

GOLFING THROUGH SOUTH AMERICA

BY

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We asked the travel agency to plan a trip to South America that was flexible. We told them we did not want to follow a package tour, for if we found a place we liked and wanted to stay an extra week, that is the way it was to be.

Furthermore, if there was a choice between staying in a city or living in the country, we preferred the latter; especially if it were near a golf course.

We were told to stand by as steamship reservations were tight, and that perhaps by the first of February there would be something available.

We were seated in front of a log fire in a ski lodge in Vermont on New Year's Day watching the Rose Bowl game on TV when a long-distance phone call from our agent informed us that we could leave in three days if we could be ready by then.

We said, "It's a deal," and thus began a four months' adventure through South America, a trip that included:

A visit to the land of the ancient Incas of Peru.

A flight over the Andes to the headwater of the Amazon and its steaming jungles.

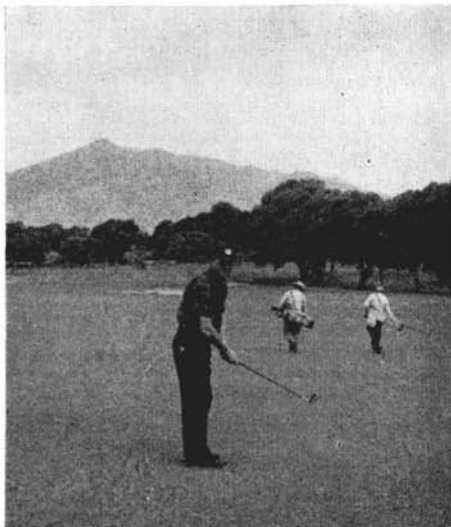
Brief calls at desert-like ports of Peru and Chile where we watched loading of copper and nitrate.

Several days' journey by motor and steamers through the magnificent lakes of Southern Chile and Argentina with their spectacular scenery and fabulous fishing.

And, finally, several weeks of sightseeing and adventure along the East Coast with its enormous cities and rapid tempo of life.

But, of all our experiences, the golf courses of South America were the most rewarding, not for the game of golf alone but because it gave us an opportunity to meet people and learn about the customs of the countries we visited.

We were armed with a letter of introduction to the secretaries of the golf



The third hole at Los Incas Country Club, an hour's ride from Lima, Peru.

clubs of South America, suggesting very subtly that the privileges of the club be extended to the bearer and his wife.

As the letter was in English and our knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese was "un poquito", we had some very amusing experiences getting the privilege to play, not because of the officials or the members of the clubs but because of the difficulties in surmounting the language barrier.

We found the people of South America, particularly those connected with golf, to be extremely courteous and most cooperative.

It is naturally to your advantage to have a working knowledge of the language of the country you are going to visit, but if this is not possible, you will still find a royal welcome in the lands south of the border.

Perhaps a description of one experience which was typical of many will suffice, particularly if we reverse the scene

USGA FILM LIBRARY

"On the Green," a 17 minute, full color 16 m.m. presentation filmed at the Mid-Ocean Club, Bermuda, illustrating correct procedures under the Rules of Golf governing situations arising on the putting green.

"Golf's Longest Hour," a 16 m.m. full color production running for 17½ minutes depicting the closing stages of the 1956 Open Championship. Filmed at the beautiful Oak Hill Country Club, Rochester, N.Y., it shows the eventual winner, Cary Middlecoff, set a target at which Ben Hogan, Julius Boros and Ted Kroll strive in vain to beat.

"Play Them As They Lie," a 16 m.m. color production, running for 16½ entertaining minutes in which Johnny Farrell, the Open Champion of 1928, acts as intermediary between Wilbur Mulligan, a beginner of unimpeachable integrity, and Joshua P. Slye, a past master in the art of breaking the Rules. The film was made at the Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N. J., where Farrell is professional.

"Inside Golf House," gives the viewer an opportunity to see the many interesting exhibits in "Golf House," USGA headquarters in New York, and to re-live golf triumphs of the past with many of the game's immortals. The film is a 16 m.m. black and white production and runs 28 minutes.

