

What Makes a Championship Tick

By JOSEPH C. DEY, JR.

USGA EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

He was chairman of the club's green committee. For three hours he had been on the course with a USGA man. They were looking it over the dull way—just walking, not playing; it was a detailed inspection in preparation for a USGA championship.

Finally, with a few holes to go, the chairman excused himself. "Pete here will finish the job," he said. "I simply have to go to a meeting our company is having with several labor unions. I postponed the meeting to come out here."

In taking several hours out from a crowded business day, the green committee chairman was unconsciously typifying the spirit which makes it possible to have golf championships. If it weren't for the devoted work of amateurs who serve without pay, golf tournaments of any considerable scope wouldn't exist as we know them now.

In an 80-day period from June 12 to August 30 the six USGA championships will be held this year: Open - Amateur - Women's Amateur - Public Links - Junior Amateur - Girls' Junior.

Their combined total entry will be approximately 6,000 players. After sectional qualifying in the three largest events, a grand total of 825 will start in the six championships proper.

A Three-Way Job

The players and the spectators will be apt to take everything for granted. Why should they stop to consider what lies behind national events? The fact is, though, that hundreds of persons have been at work a long time—two years, in some cases—to make the championships possible.

What does lie behind the biggest USGA championships? The work is divided into three main parts:

1. USGA: The pattern is fixed by the USGA. Sectional qualifying rounds are arranged, entries are handled, the host

club is supplied with information, and finally, at the Championship, the USGA conducts play. The USGA's officers and various committees—about 300 persons all over the country—all serve without compensation and, in fact, pay their own expenses to meetings and tournaments. Details of USGA work are executed by a paid staff.

2. Conduct of sectional qualifying rounds: This is handled gratuitously by district associations and USGA committeemen. Their fine work makes it possible to hold the largest championships in their present form.

3. The club entertaining the Championship: Its work usually begins about two years in advance and is prescribed in detail in the USGA's Golf Championship Manual. This is a booklet of some 23,000 words, representing the accumulated experiences of many clubs in many championships. As new wrinkles in championship conduct are developed, the Manual is in a constant state of revision.

The club's work is broken down into ten major divisions:

GROUNDS	PUBLIC INFORMATION
HOUSE	PROGRAM
ADMISSIONS	TRANSPORTATION,
GALLERY	PARKING AND
CADDIES	ACCOMMODATIONS
SCORING	FINANCE



George F. Baldwin
Northwood Club



Robert Duval
Miami C. C.

As an example of the numerous details within a division, the grounds committee must arrange for general preparation of the course, practice, cups, tee markers, ropes and lines for gallery control, tents, comfort stations, booths, platforms, presentation of prizes — among other things.

In almost all cases the club will be entertaining a USGA championship for the first time. It must start from scratch. It must take a Manual of 23,000 words and make it come to life.

The club's work does not end when play begins. Although the USGA conducts the play, the club must do everything else. When you have to consider the wants of scores of players and thousands of spectators, with 150 or so acres of land to care for, then you have a sizeable operation. And the work is done mostly by volunteers.

10,000 Free Man-Hours

When the Open was played at Merion, near Philadelphia, in 1950, a friend spied a low-handicap Merion member in the parking space. "Great tournament, isn't it?" said the friend.

"Can't tell," replied the Merion man. "I've been looking after the automobile parking all day."

When the 1948 Open was played at Riviera, near Los Angeles, it was estimated by George Armstrong, general chairman of the Club's committees, that his colleagues devoted about 10,000 man-hours

to the event. (This was exclusive of the club's paid staff.)

Ten thousand man-hours, voluntarily contributed.

If the people who gave that time had been paid for it at the rates they usually receive in their own occupations, the extra cost at the very least would have been \$60,000.

At that rate, if the championship had been a commercial venture, it could not have been held profitably.

This is true of practically all tournaments of any considerable scope. Even if they be tournaments for professionals, their operational success depends largely upon the free labors of amateurs. If all the work that goes into the tournaments on the professional circuit had to be paid for, there probably would not be any professional circuit as we now know it.

The essential nature of golf is amateur. Its participants are mainly amateurs who engage in it as a recreation. Its tournament administrators are mainly amateurs who do it as a hobby. Nowhere is the spirit of amateurism more strong than in those who sacrificially labor early and late in order that others may enjoy the game.

So long as golf continues to attract people who devote themselves to it out of sheer love, then it will continue to be among the greatest of games. For the love of golf comes close to being a thing purely of the spirit.

Chairmen at Clubs Entertaining USGA Championships



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