

BEHARRELL BRIGHTENS

BRITISH GOLF HOPES

by

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THERE are many experienced golf followers in Britain who think that John Beharrell, of Birmingham, England, who recently won the British Amateur Championship at Troon, is one of the greatest golfers for his age, 18, there has ever been. These are people who go back to the days of Bobby Jones and before.

The point is, of course, how much better he will become. He may keep on improving and become one of the world's golfing "greats" or he may win a few more tournaments and burn himself out. The chances are that he will go on and on to establish himself as supreme in his generation.

Youngest To Win

He is the youngest player ever to win the British Amateur Championship and he did it in the most convincing manner possible, beating on his road to the title C. Lawrie, Scottish international; Ian Caldwell, Walker Cup player; Frank Deighton, Walker Cup player; Gene Andrews, former USGA Public Links Champion; Reid Jack, Scottish Champion, and Leslie Taylor, Scottish international.

The quality of golf he played was of a very high class. His concentration was something not seen from a British golfer since Henry Cotton at his best.

In the final he went over to the referee at one stage and said, "Please excuse me, sir, but can you tell me the state of the match?" That is quite true and shows that this boy has no thought but to beat his opponent.

He hits the ball a long way and has plenty of reserve strength, for he stands six feet high and weighs 175 pounds. While playing golf he is completely poker-faced and always wears a cap well down



JOHN BEHARRELL

over his eyes. He has a ruddy complexion and is a pleasant-looking boy.

The new Amateur Champion began to take an interest in golf in 1946-47 and became so keen that he travelled on a bus for 15 minutes, then had a half-mile walk to the course.

In 1948 the English Amateur Championship was played at Little Aston and he was in attendance every day, watching the various competitors with close attention. His interest in the game grew as a result and when the family moved to a home near the golf club, young John's first reaction was: "Good, now I can play more golf."

He was ten years old then and Grandfather Beharrell presented him with four beautifully made small clubs as a Christmas present. In the course of time he grew out of these clubs, and when his mother, a sound player, purchased a new set of clubs, John fell heir to her old set. These

eventually wore out and then he had the first of several new sets he has possessed. His father tells me that now the most recent change round of clubs in the family is that John had a new set and dad got the old ones.

Since the first time John showed an aptitude for the game, his parents have always encouraged him, but as he took to the game naturally, it was simply a matter of giving him little bits of advice.

And, I can tell you that Mr. and Mrs. Beharrell are model spectators. At Troon they never followed him when there were no spectators, and when, towards the end of the Championship, a gallery followed him, they stayed on the edge, out of sight. One exciting match was too much for Mrs. Beharrell; she went off to the hotel to iron some of John's shirts.

All who saw the new Champion at Troon were amazed at his composure and the accuracy of his game. His composure, I fancy, has come as a result of watching the leading amateurs and professionals, and his accuracy because he has devoted so much time to practicing the short game.

He is not a slave to practice. "Two hours a day intensive practice is better than five hours mucking about," he has said to me. He is definitely not a fanatic as regards practice. He relies on his coach, Jack Cawsey, of Pype Hayes, to keep his swing in order and has a weekly lesson from that fine teacher. Yes, even in the week following Troon!

He has also received much help from Ryder Cup man Charlie Ward at Little Aston, and gives Charlie credit for his short game.

He will be going into his father's export business, and in the ordinary run of things will be able to have a fair amount of time off for golf. He is not likely to go into the business seriously until the autumn and so, during the season, will be a competitor at various events.

One of his ambitions, apart from becoming a great golfer, is to play in the United States. That chance will come, I am sure, in the Walker Cup Match at the Minikahda Club, in Minneapolis, in August, 1957.

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