

# The First 50 Amateur Championships

With the Championship at Saucon Valley Country Club this month, the USGA Amateur swings into its second half-century of competition. The Association has now been in existence nearly 57 years, but it was not possible to hold Championships every year and exactly 50 have been completed.

A half-century is a good point at which to take stock, and the USGA JOURNAL presents here a brief history of the Amateur in thumbnail sketch form, as the staff compiled it for Saucon Valley's program:

**1895**—The USGA, with its five charter clubs, was formed and initiated its first Championship at Newport, R. I., at match play. This was won by Charles B. Macdonald, pioneer in Chicago golf and later creator of many well-known courses.

**1896**—H. J. Whigham, of Onwentsia in Chicago, an Oxford man and an English-trained golfer, won the qualifying honors (86-77) among a group of 58 players trying for 16 places and went on to take the Championship. Whigham was Macdonald's son-in-law. The competition was held at Shinnecock Hills, Southampton, N. Y.

**1897**—Whigham walked off with his second Championship and C. B. Macdonald was the medalist in a field of 58 at the Chicago Golf Club. Two years later he was elected Vice-President of the USGA.

**1898**—With a field of 120 in the Championship, the conclusion was that golf was here to stay. A new method of 36-hole qualifying for 32 places was used to allow more players. Findlay S. Douglas, a native of St. Andrews, Scotland, and later President of the USGA, took the title at the Morris County Golf Club.

**1899**—The Championship moved to Chicago again, Onwentsia. A new era dawned when, for the first time, a home-bred golfer, H. M. Harriman, of Knollwood, emerged the winner. Findlay Douglas was a finalist and Charles B. Macdonald the medalist.

**1900**—Walter J. Travis, an Australian who had come to the United States and had taken up the game at the age of 35, emerged to lead the field of 120 in the qualifying with 165, and defeated former Champion Douglas, 2 up, in the final at the Garden City Golf Club, N. Y.

**1901**—Travis successfully defended his title

## Saucon Valley Facts

HOLE	*Yardage	NAME	PAR	Area Greens (Sq. Ft.)	Fairway Acreage
1	516	Saddleback	5	6,000	3.29
2	405	Roadside	4	6,000	2.23
3	385	Meadows	4	6,300	1.55
4	175	Knoll	3	6,400	
5	437	Cathedral	4	6,600	1.92
6	586	Sahara	5	6,400	3.78
7	446	Plains	4	6,000	2.44
8	389	Evergreens	4	6,750	2.15
9	193	Creek	3	6,200	
CUT			3,532	36	17.36
10	403	Lookout	4	7,500	2.07
11	187	Turf'e	3	5,900	
12	433	The Eims	4	7,800	2.60
13	352	Buttonwood	4	7,200	1.40
14	203	Plateau	3	6,200	
15	612	Faraway	5	6,500	4.32
16	448	Narrows	4	6,000	1.82
17	437	Willows	4	5,700	1.84
18	372	Saucon	4	7,700	1.71
IN			3,447	35	15.76
TOTAL			6,979	71	TOTAL 33.12

\* Measured from 2 yards from rear of tee to 5 yards from rear of green.

at the Country Club of Atlantic City, N. J. He was low qualifier with 157, a record. He played with the rubber-cored ball (Haskell patent) with such success that the gutta percha ball was soon discarded. The final round of this Championship was postponed a week because of the death of President William McKinley.

**1902**—A new method was tried with 18 holes qualifying for 64 places. Louis N. James just squeezed in with the highest score of 94, while Travis had a 79. Travis went out in the third round and James won the Championship over the Glen View course, Chicago.

**1903**—Travis was back again at the Nassau Country Club, Glen Cove, N. Y., to win his third crown. This time the Championship committee copied the Royal and Ancient method of allowing 128 players to compete, all at match play.