"The Rules of Golf—Etiquette" also has proved popular. The film stresses the importance of etiquette by portrayal of various violations of the code in the course of a family four-ball match. Ben Hogan appears in several scenes, and Robert T. Jones, Jr., makes the introductory statement. A 16 m.m. color production, the film has a running time of 17½ minutes.

The distribution of all five prints is handled by National Educational Films, Inc., 165 West 46th Street, New York 36, N. Y., which produced the films in cooperation with the USGA. The rental is \$20 per film; \$35 for two; \$50 for three, \$60 for four and \$70 for five, in combination at the same time, including the cost of shipping prints to the renter.

and use your favorite club as the location.

Assume it is Saturday noon—you are seated with your four-ball group in a crowded grill room, hastily finishing your luncheon in anticipation of the afternoon round.

The secretary of the club steps to the door and calls for attention: "Does anyone in the room speak Portuguese?" There is a moment of complete silence, followed by a waiter's voice—"I served on a Portuguese freighter many years ago. I remember a little of the language."

So the waiter leaves his station, neglecting five tables of diners, while he proceeds to the front office to act as interpreter to a strange couple from a foreign land.

To complicate matters, the couple have no golf clubs preferring to travel light, and have brought only their golf shoes and a change of clothing.

After trading ungrammatical bi-lingual phrases with the waiter, the couple finally made it known that they would like to play the course of this nice private club. They would also like to rent some clubs and purchase some balls.

We ask in all fairness: What would be the result of such an incident in your club?

In South America, not once were we turned down. On the contrary, we were treated with the utmost courtesy, and, best of all, we made a host of new friends through these casual introductions.

We were invited to their ranches for week-ends or to dinners in their city homes. We were even urged to stay over a few days to participate in coming golf events.

We also added considerably to our knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese.

Right here I should mention the problem of transportation in South America. It is the same in almost every country, so we need not make any exceptions.

Motor cars cost a fortune; a new Ford or Chevy will range from \$10,000 to \$12,000. This is due to high import duties, transportation charges, taxes, commissions and registration fees, etc.

This means that the great majority of the public have to depend upon public conveyances.

Taxis, which are mostly second-hand cars, are relatively few in number.

If you want to go from your hotel to the golf course, which in many large cities is over an hour's ride, it is best to have the taxi wait for the return trip. Otherwise, you may find yourself stranded miles from town.

Although rates are much lower than in the States, the total charge may be considerable.

It is also best to check with the club beforehand so that you do not find yourself in the middle of the club's annual championship or the Ladies' National Amateur contest.

Monday is irrigation day. Most courses are closed to play, for this is the day the greenkeepers water the courses.

In Peru and Chile, this is done by flooding the course. Small mountain



The Granadilla Country Club, Vina del Mar, Chile, a hilly course laid out on a mountain ridge overlooking the sea, is one of the most interesting on the West Coast. This view of the short seventh hole shows the green in the hollow guarded by a creek, trees and unseen bunkers.

streams that flow from the top of the Cordilleras across the barren coastal plains to the ocean are the source of water, as it very seldom rains in this part of the country. The streams are diverted into sluice ditches along the fairways and boards are used to direct the flow of water where needed.

Most of the fairways are a tough, broad-leaf grass similar to bermuda, and the greens are a combination of native bents rather wiry in texture.

They have a weed similar to our clover called "bear's ears" or "mouse ears" that frequently invades the greens and is quite difficult to eliminate.

On one course the caddie advised me not to hunt for my ball in the deep rough. "Snakes," he said. I asked, "What kind of snakes?" "Coral," he replied!

I quickly retreated from that area and dropped another ball, for I recalled what the guide had told us at the famous Butantan Institute in Sao Paulo. They have yet to find a satisfactory serum or antidote for a poisonous coral. They have a

favorite saying in Brazil. If you are bitten by a coral, you have five minutes to convince St. Peter that you should be allowed through the pearly gates.

