

THE SPIRIT OF THE OPEN

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over the face of the game in the meantime.

From a player's standpoint, the unmatched sets of clubs of 1924—largely hickory-shafted—were almost mongrels compared with the precision instruments of today. The modern golf ball has benefited from science in a number of fields. The grooming of the golf course is vastly superior today.

Galloping Galleries Gone

From a spectator's standpoint, the crowds are bigger now but the facilities are profoundly improved. Gone are the galloping galleries which used to race down the fairway for 'vantage points. Today spectators don't walk on the fairway except briefly on planned and controlled crossways. The modern system of roping off each fairway as a unit enables more spectators to view more golf with far less effort than before; it gives the stage solely to the players, and preserves the testing qualities of the course.

It used to be that spectators' information about scores was obtained largely by word of mouth—a deficiency now taken care of by a network of scoreboards on the course and a huge one in front of the

clubhouse to show how leading players score as soon as a hole is played. Thousands of other spectators all over the country will see the crux of the final round through television—an unknown medium in 1924.

The Great Occasion

Yet for all the outward changes, the National Open remains in spirit pretty much as it has always been. It is the great occasion for the great players of the day. The young professional who hopes to have his four dream rounds—the amateur who aspires to follow in the steps of Bob Jones—the veteran star who still clings proudly to his skill—the tigers of the day who are roaring in their prime: all these come together to have their strokes and their self-control tried in the greatest crucible of golf. It is the greatest crucible just because it is the Open. The last two rounds are played in one day—a 36-hole wind-up that requires the winner to hold championship form throughout a long day. There is no finer day in all sports than the last day of the National Open Golf Championship.

The Open is a great convention of golf-lovers from many parts of the country. It represents a labor of love by Oakland Hills' members, who have devoted thousands of hours voluntarily, gratuitously, to preparations.

Here, in the generous bounty of the host club is found much of the heart of the Open. For all the commercial overtones which arise when money prizes are at stake, the Open is shot through with a genius of sheer love of golf—from champion to caddie, from chairman to messenger.