

# How to Win the Open Four Times

By JOSEPH C. DEY, JR.  
USGA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

In accepting the Open Championship Cup for the fourth time, Ben Hogan revealed a few of the ingredients which he considers important in his winning formula.

"Adequate preparation and knowledge of the course are essential," he told the gathering assembled for the prize presentations on the huge practice putting green at Oakmont Country Club, Pittsburgh.

"It really isn't fair to play in a Championship without proper practice. I have to learn the course thoroughly. But if you prepare properly, the actual Championship play becomes almost incidental. It's the preparation that counts."

But there is other equipment which a four-time Champion needs—equipment of a different sort than physical practice. Ben Hogan revealed this, too, in his sincere and inspiring remarks.

"For the last several days," he said, "I've been wondering how Bob Jones and Willie Anderson must have felt and what they must have said when they won the Open for the fourth time. This sort of thinking is silly, because it was so premature; I tried to put the idea out of my mind, but with little success.

"Well, now I believe I know how they felt, and what they must have said. I can express it only by saying that I'm very, very happy.

"But there's something else I'm thankful for—you just can't do this sort of thing without God's help.

"And I want to say how very much I

owe to my wife, Valerie. She has been my partner all through, and she has helped me more than she knows."

This humbly grateful attitude — this quality of thinking of others—has been reflected frequently in little things during Hogan's Open Championship appearances in recent years. At Merion in 1950, the year after he nearly lost his life in a motor accident, he twice interrupted his concentration during the thick of the Championship playoff to inquire, first, about the health of Bob Jones and, second, about whether his friend Jimmy Demaret had qualified in the first 20 scorers in the Championship proper.

The next year, at Oakland Hills, during his brilliant closing round of 67, Ben philosophized sympathetically about the galloping galleries all around him, and how hard put they were to see the play. This year at Oakmont, when Hogan was walking to the presentation site, another professional stopped him to congratulate him. Ben immediately turned the conversation around to inquire how the other player had done.

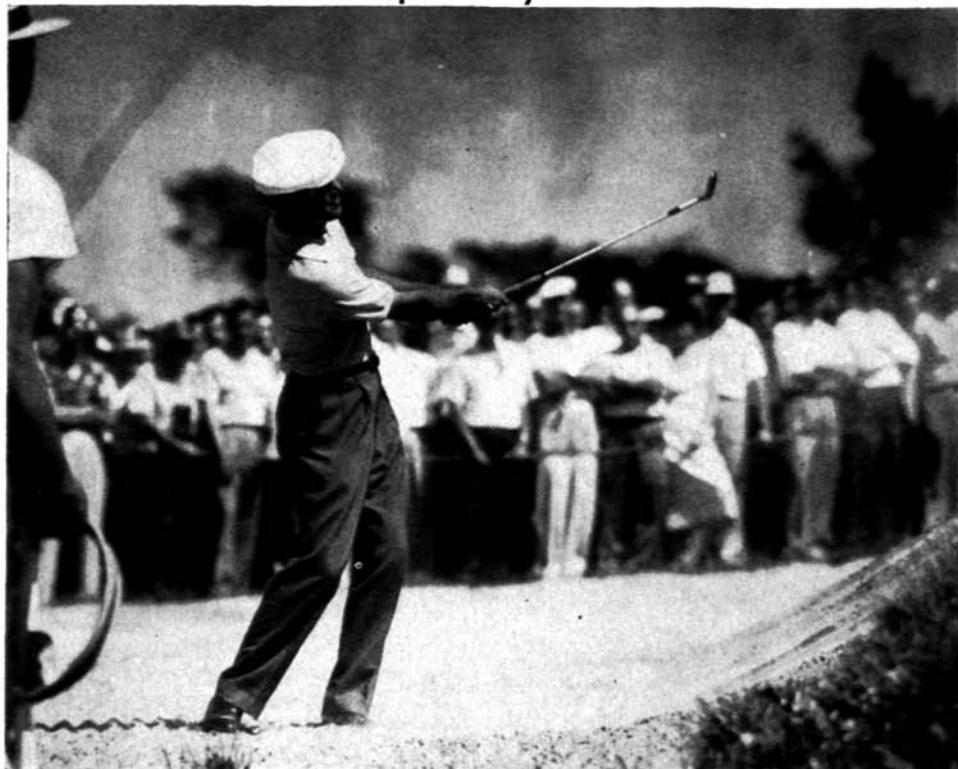
These are little things. But one wonders whether they are not big things in the golfing success of Ben Hogan. In an activity as intensely competitive as professional tournament golf, perhaps a spiritual balance is needed more than ever.