**1904**—Henry Chandler Egan, of Chicago, was 20, and had just been graduated from Harvard when he won his first Championship. The test was 54 holes qualifying (for which Egan was low with 242) for 39

places. Travis went out in the second round when George Ormiston of Oakmont holed a cleek shot for an eagle 2. Site: Baltusrol, Springfield, N. J.

**1905**—Egan repeated at the Chicago Golf Club. Dr. D. P. Fredericks of Oakmont was medalist with 155. The USGA introduced the Calkins system for calculating handicaps, based on par, and reverted to the 1898 system of 36 holes qualifying for 32 places.

**1906**—There was another threat of the title going out of the United States. George S. Lyon, Canadian Champion, reached the final at Englewood Golf Club, in New Jersey, but Eben M. Byers, of Pittsburgh, defeated him.

**1907**—Jerome Dunstan Travers, of Montclair, N. J., was just 20 when he scored the first of his four triumphs in the Amateur. Chick Evans made his first appearance in competitive play at this Championship. Travis won the medal with 146, for the fifth time.

**1908**—Travis was still in contention. He took the medal for the sixth time, and won a 41-hole match from Henry Wilder of Brookline. But it was Travers's era and he repeated this time at Garden City, where Travis had won his first title.

**1909**—Another college graduate, this time from Yale, Robert A. Gardner, won at the age of 19. Travers did not defend his title. Site: Chicago Golf Club.

**1910**—William C. Fownes, Jr., from Oakmont, Pa., was two down to Chick Evans and four to play in the semifinal round and defeated him. He went on to win the Championship. Fred Herreshoff of Ekwanok Country Club, Vermont, was medalist with 152. Mr. Fownes later became President of the USGA.

**1911**—The title went across the seas when it was captured by Harold H. Hilton, 42, from Liverpool, who had been British Open Champion in 1892 and 1897, and British Amateur Champion in 1900, '01 and '11. He was medalist in a field of 186 entries and defeated Fred Herreshoff on the 37th hole at the Apawamis Club, Rye, N. Y.

**1912**—Hilton was back to defend his title but did not succeed in retaining it. He tied with Chick Evans for the medal and lost the playoff. The USGA had just issued the national handicap list in March, showing 471 eligible players with handicaps 0-to-6, but only 86 entered. Jerome Travers was back in form and defeated Evans, 7 and 6, in the final. Site: Chicago Golf Club.



Harold H. Hilton

**1913**—Travers, the only player listed at scratch, tied for the last place in qualifying but still was tops in match play, and achieved a record later surpassed only by Bob Jones, winning for the fourth time. Site: Garden City Golf Club, N. Y.

**1914**—Francis Ouimet, who the year before had made front page news by defeating Ray and Vardon in the Open playoff at Brookline, Mass., won the Amateur at Ekwanok Country Club, Manchester, Vt.

**1915**—Robert Gardner, who had won the title six years before, repeated. The Championship was held at the Country Club of Detroit, Grosse Pointe Farms, Michigan. In the final, Gardner defeated John G. Anderson, who gained the last round for the second time.

**1916**—Charles Evans, Jr., then 26, finally pushed through at Merion Cricket Club, Haverford, Pa., defeating the defending Champion, Gardner, 4 and 3, in the final. Fownes was low qualifier. This was a momentous tournament in another respect: it marked the first appearance of Bob Jones in a USGA Championship. He was 14.

**1917, 1918**—No championships were held. The USGA confined itself to running "Liberty" tournaments in aid of the Red Cross (\$124 822.86 collected in two years) and sent golf clubs, etc., to various cantonments throughout the country.

**1919**—S. Davidson Herron, former Princetonian, was one of the very few to win a Championship on his home course, Oakmont Country Club, near Pittsburgh. Herron's play was brilliant; he was four under 4's when he finished off Bob Jones, 5 and 4, in the final.

