

GALLERY GUIDANCE IN THE OPEN

BY

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The Open Championship stirs memories of galloping galleries, in other days, and two unimportant little incidents stand out with special clarity.

First Scene: The 1930 Amateur Championship, at Merion, near Philadelphia.

The young lady was athletic and very keen, but petite. She tried standing on tiptoe, she tried racing along behind the tightly packed rows of spectators, she tried almost everything to seek a vantage point except crawling to the front row between spectators' legs—and all unsuccessfully.

After an hour or so of this, the young lady hauled her husband away. "Come on, Al, let's go home," she said. "Let's go home and buy a paper and see how Bobby Jones is doing."

She had precious few glimpses that day of Bob Jones finishing off his Grand Slam.

Second Scene: The 1951 Open, at Oakland Hills, near Detroit.

Ben Hogan was in the midst of his final-round surge of 67 that brought him one of his greatest victories. Ben was walking off the seventh tee. Spectators were scampering every which way in the fairway in front of him.

"Golf fans surely put up with an awful lot, don't they?" Ben mused, then answered his own question: "They park their cars a good distance away, then have to run around, and sometimes get pushed around by officials and policemen, in order to see us play."

Need for Fixed Control

Both charges, in 1930 and 1951, were perfectly true. Golf gallerying was a problem, and not so long ago. It was a problem for players and officials, too, for galloping galleries could be heedless of players and courses and marshals.

Five years ago the USGA's eyes were opened to a better way of doing things: Enclose every hole completely within a

fixed barrier of rope, starting behind the tee and continuing behind the green, far out in the rough, on both sides of the hole. In other words, establish permanent gallery lines of rope attached to metal stakes outside the perimeter of every hole, roping off each hole as a unit. Thus, give spectators the largest possible areas from which to see, keep them off the fairways and leave the playing areas to the players.

This was an adaptation of plans used for British Championships at the Old Course in St. Andrews, Scotland, for the Masters Tournament at Augusta National and for the 1953 PGA Championship at Birmingham Country Club, near Detroit.

It was proposed in the planning for the 1954 Open at the Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N. J., by the golf course architect, Robert Trent Jones.

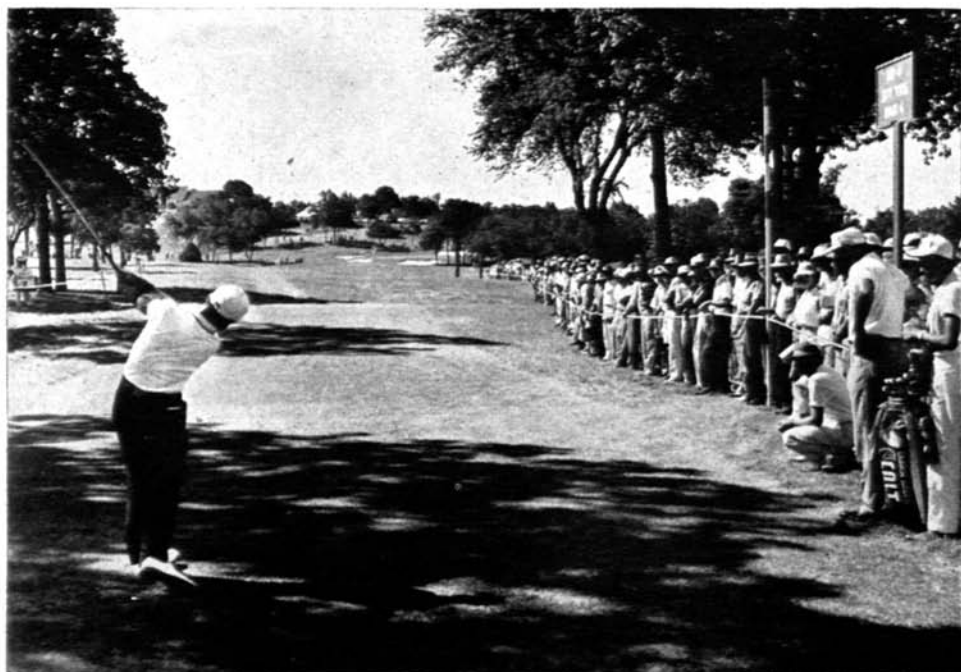
A crucial test occurred promptly in the 1954 Open. A gigantic gallery following Ben Hogan, the defending Champion, broke down the lines at one point and poured out over the course, as in former days. But Baltusrol's Gallery Committee pulled things together, under the able chairmanship of John C. Smaltz, now President of the Club, and the original plans were firmed up.

A similar incident came about in the 1955 Open play-off between Hogan and Jack Fleck at the Olympic Country Club, in San Francisco, and as a result the answer now is that play is to be halted until spectators return behind the fixed lines.

So a new pattern of guiding spectators has emerged in late years as an important part of major tournaments in America. It is being used during this year's National Open at the Winged Foot Golf Club, in Mamaroneck, N. Y., and National Amateur at the Broadmoor Golf Club, Colorado Springs, Colo.

It takes about ten miles of rope and 2,500 metal stakes to prepare a course.