There is another course where they have had difficulty with some of the older caddies. They have a habit of placing small wagers on their "players," and some have developed large toes which are capable of lifting a ball out of the rough and neatly depositing it on the fairway without anyone being aware of it. The club had recently posted a notice in the caddie house that from here on all caddies must wear shoes.

The land on which one private course is located is owned by the city and occasionally becomes involved in politics. Recently the mayor declared the course closed to its members on Sunday and opened up to the public as a park. Eighteen guards, one to each green, are employed to keep the picnickers from damaging the putting surface.

What we thought was a new ball in a trap turned out to be a hard-boiled egg

from the picnic the day before.

While playing a course in Brazil, we put a tee shot on a par 3 hole six inches from the pin. We were puzzled when the caddie said something that sounded like bum shot, until our opponent explained that "good" in Portuguese is "bom."

Another course had a quaint custom that might be adopted in the States where extra money is needed. If a member wishes to make a substantial contribution to the club's treasury or give some extra fine prizes for the annual championship, he or she has his name embroidered on one of the flags.

This has some interesting possibilities, particularly when reviewing the day's play at the 19th hole. Instead of saying you had one over par at the brook hole, you could say you bogeyed Senor Alvarez, or you might describe how you slashed your way down the middle of Mr. Chumley.

Organized golf in South America is still in the early stages of development. There is nothing comparable to the Green Section of the USGA, although everyone recognizes the need for a program of this kind.

I know the people who are concerned with the upkeep of their clubs would welcome an exchange of ideas and information from the States.

The Asociacion Argentina de Golf represents some sixty-five clubs. Its principal function is to maintain a uniform

handicap system and supervise the more important tournaments. Since my return I hear that Venezuela has adopted the USGA Handicap System.

Exchange visits of leading amateurs and professionals as participants in the national tournaments would help promote friendly relations with our neighbors to the south of us.

In the interest of the work of the USGA Green Section, we took every occasion to discuss the problems of golf course maintenance and to learn how clubs are run in South America. We found a keen desire to exchange experiences and ideas.

I am particularly indebted to R.B. Grasty, a member of both Los Leonas and Prince of Wales Clubs in Santiago, Chile; Louis A. Abarrio, the professional at Llao Llao; Anibal Vigil, Editor of the Argentine Golfer; Luther H. Koontz, a leading golf architect of South America; Charles Burroughs of San Isidro Golf Club; Horace Vignoles, President of Asociacion Argentina de Golf; K.R. Gordon Davis, Captain of Hurlingham Golf Club; Raul J. Pinto Borges, a scratch golfer of Sao Paulo; the famous Brazilian professionals, the Gonzalez brothers; Walter Ratto and Seymour Marvin of Gavea; Charles Johnson, Captain of Itanhanga Golf Club, and last, but not least, to Frank Linder, my delightful golfing companion and host from Rio de Janeiro.

To all of you, a toast—Salud, y'Pesetas y'amor, y' tiempo, para gozarlos.

A MEDICAL VIEW OF GOLFING

(Continued from page seventeen)
sick in the locker room after the game. Through case histories obtained from physicians and families, we have learned that golf, par se, did not cause death or illness, as far as we were able to determine. Those who died in the game almost invariably had previous conditions which had not been reported, or they had ignored earlier warnings.

We have seen more instances of coronary attacks among men sitting at the horse races than among athletes or physically active individuals who indulge regularly in sports. Those who have become ill in the locker rooms of the country club following a golf game, often suffer those attacks from eating and drinking too much, rather than from playing

too much.

Our observations are based on studies over many years, of athletes in many types of sports, of amateurs and many of championship caliber. We have studied marathon runners, swimmers, golfers, etc. We have never known an individual who has suffered heart or blood vessel injury as a result of sports as such. On the contrary, everything we have observed over three decades of studying both the sick (the unfit) and the well, up to the athlete who is SUPERFIT, has convinced us that exercise and physical activity, for play rather than for display, is an inhibitor of aging, a prophylactic against many of the ravages of disease associated with advancing age, and a most useful therapeutic procedure for many forms of a once disabling disease.