**1920**—There was a decided jump in the entries for 36-hole qualifying. There were 235, so the old system for 32 places was renewed. Jones won the medal in a playoff

with F. J. Wright, Jr. Evans defeated Ouimet for the title with great iron play and putting. Cyril Tolley and several other Britishers failed to qualify. There were many overtime matches in this Championship, at the Engineers' Country Club, in Roslyn, N. Y., then a new course.

**1921**—For the first time the Championship was held west of the Mississippi River, at the St. Louis, Mo., Country Club, with a larger representation of associations and states than ever before. There was a 54-hole qualifying test for 32 places. On a rainy day, Jesse P. Guilford defeated Gardner, 7 and 6, for the Championship. Ouimet was medalist with 144.

**1922**—Another Yale graduate, Jess W. Sweetser, 20, defeated all the established players: defender Guilford, Bobby Jones, Chick Evans and Willia Hunter, at The Country Club, Brookline, Mass.

**1923**—Max Marston from Pine Valley Golf Club in New Jersey, winner of New Jersey and Pennsylvania state titles, was 31 when he beat defending Champion Sweetser at the 38th hole, after having eliminated Jones and Ouimet, at the Flossmoor Country Club in Illinois. Evans and Jones were co-medalists.

**1924**—Robert T. Jones, Jr., crashed through after playing in five Amateurs. He was one of the few, like Ouimet, to gain the Open title first, having won that Championship the year before. It was the beginning of the Jones reign. Jones crushed Ouimet 11 and 10, and Von Elm, 9 and 8, at Merion Cricket Club. He was to come back there six years later to complete his Grand Slam.

**1925**—Jones won at Oakmont, defeating Watts Gunn, his protege and friend, 8 and 7. A new system was tried: 16 qualified, all matches at 36 holes. It proved unpopular.

**1926**—George Von Elm was in good form, improving each day until he reached the final and upset Jones, the medalist (143). There were 157 entries. There was another change in the form of play, reversion to the old method of 36-hole qualifying for 32 places, but the draw was seeded for eight players. There were 36-hole matches Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Site: Baltusrol Golf Club in New Jersey.

**1927**—After a victory in the British Open, Jones won at the Minikahda Club in Minneapolis. He tied the record as medalist with 75-67—142, and defeated Evans, 8 and 7, in the final round.

**1928**—For the first time the American Champion confronted the British Amateur



Charles Evans, Jr.

Champion in the final at Brae Burn Country Club, West Newton, Mass. It was Jones vs. Thomas Philip Perkins, of the British Walker Cup Team, and Jones won, 10 and 9. George Voigt was medalist.

**1929**—A great upset shook the tournament in the first round: Johnny Goodman stopped Jones, only to be stopped by a newcomer, Lawson Little, in the next. This was at the Pebble Beach, Del Monte, Cal., course, the first USGA Championship on the Pacific Coast. The medal was tied for by Jones and Gene Homans. Harrison R. (Jimmy) Johnston won the title.

**1930**—The medalists of the year before met in the final at Merion. Jones equalled his qualifying record, defeated Homans, 8 and 7, and achieved the Grand Slam of winning four major British and USGA titles in one year. There were five extra hole matches, including the longest overtime in USGA history. Maurice McCarthy defeated George Von Elm after 10 extra holes. It was Jones's final appearance in a Championship.

**1931**—Seventeen years had passed since Francis Ouimet had won the title. He took this one at the Beverly Country Club in Illinois. Sectional qualifying at 20 cities was tried for the first time with success.

**1932**—The cup went to Canada for the first and only time, won by C. Ross (Sandy) Somerville, six times Canadian Champion. He defeated Johnny Goodman in the final. Johnny Fischer equalled the qualifying record. Ouimet had 30 for nine holes in his first round against Voigt.

**1933**—Sometimes the winner of a Championship qualifies high: George T. Dunlap, Jr., was in the 12 who played off for the last eight places, at the Kenwood Country Club at Cincinnati. Somerville was knocked

out by Lawson Little, while Johnny Fischer set a new qualifying record of 141.

