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SWINGING AROUND GOLF

NEWS OF THE GOLF
WORLD IN BRIEF



By HERB GRAFFIS

Many of the greats of yesteryear were at the Open at Oakmont . . . Sam Parks, Oakmont member, who won the Open there in 1935 when he was pro at South Hills CC, said he was busier and more worried as an Open official than he was as a contestant . . . Jimmy Thomson and Walter Hagen, who finished behind Parks, also were there combining business and fun . . . With Walter was his pal, Bert J. Davis, who got the pros buying Cadillacs as a status symbol.

Tommy Armour, who won at Oakmont in 1927 after a playoff with Harry Cooper, flew in from his summer home at Larchmont, N.Y. to look over the younger stars . . . Tommy during his day's survey of the Open saw an easier course than he had played — fewer traps, milder plowing of the traps, wider fairways and temperate rough instead of the hayfields that Bill Fownes, builder and patron saint of Oakmont, and his greenkeeper, "Dutch" Loeffler, provided when they were alive.

Harry Cooper wasn't there nor was Ben Hogan who won the Open at Oakmont in 1953 . . . Hogan won at 283 67-72-73-71, same score at which Nicklaus and Palmer tied . . . There were more traps in 1953 if that means anything considering the way today's stars ease out of them . . . Hogan was kept away from qualifying by bursitis in a shoulder that was badly damaged in the automobile accident in 1949 that nearly killed him and his wife . . . He hopes to be able to play in the PGA at Aronimink.

Billy Burke, 1931 National Open champion, Freddie McLeod, 1908 champion,

Lew Worsham, 1947 winner and now Oakmont's pro, Cary Middlecoff, Open winner in 1949, Ed Furgol, Tommy Bolt, Bill Casper, Arnold Palmer and Gene Littler completed the roster of former champions present at Oakmont as players or spectators . . . Henry Picard, another of the former stars, was in the gallery . . . Pic said that Oakmont this year was several

FRONT COVER

Arnold Palmer and Jack Nicklaus, who spend almost as much time in front of the press tent mikes as on the golf courses these days, are seen along with a couple home pros who helped make the Western Open the great success that it was. The latter are Denver Caudill (l), the merchandising specialist at the Medinah (Ill.) CC pro shop, and Jack Bell, the head pro there. Denver and Jack are examining the bag rack board which shows the location of every bag stored in the shop.

Ben Chlevin photos

strokes easier than when Hogan won in 1953 — but isn't that what old pros always say?

The experiment of starting players in twos for the first two rounds didn't speed up the field as the USGA had hoped . . . First and second holes proved to be bottlenecks . . . Oakmont's rolling hills are great for spectators but don't encourage quick play . . . Players seemed to be afraid to move fast at Oakmont . . . USGA issued to competitors a communique

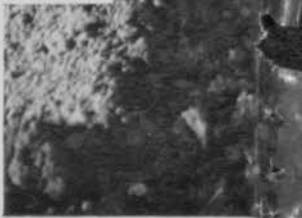
After eight years
with "low-cost" pipe

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showing how slow play had reduced the field from 171 in 1948 to 150 this year . . . The USGA notice said that it took five hours and one minute for the last group of three to play the second round at Oakland Hills last year . . . Play by twos will be the order at the National Open at Country Club of Brookline next year . . . Some golf writers say pros and a few of the hotshot amateurs are playing so slow there may be only 100 in the Open starting field a few years from now.

Slow play wouldn't be too bad if the delay merely affected the open tournaments . . . But the bad example set and extended by television coverage of golf events has virtually reduced the capacity of golf courses one-fifth.

Golf writers at Oakmont were of the opinion that the best thing the PGA ever had done for major tournament golf was to contribute the services of Jim Gaquin and his wife Lois and Don Giffin for research and publicity aid at Oakmont . . . The three PGA staffers were wonderfully helpful to the writers in supplying players' backgrounds and statistical data far beyond the scope of the type of material

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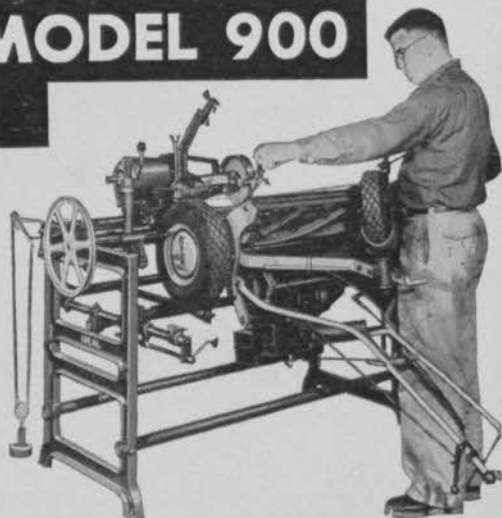
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Coming dangerously close to exploding a civil war between the USGA and several sectional golf associations was a "Proposal for a centrally controlled national handicap system" . . . It suggested that the USGA grab for itself, on a national basis, the issuance of handicap cards for cash, a practice satisfactorily handled by sectional associations . . . The latter were condemned in the proposal because they use the issuance of golf handicap cards merely as a revenue-raising device.

Without the revenue from the handicap cards the sectional associations would have to abandon many valuable services and might as well fold up . . . The proposal furthermore suggested that the electronic calculating of handicaps now being done for many clubs and associations by at least two organizations specializing in this work, and with complete satisfaction to the customers, be turned over to a sports magazine subscription department which would "sponsor" the nationwide handicap card

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The proposal is embarrassing to the USGA and had the worst possible timing . . . It was issued after the USGA business conferences with sectional association officials in Washington, Chicago and San Francisco early this year had established understanding, spirit and procedure favorable to cooperation between USGA and district associations for the good of the golfer, the game and the business.

Although the USGA has turned down the suggestion that it, with an unappropriated surplus of \$381,083, take over the "revenue-raising device" that keeps several district associations alive, the word has not been officially circulated in a manner to relieve the uneasiness and suspicions of district association officials . . . Now that the matter of the "Proposal" is out in the open it probably won't be revived . . . For some years, anyway.

With all the business problems the PGA and its members have, there is some wondering why the association devotes good official brains and time worrying about any member who feels that he is being disgraced by being called a "pro."

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