

JOE CONRAD'S VICTORY IN THE BRITISH AMATEUR

IN THE WAKE of the British Amateur Championship lie several factors which usually intrigue golf's analysts and confound its prognosticators. For five centuries it has been an accepted fact that the game's only consistency is in providing the element of surprise, but even that doesn't deter astonishment at occurrences which are old, yet always new.

Inasmuch as no United States Walker Cup Team had gone to Britain since 1926 without some member of the Team winning the British Amateur Championship, the feeling was strong that history might repeat itself this year at Royal Lytham and St. Anne's, where Robert T. Jones, Jr., first won the British Open, Lawson Little the British Amateur and Louise Suggs the British Ladies' Championships.

Of the forty-six Americans in a field of 248 entries, however, little attention was focused on a 25-year-old red-haired Texan, Lt. Joseph W. Conrad, of San Antonio, who had been one of two Americans to lose their matches in the Walker Cup singles at St. Andrews, the only defeats sustained by the United States in the two days of play.

Had Conrad's background been more generally known, perhaps his 3 and 2 victory over Alan Slater, of Wakefield, England, in the 36-hole final might have been less surprising.

After the tournament it was Conrad's mother, Mrs. Margaret Conrad, who provided the key to some of his characteristics.

A "Date" With Golf

"Many times, after he had played eighteen or thirty-six holes during the day, he would take the car out at night," she

said. "At first we used to think he was on a date, even though he doesn't have a steady girl. But do you know where he went? He'd park the car on the Brackenridge practice area and hit balls hour after hour. His love is golf."

That, at least, partially explains why the British Amateur trophy is the twenty-fifth—one for each year of his life—in Conrad's collection.

The United States entry was led by all the members of the victorious Walker Cup Team except E. Harvie Ward, Jr., of San Francisco, and by young Donald M. Bisplinghoff, of Orlando, Fla., the 1952 USGA Junior Amateur Champion.



LT. JOSEPH W. CONRAD

On the fifth day, when the quarter-finals and semi-finals were played, the wheel of fate began turning rapidly. There had been eleven Americans among the last thirty-two survivors of this all-match-play Championship and nine among the

last sixteen, but only three advanced to the quarter-finals. They were William J. Patton, of Morganton, N.C., Bisplinghoff and Conrad.

In a heavy rain during the quarter-finals, Patton lost to Philip Scrutton, of London, a member of the British Walker Cup Team whom he had defeated in the singles at St. Andrews, by 7 and 6. Bisplinghoff, who had eliminated Bruce Cudd, of the U.S. Walker Cup Team, 4 and 2, in the fifth round, lost to Arthur Perowne, an English farmer, on the twentieth hole.

Conrad meanwhile disposed of Roger Bayliss, 5 and 3, in the quarter-finals, and Scrutton in the semi-finals, 5 and 4.

Slater, who is 36 and lives in Yorkshire, earlier had defeated Dale Morey, of Indianapolis, Ind., and the Walker Cup Team, and James B. McHale, Jr., of Wynnewood, Pa., on the same day. He gained the title round by eliminating Ireland's Joe Carr, the 1953 Champion, 2 and 1, and Perowne, 3 and 2.

A Crucial Half

After being 4 up at the end of eighteen holes, Conrad was only 1 up going to the twenty-seventh, a one-shotter. There Slater sank a 20-foot putt for a 2. Conrad faced a downhill putt of almost the same length. After a brief study, however, he sank it for a half and was never in danger after that.

Not until after the match did it become generally known that Conrad had played the final round with a deep cut on his right forefinger, a cut he declined to bandage lest it hamper his grip. The wound was revealed only by William C. Campbell, of Huntington, W. Va., Captain of the Walker Cup Team, after Conrad's triumph.

The new British Amateur Champion and twenty-four other Americans then went to France to compete in the French Amateur Championship at Golf de Chantilly. Among the others were Campbell, Cudd and Bisplinghoff, the latter going to the final, where he was defeated by Henri de Lamaze, of Paris, defending champion, 5 and 4.

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