

GOLF WRITERS AS GOLF PLAYERS

By

DES SULLIVAN
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It is almost ancient history now, but it is still worth recording that golf writers have proved that they aren't any smarter than the people they write about. But they may be somewhat hardier.

The pen-and-pencil men gathered for the seventh year in Myrtle Beach, S. C., at the Dunes Golf and Beach Club for their annual Golf Championship—an event which is always just before the Masters Tournament. Besides producing a Golf Writing Champion, the competition also gives the scribes a chance to try out their legs to see if they are in proper condition for the long summer campaign.

It generally turns out they are not.

Champion this year is Ronald Green, a youth representing The Charlotte News. He scored 39-41—80 over the 6,800-yard, par-72 Dunes course. On the face of it, that total is not something Arnold Palmer would be proud of, but the weather the day the writers ventured forth was so bad that Palmer and Company probably never would have gone outside anyway.

Over the final nine, the writers didn't skirt ponds; they swam through them.

While Mr. Green was the day's hero, Charles Bartlett of The Chicago Tribune, who is Secretary of the Golf Writers Association of America, earned the title of "Outstanding Martyr." He broke all the records for high score. Mr. Bartlett's 22 on the 520-yard, water-girt 13th was four higher than the soul-searing 18 posted a couple of years ago by Herb Graffis of *Golfdom Magazine*.

Charles' experiences on that hole deserve particular description. In his own words, he "approached the problem carefully," bunting his first shot about 30 yards. Next he went on the offensive, sending an iron to the water's edge. At that point he was faced with a 170-yard carry over the pond.

After five shots made a big splash, Charles decided to be more cautious and to pay attention to economy. He nudged

the ball around the drink, reached the putting surface in 19 strokes, and neatly three putted for his 22.

Charles' handicap is about 43.

Closely behind Champion Ronald Green in the scoring came Ed Campbell of the Charleston, S. C., *News and Courier* with 42-39—81.

Others among the better shooters included: Dan Scism, *Evansville, Ind., Courier*, 40-43—83; Tom Davison, *Houston Post*, 42-42—84; Howard Gill, *Golf Digest*, 44-41—85; Marshall Dann, *Western Golf Association*, 42-45—87; Bill Davis, *Golf Digest*, 45-44—89; the writer of this article, 44-47—91.

The Writers' Tournament suffered a loss from an unexpected quarter even before the festivities began. Dan Jenkins of the Fort Worth, Texas, *Press*, won last year but he was unable to defend this time. He got married a couple of days too soon.

Several player-writers began their appointed rounds but got no further than the second green whereupon they retired—to the clubhouse, that is.

While Mr. Bartlett was taking his historic 22 and going through purgatory, rain in large bucketfuls was pouring down.

If pros had been out in that stuff, they'd have quit and gone home. Nobody with intelligence, Graffis said, would permit himself to be seen outdoors in such weather. It definitely was a day more suited to gin rummy.

There was no championship trophy devoted to that sport, but neither Larry Robinson, of The New York *World-Telegram and Sun*, nor Bob Drum of The *Pittsburgh Press*, worried about trophies. They trustingly accepted checks from their confreres.

Mr. Drum had a smoothly fashioned (a phrase often used by the writers to describe the playing of others) 49-44—93. Mr. Robinson brought in a 47-48—95.

This was the seventh time writers have visited Myrtle Beach.