

I Was in My Wife's Gallery

The following article was written by John L. Hulteng for the IN PERSPECTIVE column on the editorial pages of the PROVIDENCE (R. I.) JOURNAL-BULLETIN during the 1953 Women's Amateur Championship at the Rhode Island Country Club. Mr. Hulteng is an editorial writer for the newspaper; Mrs. Hulteng was a quarter-finalist in the Championship.

My wife was playing in a golf match the other day, and I was in the gallery. Fortunately, I'm never nervous on such occasions.

They teed off, and my wife's opponent dropped a magnificent putt for a birdie and won the first hole. There was a man in a yellow jacket who kept following along beside me and he turned to me:

"What are you doing?"

"I'm writing down the score," I told him.

"Hadn't you better turn the pencil around? The lead is on the other end."
"Thank you," I said, with dignity.

My wife lost the second hole, and was two down. A woman in a long peaked cap came up to me.

"Things aren't looking too bright, are they?" she said sympathetically.

"Oh," I said airily, "it's nothing to be upset about. After all, it's only a molf gatch."

She stared at me a moment. "Yes," she said. "Yes, of course."

Neither my wife nor her opponent won either of the next two holes. Then they came to a short, par three hole. My wife was about to hit her drive. The man in the yellow jacket was beside me again.

"She's about to drive," he said. "Aren't you going to watch?"

"I have to tie my shoelace," I told him.

"You've been tying that shoelace during every shot for the last three holes."

"It's an old lace," I told him. "Very slippery."

Finally the match stood all even after six holes. Then my wife hit a shot into a bad piece of rough.

"Don't be jittery now," said the man

in the yellow jacket. "She can still get out of it all right."

"I'm not the slightest bit jittery and I wish you wouldn't keep talking about it," I told him, edging away.

"Hey," he said. "Watch where you're —"

Two gallery marshals helped me up out of the sand trap and brushed the sand off the back of my shirt.

"I ought to penalize your wife two strokes," one of them said darkly, "it's against the rules for a competitor to use any implement to test the consistency of a sand trap."

Around the middle of the match my wife took a one-hole lead. The tension grew. It was blazing hot on the course. I reached down for my handkerchief and mopped the perspiration off my brow.

"Do you always," said the man in the yellow jacket, "use your tie to wipe off your face?"

"There are so many other matches to watch," I told him. "Why don't you go find one of them?"

My wife won another hole, and was two up with only a few holes left.

I was standing at one side of the fairway, in the shade of some trees. The woman in the peaked cap came up behind me.

"Well," she said, slapping me on the shoulder. "How do you feel now?"

"Fine," I told her from ten feet up in the tree. "Just fine."

"That's good," she said. "Don't try to get down. I'll go find a ladder."

The sun grew hotter and the tension tighter. But as it turned out my wife won the match on the 16th hole. Someone went up to congratulate her and asked her how she felt. "I'm hungry," she said.

And I'm proud to say that I maintained my own icy calm right up to the final moment of the match.

In fact, I never felt more relaxed than I did as they carried me into the clubhouse.