

# Why Championships?

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The casual spectator at a USGA Championship naturally assumes that the pitch-and-putt contingent holds a monopoly on all the nervous tension suffered. Little does he realize the strain under which the brass-hat brigade operates.

Even with the benefit of long experience and after months of careful planning and preparation, any official knows that any Championship can "lay an egg" at any moment. The constant vigilance against the unexpected and the concern that the wrong thing may be done at the right time, or vice versa, keeps every official on edge until the last putt has rattled into the cup.

## Handshakes with Meaning

Maybe you thought the USGA officials you saw shaking hands after the presentation ceremonies were merely saying good-by to each other!

The answer to this might be, why worry? Most folks enjoy a good, hot controversy, a sour decision or a well-vocalized gripe. There can be only one defense for jitters on the part of the humble badge-wearer, and that is his earnestness to have things go just right. He is not satisfied to conduct the competition for the sole purpose of determining a new Champion; he expects the event to exert a wider, constructive influence on the game he loves. He feels that this cannot be accomplished unless everything does go just right.

This naturally brings up the question of what we are trying to accomplish.

The USGA offers a well-rounded program in the competitive field. Probably the best answer is obtained by giving a brief description of the fundamental purposes for which each competition is conducted. There is the matter of selecting a Champion, but who wants to go to all that trouble for the benefit of one individual? More must be accomplished than just selecting a Champion.

Naturally the Open comes first, and

naturally the Open is the top quality competition. It is the glamor event, the ultimate test of skill and a gathering of the foremost experts of the game. It is a serious, intensive, commercial competition, but with all its popular appeal, its influence on the game is more remote than that of any other USGA competition. It is essentially a spectacle which, like the races at Indianapolis, is wonderful to watch but in which the cars and their drivers enjoy only a distant relationship with the family in its pre-war jalopy, en route to the beach for a pleasant week end.

Just as the Open is commercial, so is the Amateur non-commercial. The pace is more leisurely. It is designed for friendly combat, and there is the feeling that here are gathered those who play the game for pleasure and for sport.

The influence of the Amateur on the game is far more general and more intimate than can ever be true of the Open. Competitors at the Amateur come from every golfing district and they are men who come in close, every-day contact with the golfers of their communities. As the leading players, they are respected and followed. To this extent, the thoughts and attitudes they may bring back with them from the Amateur must exert a considerable influence on American golf. The Amateur must, therefore, be conducted in a manner in keeping with the true spirit and the best traditions of the game.

## The No. 1 Competition

The Junior is exactly what the name implies, a Junior Amateur. The same feeling of friendly rivalry prevails, with an added sense of fresh youthfulness, impressionable inexperience and the desire to learn. Because of the age limitation, this is a competition in which there will always be many new faces each year. Thus the competition reaches a larger number of players, all in their formative years. In the extent of its

## It's All in Fun in the Amateur



*Wide World Photo*

A storm delayed play in the first round of the last Amateur Championship at the Oak Hill Country Club, and the late starters could not finish that day. Tom Whiteway, of Cleveland, and Ernest Pieper, Jr., of San Jose, Cal., were among those stopped by the USGA Committee just before darkness cloaked the course. But John P. Rooney, enterprising Associated Press photographer, is not a man to let a good picture be spoiled by the facts; he equipped the players with lantern and flashlight, persuaded them to stay out on the course until night fell, and then snapped this "picture of the year."

possible influence on the game, the Junior is certainly the USGA's number one competition.

With no thought of brushing any others lightly aside, all that has been said with respect to the Amateur and the Junior can be repeated for the Amateur Public Links, the Women's and the Girls' Junior Championships.

### **The Cup Matches**

Whereas the Walker Cup and the Curtis Cup Matches may not be so balanced as we could wish, they serve two purposes exceedingly well. They offer an opportunity of recognizing players

with outstanding competitive records, and they provide a valuable common meeting ground with our fellow golfers from across the water. The influence of the matches in these two respects is far deeper and more significant than might be suspected.

In conclusion, it is well to remember that the exertion of a favorable influence through the manner in which its competitions are conducted is only one of the USGA's numerous programs, carried on for the benefit of the game and directed at maintaining the highest standards and traditions for golf.