Although par is never a precise gauge, the fact is that in his four winning Opens Hogan has played 17 rounds—306 holes—in exactly even par. The details follow:

Year	Course	Yards	Par		Ben Hogan's Rounds					
			18 Hls.	72 Hls.	67	72	68	69	—	276*
1948	Riviera	7,020	71	284	67	72	68	69	—	276*
1950	Merion	6,694	70	280	72	69	72	74	—	287
	playoff		70	70				69	—	69
1951	Oakland									
	Hills	6,927	70	280	76	73	71	67	—	287
1953	Oakmont	6,916	72	288	67	72	73	71	—	283
	Total	par	1,202					Total	strokes	1,202

\*All-time record for the Open Championship

## The Champion Plays from Sand



*Wide World Photo*

**Ben Hogan cuts his ball deftly from the modified furrows in a bunker by the ninth green in the first qualifying round at the Oakmont Country Club. There is a lesson in his relaxed balance and his follow-through.**

This year Hogan was the first player to lead the Open after each of the four rounds since James M. Barnes did it in 1921 at the Columbia Country Club near Washington. Barnes won by nine strokes.

Hogan at Oakmont won by six strokes. Sam Snead was second with 289 and Lloyd Mangrum third with 292. Low amateur was Frank S. Souchak, of Oakmont. It was Snead's fourth time in second place; it seems a pity that this magnificent player has never won.

Hogan made a glorious finish of 3-3-3 for the last three holes, with birdies on the last two. At the end he was striking the ball as truly and as accurately as at the beginning. In fact, he said that toward the finish of a Championship round he unconsciously tends to build up such intensity as to produce his longest possible

drives, with the result that he must use extreme caution in selecting clubs for second shots.

Total prize money was increased by approximately \$5,000 to \$20,400, of which the winner received \$5,000.

The Championship was held in a revised form. After the usual Sectional Qualifying Rounds, there were new 36-hole Championship Qualifying Rounds, divided between Oakmont and the Pittsburgh Field Club. The low 150 and ties—actually 157—became eligible for the usual 72-hole Championship Rounds.

No decision has yet been made by the USGA Executive Committee as to whether the Championship Qualifying Rounds will be continued. This year's system was on a trial basis.

Oakmont, as usual, provided a wonder-

ful test of championship skill. This is one of the great courses. It was Oakmont's sixth USGA championship—three Opens and three Amateurs.

Before the tournament there was some public misunderstanding on certain features of conditioning the course, especially about furrows in the sand of Oakmont's bunkers. The Club and the USGA came to complete agreement.

In order to insure some reasonable degree of uniformity in championship playing conditions from year to year, course conditioning for a USGA competition is subject to USGA approval. If this were not so, there sometimes would be extremes in both directions—of excessive and unfair toughness and, on other occasions, of undue softness. The USGA's policy is to have a course provide a real test without being tricky or unfair.

Of course, the USGA has long recognized the natural interest of an entertaining club in the preparation of its course, including the bunkers. Consequently, the USGA Golf Championship Manual, for the guidance of entertaining clubs, makes provision for small furrows in sand.

Thus, Oakmont continued its practice of providing such furrows, in somewhat modified form, in bunkers proximate to putting greens. Furrows in bunkers adjacent to fairways were of more moderate size than those guarding greens and did not prevent full recovery with well-played strokes.

All in all, Oakmont provided a magnificent test.

#### Slow Play

Play during the first day of the Championship proper was so slow that the USGA particularly requested the cooperation of all players thereafter. A few competitors apparently resented the request.

There are several causes for slow play

during a Championship. One is the unusually large galleries.

Another factor is holes of unusual character, such as Oakmont's fourth—a comparatively short par 5—and the eighth—a particularly long and hard par 3. There were pile-ups of players on both tees during the first two days.

But the players can control one factor—that is, the dawdling with which some are afflicted. It required 12 hours—from 8 A.M. to 8:02 P.M.—for only 157 players to play Oakmont during the first Championship Round. Had there been storms requiring play to be postponed or canceled for the day, it would have been most unfortunate.

Here are some facts on the time required by certain groups of three players:

	1st Rd.	2nd Rd.
First group	3:04	3:00 approx.
Middle group	4:24	3:56
Last group	4:24	4:48

Questions arose among some players as to how pairings are made for the last two rounds. Under the Rules of Golf, "The Committee shall arrange the order and times of starting, which, when possible, shall be decided by lot" (Rule 36-2a).

Pursuant to that, the USGA makes pairings and assigns starting times to the leading players in such a way as to avoid excessive gallery congestion. The remainder of the qualifiers for the last day's play are then drawn.

There has never been any intention to favor or disfavor any particular individual. The starting times each year are arranged independently, without consulting previous year's lists.

Here are the relative positions in which four particular players have started the last two rounds of the last four Opens; the figures in parentheses are their 36-hole scores:

Year	Groups of Players	Hogan Group	Snead Group	Mangrum Group	Middlecoff Group
1950	26	16 (141)	13 (148)	6 (142)	16 (142)
1951	27	7 (149)	14 (149)	3 (149)	21 (149)
1952	26	17 (138)	4 (145)	10 (149)	20 (149)
1953	30	11 (139)	20 (141)	15 (143)	27 (149)