

# The State of Amateur Golf

By JOSEPH C. DEY, JR.

USGA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Suppose the following amateur golfers had been selected as the Walker Cup Team to represent the United States against Great Britain last spring:

J. C. BENSON, of Pittsburgh, Pa.

L. M. CRANNELL, JR., of Dallas, Texas.

JOSEPH F. GAGLIARDI, of Larchmont, N. Y.

ROBERT E. ECKIS, JR., of Buffalo, N. Y.

ROBERT W. KUNTZ, of Larchmont, N. Y.

WILLIAM J. PATTON, of Morgantown, N. C.

WILLIAM H. PICARD, of Cleveland, Ohio.

LLOYD D. RIBNER, of White Plains, N. Y.

Capable golfers, all of them. But none of them *was* on the Walker Cup Team. They were the players who eliminated the 1951 Walker Cuppers from the Amateur Championship in September at the Saucon Valley Country Club, Bethlehem, Pa.

This year's Cup Team was strong. It had defeated Great Britain abroad, 6 to 3, with three matches halved. It defeated Canada in an informal match at Saucon Valley, 10 to 2. Five of its nine members have won either the American or the British Amateur Championship within the last three years.

But not a member of the Team reached the semi-final round at Saucon Valley. Three lost in the first round. Four others lost by the time the fourth round was completed.

The basic reason for this state of affairs is found, of course, in the nature of golf itself. It is a game of both unusual skill and unusual uncertainty. Play does not follow form with the same fidelity as in many other games. Al-

most any golfer can, upon occasion, outplay the best player for a hole. Therein lies much of the attraction in golf, much of its come-on quality. It is a game for the hopeful.

## An Appraisal of the Game

But the exit of the favorites at Saucon Valley prompts other thoughts. Any appraisal of competitive amateur golf in our country today produces the following impressions:

1. The number of low handicap players must be at an all-time high.

2. There are many players of national championship calibre, yet there is no one standout.

3. Despite the quality of play among the best amateurs, it cannot seriously compare with that of the top professionals.

4. The American game is superior internationally.

5. There is perhaps a record number of youngsters of real ability.

6. The state of the game is wonderfully healthy.

These impressions were pretty well confirmed at Saucon Valley. Item 1 was confirmed before the event started—there were 1,416 entrants for the 51st Amateur Championship, about 200 more than the previous all-time record and they all had handicaps not exceeding 4. They were only a portion of the country's players with such handicaps.

The absence of a real standout among the amateurs sometimes brings on lament among nostalgic old-timers. They sigh for the days of Walter J. Travis, or Jerome D. Travers, or Francis Ouimet and Chick Evans, or Bob Jones, or Lawson Little (before he turned pro). Among them, those six players won 32 national championships here and in Great Britain: Jones won 13. Each was great in his day—a super golfer. Every

one of them except Travis won the Open Championship; Jones in nine consecutive Opens won four times and was second four times.

Since Jones, the gap between top pro golf and top amateur golf has gradually widened with development of the pro circuit. The constant competition of the circuit has evolved a small class of highly skilled pros whose chief activity is playing golf, as distinguished from teaching it.

The fact that there is no super-golfer evident among the amateurs is not deplorable but, rather, natural. Competitive golf for an amateur is theoretically a secondary interest, subordinate to his vocation. Ronnie White, young English lawyer who is perhaps as skilled an amateur golfer as there is today, didn't even compete in the British Amateur this year following the Walker Cup Match—he was simply too busy and it was too costly. Several other British Walker Cuppers also abstained.

But competitive amateur golf, at least in our country, is in a fine state of repair. There are ever so many players who can beat anybody else upon occasion.

#### Maxwell and Gagliardi

For instance, a great many followers of the game never heard of Joe Gagliardi before September 12. The New York attorney then ended Sam Urzetta's reign as Champion at Saucon Valley — a reign which, incidentally, marked Urzetta as a thorough Champion, as both a player and a person; he was a credit to the game.

The next day Gagliardi defeated Charley Coe, the 1949 Champion and one of the best amateurs in the world. A couple of months before Gagliardi had won the Metropolitan Amateur by defeating Jimmy McHale in the 36-hole final. So here you had three leading members of the Walker Cup Team losing in serious competition to a 39-year-old week-end player.

Perhaps you had never heard of Billy Maxwell until he won the Championship this year. His victory, however, was

no surprise. The 22-year-old Texas collegian has been a promising player for several years. In the 1950 Amateur he reached the fifth round and numbered among his victims Dick Chapman, the present British titleholder.

At Saucon Valley, Maxwell had to play well all week long to get past Tom Strange, Jr., Bo Winingger, Harvey Ward, L. M. Crannell, Jr., his North Texas State College teammate who holds the Trans-Mississippi Championship; Arnold Blum, the Southern Champion, and finally Joe Gagliardi, the bearded of Walker Cuppers.

Billy Maxwell is one of many young players of real ability. In the last few years it has been interesting to observe the development of a new generation in national competition; the junior championships which were started post-war have served a real purpose in this regard.

