

When the Open Champion Won \$150

The Open Championship this year provides a field day for the golf historian. Not only is it the Golden Anniversary USGA Open but its venue is the Merion Golf Club near Philadelphia, and Merion has been a rich source of grand moments in golf. This is Merion's ninth USGA event.

But the historical associations of this year's Open are even broader than Merion's own generous record. They



Horace Rawlins
First Open Champion

reach to the very beginnings of organized golf in America—back to a busy October day in 1895 when Horace Rawlins became the first Open Champion at Newport, R. I. That was the first, and this year's is the fiftieth. Because of the two world wars, championships were not held in six of the intervening years.

Horace Rawlins was a 19-year-old assistant professional, playing in the third tournament of his life, when he toured the nine-hole Newport course four times in a day for a 36-hole score of 45-46-41-41—173. His prize was \$150 in cash and

a \$50 gold medal. There were ten other entrants.

This makes strange comparison with the field this year of 1,388. Now the Championship record for 72 holes is 276, held by Ben Hogan; the single-round record is 65, made by an amateur, James B. McHale, Jr. If the winner now be a pro, his earnings are measured not only by the \$2,000 USGA first prize money but also by all manner of supplementary income. Rare is the Open Champion whose title is not worth between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

"A Wild Horse"

The Newport Golf Club course in 1895 was 2,755 yards long for the nine holes, and the golf writer for the NEW YORK SUN described it thus:

"The course is rocky, rough, and swampy in many places, and artificial bunkers have been placed at many points to increase the natural difficulties. The putting greens are in fine order and the open greens are close and thick. A few yards beyond the tee for the harbor hole is a rock about thirty feet high, which has to be cleared in the drive to make a good score, and around the putting green a semi-circular bunker has been built, this being the only hole in the country so guarded."

In recounting Rawlins' performance of 91-82—173 for 36 holes, the writer said:

"Today Rawlins was a wild horse, and he could not be stopped."

His victory was a great upset. He was born at Benbridge, Isle of Wight, and learned golf while a caddie there. He came to the United States less than a year before he won the first USGA Open.

Willie Campbell, professional at The Country Club, Brookline, Mass., attracted the SUN reporter's attention at Newport: "In playing for the cop (third) hole on the last round his ball flew out into the road, counting a lost ball. His next drive sent the ball into the face of the stone wall by the road, which runs parallel to the links. He moved the ball

Scene of the Golden Anniversary Open



The first tee and clubhouse of the Merion Golf Club.

out a club's length, and by the local rules should have received a penalty of one stroke. T. A. Havemeyer (USGA President), who was scoring for the men, said the penalty would be two strokes, basing the verdict on the rules of the United States Golf Association. Campbell protested against the ruling, and as soon as Mr. Havemeyer had a chance to read the local rules the protest was granted. Campbell then went on and holed out in 48."

A True Amateur

The first USGA Amateur Championship had ended just the day before at the same course, but:

"All the amateurs, except A. W. Smith, a Canadian, evaded the issue with the professionals," said the SUN. "Smith played a strong game, showing special skill in putting and driving as far as the best. His card at the end showed he was even with James Foulis for third place.

"'You divide third money, Mr. Smith,' said Mr. Havemeyer as the Canadian stepped off the home green.

"'My dear fellow,' said Mr. Smith, 'I want to win or nothing. I am an amateur and cannot accept money.'

"One of the incidents was a long drive

made by James Foulis in going to the meadow hole. He drove from the tee and was 218 yards by actual measurement. This means, too, by the actual carry, as the ball did not roll a yard. (The reporter neglected to mention whether the violent wind was with or against him.) At Niagara-on-the-Lake, MacDonald (Charles B. MacDonald, the first USGA Amateur Champion) won the long driving competition by a stroke which sent the ball 179 yards, roll and carry both. The longest authentic professional drive is Willie Park's drive from the cliff tee at St. Andrews of 243 yards; this shows when the violent wind is taken into account what a good drive Foulis made...

"All the doings of the professionals are told in detail by the scores which follow. Unlike the games between the amateurs, the drives and the play through the green were safe in force and direction, and the bunkers were seldom an obstacle. Davis, however, although on his home links, managed to find nearly every bunker and hazard. This was because Willie Dunn's good play rather rattled him; but the best player might be excused for showing irritation under such circumstances."