

SCALING THE HEIGHTS WITH MAYER IN THE OPEN

Professionals Show Great Ability to Produce Best Golf When It Counts Most

IT is always a wonderful thing to see people produce their very best when it means most. Many of us usually fall so far short of realizing our full capabilities that it is especially striking and inspiring to observe the great in the full bloom of their greatness.

In golf, the National Open Championship is a particularly fruitful field for this. Here the best players of the day come together, professional and amateur, and it is a never-ending source of wonder to watch them lift their games to the peak.

The Open is an unusual test in a number of ways. Since it determines the National Champion, the USGA and the entertaining club seek to provide a course and course conditions which will try every club in the bag and reward the most accurate. Thus fairways and greens are fringed with rough which is unusual for this generation and which penalizes the errant. Further, the Open is distinctive in that its four rounds are played in three days. Today most 72-hole stroke play events are played over four days.

The last day of the Open, with 50 or more of the finest golfers playing their hearts out for 36 holes, is perhaps the finest day in all the world of sport. It takes more than mere shot-making for the competitor to keep on concentrating for six to eight hours of athletic competition and still lift his game to its peak.

But they do lift their games to their peak. In the Open won by Dick Mayer last month at the Inverness Club, Toledo, 52 played the final day. In the Fourth round—the gruelling climax round—27 of the 52 equaled or improved upon their scores of the third round, when they presumably had been fresher and keener both mentally and physically.

To be even more specific:

A Sequence of Thrills

Jimmy Demaret, 47 years old and a grandfather, led at 18 holes with 68 and at 54 holes with 211. After eleven holes of the last round, staggering under the incu-

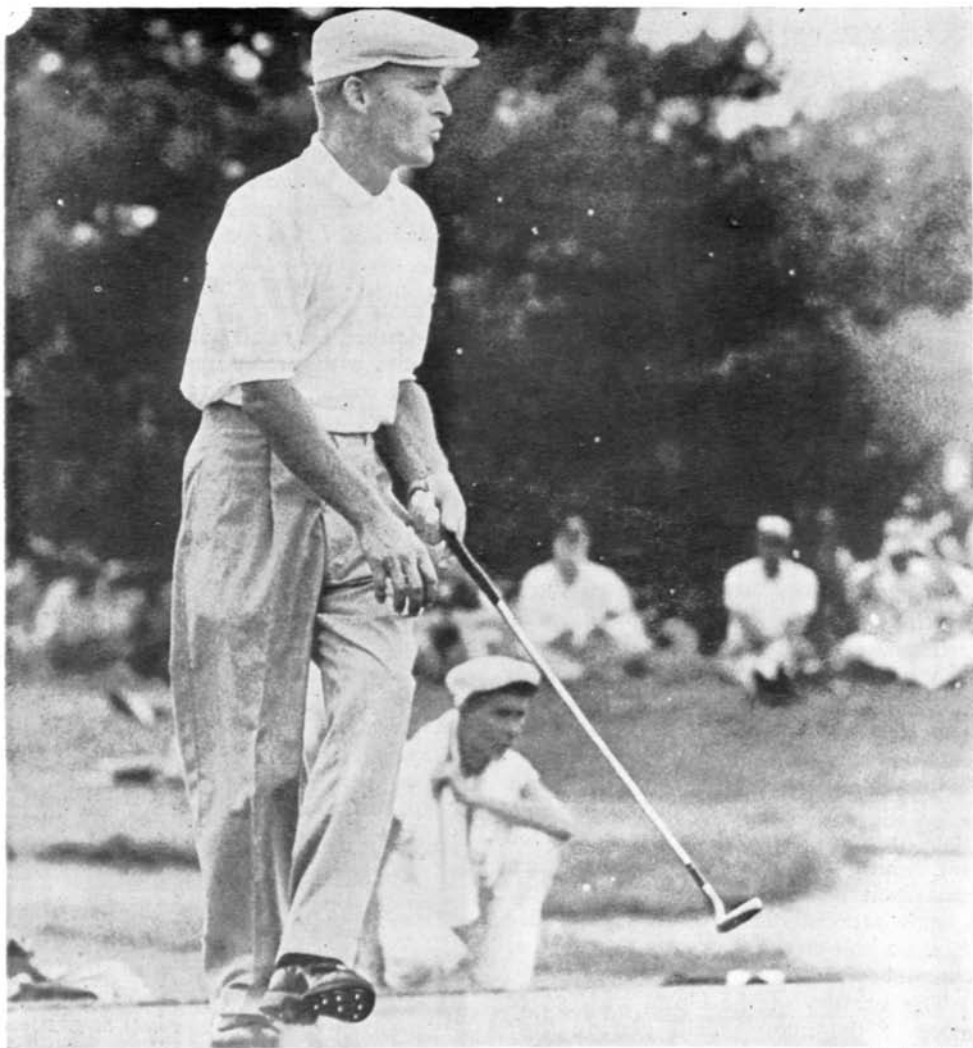


Toledo Blade Photo

OPTIMISM: Smiling for the cameras as he leads the field at one stage on the final day, Jimmy Demaret, one of the oldest competitors, finished a gallant third.

bus of being five over par, he played the last seven holes in three under par. A birdie 3 at the 17th when it seemed to count most put him in position to post a 72-hole total of 283. That put Jimmy back in the lead, and it looked as if the Championship might be his for the first time, after many years of trying.