Tommy Jacobs, from Los Angeles, is only 16 years old but he was a semi-finalist at Saucon Valley; two months earlier he had won the USGA Junior Amateur Championship. Willie Turnesa, the Walker Cup Captain, was put out by young Bill Picard, son of Henry, former PGA Champion. Crannell eliminated Dick Chapman.

There are vast numbers of others coming along — to name just a few who played at Saucon Valley: Ken Venturi, San Francisco; Jim Blair, Kansas City; Don Bisplinghoff, Orlando, Fla.; Pat Schwab, Dayton; Gay Brewer, Jr., Lexington, Ky.; Bud Holscher, Santa Monica, Cal.; Billy Key, Columbus, Ga.; Tim Holland, Rockville Centre, N. Y.; Dave Stanley, Los Angeles; Billy Sixty, Jr., Milwaukee.

Whether or not another super-golfer emerges from the new generation is not now important. The thing to cheer about is that amateur competitive golf is healthy and vigorous.

#### The Saucon Valley Job

The game is aided immeasurably by tournaments such as Saucon Valley held. The Bethlehem club, with William H.

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13(1). Some question has been raised as to the correctness of this ruling because the mistake occurred through wrong information given by a forecaddie, as provided in Rule 13(1b). I considered that the forecaddie therein was governed by "his", and referred only to the opponent's forecaddie.

Question by: NORMAN B. BEECHER, CHAIRMAN  
RULES COMMITTEE  
BLTMORE FOREST COUNTRY CLUB  
BLTMORE, N. C.

**A.:** Your decision was right.

The forecaddie mentioned in Rule 13(1b) belongs, in effect, to the opponent's side.

The forecaddie in the case described is an outside agency (see Definition 10 and Rule 15(Def.)), and information from him has no more weight than information from any other outside agency, such as a spectator. A was not relieved of the responsibility of identifying his ball before playing it.

#### When Obstruction Is Out of Bounds

No. 51-62. R. 7(4).

**Q.:** A player's ball came to rest in the rough three inches inside line of out-of-bounds stakes, but only five or six inches from front of building used as a shelter, which building is on ground out of bounds.

It was impossible to stroke ball in desired direction or even take a stance.

Under Rule 7(4b), may a player drop ball in the rough not nearer the hole without penalty? (Sketch submitted).

Question by: F. B. LUKENS  
125 PARKVIEW AVE.  
SYRACUSE, N. Y.

**A.:** Conditions beyond a boundary line do not entitle a player to relief in playing a ball lying within bounds. Rule 7(4) refers only to artificial obstructions within the limits of the course.

As is always possible, the local committee could afford relief by local rule if it were deemed advisable.

#### Friend Posing as Caddie

No. 51-64. Def. 10. R. 1(1), 2(1), 4(1)

**Q.:** In the USGA Rule Book, I find that a caddie is defined as a person who carries the golfer's clubs. Also (I am now speaking of a singles match), he is the *only one* from whom the player who hired him can accept advice.

Players A and B are engaged in a singles match. Player A has just eliminated player C. Now player B, facing A, hires himself a caddie to carry his clubs and brings player C along for consultation, and I mean consultation! Both players A and B agree mutually that player C shall hold the flagstick on all holes. Other duties of player C consist of cleaning player B's ball once in a while in order to make him the "official" caddie in the eyes of the referee. The caddie who actually carried player B's clubs kept himself discreetly in the background.

I am wondering if player C in this case would be accepted as the official caddie, permitted to give advice, or should player B have been penalized according to USGA Rules.

Question by: WILLIAM R. SCHESSLER  
518 NOBLE AVE.  
LAWRENCE PARK  
ERIE, PA.

**A.:** The fact that B hired a caddie to carry his clubs establishes this person as B's caddie within the meaning of Definition 10.

If B sought advice or took any action which might have resulted in his receiving advice except from this caddie, he violated Rule 4(1), the penalty for which is loss of hole—see Rule 2(1).

As there was a referee for the match, attention is called to the fact that, under Rule 1(1), a referee's decision is final.

#### THE STATE OF AMATEUR GOLF

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Johnstone as President and Norborne Berkeley as General Chairman, did a superlative job in preparing facilities for players and spectators alike. More than that, they created an atmosphere of warm friendship which made everybody feel at home. Competitors in general have never had a happier time.

The spirit of amateurism prevailed, even to the Club's production of a handsome Championship program without advertisements. Saucon Valley received letters of praise for the program from as far away as Europe and South America.

Admissions receipts were about \$48,000, including taxes — second largest "gate" in Amateur Championship history.

A player's dinner preceded the tournament. The USGA instituted this feature last year, and it has served a splendid purpose of bringing everybody together in good fellowship and mutual understanding.

Guiding spirit in Saucon Valley's planning was Eugene G. Grace. As a maker of steel, he holds a foremost place among world industrialists. As a lover of all that is best in golf, he holds a foremost place in the affections of those who spent that bright September week at Saucon Valley.