were, besides *Golf*, four other player magazines: *Western Golfer* of Chicago, edited by Herbert James Tweedie; *Western Golf* of Chicago, edited by A. Haddow Smith and Henry Spofford Canfield; and the *Golfer* of Boston, edited by J. S. Murphy.

Fred Herd was Open champion then, having taken 328 at Myopia the year before. That fall Willie Smith was to lead a field of 81 in the Open at the Baltimore (Md.) CC with his 315. Tied for second would be the durable veterans George Low, Val Fitzjohn and Bertie Way. Findlay S. Douglas was to lose his 1898 Amateur title in July, 1899, to H. M. Harriman. There would be a field of 112 and Harriman would beat Douglas 3 and 2 in the finals. Charles B. Macdonald was to be the medalist with 168. Later that year Miss Ruth Underhill would defeat Mrs. Caleb F. Fox, 2 and 1, at the Philadelphia CC, for the Women's title. Miss Beatrix Hoyt would be medalist, as she was at the first 5 Women's championships played at match.

Looking Back at Business

"Our Lady of the Green (A Book of Ladies' Golf)" was advertised in the July, 1899, *Golf* and in the ad appears this interesting line on a chapter: "The title 'Ladies as Professional' suggests a new field of activity for women."

Sapolio, in a full page illustrated ad, sings:

"If a caddy meet a caddy
"Comin' thro' the green
"If a caddy ask a caddy
"Why his clubs are clean
"It's ten to one he'll answer oh!
"I rub them with SAPOLIO."

A. G. Spalding & Bros. advertised "Everything in golf from a Paper Tee to a \$20.00 Traveling Golf Case," and featured "Compressed clubs, Drivers and Brassies, any model . . . \$1.50;" "Hand-forged irons, any model . . . \$1.50;" "One-piece drivers or brassies . . . \$2.00;" and Morristown drivers and brassies (not compressed) and Morristown irons, at \$1.00.

Bridgeport Gun Implement Co. advertised BGI "highest grade" golf goods made under the direction of John D. Dunn. BGI would send free "Elementary Instruction to Beginners" by John D. Dunn and "The Rules of Golf."

Willie Dunn advertised his "Stars and Stripes" golf ball which had a marking of three stripes cutting the ball into quarters and stars in each quarter. Willie claimed it to be "the only truly American ball which for elasticity and flying power eclipses the imported article." Willie also advertised a pear-shaped flag: "The top of this flag being round, saves the putting greens from being cut up by falling, and is readily discerned at a distance." The only other maintenance equipment advertising was Rider-Ericsson Engine Co. which advertised its pumps as being so simple and safe "any caddie" could run them; the Coldwell lawn mowers and Woodhouse "rollers for golf."

Pro-Physician Wanted

Golf carried about as much resort advertising as it did advertising of clubs, balls and bags. One of its classified ads read: "Wanted—Young gentleman who thoroughly understands the game of golf; physician preferred. Address Dudley S. Phinny, Proprietor Cayuga Lake House, Sheldrake, N. Y." The Albany (N. Y.) CC wanted "a professional; a good teacher and club maker; 7 months a year; salary \$50 per month. References required." Bert Way at Grosse Pointe Farms, Mich., advertised: "First class club makers wanted, best wages."

The Garden City GC was taking over the public course, building a "fine clubhouse," and taking in private club members for \$100 initiation fee and \$40 annual dues. Until August 1 the initiation fee was \$25. Over 400 applications for membership were received "although 250 has always been considered the limit."

Western Golf's first issue, that of May, 1899, had as its lead article one on the formation of the Western GA which had taken place April 27 in the German Room of the Grand Pacific Hotel. The WGA then absorbed a strictly Chicago organization "The Associated Golf Clubs of Chicago." Represented at the WGA organization meeting were Onwentsia, Chicago Golf, Glenview, Midlothian, Washington

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Golf In Early Days

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Park, Riverside, Westward Ho, Evanston, Edgewater, Belmont and Skokie.

