

The Tent of Broken Dreams

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Just off the 18th green at Oakland Hills was the Scorer's Tent, where the contestants in the Open returned their signed official score cards. From its site could be seen few of the spectacular shots that brought roars from the galleries reverberating across the hills. The tent was not without its drama, however. Within it were played some of the most poignant scenes of the Championship.

Once within its shelter, the players relaxed the grim demeanor which most of them had presented to the spectators on the course. The strain melted from their tired bodies. Their true feelings about the rounds they had just played were revealed. It was, in essence, a tent of broken dreams. Into it came some happy men but many more disillusioned ones.

Some contestants were frankly disgusted with their efforts, so much so that they forgot, or nearly forgot, that they must return a score card to continue in the tournament. A few went plunging through the gallery lines, eager to forget, until they were recalled.

A Man of Many Moods

The performance of one top player was perfectly mirrored in his attitude at the end of each of his four rounds. He was annoyed after the first; he could hardly contain his fury after the second; he was rather pleased after the third. At the finish, he sat there in the wreckage of his hopes, and inquired humbly:

"Do you think that will qualify for next year's Open?"

He was told that it would definitely be among the leading scores.

Another well-known contender, formerly Open Champion, chatted quite pleasantly about the tournament and his disappointing part in it, after one of his rounds.

"It's not the course, it's myself," he said frankly. "I'm just playing poorly."

Occasionally a player was angry because of some grievance, fancied or real. One did not care for his playing companion, who evidently sensed this feeling. However, at the finish he extended his hand to his taciturn partner and said: "Well, I enjoyed playing with you."

The other took his hand but had no answering smile. "Yes," he said heavily, "I enjoyed it."

One who played with pronounced brilliance throughout was starkly despondent at the finish. It was plain that he had believed he could pull off victory, and now that the tournament was ending and he had fallen short, he could not conceal his heartache. For a long time he sat checking his score and looking at it. Then he signed swiftly, stood up and, as he departed, rasped:

"Well, thanks for the use of the hall."

His eyes and his voice said, as plainly as if he had used the words:

"I thought I had this Championship, and now my disappointment is bitter."

Each group was accompanied by a scorer, a woman golfer from the Detroit district. With hardly an exception, each contestant personally thanked his scorer after every round. Somehow, Bobby Locke had a manner of doing this that seemed to convey that he was forever in her debt for the service she had performed.

The Champion

Golf is not a wrestle with Bogey; it is not a struggle with your mortal foe; it is a physiological, psychological and moral fight with yourself; it is a test of mastery over self; and the ultimate and irreducible element of the game is to determine which of the players is the more worthy combatant.

ARNOLD HAULTAIN
(In Praise of Golf)