

British Have Joys, Troubles, Staging Big Championships

By PETER ROSCOW

AWAY back in October 1952, the thinking cap was placed on the head and a start was made in preparing for the big event. Advice was sought from and most generously given by that expert in organisation, the Ganton Secretary. Gordon Wright brought out all his correspondence in connection with the previous Ryder Cup Match in 1949, and though enlightening the new Wentworth Secretary, left the latter in no doubt of the magnitude of the operation that lay ahead.

The major difficulty was at once evident. Whereas the Scarborough Corporation had given valuable assistance in both the financial field and in that of organisation, it was obvious to the meaneast intelligence that Virginia Water, with the best will in the world, could not attempt to give aid in the same way as Scarborough, Leeds or Southport had done previously. In fact, the job must be tackled by the P.G.A. and Wentworth Club alone and unaided.

So off we started with no money in the bank and fully aware that no subsidy would be forthcoming. Big crowds would surely attend the match, particularly as the 1953 Ryder Cup Match was to be played near London for the first time in history. Big crowds used space, but the Burma Road is heavily wooded and gaps from green to tee in many cases were narrow.

So a contractor was engaged to cut down, grub out and generally clear gaps wide enough to permit easy passage for spectators. Together with this operation, work commenced on levelling a number of large areas on the estate to enable them to be used as car parks, and by the time this was completed, space had been found to park over 10,000 cars and 150 coaches.

In December, 1952, the Wentworth Secretary awoke one morning around 3 a.m. He just had to awaken his wife to declare—in the famous words of Miss Yvonne Arnaud—"I have an idea. I've got the 'drill' for crowd control, I'm sure," he declared. "One Golf Club—one Hole. Berkshire, Sunningdale, Camberley Heath,

Woking, and many others—each taking on a Hole. Isn't that the answer to the ever-difficult problem of coping with large moving crowds?" The Secretary's wife replied, "You've got it. Let's go to sleep."

The alarm clock was, for once, superfluous. The Secretary was wide awake and itching to get going. On reaching the Club, he telephoned to the Chairman of the Committee who seemed to think that the idea was worth consideration. A luncheon was arranged for the 13th of December to which the Captains and Secretaries of 25 golf clubs within a 15 mile radius of Wentworth were invited. After the meal the Wentworth Secretary propounded his ideas and included the suggested method of control at each hole. The reception was overwhelmingly enthusiastic. The scheme was adopted. A Press conference was held at Wentworth and a draft of the "Drill" was sent for typing. Five hundred copies were printed and issued among the Clubs volunteering.

During the summer of 1953, all the Clubs involved (now 27 and 2 Golfing Societies) visited Wentworth for rehearsals of their respective holes. These rehearsals

We've had many articles on how to run big tournaments and Carl Jehlen, Baltusrol's gen. mgr. added his very valuable contribution on that subject, in his address at the Club Managers' convention.

Up to this time GOLFDOM has never carried a piece on how a big British championship is run. The British have done some excellent jobs on Ryder Cup matches with Gordon Wright at Ganton and Peter Roscow at Wentworth as ringmasters of the latest two Ryder shows in Britain.

Maj. Roscow wrote the accompanying article for the information of fellow members of the British golf club secretaries' association.

—THE EDITOR

proved most valuable, and produced many excellent suggestions for better crowd control.

From many complimentary comments on the stewarding on the two Match Days, it would seem that this noble band of volunteers did a splendid job. We, at Wentworth, are most grateful to the 1,100 stalwarts who worked so efficiently, that the Wentworth Flying Squad—the mobile reserve—was hardly called into action at all until sent to assist at the historic incidents at the 18th hole on the last day.

To go back to the early part of the year, preparations were made covering a wide field of activities. Police and catering arrangements, ticket selling at the entrances, ingress and egress facilities for the resident on the Estate, television and sound broadcasting, roping of the entire West Course with the thin red line, privileges for Members and their guests—erection of stands, these and a host of other items all needed attention and careful preparation.

As the months passed, the tempo quickened and for the three months just prior to the match it was a case of Ryder Cup priority for virtually every item. In fact, the last four weeks were hectic indeed. Day by day, lorry after lorry brought in cargoes of tubular scaffolding and boards for the many stands, marquees and tents for snack bars, first aid posts, lavatories and cloak rooms, etc., etc. Television engineers swarmed around the 7th Green and 8th Tee burying almost a mile of cable and even a greater distance of overhead telephone wires. Post Office engineers joined in the general jamboree, while walkie talkie experts carried out extensive tests to ensure efficient communication from all parts of the Course to the score board near the Club House.

By the 21st of September, all seemed to be going according to plan. The schedule was up-to-date and if anything, we were ahead of time. Needless to say the crises appeared. And they were what our American friends would describe as "really something." It would be unfair to publish the full details, but to get the ship back on to an even keel took a deal of doing. Most desperate measures were taken in the twinkling of an eye. Gangs of men were summoned to our aid and they worked for three days at the maximum pressure.

The second crisis occurred only four days before the opening of Ryder Cup week and necessitated a hastily sum-

moned Board Meeting in London at which big and drastic action was taken.

However the dark clouds passed over, the sun came out and by the morning of the first Practice Day we were ready and itching to begin.

What happened from the opening day until the final thrills on Saturday evening is now known to all who were here, and to thousands who viewed on T.V. and read the papers.

Not for four years shall we see another Ryder Cup match in this island. We wonder who will have the honor of staging it. It is mighty hard work but a lot of fun. Lastly, may a word of admiration be recorded. The sportsmanship shown by the two teams can surely never have been finer. The Americans, players and officials alike, were charming people to entertain. We hope we looked after them satisfactorily. We were sorry to say farewell to them.

Some Ryder Cup Statistics

(a) 12 miles of thin red sisal twine was used to rope off the fairways round the Course.

(b) 2,800 stakes carried the twine.

(c) Ascot Race Course Staff carried out the sale of tickets at eight entrances to the Estate.

(d) The Mobile Bank, provided by the National Provincial Bank (Egham Branch) received 568 callers during the match, handled all the gate and car park monies, together with the shops' monies from the stores trading at Tom Haliburton's shop and all the catering establishments.

(e) The Wentworth Secretary swallowed 24 sleeping pills between the 21st September and the 2nd October.

(f) The Dunlop Co. Ltd. provided (gratis) the many directional sign posts and boards used on the Course and in the car parks.

(g) Litter left behind after the match was well up to Test Match standards.

(h) The American Team occupied the Ladies Dressing Room for the whole week. The Ladies used other quarters!

(i) A set of false teeth in an empty match box was found by a Steward on the 16th Hole.

(j) The four Ice Cream Bombes served at the Banquet in the club after the match were so frozen that they had to be attacked with venom and a meat chopper by the Wentworth Chef. Vive les Belges.

(k) The profits on Bar Sales were not—as has been quoted—£9,999 19s. 9d. They were in fact £10,000 exactly!!!