

SCENE OF THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

THE 6,700-yard length of the Olympic Country Club's Lake Course in San Francisco, site of the 55th USGA Open Championship this month, requires an explanation. There are two par 3 holes of 139 and 187 yards, respectively, which reduce the yardage on the card and create the impression the tournament will be played over a comparatively short course. Any player anticipating a "soft touch," however, is due for disappointment.

Although the San Francisco Bay Area may be a newcomer to the list of USGA Championship sites, the Olympic Country Club's Lake Course is known to many of today's professional golfers. In 1946, when the San Francisco Open Championship was played on this course, a winning score of 283 for 72 holes was posted by Byron Nelson. The tournament, which attracted more than 150 of the leading professionals and amateurs, saw only two players able to break 70. One of these was the low score of the tournament, a 68 by Nelson. Although the event was played in January, when the course was heavy from rains, there was no rough such as will be in evidence for the Open this month.

Rolls Held To Minimum

The course, hard by the Pacific Ocean, is continually moistened at night by San Francisco's fog, which holds the roll to a minimum and makes the course play much longer than the yardage indicates. A stretch of five holes, beginning with No. 2 and running through No. 6, probably is as difficult a run of continuous holes as competitors ever will be called upon to face in the Open Championship. It is there the winner may well be decided in the late rounds. Following a comparatively routine par 5 first hole of 500 yards, a contestant will face the following:

No. 2, a hole of 423 yards, up-hill, which calls for a drive placed to the left of the fairway center, with severe trouble for the player who wanders off the fairway to the left. A well-hit tee shot will

leave anything from a No. 3 iron to a No. 6 iron to the green.

No. 3, par 3, 220 yards down to a tightly trapped green with a narrow opening at the front. This shot from the championship tee may be anything from a No. 2 wood to a No. 2 iron.

No. 4, a dog-leg to the left, is approximately 433 yards, with a down-hill tee shot and an up-hill second with about a No. 5 iron. The green is large, but only part of the flagstick is visible, due to the contour of the ground.

No. 5, the first hole on which a handicap stroke is allowed, is 457 yards, par 4, and bends to the right. The tee shot is down-hill and calls for an extremely well-placed drive in order to reach the green with a long iron or No. 4 wood.

No. 6, 437 yards, also is a par 4. While the drive is not difficult, the second shot requires a well-controlled, medium length iron to a green sloping from right to left to assure the player his par 4.

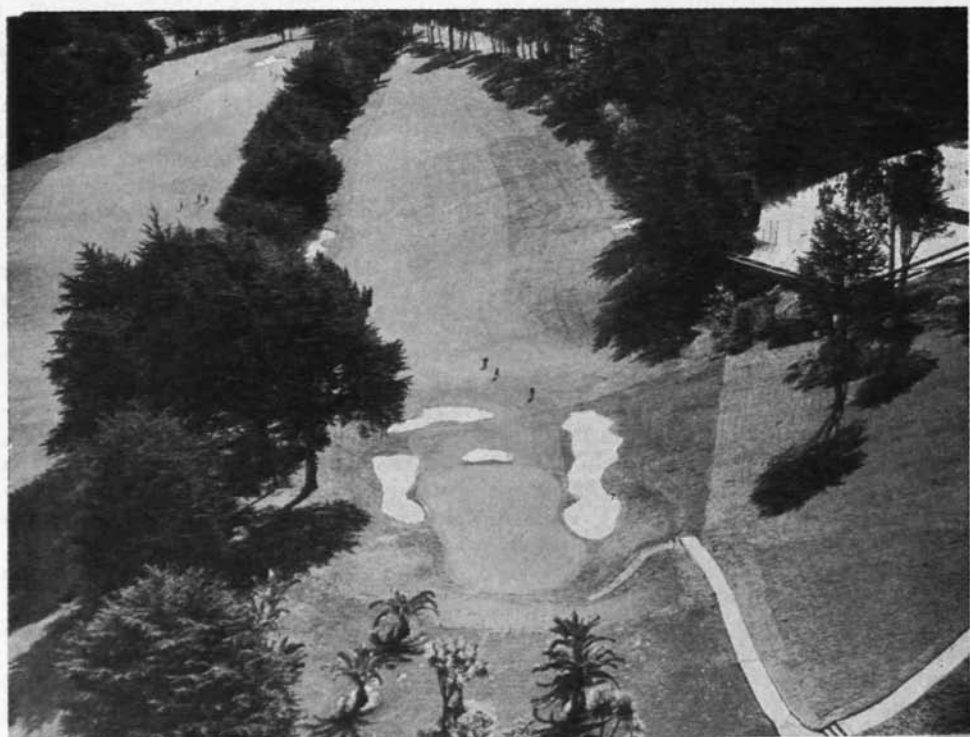
Real Test Of Ability

While these by no means are the only difficult holes on the course, the fact that they come in succession will test the mettle of the finest players in the game. One hole deserving of mention, since it comes near the end of the round, is No. 16. This is a double dog-leg to the left, 603 yards. The second shot here is all important. The fairway narrows between trees at the point where this shot must be placed. Two well-hit shots may leave only a No. 8 or No. 9 iron to the green, but the least mistake could result in taking a 7.

