

USGA Business Sessions Fill 3 Days; Re-elect Heffelfinger

Following three crowded days and nights of official work the USGA executive committee met at the Princeton Club, New York City, Jan. 31, and conducted the formalities of electing officers headed by Totton P. Heffelfinger, Minikahda Club, Minneapolis. Committee reports were summarized prior to lunch. In the afternoon USGA officials, club officials and other golfers met at Golf House for the unveiling of a painting of Robert T. Jones, Jr., by Thomas E. Stephens, which was presented to Golf House by the Augusta National GC.

Jones, looking remarkably well considering the disabilities that he's suffered, responded to remarks of Cliff Roberts and Tot Heffelfinger and the reading of a letter of tribute from Pres. Eisenhower, with one of those gracious, sincere little talks that only the beloved Bob can make.

At Golf House there also was shown for the first time the clubmaker's bench which the veteran clubmaking authority Jim Gallagher outfitted.

At the luncheon Jerome Bowes presented the Americas trophy, expressing the hope that competition for the cup would be extended from the U. S., Canada and Mexico to include all nations in the hemisphere. Colin Rankin, pres., Royal Canadian GC and Pedro Suinaga, former pres., Mexico Golf Assn., and Pres. Heffelfinger also spoke of international golf competition as a factor in promoting friendship between free countries.

Committee report highlights:

EXECUTIVE—Record entries in Open, Junior Amateur and Girls' Junior championships in 1952. Large field in Open (and slower play) accounts for change in form of National Open which will be tried this year, making 300 instead of 162 players eligible after sectional qualifying rounds, for 36-hole qualifying at Pittsburgh (Pa.) Field Club prior to the Open at Oakmont.

RULES OF GOLF—No changes until Jan. 1, 1954. USGA and R&A considering some possible changes but want another year of observation and analysis before amendments, if any, are made.

CHAMPIONSHIP—To represent USGA in team competition a player will have to

qualify on following points: (1) Merit as a competitive golfer, based upon records in tournaments of importance during recent years. (2) Sportsmanship and general ability to represent the U. S. in international relations. (3) Unquestioned status as an amateur golfer. Selection of team members shall not be influenced by age, geography or any factors other than those named.

USGA to sponsor Women's National Open at Country Club of Rochester, N. Y., June 25-27 at 72 holes. Prize money: \$7500. The event previously has been sponsored by the Ladies' PGA.

AMATEUR STATUS AND CONDUCT—Reminded that collegiate scholarships awarded on basis of abilities as golfers is in violation of Rules of Amateur Status. Reported manufacturers had been asked to cooperate with USGA by clamping down on gifts of equipment to amateurs. Put USGA rule in line with R&A rule by allowing teachers in recognized educational institutions and to whom golf instruction is incidental to academic duties, to retain amateur status. Revising age limit upward from 18 to 21 on those who work, repair or clean clubs in a pro shop, so amateur status won't be lost.

Merchandise prizes may not exceed retail value of \$150 (changed from \$100).

IMPLEMENTS AND BALL—Approved glass shaft. Said ball and clubmakers and players had cooperated completely in observing club and ball specifications.

MEMBERSHIP—Record high of 1,590 on Nov. 30, 1952. Gain of 95 member clubs for the year.

GREEN SECTION—Estimated annual maintenance cost for all U. S. courses of about \$100,000,000. Green Section established regional office at Davis, Calif., last year to bring its research information nearer to western clubs and to supplement work on Green Section's main office at Beltsville, Md. Green Section work limited by finances. Members of Green Section staff in 1952 reached more than 10,000 persons in turf conferences, field days and superintendents and district golf association meetings in 1952. Reported on support of research projects at state col-

leges and experimental stations. Principal projects encouraged by Green Section financial support include water management on turf, aeration of soils under turf, mechanical nature of soils for turf, testing strains of grass, combination turf, providing source nurseries of improved varieties, seed production of improved varieties, fertilization, weed control, disease control.

WOMEN'S — Women's National at Waverly CC, Portland, Ore., had gate of \$8,875, high for that event, and approximately half the gate of the 1952 men's national amateur. This year's Women's National will be entirely at match play.

Shorts won't be worn in women's championships conducted by USGA in the future. Shorts of some females were getting so short they looked like costumes from Minsky's.

SECTIONAL AFFAIRS — Reported closer nation-wide coordination.

PUBLIC LINKS — 1952 Publink championship at Miami (Fla.) CC was first played on a private course. Committee reaffirmed top limit of \$6 a day for expenses to be received by Public Links championship players to supplement the player's own expenditures.

HANDICAP — Wm. O. Blaney, chmn., and Thos. G. McMahon, who have been working together in formulating a system based on experience of Massachusetts Golf Assn. and Chicago District Golf Assn. came forth with a system the USGA soon will officially adopt. The system produces Basic handicaps (designed on the inherent scoring ability of the player) and Current handicaps to show the at-the-moment state of a player's game.

Main points of the system to be announced in greater detail and with charts later, are:

"1. Basic handicaps will be computed from the lowest ten of the player's last fifty scores. When fewer than fifty scores are available, 20 per cent of the available scores will be used provided the player has returned at least six.

"2. Current handicaps will be computed from the lowest ten of the player's last fifteen scores. Provision is made for provisional handicaps when the player has returned as many as six but fewer than fifteen scores.

"3. The new system will use a handicap chart based on the figures in the present

Chicago District Golf Association chart. It will be a simplified one, making use of a scheme of differentials between scores and course ratings.

"4. For the time being, provision will be made for a club to use either the present USGA course rating system or the Chicago District Golf Assn. fractional par rating methods. Eventually, it is hoped, a compromise combination of course rating will be produced."

JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIP — For 1952 sectional qualifying rounds 711 entered. Committee active in coordinating and encouraging junior activities nationally.

GIRLS' JUNIOR — Fourth USGA Girls' Junior at Monterey Peninsula CC, Del Monte, Calif., drew a field of 49 from 7 to 17; the largest field the championship had had.

MUSEUM — Numerous contributions for museum at Golf House acknowledged.

GOLF HOUSE FUND — \$15,000 needed to reach goal of \$110,000.

Excess of USGA income over expenses in 1952 was \$19,405.85 compared with \$42,359.64 in 1951. Expenses about \$4000 more in 1952 than in 1951 but National Open income record high in 1951 represented main item accounting for difference in the two years' statements.

Prize money of \$20,000 in 1953 Open will mean first prize increase from \$4000 to \$5000. Last 30 of the 50 money prizes this year will be \$150 instead of \$100 as previously.

1955 National Open to be at Olympic Club at Lakeside, San Francisco, Calif.

Walker Cup team selection will be made in spring.

Open and Amateur entry fee in 1953 will be \$10 instead of \$7 as previously.

1954 Girls' Junior to be played at Gulph Mills GC, Bridgeport, Pa.

USGA 1954 meeting, Jan. 23, in New York City.

The superintendent always has to "play it safe." If he takes a chance he is too much at the mercy of a change for the worse in weather conditions and of the uncertain grade of help on most golf courses now. His great aid is going to be the development of better fitted strains of grass for greens, fairways and tees in his area.

—TAYLOR BOYD
Supt., Camargo Club, Cincinnati, O.