But Dick Mayer, too, was lifting his game to its peak. At 36 holes he had been a leader with 138, and at 54 holes he was one stroke behind Demaret. Now, in full



Toledo Blade Photo

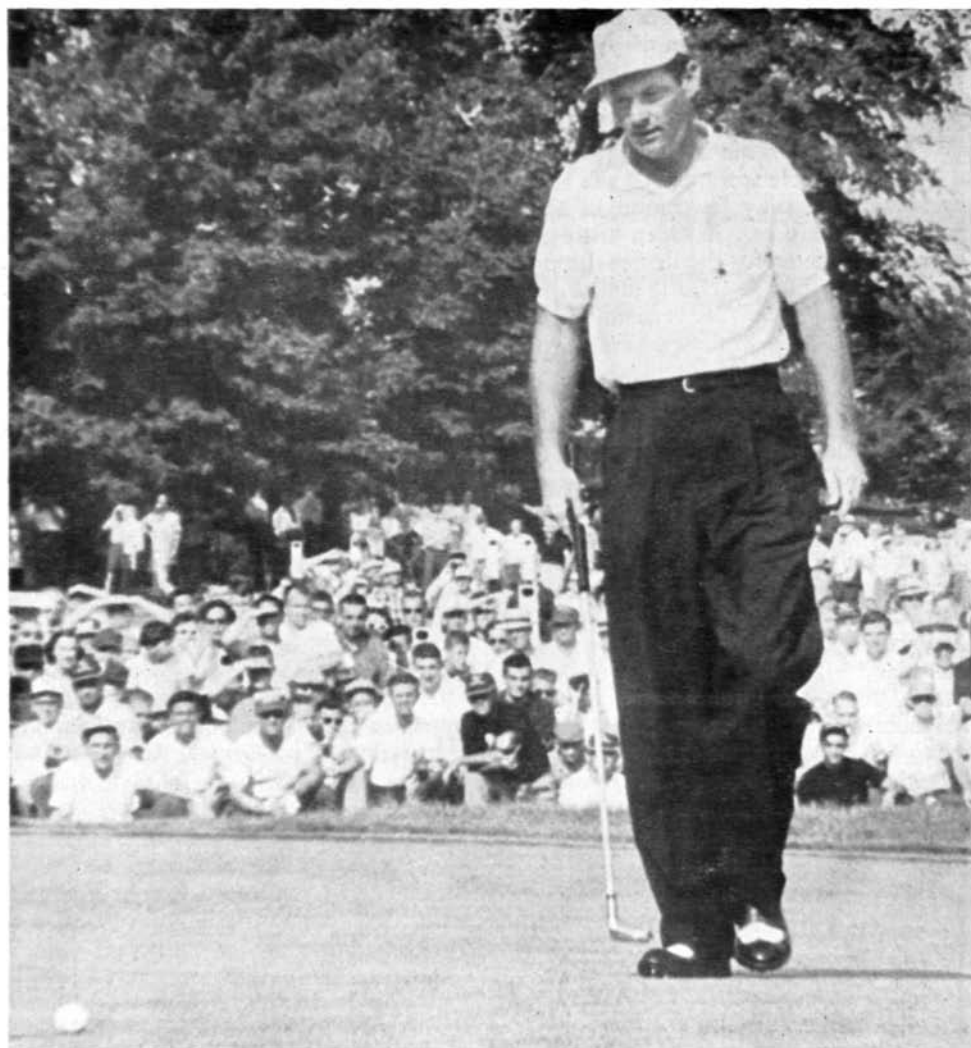
APPREHENSION: Dick Mayer, bidding for his first Open title, tries some country-style body English in an effort to urge his ball into the hole.

consciousness that he needed a birdie 3 at the home hole to beat Demaret's total by one, he got it.

And then came Cary Middlecoff. A truly inspirational sort of player is Doc. Twice before he had been able to rise to the heights when it really counted—he had won the Open in 1949 and again last year. Now he was defending his title with all the skill and all the heart that have made him one of the great golfers of his generation.

