

California Takes Over the Public Links

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It is getting to be an old story, and yet it seems to improve with each retelling.

In the eight Amateur Public Links Championships which have been held since World War II, Californians have triumphed six times and five of these six Champions have come from the Los Angeles area, a fact in which Harry Packham, the USGA Public Links Committeeman in Los Angeles, takes considerable pride.

The most recent is Ted Richards, Jr., who lives in Santa Monica and plays at the Rancho Golf Course in Los Angeles. Richards was graduated from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1949 and is now 30 and a stock broker. Although he was a semi-finalist in the 1948 intercollegiate championship, he played little golf while he was getting established in business and really only returned to the game last year.

How superbly he can play when he sets his easy-going mind to it was demonstrated in the 28th Amateur Public Links Championship of the USGA in Seattle, Washington, at the handsome West Seattle Municipal Golf Course last month. He scored 134 in the sectional qualifying and, on a course which quickly separated the men from the boys, walked all the way through the final with scarcely a discernible ruffle.

Richards was an extremely impressive player in a field that was impressive not only for its ability but for its camaraderie and good sportsmanship. In the final against a fellow Southern Californian, Irving A. Cooper, 22, of Long Beach, Richards had ample opportunity to be ruffled. The finalists were even after nine holes and, each having scored a 69, were even again after eighteen. They were still even, and still two under par, after twenty-seven holes. And it just happened that Richards was 1 up and one under par when the holes ran out.

The semi-finals were more conclusive than exciting. Cooper defeated Ed-

ward J. Hart, a 40-year-old truck operator from Denver, 12 and 11, and was four under par for the twenty-five holes. Richards turned back Doug Sanders, of Cedartown, Ga., a 19-year-old sophomore at the University of Florida and the 1951 Junior Chamber of Commerce Junior Champion, 5 and 4, with approximately par golf.

It was a tournament of contrasts at the beginning.

The young Jacksonville, Fla., team, which travelled the greatest distance, won the Hon. Warren G. Harding Trophy by equalling the record of 221 established by San Francisco in the 1949 Championship at Los Angeles. Tommy Jenkins, 18 and just out of high school, made a 71, the low score of the day. Daniel D. Sikes, Jr., 22-year-old captain of the University of Florida golf team, holed an eight-footer on the last green for the 74 that clinched matters. And Robert Goetz, 20-year-old Texan now stationed at the Jacksonville Naval Air Station, had a 76.

The Montebello, Cal., team was one stroke back, at 222. Honolulu would have registered the same score had it not been for an inadvertent error on the scorecard of one of the Hawaiian players which necessitated his automatic disqualification. The Hawaiians, incidentally, accepted the penalty with a knowledgeable sportsmanship which set a high tone for the entire Championship. Colorado Springs, Dallas and Seattle tied for third at 223.

In the individual play for the James D. Standish, Jr., Cup, Harvey Woodard, of East Detroit, Mich., who had set a new record in sectional qualifying with his 64-69-133 at Morey's Golf Club, a par-65 layout, was beaten in the first round by Harold Gjolme, of Seattle. George Earnest, of Seattle, played out the bye holes for an unofficial West Seattle record of 34-32-66 in the first round, and then was defeated in the second round by Richards.



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Harry Packham (center), USGA Public Links Committeeman in Los Angeles, fondles the James D. Standish, Jr., Cup with obvious pride after two of his Southern Californians had competed for it in the final of the Amateur Public Links Championship at Seattle. On the left is Ted Richards, Jr., of Santa Monica, the winner. On the right is Irving A. Cooper, of Long Beach, the runner-up.

Pete Bogan, of Montebello, Cal., the 1952 Champion who is reputed to make up in headlines what he lacks in power, incurred two unusual penalties in the very first round: he played a wrong ball out of the rough on the second hole and walked so far ahead on the fourteenth hole that he got himself hit in the leg by his opponent's long iron shot to the green. Bogan got out of that with one hole to spare, won his second match by holing a 25-footer for a birdie on the second extra green but finally bowed by 3 and 2 to Hal McCommas, a shy 18-year-old from Dallas and Southern Methodist University, in the fourth round.

It will be difficult for any course to match the facilities provided for the Championship by the King County Public Links Association and the City of Seattle. Every conceivable need had been anticipated for the players, and the tight little course had a luxurious growth of grass which private clubs would envy.

The dozen loyal members of the USGA Public Links Committee who attended conducted the play with efficiency and dispatch, and it seemed that everyone went home happy.

But then, there isn't much temperament in the Public Links.

A Women's Record?

A woman has come along to challenge the record established by Messrs. W. Hamilton Gardner, Paul Hyde and Findlay S. Douglas. You may recall that each of these gentlemen won championships over thirty-five-year spans, as we pointed out in the September, 1952, and April 1953, issues.

Mrs. Sydney Grossman, of the Hillcrest Country Club, Los Angeles, Cal., has not yet matched the thirty-five-year span, but last June she won the championship of her club for the sixteenth time over twenty-six years. She may have set, thereby, a comparable record for women.