

Shots Heard 'Round the World

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It is natural for people to wish they were younger, but very often during the researching of "The Story of American Golf," I wished I were older, or old enough, at any rate, to have witnessed many of the historic matches. I was trying to recreate as graphically as possible. Above all, I regretted that I hadn't been able to trudge around The Country Club at Brookline, Mass., that wet September day in 1913 when Francis Ouimet fired the shots heard 'round the world in the play-off of the Open Championship.

Those 18 holes that Ouimet played against Harry Vardon and Ted Ray—the American youth against the British masters—constitute perhaps the most momentous round in the history of golf, tremendously dramatic in itself, inordinately crucial in the effect Ouimet's stunning victory had upon the future course of golf in this country. That was one match that had to be done absolutely right.

As things turned out, I think the chapter on Francis did come off right, thanks to the active interest of Herbert Jaques and Harold Pierce. I went up to Boston in February, 1947, to talk with them about Ouimet and the 1913 Championship. If a detailed shot-by-shot of the play-off was what I wanted, then, they suggested, why wouldn't the solution be for them to see if they could prevail upon Francis to walk around the course and "Ye-play" that round? A week later I heard from Mr. Pierce. He had been able to arrange the walk.

Five of us met at The Country Club at 10:30 on the morning of March 30—Francis, Mr. Pierce, Mr. Jaques, Linde Fowler, the pioneer golf reporter (who had carried his 1913 notes along), and myself. We started down the first fairway.

Francis, with his astonishing memory, was able to walk to the exact spot from which he had played each shot, to remember the clubs he had used, how the shots had felt, how he had felt, and to remember

almost as perfectly the precise progress of Rav and Vardon. Mr. Pierce filled in with background on the holes where changes had been made, Mr. Jaques added some impressions of the match which now came vividly to his mind, and Mr. Fowler cleared up a few points on which Francis had been, characteristically, too modest.

Three hours later when Francis led us off the 18th green after canning that final four-footer, I believe we had come very close to "seeing" the play-off round.

Hole by Hole

{EDITOR'S NOTE—By kind permission of Mr. Wind the publishers of "The Story of American Golf," the USGA JOURNAL is privileged to print below, in a slightly condensed form, the account of the Ouimet-Vardon-Ray play-off as contained in Mr. Wind's new book. The USGA JOURNAL hereby records its thanks and appreciation for this privilege. This is but a sample of the many historical events recounted in the volume.}

After tying with Harry Vardon and Ted Ray, Francis Ouimet went home and took a bath. He went to bed at 9:30 and slept until 8. He ate a light breakfast, and then walked to The Country Club and hit some practice shots out to his 10-year-old caddie, Eddie Lowery. The shots felt fine. Johnny McDermott, who had watched Francis practice, took him by the arm and said, "You are hitting the ball well. Now go out and pay no attention whatsoever to Vardon and Ray. Play your own game."

In the tent beside the first tee, the three contestants drew straws to determine who would have the honor of hitting first. Francis drew the longest straw, and teed up. He was nervous but got off well. Vardon and Ray also hit good drives. As the players walked down the first fairway, they were followed by a gallery that swelled to 3,500 as the match progressed. Thirty hours of continuous rain had turned the low stretches of the course into a quagmire, and a drizzle was still coming down, but this was a match that even the old and the gouty had to see for themselves.

The first hole at The Country Club was a lengthy 430-yard par 4, and under the sopping conditions only Ray had a chance of reaching in 2. Ray, however, pushed his second into

the mounds off to right of the green, and had to be satisfied with 8 5 when the wet grass held up his chip. Vardon took a 5, and Francis got his when he holed a three-footer. That putt was very important. The instant it dropped, Francis lost all sense of "awe and excitement."

On the second, all three played orthodox pitches to the green, and all got their 4s. On the third, a testing two-shotter measuring 435 yards, Ouimet and Vardon made their 4s after getting home in 2. Ray three-putted from 40 feet and took a 5. All three played tidy pitches to the fourth green and went down in two putts for their 4s.

The fifth proved to be a very interesting hole. On this long par 4, a player drove from an elevated tee and tried to keep well away from the woods hugging the right-hand side of the fairway. On his second shot, which on wet turf was a brassie or spoon for even the good golfer, he avoided the pot bunker to the right of the green, if he could.

The Winner



Courtesy H. B. Martin—Photo Edwin Levick, N. Y.

Francis Ouimet posed for this photograph a few days after he won the Open Championship in 1913.

He worried about the green slanting from right to left, when he got there. All in all, a very tough par 4—420 yards long.

