

Notes on the Public Links Event

Last issue we published an article in which Morton G. Bogue inveighed against the slow player as being golfing enemy No. 1. As a contrast, it would have pleased you to see how the contestants in this year's Amateur Public Links Championship played the game.

In the final, for example, Michael R. Ferentz and Ben G. Hughes got around the first 18 holes in 2 hours 40 minutes, over a course with an unusual amount of playing trouble and at the end of a week of Atlanta summer weather. They went 17 holes in the afternoon half in 2:45.

So it can be done, you see, even with a USGA Championship at stake.

The pace of play in the final, as well as the quality of play, was typical of the fine spirit in which the Public Links Championship usually goes off. You'll look a long while before you can find a golf event in which the sheer fun of playing the game is so marked.

Mike Ferentz and Ben Hughes are happy golfers. So cheerful are their temperaments that, to judge from their expressions, you'd never know whether they were winning or losing. When an opponent rolls in a long putt, Mike is pretty apt to laugh out loud at his own discomfiture. Ben's the same way.

They had dinner together the night before the final, breakfast together next morning, and they were still on speaking terms after Mike stymied Ben on the last two holes of the match.

It was Mike Ferentz's first venture in the Amateur Public Links Championship, and he did a grand job in winning. It takes not only skill but stamina to play through this Championship. It was all match play, with eight matches comprising ten rounds of golf in six days. Mike lost about 15 pounds and was down to 145 when it finished.

Ferentz lives in Long Beach, Cal., and he plans to defend his title when the tournament is played next summer at the new El Rancho Golf Course in Los Angeles. He used to live in Rochester, N. Y., and spent several years there as caddie, caddie-master and assistant pro; he was reinstated

to amateur status by the USGA in 1938. He is 33 years old and has played the game 20 years. He spent five years in the Army, was a master sergeant, and served overseas with an anti-aircraft outfit.

Experience on Bermuda

The night before the Championship began, Robert T. Jones, Jr., advised all the players at a dinner in their honor: "Never give a six-inch putt on Bermuda greens."

It happens that the Meadowlark course in Long Beach, where Mike Ferentz plays, has Bermuda grass on nine of its 18 greens—it's said to be the only course in the section with such putting surfaces.

Ben Hughes was competing in the Public Links event for the second time. He was a semi-finalist last year on his first try. Ben, who is an accountant in Portland, Ore., is 31 and has played golf since he was a caddie. Like Ferentz, he served in the Army for five years, three and a half of them with the Third Infantry Division in the European Theatre; he was a warrant officer.

Hughes's match with Ferentz at the North Fulton Park Course in Atlanta was a thriller. Ferentz started fast and was 2 up at the first turn, going out in 34, one under par. Hughes rallied and was 2 up after 18, playing the second nine in 35, one under, and being par 71 for the first round.

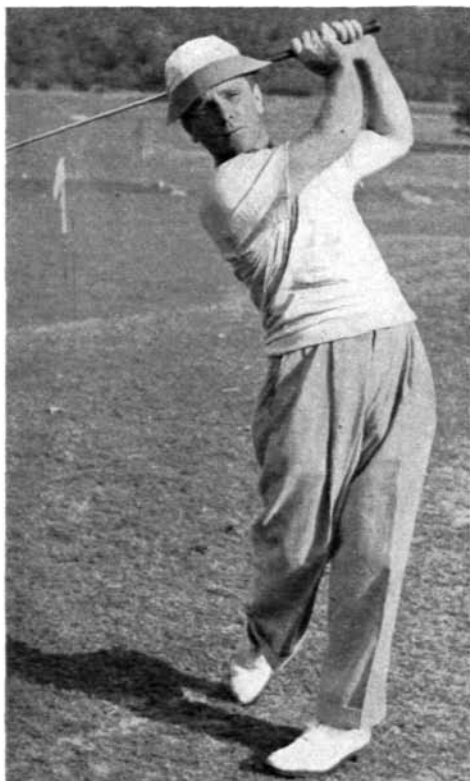
Ferentz squared matters at the 27th, reaching the turn in 35, and they alternated in winning the next four holes. Pars by Ferentz were good for wins on the 33rd and 34th, and those holes provided his winning margin of 2 and 1. On the 34th and 35th Hughes left himself open for stymies which Ferentz laid down.

In the semi-finals, Ferentz eliminated plucky Charles W. Barnes, of Atlanta, who started the tournament against a physician's advice; and Hughes defeated Oliver Kay, of Toledo.

The semi-finalists were invited to enter sectional qualifying rounds for the Amateur Championship, and three accepted. Kay qualified.

The Public Links was held entirely at match play for the first time. The new

Public Links Champion and Runner-up



Ed Miles photo

Michael R. Ferentz

form was popular. Players who expressed opinions said they preferred to play opponents from the outset rather than engage in a 36-hole qualifying test on the first two days, as used to be the case.

There were 2,728 entries and, by means of sectional qualifying, they were reduced to 210 for the match play at Atlanta. A full field of 210 actually started.

The Team Championship for the Harding Cup was on a sectional basis for the first time. The three-man team of the Raleigh, N. C., section won with 223 for 18 holes; the team comprised Clarence Alexander, 73; Aubrey D. Turrentine, 74, and Avery Beck, 76. Pittsburgh was second with 227 and Atlanta third with 228.

Markings on iron clubs of a number of contestants were outside USGA specifications before the tournament; most of them were corrected by diligent use of pro shop



Ed Miles photo

Ben G. Hughes

equipment. As at all USGA events, club inspection was voluntary. The vast majority of players submitted their clubs for checking.

The Atlanta Public Links Golf Association and officials of Fulton County did a grand job in organizing and entertaining Atlanta's first USGA event. Don Gavan and Verne Murrah were co-chairmen of the committee in charge.

They started things off with a dinner which will long be memorable to the contestants. Only Atlanta could furnish such a notable line-up of golfing speakers as Robert T. Jones, Jr., the Misses Louise Suggs and Dorothy Kirby, and Charley Yates.

The USGA Public Links Committee expressed its feelings this way in a resolution transmitted to the Hon. William B. Hartsfield, Mayor of Atlanta:

"WHEREAS, The City of Atlanta, Georgia, has extended to the Public Links Golfers of the United States and Possessions the hand of Hospitality; be it

"RESOLVED, That the Public Links Committee of the United States Golf Association, in Annual Meeting assembled, do tender to the Citizenry in general, and to the Committee in Charge, their collective respect for a most enjoyable week of golf in a sympathetic Southern city.

"JOSEPH S. DICKSON,
"Resolutions Committee."