

Qualities of a Champion

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A blend of many qualities is required to produce a true champion. Often the addition of just one extra ability will determine the result of a match. As an example, we cite the play of the ninth hole in the morning round of the final in this year's Amateur Championship — Willie Turnesa vs. Ray Billows at the Memphis Country Club.

This hole is a short par 4, 319 yards, with a long green running lengthwise of the hole, slightly from left to right, and with the back portion swinging to the left behind a trap. With out of bounds on the right, the feature of the hole was this: when the cup location was on the front three-quarters of the putting surface, the proper place for the tee shot was to the left, but when the hole was moved well to the back the picture was completely reversed and the prospects of making even a 4 from a tee shot on the left side were almost prohibitive. From the tee it was difficult to see the exact location of the flagstick on the green, but, since the green was close to the clubhouse, the hole offered an interesting test of a player's foresight in checking the cup location before starting his morning match.

This tricky location at "the back" was saved for the final day. Ray drove; as usual, to the left. When Willie placed his tee shot far to the right it was natural to ask him, as we walked from the tee, whether his line had been influenced by an inspection of the cup location before starting play. His brief reply, "Yes, it was," told volumes; and, incidentally, he won the hole with a birdie.

Control of Club and Self

This ability to observe and to study during play those parts of the course not at the time in play is a rare and valuable quality. There is no doubt that Turnesa had immediately realized the importance of cup location in play of the ninth hole and during the tournament had been carefully watching for the switch that finally took place Saturday. It would be interesting to

know how many other players in the field had been checking each morning on the location of this particular hole.

There is a second important quality, possessed to a marked degree by the two finalists. Turnesa and Billows are earnest, serious contenders, but both play the game for the pleasure of playing it and consequently are able to compete with a will to win but a willingness to lose. They know that golf is a sport and are not ready to permit the breaks (which are, after all, an inherent part of the game) to upset either their self-possession or their pleasure.



After the tournament a friend remarked to Turnesa that, throughout the week at Memphis, Willie had seemed remarkably self-possessed, even when the going was tough.

Now Willie is not much given to talking about himself, but he commented as follows:

"Well, I guess it depends on how you look at the game.

"Of course, I try to play every shot for all it's worth. I try hard to win. But I try just as hard to avoid letting myself get upset or discouraged if things go wrong.

"After all, golf's a game, and the fun of it is the playing of it.

"Yes, as you say, there are a few good players who get really annoyed-temperamentally upset-at bad breaks. When we do, our game usually suffers. This often happens when we most strongly want to win-perhaps when we let desire to win become too important to us and make us greedy.

"Oddly enough, I think you're most apt to win when you can both play hard and

The Finalists in the Amateur Championship



Acme News Pictures

William P. Turnesa (left) and Ray Billows display the Havemeyer Trophy, symbolic of the USGA Amateur Championship.

at the same time not mind losing too much -in other words, when you%-e the master of the game, instead of letting it master you."

Turnesa's performance was forceful evidence that control of a golf club is often directly related to the player's own self-control, or lack of it. This truth is especially apparent in championships, when it is necessary to maintain one's shots-and one's temperament-in their best condition over an extended period of time.

Ben Hogan in the Open this year played with the same serene and confident indif-

ference to the lesser irritations, and you realize in watching these men that the benefits of golf go even beyond such good things as recreation, fellowship and physical exercise-you realize that the game is a character-builder.

Ray Billows at Memphis provided perhaps the most abundant testimony of this quality. Ray reached the final of the Amateur Championship for the third time, and for the third time was the runner-up. Immediately after the final, when a well-wisher commiserated with him, Ray confessed that he was disappointed, but he smiled

in his characteristic jolly way, and joked: "Well, somebody has to lose-but why does it always have to be me!"

Bermuda Greens A Fair Test

This was the first Amateur played in the deep South on a course with putting greens of Bermuda grass. The greens were excellent, and those without experience on this type of putting surface seemed to have no particular difficulty, provided they were putting well. Skill was rewarded, as is shown by the fact that the finalists, Turnesa and Billows, are both from the New York district and were not experienced on Bermuda greens.

The event convinced skeptics that a very successful championship test can be provided under Southern conditions of course and weather.

Turnesa has now won three major championships, under widely differing conditions. First was the 1938 Amateur at Oakmont, Pa., and then last year the British Amateur at Carnoustie, Scotland.

All arrangements by local authorities at Memphis were well planned and executed, but the greatest impression was made by the extra attention given to needs and comforts of the competitors, their wives and other visitors. Obviously, planning for the reception of players should be an important feature of the Championship.

There was much less difficulty than formerly with markings on faces of iron clubs. Players have acquired a knowledge of the technical side of club face markings, and, with the manufacturers now being more careful, there should be much less of this unfortunate trouble in future.

All cup locations for the entire week were determined before play started. It is probable that we saved too many of the "tough spots" for the last day. It is especially difficult to play to a hole marked by a flagstick which merges with a large gallery surrounding a green.

All-Match Play Form Popular

The all-match-play form of the Amateur Championship after sectional qualifying seems now to be well established. Mathematically, it has the great advantage of

permitting 210 players to attend the Championship proper, as compared with the maximum of 150 who could be accommodated if there were qualifying play in the Championship. At Memphis it was obvious that many fine young players would have been denied the opportunity of competing in the Amateur had the old system been in operation.

To attend the Amateur, play in the practice rounds, and meet other players is an experience all true golfers enjoy. It is interesting to note that the four largest entries ever received for the Amateur were in years when it was entirely at match play. This is certainly substantial proof that it is the most popular method of play.



One of the most difficult operations at a championship is to fill vacancies created by withdrawals. It is the USGA's desire to give an opportunity to play to every player entitled to do so. In spite of efforts to systematize the matter of filling vacancies, eligible players sometimes fail to notify the USGA concerning their intention to appear or not appear at the championship.

When a player fails to show, his place must be offered to each alternate in his district in order; if not filled in this way, the place is transferred in a pre-determined order to some other district and again offered in order to the alternates in that district. Often it is Saturday or even Sunday just prior to the start of championship play before a player takes the trouble to advise of his inability to attend, and it requires a great amount of long-distance telephoning to fill in such last-minute vacancies.

The Association is therefore gratified by the fact that the only first-round vacancy in its four male championships this year was due to a disqualification caused by late arrival at the first tee.