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by Herb Graffis

SWINGING AROUND GOLF

Joe Kirkwood: A tribute

Joe Kirkwood, who died at the age of 73 after a long illness, in a Burlington, Vt., hospital established a new stage of golf show business. He was the first of the trick-shot showmen. He came here from Australia after winning the Australian and New Zealand Open championships at the suggestion of Victor East. East, also from Australia, thought young Joe would cut down the American hopefuls.

At Pinehurst one time Joe was at Maniac Hill, the first of the world's practice tees, hitting trick shots he had perfected. Fellows quit practicing and came out of the clubhouse to watch. Word of his wizardry got around and golf nuts who left Pinehurst told about the incredible Kirkwood.

Joe always was a guy who could do careful tricks with money. He played safe financially with exhibitions and took tournaments as a sideline. But he played so well that he won the Canadian Open in 1933, finished tied for third in the British Open in 1927 and was fourth in 1923 and 1934. He was tied for 10th in the 1934 U.S. Open at Merion. He was hot at St. Louis CC in the 1947 National Open. His pal The Haig walked the last nine with Joe, and had him so scared about possible violation of Rule 9 about taking advice (although Joe didn't ask Walter), Joe blew to a fat 78 and a tie for 22nd place and \$100 prize money. Joe won the North and South Open and several circuit tournaments. He

played at nearly 7,000 different courses around the world. His son, Joe Jr., won circuit events, then went to Hollywood to star in pictures as boxer Joe Palooka.

Kirkwood was followed in the trick-shot field by Jack Redmond, and Paul Hahn and others of lesser fame. Joe never smoked or drank. He died of the same thing that killed his playmate Walter Hagen, who did everything.

There's reduced anxiety on the part of golf ball makers at the prospect of the **United States Golf Assn.** and the **Royal & Ancient** changing the size and weight of golf balls to uniform specifications for world-wide use. Somewhere, somehow, among the fellows who devote themselves to amateur golf rules and rulings, the great white light of reality must have been turned on.

Practically, what the USGA and R&A have been fooling around with amounts to thinking about an ideal golf ball for the pro playing specialists who don't pay for golf balls and losing touch with the large percentage of amateur golfers who do. The USGA and R&A officials must be aware of the multitude of peasant golfers. So why do they get into a sweat about something that does not positively benefit the vast international majority of golfers?

Compromises in international competitions allowing contestants to play the USGA or R & A ball have worked out agreeably. Within the limits of the present specifications there's enough leeway to allow manufacturers, eventually, an area of individuality. One could even call it a "golfing public service" since it would allow the golfer interesting choices of a ball for his game. That should help the golf ball business.

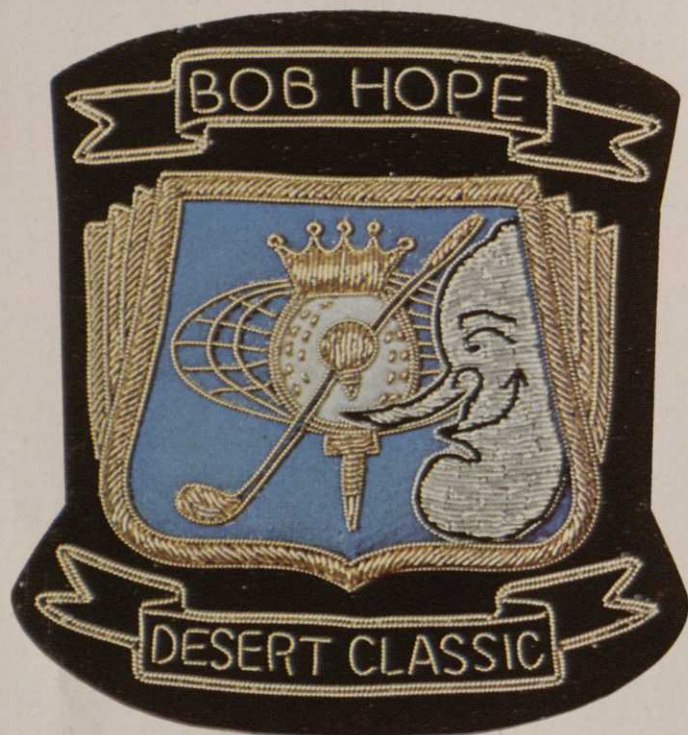
A world-wide golf ball of restricted standards would be nonsense. Considering the differences in turf, weather conditions, maintenance, need of encouragement of golf and money available for golf, it is utterly impractical to limit golf ball specifications to one tight world-wide standard.

Somewhere it appears that the USGA and the R&A may have forgotten that golf is an art. It is played by people for fun, and golf legislation should start from there and never get far away.

The best job of merchandising that I've ever seen was done at the **18th Annual World Cup** international pro tournament at the **Jockey Club**

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Graffis

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in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The display, which appealed to the quality market that attends a golf tournament, was more attractive than the big tent showing at the British Open. There was a row of boutiques with simple artistic fronts near the clubhouse first tee and 18th green. There also was a display of an automobile maker's models, two drink tents with tables and chairs and striped umbrellas. And under one of those inflated Tecin air structures was a food and drink cafeteria operated by Damas Rosellas and their daughters. These women, members of Buenos Aires hospital auxiliaries, are socially prominent, good looking, wealthy and invaluable public spirited workers. They are the Argentine counterparts of the great ladies who make the Westchester tournament as a hospital money-raising show such a tremendous success.

Although there are only 18 courses in Argentina and a small percentage of the population playing, **Roberto De Vincenzo** is as big a sports idol in that country as Hagen, Jones and Palmer have been in the United States. De Vincenzo's winning the individual championship at Buenos Aires and the Australian team of Devlin and Graham winning the team tournament against competent international competition, pointed to the sportsmanship and wisdom for such major tournaments as the USGA Open and the Masters granting invitations to World Cup individual and International Trophy winners. World Amateur team players are among the 14 classes qualified for invitations to the Masters. As contenders of one of the world's top titles in golf, it is logical that the winners in the international professional competition also qualify.

No getting away from it, the World Cup, then called the Canada Cup, gave world-wide pro and amateur golf competition the boost that brought it from a dream into reality. Juan Trippe, head of Pan American Airways and of International Golf Assn., had his men work out with Fred Corcoran arrangements that spread golf beyond the Walter, Curtis and Ryder Cup competitions. And don't forget the senior golfers of the United States who spent their own money and suffered considerable inconvenience in Europe and Africa establishing truly international golf competition. □