**1934**—W. Lawson Little, Jr., then 24, came into his own. A new all-match-play program, with no qualifying at the course, and 36-hole final and semifinals proved popular with players and the gallery. Little had already taken the British Amateur, thus achieving a "Little Slam." There were nine former Amateur Champions present, due to a new ruling that exempted former Champions from qualifying sectionally.

**1935**—Little achieved a second "Little Slam." At the Country Club of Cleveland he was under par for his rounds. Largest entry record to date: 945 with 207 players qualifying, including some British.

**1936**—Entries were growing: 1,118 this year from 32 qualifying points, 210 in the tournament proper. Both Walker Cup teams were present. John W. Fischer, playing on the oft-tested Garden City course, was one down and two to play against visiting Walker Cupper Scotsman Jack McLean in the final. Fischer then birdied the next three holes to win at the 37th. A stymie against McLean at the 34th helped Fischer keep the match alive.

**1937**—Johnny Goodman of Omaha, then 28, a former Open Champion, defeated Ray Billows, 2 up, in the final. For the first time since 1933 there was a 36-hole qualification (besides sectional qualifying) at the course, Alderwood Country Club, Portland, Ore., for 64 places. This was the first time the Championship had been held in the Pacific Northwest.

**1938**—When stylist Willie Turnesa, only amateur in a family of seven brothers, won, he was reported to have been in traps on 13 of 29 holes of the final. Five of eight of the Walker Cup players were disposed of in the first two rounds. The site was Oakmont, near Pittsburgh.

**1939**—Marvin (Bud) Ward was the star and new Champion. He was 11 under par for 170 holes played, and in his last two matches one-putted 29 greens. Billows was again runner-up. A new qualifying record was set: 139(70-69) by Thomas Sheehan, Jr.

**1940**—Richard D. Chapman, playing from Winged Foot, Mamaroneck, N. Y., was medalist with 140 (4 below par) and played 157 holes in eight under par at Winged Foot. Duff McCullough, whom he defeated in the final, had been second low qualifier with 67-77.

**1941**—Bud Ward was playing steady golf

at Omaha, Neb., Field Club. Although he had been 4 up and his lead was cut to 1 up after the 26th, he held on to defeat B. Pat Abbott, 1938 finalist and 1936 Public Links Champion, 4 and 3. Stewart (Skip) Alexander, Jr., was medalist with 144.

**1942-45**—There were no Championships. The USGA again limited its activities to war-related work.

**1946**—After the war, interest in this Championship was high. The largest galleries since 1930 were reported at Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N. J. Skee Riegel established a new qualifying record with 69-67—136. After sectional qualifying, 150 players competed for 64 places. Ted Bishop, of Boston, had an overtime match with Smiley Quick, whom he conquered on the 37th hole in the final.

**1947**—To make it possible for more players to play in the Championship, qualifying at the tournament was abandoned, and 210 places permitted, at match play. Skee Riegel defeated Johnny Dawson at Pebble Beach, 2 and 1.

**1948**—The Amateur was held at Memphis Country Club, first time in the South. A record entry of 1,220 was received. Many younger players emerged: standard of play and keenness of competition had increased since pre-war days. But after ten years Willie Turnesa proved himself still a master, beating Billows in the final.

**1949**—Charles Coe, of Oklahoma City, showed his ability to produce his best game when needed and dominated the field at Oak Hill Country Club, Rochester, N. Y. His biggest thrill came when he defeated Harvie Ward at the 19th after being 3 down and 5 to play and later defeated Johnny Dawson at the 21st, on the same day.

**1950**—There had been overtime final matches before in the Amateur but the one between Frank Stranahan and Sam Urzetta at Minneapolis Golf Club broke the record. It lasted three extra holes before the little-known basketball player and former caddie from East Rochester, N. Y., defeated the Toledo golfer at the 39th.