Middlecoff had started well enough with a 71, but a sour 75 had left him eight strokes behind the leaders at 36 holes. He played his third round in 68, and now, three holes from the finish in the final round, he needed two birdies and a par to tie Dick Mayer. He got them—a bird 3 at the 16th, a par 4 at 17, and a bird 3 at the last green.

There were other wonderful deeds in that last day of Inverness' third National Open. Walter Burkemo, for instance, came



Toledo Blade Photo

DISILLUSIONMENT: Cary Middlecoff, defending Champion, walks towards the ball which hung on the lip. The touch that helped him tie deserted him in the play-off.

from nowhere in the final round with a 65 that was only one stroke more than the best single-round score ever made in the tournament, which started in 1895. The whole competition was a tribute to the talent and the spirit of the field, and the sequence of Demaret, Mayer and Middlecoff provided superlative evidence.

In the 18-hole play-off Mayer sustained his fine form with a 72 and it was easily good enough to win. Middlecoff had brought himself to such an inspirational

peak the day before that it was as if he had nothing else to give.

Dick Mayer was not to be denied this time. Once before, in 1954 at Baltusrol, he had been on the brink of success but took 7 at the par-5 72nd hole and finished two strokes behind the winner. This time his Championship rounds of 70-68-74-70 and his play-off round of 72 were both steady and at times brilliant—in his round of 68 he eight 3s.

Dick Mayer, at age 32, is a thoroughly

capable Open Champion. For many years he was a leading amateur in the New York Metropolitan district. Since turning professional he has moved to St. Petersburg, Fla.

Records Tied

Mayer's 36-hole score of 138 was shared by an amateur, Billy Joe Patton, of Morganton, N. C. No one in Open history has ever scored better for the first two rounds, and only two had previously done as well—Sam Snead in 1948 at Riviera and Ben Hogan in 1952. Patton finished as low amateur with 290.

Middlecoff's last two rounds of 68-68—136 tied the Championship record for that particular stretch. Gene Sarazen had done 70-66—136 in 1932, when he also played the last 28 holes in 100 strokes.

Inverness provided a tight test. Inverness always cuts its greens at one-eighth inch—a very low cut—and they are normally quite fast, but heavy evening rains and a tremendous storm on the first day slowed them, and also made some new tees unusable, so that the course played in the neighborhood of 6,750 yards instead of 6,919 as planned. The first day's storm brought not only rain but winds of nearly 60 miles per hour. Remarkably, the course was playable after play had been suspended

for an hour and ten minutes. Due to the delay, five groups of players were unable to finish the first round until the morning of the second day.

Pending official figures, it was believed that the third day's gallery set an all-time USGA Championship record of about 16,000. The first day's attendance was estimated at 10,391, the second day's at 12,910, and the three-day total at 39,301, very close indeed to the all-time record. The play-off attendance was not nearly as large as that of any preceding day.

Ben Hogan was unable to play. Pleurisy of the chest wall in the morning of the first day caused him such pain that he had to withdraw after his starting time had been postponed an hour to give him opportunity for medical treatment. Jack Burke had to withdraw after 36 holes because of a wrist injury.

Each professional prize was increased by 20% above the original schedule, and the total of nearly \$30,000 was a new USGA record. The winner's share was \$7,200.

The world of golf owes great thanks to Inverness and its committees for their fine preparations. The General Chairman was James J. Secor.

Here is how the leaders stood at each stage:

18 Holes	
Jimmy Demaret	68
Chick Harbert	68
Doug Ford	69
Julius Boros	69
Ken Venturi	69
Marvin (Bud) Ward	70
(A) William J. Patton	70
Dick Mayer	70
Billy Maxwell	70
Bo Wininger	70

54 Holes	
Jimmy Demaret	211
Dick Mayer	212
Cary Middlecoff	214
Julius Boros	214
Roberto DeVicenzo	214
(A) William J. Patton	214
Marvin (Bud) Ward	214
Ken Venturi	215
Fred Hawkins	215
Mike Fetchick	216

36 Holes	
Dick Mayer	138
(A) William J. Patton	138
Doug Ford	140
Ken Venturi	140
Bo Wininger	141
Jimmy Demaret	141
Roberto DeVicenzo	142
Peter Thomson	143
Julius Boros	144
Fred Hawkins	144
Marvin (Bud) Ward	144
Sam Penecale	144

72 Holes	
Dick Mayer	282
Cary Middlecoff	282
Jimmy Demaret	283
Julius Boros	284
Walter Burkemo	284
Ken Venturi	286
Fred Hawkins	286
Sam Snead	290
Roberto DeVicenzo	290
Chick Harbert	290
Billy Maxwell	290
(A) William J. Patton	290
(A)—amateur	