

A Public Links Milestone

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The light and casual touch can be just as effective a manner of playing Championship golf among amateurs as the super-serious way—that is, if the example of Stanley Bielat is to be believed.

Mr. Bielat is a gentleman who lives in Yonkers, N. Y., aged 37, driver of a delivery truck by vocation, and golfer by strong inclination. Much as he loves the game, he does not take himself very seriously at it, although he has played it since he started caddying as a lad of 10 and has enjoyed some success in public course events around Westchester County.

He took a vacation last month and played in the USGA Amateur Public Links Championship in Louisville. He had not particularly "pointed" for the tournament — hadn't done roadwork, nor gone to bed at 9 o'clock every night for the preceding month, nor otherwise become grim about it. In his own words, he "just went along playing golf, enjoying it all. I just played them one at a time and let them beat themselves."

That meek sort of approach brought Bielat some close squeaks — he had four extra-hole bouts in seven matches before the final — but it also helped bring him the Championship. And no one was as honestly surprised at Stan. If he had been "pressing" throughout the week, trying too hard to have it all his own way, who is to say who would be Champion now? So there is something to be said for the humble approach to the fickle fortunes of golf — there is some merit in the light and casual touch. At least, the game is fun that way, and maybe one object of golf is to have fun.

The four extra-hole matches out of eight which Bielat played at Louisville's Seneca Golf Course almost constituted a record. However, in 1934 Reynolds Smith played five extra-hole matches in a row in reaching the Amateur Cham-

pionship semi-finals at The Country Club, Brookline, Mass. When Smith was asked if he were nervous on the extra holes, the stocky little Texan replied: "No — mah mind was just as smooth as velvet."

That's the way it seemed also with Stan Bielat in the Silver Anniversary Public Links Championship. For instance, in a semi-final with Frank Rutkiewicz, of Honolulu, Bielat was 1 down with 1 to go. He thereupon holed two magnificent birdie 3s to win.

His opponent in the final was John Dobro, of Chicago. They had a fine match of it for 23 holes, Bielat being 1 up at that juncture. But Bielat then bagged five birdies in eight holes with almost miraculous putting, and sealed a 7-and-5 victory.

A Refreshing Tournament

There is no tournament on golf's calendar which seems to hold more sheer joy for its contestants than the Public Links Championship. Certainly no other event produces more sportsmanship, nor more avidity to know and to play by the Rules of Golf. It is a very refreshing competition, and the finest spirit of amateurism prevails. Many players schedule their vacations almost a year in advance in the hope of qualifying.

All told, there were 2,389 entrants this year. After sectional qualifying, the field was whittled to 210 for the all-match-play Championship at Louisville. Not a place went by default. With Bielat setting the pace, there were 23 extra-hole matches.

The Team Championship went to the Los Angeles Section with a score of 217, compiled by Stephen Z. Shaw, 67; Robert Roux, 74, and James R. Griffiths, 76. New York and Oklahoma City tied for second at 223.

Louisville's committees, headed by Uncle Joe Dickson, saw to it that Kentucky hospitality was not lacking.

James D. Standish, Jr., now USGA President, was on hand and must have secretly been gratified by the high status of the event which he fathered back in 1922. He

was then first Chairman of the USGA Public and Municipal Golf Courses Committee and donated the Individual Championship Cup.

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benefited him in the Junior. Twice he had to win on extra holes, and in the final he broke another brave young player, Chuck Beville, of Los Angeles, 2 and 1.

One of the rewards of victory is exemption from sectional qualifying for the Amateur Championship. Thus Mason is the only individual who can play in three USGA Championships this year.

The play of the youngsters is edifying, particularly their speed. They report at the tee promptly. They have no time for lengthy surveys and cerebral processes; they simply step up to the ball and hit it with enthusiasm. They accept without question the doctrines of playing the ball as it lies and taking the course as they find it.

Yet Johnny Brown, of Lexington, Ky., played out his bye holes one day for a 68, three under par, and Charley Strack,

of York, Pa., Don Bisplinghoff, of Orlando, Fla., and Gene Hay, of Atlanta, all played the first nine in 32.

It really was small wonder that Gerald H. Phipps, Chairman of the Denver Country Club's Golf Committee, expressed the wish that the Club could conduct the tournament every year, and that the members were so generously hospitable.

The competition was the first operated by the new Junior Championship Committee; and C. Dewey Allen, of Grand Rapids, Mich., Frank Emmet, of Washington, D. C., George A. Schrieber, of Albuquerque, N. M., and Robert M. Siegfried, of Tulsa, Okla., aided N. C. Morris, of Denver, in conducting it. Their enthusiasm was keen. Emmet brought his seven qualifiers with him and shepherded them until the last was eliminated. Siegfried came for one day and stayed four.

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Another name engraved on the Cup is Miss Helen Sigel, twice runner-up for the USGA women's crown.

Among the men, Max Marston, 1923 USGA Amateur Champion, was the "male lead" in the Fridolyn Cup eight times. W. B. (Duff) McCullough, Jr., runner-up to Dick Chapman in the 1940 Amateur Championship, has shared in four victories, three of them with his sister, Mrs. William G. Hamilton, Jr.

For many years Mr. Gimbel personally attended to all the tournament arrangements as well as donating all the prizes. He gradually relinquished these duties, but never missed a tournament prior to his death last April.

Another driving force behind the Fridolyn Cup tournament was Raymond M. Slotter, long Philmont's green chairman. When he died four days before the 1936 tournament, his daughter, Miss

Frances (Topsy) Slotter, took over the supervisory chores and handled them until she left Philadelphia with her soldier husband during World War II.

The Fridolyn Cup was played without lapse through the War, as it had been through World War I. War Bonds took the place of the usual prizes, and, because of the curtailed use of automobiles, horse-drawn wagons were used to transport players to and from the Philmont railroad station, about a mile away.

Sydney K. Allman, Jr., Harold Bayuk, and more recently Leonard Geis, Philmont's new President; Harold Blumenthal, and Joseph Simon have carried on what was one of Mr. Gimbel's most enthusiastic projects. The winners this year in the selective drive, alternate stroke competition—with a 74 despite a two-stroke penalty for playing the wrong ball—were Huntingdon Valley's Mrs. Frank O'Neill, Jr., and Matt Scammell, Jr.