The home hole has been extended to 337 yards. It should give galleries numerous thrills in watching players putt on a green which sits toward the tee at approximately a 35-degree angle. Ben Hogan took four putts on this green in 1946.

The Lake Course, although near the ocean, runs entirely through trees, which form a natural windbreak. On days when winds of gale proportions can be found on the companion Ocean Course, just

Home Hole in the USGA Open Championship



Moulin Photo

The eighteenth green of the Olympic Country Club's Lake Course in San Francisco, where the Open Championship will be played this month, promises to give galleries numerous thrills. The green sits toward the tee at about a 35-degree angle. It was here Ben Hogan took four putts in the 1946 San Francisco Open. The hole has been extended to 337 yards for the Open.

across the road, nothing more than a gentle breeze will prevail on the Lake Course.

With few exceptions, greens on the Lake Course will not present the problems to contestants which the large undulating greens at the Oakmont Country Club and the Baltusrol Golf Club did in the 1953 and 1954 Open Championship, respectively.

Preparations for the Open Championship has impinged upon the private and public lives of several hundred San Franciscans, extending over a period of almost two years. First the Championship involved Robert A. Roos, J., General Chairman for the Club, and his immediate associates in the establishment of policy. Next, sub-chairman were brought in to handle such matters as the sale of tickets and adver-

tising in the program to finance expenses, the editorial preparation of the program, the maintenance of the course and grounds, the handling of parking and galleries during the Championship, the establishment of a system for reporting and posting scores, the recruiting and training of caddies and many other details.

The Picture Expands

As new men were brought into the picture to handle these specialized problems, they in turn fanned out among their friends in the Club for assistance.

USGA officials also contribute their services, not as much to the preparation of the facilities at the Club as in the handling of entries and the conduct of the Championship play itself. Those who attend will see these USGA officials on the

course during play. They are identified easily by their navy blue jackets, navy blue, silver and scarlet ties and hat bands. There are fifteen of them, from all parts of the country.

It isn't generally known that all these men contribute their time and services without any reimbursement. Their contribution in travel alone is sizable. Many of them this year will arrive almost directly from St. Andrews, Scotland, where they went for the recent Walker Cup Match.

Intricate Web Of Details

Some idea of the intricate preparations necessary in conducting the Open Championship may be gained from the maze of details involved in communications arrangements. Take the Open at the Baltusrol Golf Club last year, for example. The New Jersey Bell Telephone Company provided more than 45 circuits to carry press, radio, television and telephone traffic. An 1,800-pair cable was run in to relieve the Springfield, N. J. area around Baltusrol. From this cable some 76 pairs were carried into the clubhouse to supplement an existing 51-pair cable.

On Baltusrol's Lower Course the construction and installation forces had to improvise. Cable was run from the clubhouse out onto the course itself. A telephone pole was placed on the bowling green to serve the press tent, as well as two restaurant tents which straddled the first fairway of the Upper Course. From this point, wire was strung along trees out to the sixteenth tee to provide a private line for the relaying of scores to the press tent. Similar private line arrangements were provided at the ninth tee for the combined press and the Newark Evening News. Approximately two miles of wire were required to get these three circuits back to the scoreboard and press tent.

The National Broadcasting Company provided its own telecasting equipment, which was set up to beam a signal from a tower and mobile truck near the seventeenth fairway and a vantage point near the eighteenth green to a small dish antenna on the roof of the clubhouse. From

MEN'S HANDICAPS FOR CHAMPIONSHIPS

Effective this year, handicaps submitted by amateurs as a basis for eligibility for the Amateur, Senior Amateur and Open Championships must have been computed in accordance with the USGA Golf Handicap System for Men (1953 edition). Either basic or current handicaps will be acceptable.

While the USGA has long maintained a handicap qualification as a basis for eligibility of amateurs in these championships, it has not previously specified the method by which these handicaps should be computed.

Scores to be recorded shall be only those made when the player has complied with the Rules of Golf. Scores made under "winter rules", general "teeing up" or "preferred lies" must never be used for handicapping purposes.

there the New Jersey Bell Telephone Company and the American Telephone and Telegraph Company took over and beamed the signal by micro-wave to the master antenna atop the Empire State Building, in New York City.

Exemption Rules Changed

Sam Snead, Al Mengert and Rudy Horvath were added to the list of those exempt from sectional qualifying for the Open this year as a result of a new interpretation of rules. The exemptions were extended to include the ten lowest scorers of the 1954 Open, exclusive of the last five winners of the Championship.

However, Ed Furgol, the present Open Champion, Ben Hogan and Cary Middlecoff, former Champions, also were among the first ten last year. Thus three more exemptions became available. Snead finished eleventh last year, while Mengert and Horvath tied for twelfth.

In addition to Middlecoff, Hogan and Furgol, the last five individuals who have won the Open include Lew Worsham and Julius Boros. Among the others exempt as among the ten lowest scores last year are Gene Littler, Dick Mayer, Lloyd Mangrum, A. D. (Bobby) Locke, Tommy Bolt, Shelley Mayfield, Freddie Haas, and William J. Patton, an amateur.