Ouimet, still up, continued his steady driving. Vardon was a little behind the amateur but down the middle, too. Ray was off to the left in the high grass. His second was short of the green. Vardon cut his brassie a shade too much and was off on the right. Ouimet also elected to play a brassie. The ball streaked crazily off to the right and crashed into the overhanging branches of the trees-out of bounds.

It was the first error the young amateur had made. Had the shot been just a little awry, Francis might have started to worry about what he had done wrong. Fortunately, it was such a totally bad shot that Francis was able to dismiss it immediately. He didn't alibi to himself that his hands had slipped on the wet shaft, nor did he change his club. While the gallery was speculating on the effect his loose shot would have on Ouimet, he dropped another ball quickly over his shoulder and played his third without the briefest hesitation.

It was a ringing brassie that ended up on the edge of the green. Ouimet got down in 2 from there, and came out of the hole with a 5. When Vardon and Ray both needed a chip and two putts, Ouimet had gained a half and a valuable psychological boost. His opponents had failed to capitalize on the opening, and this reinforced Ouimet's confidence in his ability to keep pace with them. Vardon and Ray were not infallible. Then, too, he felt that he had been lucky when that second shot had ended up out of bounds, for if he had been forced to play it out of the brush, he might have dropped several strokes to par instead of just the one.

The sixth was a shortish 4 uphill, the sort of a hole on which a player might well pick up a birdie. All three were down the middle, with Ray, straight for the first time, the longest. Vardon played first and sent an elegant little pitch close to the cup. Ouimet and Ray could not match it. They two-putted for their 4s, and when Vardon sank his putt for a birdie 3, he went into the lead, one stroke in front of Ouimet, two in front of Ray.

It was Ray's turn at the seventh. None of the three were on the green on this stern one-shotter. Francis went 12 feet by with his chip and Vardon was even stronger. They missed their putts for 3s and lost a stroke to Ray, who had played a brilliant run-up. Ray had now drawn back on even terms with the American and was only one stroke behind Vardon.

There was not much to choose among the drives on the eighth. The players were left with approaches of about 160 yards from the valley at the foot of the incline on which the large green was perched. Ouimet played a mashie, and the wild shout of the spectators gathered around the green told him that the

Ouimet Lines Up Putt That Made History



In this rare old photograph, Francis Ouimet, then 20 years old, can be seen at the upper left, crouching behind his ball on the eighteenth green at The Country Club, Brookline, Mass. The putt he holed moments later gave him a 72 and victory over Harry Vardon and Ted Ray (leaning on putters) in a play-off for the 1913 USGA Open Championship. The popularity of golf as a sport for all the people is said to have started with that putt.

shot was near the cup. Absolutely stone-dead, Eddie Lowery, his caddie, thought. Francis wanted to think so too, but as they walked up the hill, he guarded against disappointment by reminding himself that approaches which looked stony from a distance often turned out to be 10 or 15 feet away. . . . But it was dead, 18 inches from the hole. Francis got his birdie, but Ray matched him by rolling in a curving 35-footer. Vardon got his 4. Now, after eight holes of play, Vardon, Ray, and Ouimet were tied at 33 strokes apiece.

Ray was feeling better now. He had picked up two strokes on Vardon and one on Ouimet on the last two holes. and his length gave him the best chance of snagging a birdie on the ninth, a 520-yard par 5 which dropped from an elevated tee into a flat land crossed by a brook 350 yards out and then broke sharply up to a well-trapped green. Ray played his tee shot down the right-hand side of the fairway, which gave him the shortest line to the green if he was going to try to get home in 2. Francis declined to press and was comfortably down the middle.

After Vardon had hit, Ray commented, "Nice shot, Harry"—the only words which were passed between the Englishmen during the round, as Ouimet remembers it.

Actually, Vardon's drive was not a nice shot. It was off line, remarkably off line for Vardon, and his lie in the rough made it necessary for him to play his second safe, short of the brook. Ray had to forego any ideas he might have had about nutting everything into his second in an attempt to reach the green when he found that his drive had

ended up in a close lie on sloping ground. He played a regulation 5, on in 3 and down in 2, as did Ouimet. Vardon had to work harder for his 5, but he got it by hitting his midiron third close to the green and chipping up for one putt.

Everything had happened and yet on the scorecard nothing had happened. All three were out in 38.

Ouimet Gains the Edge

They started in. Ray, Ouimet, and Vardon, in that order, put their iron shots onto the Redan-type green of the 140-yard 10th. Ouimet was nearest the pin. The Englishmen were about 35 feet away, with Vardon's line to the cup stymied by the hole his ball had dug when landing on the soft green. Harry three-putted. Ray also three-putted. Francis got his 3 and for the first time in the match he was out in front.

Vardon and Ray both had chances to get that stroke back on the 11th, a 390-yarder, but they missed holeable putts for their 3s and halved with Ouimet in 4.

