

Middlecoff's Courage in the Open

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The usual problem in setting up a course for the Open Championship is to provide an adequate test for the present-day professional without at the same time making the course too tricky.

For this year's Championship at the Medinah Country Club, near Chicago, there was such a wealth of material to



Bachrach
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work with that it was not considered necessary to play the course at its full length or to use many of the more difficult cup locations. Medinah's length, its narrow, wooded fairways and small greens in difficult situations provided a rough test for the best of our professionals.

To be sure, Medinah called for no strokes which were beyond the ability of any golfer in the field, but the penalties which awaited even a slightly off-color shot were so severe that any attempt to save a stroke was usually impossible and often led to further disaster.

This constant pressure of Medinah's rugged layout offered one of the greatest tests of true championship ability. No player in the field could hope to survive 72 holes of play without slipping two or even three strokes to par on one or more holes. The ability to accept these "slings and arrows of outrageous fortune" without upsetting the even tenor of the player's progress was certainly a first requisite in winning the Open Championship at Medinah.

It was this very courage in the face of impending disaster that enabled Cary Middlecoff to become the 49th Open Champion. Starting with an indifferent 75, he found himself in a tie with 15

others for 38th position in the field. On the second day he came back with great courage to play the lowest round scored during the tournament, a brilliant 67.

After the first five holes of the third round, it looked as if he would make a runaway of the event, since at that point he was four strokes under par. But Medinah's troubles beset him and it was only with a fighting finish that he brought in a two-under-par 69.

In the final round disaster came even closer. Slipping back to even terms with his fellow competitors, Clayton Heafner and Buck White, with Sam Snead burning up the course behind him and with Medinah's woods and rough constantly threatening his every shot, Middlecoff proved himself a great fighter by staving off the collapse which overtook many other capable and experienced golfers. His last round of 75 brought his winning total to 286, two over par.

Aside from Middlecoff's courageous play, tribute should be paid to several other great performances:

To Sam Snead for a fighting finish in which only a difficult shot from the edge of the 71st green stood between him and a par finish for a tie.

To Clayton Heafner for four fine rounds and a noble attempt for a tying birdie 3 on the closing hole.

To Al Brosch, a club professional who led the seasoned touring professionals at the end of two rounds and was tied for second position at the end of the third.

To Grandfather Bobby Cruickshank, who showed the youngsters a thing or two with two superlative rounds and finished with a total of 302.

Chicago is one of the greatest and most enthusiastic strongholds of golf. With smart advance promotion by Co-chairman Larry Rutherford, it was therefore

not surprising to find an estimated near-record attendance for the three days of approximately 26,000, with 12,000 on the last day. (The estimates were made by the Club and include players, workers and other non-paying attendants.) Under the able direction of J. Warren Barr, President of Medinah, a hard-working, efficient organization had been set up, and General Chairman Jack Barns left no detail uncovered which could make for the greater success of the Championship or the comfort and convenience of the spectators, competitors, press and visiting officials.

To these three, with their many able lieutenants and the members of the Medinah Country Club, are due the profound thanks of all lovers of the game, for without the personal sacrifices which they all made, the proper and adequate conduct of this Championship would have been an utter impossibility.

Middlecoff's 286

Hole	Yards	Par	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
1	385	4	4	4	3	5
2	192	3	4	3	2	3
3	415	4	4	4	3	4
4	442	4	4	4	4	5
5	525	5	5	4	4	5
6	444	4	5	4	5	4
7	580	5	5	6	4	6
8	200	3	3	2	4	3
9	443	4	5	3	5	4
Out	3,616	36	39	34	34	39
10	582	5	5	4	6	5
11	412	4	4	4	4	5
12	369	4	3	3	4	4
13	445	4	5	5	4	4
14	163	3	4	3	2	3
15	316	4	3	3	4	4
16	445	4	4	4	4	4
17	193	3	3	3	3	3
18	395	4	5	4	4	4
In	3,320	35	36	33	35	36
Total	6,936	71	75	67	69	75

No Greenskeepers Here

The sun-tanned man who nurses your greens and the fellow member who supervises his efforts are properly called "greenkeeper" and "chairman of the green committee". There is no greenskeeper or greens committee.

The term derives from the old custom of referring to the entire golf course as the "green," as in "village green." The addition of the "s" is a common error.

Dr. Middlecoff Finds Out

It has taken Cary Middlecoff just two years to find out whether he could be an outstanding golfer. In the light of his victory for the Open Championship, a letter which he wrote the USGA on January 16, 1947 takes on new significance.

Middlecoff wrote the letter mainly to decline an invitation to be on the 1947 Walker Cup Team. He might have accepted the invitation without disclosing his professional intentions; he might have used the trip abroad to enhance his reputation and then turn pro afterwards.

But Cary Middlecoff's letter tells what kind of person he is without need of further comment:

"Needless to say, I am gratified beyond words about being selected on the Walker Cup Team. I know that it is the highest honor that can be bestowed upon an amateur golfer in this country, but a few things have come up that make my participation impossible.

"First, I am going to be married March 4.

"Next thing is that I have planned to turn pro at that time and play the tournaments until I have proved to myself one way or the other if I am good enough to make golf playing a life work.

"Ever since I can remember I have wanted to play golf without being worried about one thing or another but have never had the chance. I know that I would never be happy practicing dentistry without knowing for sure if I were a good player or a great one, and dentistry is too confining to ever offer me that opportunity.

"I certainly hope that I can continue the pleasant relationship with the USGA that we have had in the past. My decision was reached because I love the game of golf and I see no other suitable out.

"Very sincerely yours,
"Cary Middlecoff"

Fore!

*Golf is much like
Life itself: When
Once it is begun,
Unending are
The thrills that
It imparts.*

*If we don't take it
Seriously
Then it isn't fun;
And if we do
It breaks our
Silly hearts!*

—H. S. G.