Other highlights of that issue of *Western Golf*:

"Caddies at the Sellwood (Ore.) course struck the other day. They had been getting 15c for a round of 9 holes and 25c for a round of 18 holes. They are still out."

Golf Getting Big

"It is estimated that in the East more than \$1,500,000 will be expended this season in the erection of golf club houses alone, to say nothing of the money which will go into the maintenance of grounds, etc. It is, of course, impossible to give an exact accounting of the amount of capital invested in American golf, but * * * men who have made some study of it declare that \$200,000,000 is short of the mark. Others say that, computing the capital shut up in golfing lands, \$500,000,000 would be near it."

"So far as our knowledge extends there are only four instances of holing in one stroke in the history of American golf."

An eastern club investigating a report that their pro was of negro blood, "announce proudly * * * he is, instead a lineal descendent of John Rolfe and Pocahontas."

"It is reported from Brooklyn that the caddies of Long Island intend to form a trust."

"A liquor maker in New York city says that the growth of golf in this country has popularized Scotch whisky."

Women Start a Club

From July, 1899, *Western Golf*:

"The Danville (Ill.) GC is the only golf club in the world organized, officered and engineered entirely by women. The men were not consulted, nor was any one of the trousered tribe taken in even as a member until the ground had been procured, the course marked out, and the body put in fair running order."

"In the middle west more than 100 new clubs have been formed since March 31."

In an ad for Imperial Liquid Fertilizer, Tom Bendelow, Golf Expert says: "During the past 2 years I have laid out over 130 golf courses."

Studebaker Bros. Mfg. Co. advertises "Country club and golf wagons."

In August, 1900, *Western Golfer*, Studebaker's copy begins: "Golf grounds rolled, sprinkled and kept in perfect condition with Studebaker Wide Tire Sprinkling Wagons."

The same issue had a comedy story, "Why the Strike Occurred" by A. Caddie, the wind-up of which is that the kid is complaining about caddying 3 hours for 10 cents the round. He says that unless they make it 15 cents there'll be no more golf on "dese here links" this summer.

Vardon for Free

"Short Putts" a department by the editor, Herbert James Tweedie, said: "The golfing public of Chicago took advantage of the kindness of the Midlothian and Chicago clubs in permitting them to witness the matches played at their respective clubs by Vardon during his visit without charge, contrasting favorably with the methods of Cincinnati and some eastern clubs that charged an admission fee."

Also in that department:

"Nicholas Longworth, the well-known Cincinnati player, drove a golf ball $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles in 117 strokes over the rough country from Grandin Road to the Pillars, near Cincinnati. It was wagered that he could not accomplish this feat under 159 strokes."

Two pages were devoted to Pacific Coast golf.

Willie Hoare, who had recently broken the Sinissippi GC, Janesville, Wis., course record with a 37 is quoted; "When water is laid on the greens it (Sinissippi) will be the best 9-hole course in America."

James and David Foulis of Chicago GC, Wheaton, Ill., advertised clubs, balls and Foulis' cup. The American Eagle golf ball, made of "best gutta percha" and originally designed and manufactured by James and David Foulis, "prove to drive further than any ball against them."

Joplin, Mo., organizes its Country Club with 225 members, saying: "Almost every other town in the United States has its golf club, and an enterprising town like ours should not be behind the balance of the country that have golf clubs. * * * The links will be put in shape very soon, and a steam roller will be used to prepare the grounds."

From these quotes you can see how far, in some respects, golf has come in the past 47 years, and in other aspects you'll see that basically the nature of golf news and problems is about the same in relation to the current American design of living.

Greenkeepers Consider Change of Name

Greenkeeping Supts. Assn. members are considering changing name of the organization to Turf Improvement Assn. Action will be taken on proposed name change and suggested new by-laws at the association's 1947 convention which will be held at Hotel New Yorker, New York City, February 11-14.

First name of the organization was National Association of Greenkeepers of America. Leadership of greenkeepers in turf improvement work has interested many park, cemetery, airport and estate superintendents and others in joining an association having course maintenance experts as its nucleus.