Ouimet had been outdriving Vardon regularly, and on the 12th he outdrove Ray as well. Ouimet was the only one to get home in 2; he hit a superb mashie 10 feet from the cup. Vardon was short and Ray was down the embankment to the left. The Englishmen could do no better than 5s. Ouimet was timid on his try for his birdie but his comfortable par increased his lead to two strokes.

On the 13th, the short par 4 on which Ouimet had picked up a birdie the day be-

fore, all three were on in 2-Ray on the edge, Vardon about nine feet away, and Ouimet just inside Vardon. Ray made a fine bid for a 3 with his long putt. Vardon holed his nine-footer. Ouimet missed his. Vardon was now only one stroke behind Ouimet, the perfect position for the experienced campaigner with five hard holes left.

On the long 14th, however, Vardon played poorly although he got his par 5. He hooked his drive into the rough, and after an adequate recovery, hooked his mashie third. This was not like Harry. If he didn't hit his irons perfectly straight, he faded them. Linde Fowler, the pioneer golf reporter, had not been looking for indications that Vardon was feeling the pressure, but Harry had hit that hooked approach so uncharacteristically that Linde could only deduce that Vardon was becoming worried.

Ouimet apparently was not. He topped his brassie second on the 14th—his first poor shot since the fifth—but he put his third confidently onto the green as if he had already forgotten his second. The young man's poise was amazing. Ray seemed to be getting restless about his inability to do the things he wanted to do. He also played the 14th badly, pushing his second far to the right, but he took advantage of a lucky opening to the green and also got his 5. Three pars on the scorecard.

Ray finally went on the 15th, the par 4 over the hill and across the drive. Ted's tee shot was headed for the rough on the right when it hit a spectator's derby and rebounded onto the fairway. (The spectator was incensed and left the play-off? then and there.) Ray, however, did not take the advantage of this break. He underclubbed himself on his second, and his soaring mashie thudded into a trap. He took 2 to get out, and only a good putt prevented him from taking a 7. But Ray's 6 put him four strokes behind Ouimet and three behind Vardon—who had taken 4s—and with only three holes remaining, Ted was out of it. . . . On this hole, Vardon, who never smoked on a golf course, lighted a cigarette..

On the short 16th, Vardon and Ouimet got their 3s. Ray three-putted carelessly for a 4. He had given up the fight.

They came to the 17th, the 360-yard dogleg to the left, with Ouimet still protecting his one-stroke lead over Vardon. It was still Vardon's honor. Harry elected to play his drive close to if not over the corner, a risky shot, but he had decided that the time had come to gamble and wanted to be in a position, after his drive to stick his approach very close to the pin. That drive proved to be Vardon's undoing. His right hand got into the shot too much, and he hooked into the bunker in the angle of the dogleg. From his lie in the bunker Vardon could not go for the green and was forced to play out to the

fairway. He put his third on, but not stone-dead. He had take a 5.

Francis had driven straight down the fairway to about the same spot from which he had played his jigger approach the day before. This time he selected his mashie and hit a lovely shot 18 feet past the hole. His long-shafted, narrow-blade putter had not let him down all morning, and now he called on it to get him down safely in two putts for the 4 which would give him that valuable insurance stroke over Vardon. He tapped the ball over the slippery downhill grade . . . and holed it.



Francis now held a three-stroke lead on Vardon as they came to the home hole. He did not let up. His drive was down the middle, his second on. His approach putt, however, left him with a good four-footer for his 4. As Francis lined up his putt, he realized for the first time that he was going to win, and with that awareness the astounding calmness that had sheathed him from the first hole on instantly disappeared. The boy felt himself shivering all over. He steadied himself as best he could, and made the putt. It was quite irrelevant that Vardon had taken a 6 and Ray a birdie 3. Final score, compared with par 71: Ouimet, 72; Vardon, 77; Ray, 78.

The crowd who had slogged around the course in the drizzle, worn out from playing every shot with Ouimet, still staggered by the boy's nerveless poise and his brilliant golf, reeled around the 18th green and the clubhouse in the gayest stupor many of them ever experienced in their lives. They recalled the great shots the new champion had played—that brassie to the fifth green after he had knocked his first out of bound's, that mashie to the eighth and that equally fine mashie to the 12th, that conclusive putt on the skiddy 17th which perhaps more than any other single shot was the one heard round the world.

And what about the new champion? After the battle he was the same remarkable young man—exhilarated but modest, still unbelieving and still unbelievable. "I am as much surprised and as pleased as anyone here," he said in accepting the trophy from the USGA Secretary, John Reid, Jr. "Naturally it always was my hope to win out. I simply tried my best to keep this cup from going to our friends across the water. I am very glad to have been the agency for keeping the cup in America."