

Observations on the Ryder Cup Match

By HENRY COTTON

CAPTAIN, BRITISH RYDER CUP TEAM, 1947

The team of first-class golfers chosen from your mighty country arrived a bare week before the Ryder Cup Match and hurried to Ganton, the scene of the encounter, in our best motor cars, Rolls and Bentleys, traveling via Oxford, Stratford-on-Avon and Leeds.

These great golfers in their bright attire and with their huge red leather golf bags set about getting to know the course, for a good British golf course, unlike most American courses, cannot be learned in one round, however studied and thorough the round may be. It takes many rounds to learn a natural type of course such as Ganton, as the boys found out.

The fact that Ben Hogan came over and met us all pleased golfing fans immensely, and we were all so sorry that he could not play for us. Ben handled his team well, and he, Ed Dudley and Bob Hudson had a busy time with such a big party to handle. The meat brought by the team gave much pleasure to all of us who were in contact with them, for we all shared their food. I am sorry that fellow-countrymen of mine lowered themselves by writing anonymous letters to Ben and Bob on this question. We were delighted they thought of bringing food with them.

The Club-Face Matter

After the first day at foursomes, with the home players leading 3 to 1 and our Captain claiming it was then 50-1 on us, the visitors were so mad at themselves that I felt anything could happen. It did, for we won just two singles matches and lost by 7 to 5.

I do not think we can ever win a match in your country, but we could win over here, given all the advantages. These matches do good and I am pleased Ben called attention to some roughed-up club faces in the British players' bags, for it is to the eternal credit of the United States golfers that since 1947 United

States clubs have been scrupulously correct. We shall follow suit, no doubt, now, for if I called attention to the club-face situation in 1947, it was needed; and it is regrettable that two years later a timely word was needed from your Captain, requesting us to put our house in order.

The inspiration left to us by your golfers will benefit us all, and our standard will improve in 1950 as a result of this all-too-brief visit. We had hoped your players would stay and play for us here and there, but as the pound note slipped, some profited by the occasion to show their wives around Europe and others dashed back to get on the dollar trail again.

I hope it will not be four years before we see your leading players again. We are due to visit you in 1951 and I hope we shall do better on the next occasion, but I am sure that, whatever the result, our players will benefit from visiting your great golfing country.

Those golfers on your team who had not played our sort of golf before complained that if that was what we called golf, then they had never played golf. This was prompted because on our courses greens are often not built up and frequently slope away, and shots have to be played to run to the flag. I have been brought up to think of this type of golf as the real game, as it was first played with the "rub of the green" as part of the game. You in your country have tried to eliminate from the game any sort of chance, and whilst much is to be said for the motive, it becomes a much duller game than ours and at times monotonous. That is why I wish your players had stayed longer, to get to know and I hope like us more and to see our great courses as they are so very different from the majority of your courses.

All the same golf is a wonderful game and we all love it.