A CONTROLLED GALLERY



Control of a gallery within fixed barriers of rope reserves the playing area for players, permits maximum viewing for spectators and keeps the course in a more normal and uniform condition. This is the fourth hole at Southern Hills Country Club, Tulsa, Okla., during the 1958 USGA Open. Gary Player of South Africa is driving.

Some courses are so tight in land area that variations from the basic scheme must be used. For instance, sometimes two parallel holes are roped as a unit and spectators are not permitted between the holes. Sometimes, where bottlenecks occur on adjoining holes, spectators are either restrained from entering blind alleys or are sent across from one side of the fairway to the other on narrow chalk-lined walkways after shots have been played. But the old pattern of spectators forming arcs in the fairways while strokes are being made is passe in the big events.

In a word, gallery guidance is now pre-arranged and fixed, where formerly it was movable and had to be flexible, depending on where shots came to rest. Wild shots today sometimes require taking down small sections of the ropes and stakes temporarily.

In considering gallery control, the interests of three groups have to be borne in mind: players, spectators and tournament management. The present system has manifold advantages for all three groups.

From the players' standpoint, course conditions are maintained at a relatively high level because of absence of spectators' footprints in playing areas, especially fairways and approaches to putting greens where delicate strokes are made.

There is no interference with play.

Players without large galleries, following immediately behind star attractions, are not disturbed and delayed by thoughtless spectators who, in the past, have been so absorbed in watching the stars that they have paid scant heed to players following and have interfered with their play.

Golf has a great virtue in being the only popular sport in which players and spectators commingle, to some extent, but sometimes this can be a great nuisance to players.

Immediately after the 1954 Open experiment at Baltusrol, Claude Harmon, Winged Foot's professional, voiced the views of players generally when he said:

"Under the old system, in trying to get through the crowds you had to break your stride numbers of times, and that is annoying when you are concentrating. Besides, spectators frequently came up and recalled the time you played their course back in 1941.

"The new system at Baltusrol was a joy for the players, and I know all of us felt that way. We had the playing area to ourselves, and the course was not pock-marked by thousands of footprints.

"It was a great pleasure to play under such conditions."

From the spectators' standpoint, more play can be seen more easily with less walking and general effort, as the areas of visibility are the widest possible. Racing down fairways for preferred positions is not necessary.

As spectators are generally off the course, the danger of being struck by golf balls is minimized.

For the tournament managers, the formerly thankless job of shepherding spectators is simplified by fixed control, where formerly new controls had to be established after every shot.

It is easier to maintain the course in good condition.

The testing qualities of the course are kept more nearly normal and uniform. Rough-immediately adjacent to the fairway is not trampled by thousands of feet, and so serves its true purpose of testing and rewarding accuracy in play.

Fair play is furthered because lucky and unlucky breaks caused by balls striking spectators are kept to a minimum.

The pace of play is helped—or should be.

Used in Major USGA Events

This system of completely roping each hole as a unit, where feasible, is followed for both the Open and the Amateur Championships of the USGA, and oc-

asionally for other USGA events. Roping of tees and greens is usually done for all other USGA competitions.

The USGA owns three sets of ropes and two sets of stakes (as a USGA official once said, "Enough rope to hang all of us!").

A new lightweight yellow rope made of Marlex, a plastic, was used for the 1958 Open Championship at the Southern Hills Country Club, in Tulsa, and in the 1958 Amateur Championship at the Olympic Country Club in San Francisco. It was loaned by the Phillips Chemical Company, American Manufacturing Company, Samson Cordage Works and Puritan Cordage Mills, Inc. It has since been acquired by the USGA and will be used for the 1959 Amateur at the Broadmoor Golf Club, in Colorado Springs, Colo.

AN EASY GAME

Everyone knows how to play golf. Once a player has mastered the grip and stance, all he has to bear in mind, in the brief, two-second interval it takes to swing, is to keep his left elbow pointed in towards the left hip and his right arm loose and closer to the body than the left and take the clubhead straight back and low along the ground until his hands are past his right knee and then break the wrists at just the right instant while the left arm is still traveling straight back from the ball and the right stays glued to the body and the hips come around in a perfect circle, and meanwhile everything will be mucked-up unless the weight is 60 per cent on the left foot, and 40 per cent on the right at the start, not an ounce more or less, and at just the right point in the turn the left knee bends in towards the right in a dragging motion until the left heel comes off the ground, but not too far, and be sure the hand's over the right foot, but not on the toe, more on the heel, except that the left side of the right foot is tilted off the ground, but not too far, and be sure the hands at the top of the swing are high and the shaft points along a line parallel with the ground and if it's a downhill lie the shaft is supposed to be pointed downhill, too, and pause at the top of the swing and count one and jerk the left arm straight down like a bell ringer yanking a belfry rope and don't uncock the wrists too soon and pull the left hip around in a circle, but don't let the shoulders turn with the hips, they have to be facing the hole, and now transfer the weight 60 per cent to the left foot and 40 per cent on the right, not an ounce more or less, and tilt the left foot now so the right side of it is off the ground, but not too far, and keep the left leg straight, that's the one you hit against, and watch out for the left hand it's supposed to be extended, but not too stiff or the shot won't go anywhere and don't let it get loose or you'll hook, and let the wrists uncock, but don't force them or you'll smother the shot and don't break them too soon, but keep your head down AND HIT THE BALL.