

Ontario's Novel Opening Rally

Our neighbors to the north may have added something new to the promotional side of the game by what — for want of a better name — the Ontario Golf Association called a "Monster Golf Rally". The Ontario Association, which is comparable with a State or district association in the United States, administers golf in Canada's largest Province.

The Golf Rally was the dream child of Phil Farley, President of the O.G.A., Canada's second ranking amateur, aided by Charles Watson, First Vice-President of the Royal Canadian Golf Association. The purpose was to launch the new season auspiciously.

The Rally was held at Toronto's Royal York Hotel, largest hostelry in the British Empire. First item was a dinner for 980 golfers, men and women. Clubs had their long tables, each plainly marked with the club name, and there was the spirit of a class reunion. One club turned out 85 strong.

During the dinner there were a welcoming message from Nicol Thompson, dean of Canadian professionals and now retired; a civic welcome from Mayor H. E. McCallum of Toronto, and presentation of the CANADIAN SPORTS MONTHLY trophy by publisher H. R. Pickens, of Montreal, to Walter McElroy, of Vancouver, who had been adjudged Canada's top-ranking amateur of 1948.

After dinner 350 persons who could not be accommodated for the meal were admitted to the hall. The program began with a technicolor movie of Canada's 1948 Open Championship. Next, a short address by Mr. Farley, who then introduced the guest speaker, Francis Ouimet, of Boston. He reminisced about the past and, with characteristic modesty, said his winning of the USGA Open in 1913 was due almost wholly to a series of fortunate circumstances. He gave the audience an intimate insight into what goes on within the breast of a 20-year-old who is winning a great championship.

Mr. Ouimet closed with a plea for more international matches. He declared that golf can be one of the greatest agencies for better understanding among peoples, and he voiced the hope that a way might be found for the North American nations to meet in annual competition.

A motion picture was then shown — "Muscles and the Lady", with Frank Stranahan, Canadian Amateur Champion, and Miss Louise Suggs.



Next, there was a novel and pretentious "Golf Clinic". On the main stage of the great room, Horton Smith took charge. Armed with a portable microphone and a set of clubs, he acted as class leader in a one-hour clinic with the assistance of Canadian professionals Bill Chinery, Bob Gray, Jack Littler, Joe Noble, Lex Robson and Lloyd Tucker. They occupied six stages spotted along the walls of the room; each stage was covered with an artificial grass tee, and each was within easy viewing distance of a substantial part of the spectators.

As Smith went from orientation to fundamentals, to progression of power, to mental attitudes and to mechanical faults, the six assisting professionals demonstrated in unison what Horton was explaining from his large stage.

Many impartial observers voted it the most comprehensive and intelligent golf lesson they had ever been given.

The program concluded with a showing of the Michigan PGA picture — "Behind the Scenes with the PGA".

The majority of the guests arrived by 6:30 p. m. and were still "on the course" at 11:30. The Ontario officials were so encouraged by the reception of the experiment that they intend to hold an annual variation of it from now on.