

Georgia's Golfing Peaches

By ED MILES

GOLF EDITOR, THE ATLANTA JOURNAL

Georgia Peaches as a fruit are deliciously edible; the Sweet Young brand is a joy to see on a Peachtree Street stroll, but the golfing species, male or female, has been a source of national and international dyspepsia for more than three decades.

When winsome Dorothy Kirby won the USGA Women's Amateur Championship this last September after 17 years of trying, it marked the 20th time a major golf title was won by an Atlanta Peach.

Alexa Stirling, a red-haired, freckled and fiery Scottish lassie, pioneered the parade in 1916 with the first of three consecutive USGA Women's Amateur Championships. This same year, Bobby Jones, later to become the most famous of all Georgia Peaches, started his title run by taking the Georgia State amateur title as a lad of 14.

Jones later won 13 major championships, winding up with his unique Grand Slam of all four major American and British titles in 1930.

Miss Stirling and Jones were contemporaneous from the time both puttered about the East Lake course with blithe disregard of their nuisance value to their golfing elders.

Influence of Stewart Maiden

Third in line was Charley Yates, who, like Miss Stirling and Jones, grew up on the East Lake course and finally reached full stature by taking the British Amateur Championship in 1938.

This series of successes could be traced back to the caustic but highly effective teaching of a canny Scot named Stewart Maiden, who died only a couple of years ago while still active in harness as professional of the newly famous Peachtree Golf Club, conceived and carried to completion by Bobby Jones. It was Jones, Maiden's most famous pupil and very

likely the most famous pupil ever boasted by a professional, who brought Maiden back to Atlanta in his declining years.

Louise Suggs was the fourth Atlanta Peach to achieve international golf success. She won the USGA Women's Amateur in 1947, the British in 1948, and the fledging Women's National Open in 1949 (not to mention three triumphs in the Western Open).

Wilfred Crossley was the kingpin of the unique clean sweep made by Atlanta's public links team in the 1947 USGA Amateur Public Links Championship. Crossley won the medal, the individual Championship and teamed with Lieut. Walter Browne and Charlie Barnes to take the team trophy.

And now, fifth in the illustrious line, Miss Dorothy Kirby. Her victory in this year's Women's Amateur was the reward of a patience and perseverance that endured through 17 years of effort and the disappointment of twice losing out in the finals.

She was defeated, 3 and 2, by Miss Betty Jameson in 1939, after having been five down at 17, only one down at 27. She lost on the 36th to her one-time fellow townswoman, Louise Suggs, in 1947.

What accounts for the golf success of Atlantans?

Sunny climes laid end to end throughout the year—temperatures made to order for peaches and golf.

And the inspiration of Bobby Jones.

— ● —

Times Sports Stories

A collection of 130 stories and columns running to more than 700 pages will appear in THE GREATEST SPORTS STORIES FROM THE NEW YORK TIMES, to be published on November 26. The book is edited by Peter Brandwein and Allison Danzig, of the Times sports staff.

A number of golf stories on famous events are included.