

ANOTHER KOCSIS MOVES TO THE FORE

by

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ONE OF THE most notable distinctions between the Amateur Championship and the Amateur Public Links Championship lies in the fact that many of the players in the Amateur Public Links Championship actually play comparatively little golf.

Sam D. Kocsis, of Detroit, Mich., is a prime example of this distinction. He had played about half a dozen complete rounds this year when he went to the Coffin Municipal Golf Course, in Indianapolis, Ind., for the 30th USGA Amateur Public Links Championship.

Actually, Sam's decision to enter was somewhat of a spur of the moment one. He had played in the event, but in perusing a USGA schedule one day he noticed that it was being held not too far from his home during the dates which had already been assigned for his annual vacation from a Detroit tool factory.

The fates were certainly with Sam in the sectional qualifying round, too. He tied for last place with a score of 154 and won his trip to Detroit only through a sudden death play-off.

Of such things are Amateur Public Links Champions made, however. Sam went serenely through the field and defeated Tommy Bean, of Summerville, Ga., on the thirty-sixth hole of a most interesting final.

During the first three or four rounds his game was a little shaky, undoubtedly because of the infrequency of his play, but he was even par for fifteen holes in the fifth round, three over par for seventeen holes in the sixth round, five over par for thirty-six holes in ousting the defending Champion, Gene Andrews, of



Indianapolis News Photo

SAM KOCSIS

Pacific Palisades, Cal., 1 up, in the semi-final, and he played the last nine holes of the final in 34 to close out Tommy Bean.

Test of Control

The Coffin Golf Course, which actually measured only 6,536 yards and carried a par of 70, proved an extremely fine test, especially of control. The course is hilly and wooded, and the rough had been drawn in and allowed to grow in a way which placed a real premium on accurate tee shots. The coating of turf was excellent throughout most of the course, and the tees and greens were above the standard found on many municipal layouts.

The name Kocsis is familiar to golfers everywhere through the exploits of Sam's older brother Chuck, who was a member of the 1938 and 1949 Walker Cup Teams.

Sam's rise to national prominence indicates that the Kocsis family can give even such a large and distinguished family as the Turnesas a run for their money.

The key club in Sam's bag at Indianapolis was his blade putter and this was a hand-me-down from Chuck. Sam's bag, incidentally, contained only twelve clubs, including two putters, one of which he uses only for warm-up purposes in practice rounds. Until the semi-final round Sam pulled his own clubs on a cart.

The victory was an extremely popular one because of Sam's excellent bearing and demeanor throughout the Championship, but the gallery of about 1,500 which followed the final could not find it in its heart to be partisan. Tommy Bean, a most light-hearted and attractive southerner, had also won his share of admirers by a remarkable act of good sportsmanship in the fifth round.

Bean was playing Mike Borson, of Anderson, Ind., a prime Hoosier threat. On the seventh hole Borson dropped his approach into the ditch in front of the green, and when he blasted out his ball arrived on the putting surface caked with mud. Borson putted once and his ball bounded and zig-zagged four feet past the hole. Bean promptly conceded the four-foot putt, which was for the half, remarking: "I wouldn't want to have to try a putt that long with that ball."

Bean, an automobile salesman who reached the quarter-finals in 1952, also had engaged in a thrilling semi-final with Ralph Allen, of Miami Springs, Fla. Allen played the morning eighteen holes in 74 to go 6 up, but in the afternoon Bean won four straight holes, from the second through the fifth, squared the match at the sixteenth and went 1 up with a birdie 4 on the 570-yard seventeenth. Allen then holed a ten-foot putt for a birdie 3 on the eighteenth to send the engagement into extra holes, but he ran into all kinds of hard luck on the first extra hole and Bean won with a par 5.

The 18-hole stroke-play competition for the Harding Trophy was held on the

Saturday before the individual Championship and was won by the Miami, Fla., section with a score of 224. The Miami team comprised Joe San Filippo, 72; Marshall Carlson, 75; and Ralph Allen, 77. The Seattle section was second at 225, and the Indianapolis section was third at 226.

New Order of Holes

It was the second playing of the event at the Coffin Municipal Golf Course, but the layout had a brand-new clubhouse and an altered order of holes this time. The event was previously held there in 1935, and the Hon. John L. Niblack, who has been a member of the USGA Public Links Committee since 1933, was local chairman for both events.

Judge Niblack had an excellent local committee and the enthusiastic support of Mayor Alex M. Clark and the City of Indianapolis, as well as the Indianapolis Golf Association and the Coffin Golf Club.

The hosts could hardly have done a nicer job for the players or provided a better test of golf.

The holding of the event in the central part of the country apparently proved attractive to both players and Public Links Committeemen. The entry, which had been declining since World War II, turned upward once again and settled at 2,007. The Public Links Committeemen turned out in the number of 20, three as qualifiers and seventeen to help conduct the play.

Among the Committeemen were Joseph S. Dickson, of Louisville, Ky., who has been a member of the Committee since 1929 and was attending his 22nd Championship, having missed only in 1952; Harry Packham, of Los Angeles, who has been a member since 1934 and was attending his 16th consecutive Championship; and Judge Niblack, who was attending his 14th Championship and his second as local chairman. They symbolize the enthusiasm of a great USGA Public Links Committee.