

A BACKWARD LOOK AT OAKLAND HILLS

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One of the most pleasant facets of golf is the recollection of its historic events. The Open Championship, which unites great players with great courses, is an especially pleasing challenge for the memory.

The player and the course are bound inextricably in Open history. Golfers everywhere identify The Country Club in Brookline, Mass., with Francis Ouimet's success there in 1913; Interlachen in Minneapolis is where Bob Jones nailed down the third quarter of his Grand Slam in 1930; Fresh Meadow in New York recalls Gene Sarazen playing the final 28 holes in 100 strokes in 1932.

Three Notable Performances

Oakland Hills, near Detroit, where the 61st Open takes place this month, is rich in memories because it recalls three notable Open performances.

Think of Oakland Hills and you must think of little Cyril Walker emerging

from obscurity there in 1924; of Ralph Guldahl beginning his two-year reign as Open champion in 1937; and of Ben Hogan's superb finishing round of 67 to win his third Championship in 1951.

The great courses endure. The Champions move on. The ill-fated Walker, whose last job was as a caddie, died in 1948. Guldahl, only 25 when he won at Oakland Hills, won his last important title, the Masters, two years later and then gradually faded from golf. He has just recently returned to the game as a professional at the Deauville Country Club, Tarzana, Calif. His son, Ralph Guldahl, Jr., a professional at Inglewood, Calif., entered the Open this year.

Hogan seems intent on testing even the endurance of the course. He is a contender at age 48 just as he was at 47 last year at Cherry Hills. Since his 1951 victory Hogan has competed in eight Opens. He won once, lost a playoff to Jack Fleck,



Thousands bank the 18th green at Oakland Hills in 1951. Ben Hogan, playing his final hole, has just reached the center of the green. Cap in hand, he is acknowledging the ovation of the crowd.

tied for second, was third, tied for sixth, twice tied for eighth, and tied for tenth. In brief, he has not been out of the low ten in more than a decade.

Oakland Hills now joins two other courses, the Myopia Hunt Club, Hamilton, Mass., and the Baltusrol Golf Club, Springfield, N. J., to form a select trio which have been host to the Open on four occasions.

The course in 1961 plays much the same, though not as severely, as it did a decade ago. Seven traps have been taken out, but 113 remain. Five greens have been modified to provide for additional pin placements.

Hogan, after he had won the British Open in 1953 at Carnoustie, was asked if the Scottish course was the toughest he had played. "No, it was Oakland Hills," Hogan quickly answered.

The man who wins this month, therefore, will earn his laurels on one of the world's great courses. By winning, he will also add to the rich heritage established by these three earlier Opens at Oakland Hills:

Walker in 1924

The 30-year-old Cyril Walker, a native of England, had never finished higher than 13th in previous Open attempts. He was never to finish higher than 47th in the future.

Plagued by ill health, Walker, who weighed but 118 pounds, somehow garnered the confidence and the determination to forecast his victory to his wife on the eve of the Championship.

Later, Walker gave full credit to his wife for his success at Oakland Hills. Elizabeth Walker, called "Tet" by her husband, asked if she might accompany him to Oakland Hills. She'd never seen an Open.

A Wife's Help

Walker wrote of her in *THE AMERICAN GOLFER* soon after the tournament. He said "I decided that she'd be a great help to me in seeing that I didn't 'hang around' with the other boys to all hours of the night, swapping stories, and perhaps indulging in the five-card pastime.

"You know how it is at Championships. You meet all the boys. You haven't seen them in a year, and there's always the temptation to stay up late. When your

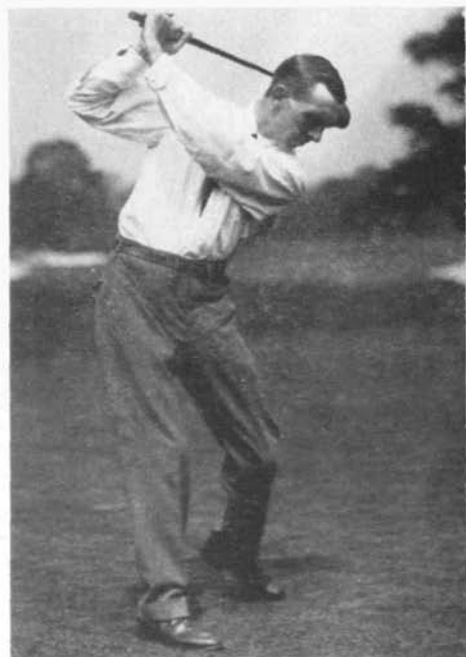
wife's around you've at least got an excuse to get away from all that.

"I knew that I of all persons needed to keep fit, for I knew that Oakland Hills was a course that would call for more endurance than any other on which the Championship had been played in recent years.

"And all the time that I was out there I got to bed at 11 o'clock and was up at 7 o'clock in the morning, feeling fit as a fiddle, clear-eyed and with my nerves—until this year a great handicap to me and responsible for my slowness of play in the past—absolutely under control."

The Championship was confined to two days. Walker was regarded as a good golfer, but the field was obviously full of good golfers—Bob Jones, Gene Sarazen and Walter Hagen, to name but three. According to the late Grantland Rice, Walker, set in the middle of the vast Oakland Hills course, "looked like a blade of grass in an open plain."

Walker did not become prominent until nearly dusk of the first day when it was learned that he had added a 74 to his 74 of the morning round to rest one stroke back of Jones and Bill Mehlhorn,



Cyril Walker

the leaders. Bobby Cruickshank and Davey Robertson were in at 149. Hagen and Mac Smith were deadlocked at 150.

The second and final day of play was marked by extremely strong winds blowing out across Lake Erie to add to the hazards of the well-trapped course.

Walker made a strong bid on the first nine holes of the third round. The other six leaders went out between 37 and 39. Walker kept his shots low and straight, putted consistently if not spectacularly, and came to the 9th hole needing a par of 3 for a 35.

He used a brassie on the 210-yard hole and hit a low shot squarely to the pin. The ball stopped only three feet from the cup and when he sank his putt for a 2 he was out in 34.

Walker faltered coming in with a 40, but his third 74 tied Jones at 222. Four others were within five strokes of the lead.

One by one, Walker's rivals encountered trouble along the final round. Eventually it was apparent that only Jones, playing well ahead of Walker, had an opportunity to beat the little man.

The 10th hole finished Jones' chance. This hole, 440 yards long, had cost Jones 6-5-6 in the three preceding rounds. He took another 6 on the last round despite a strong tee shot. In all, Jones needed 23 strokes on the 10th, seven more than par.

Jones slipped again at the 13th and the 14th but finished strong to post 300. Walker, who was two strokes ahead of Jones after the 10th, retained that lead through the 15th. He was the last contender on the course.

Walker hit a strong drive at 16 and then deliberated—some say for as long as 10 minutes—before selecting a midiron to clear a water hazard and reach the green 175 yards away. Walker admitted "It took me quite a little time to decide what club to use.

"I'll tell you I was relieved when I saw that ball drop as close to the pin as it did. I made double sure on the putt and holed it for a birdie 3. Nothing but a break-down could halt me now. I knew it."

Walker followed with another 3 on the 210-yard 17th. This left him with 7 strokes to win and 8 to tie on the final hole. He played it safely for a sure and certain 5.



Ralph Guldahl

Guldahl In 1937

In 1933 Ralph Guldahl, then only 21, had missed a putt of four feet on the final hole in the Open. Had he holed that putt he would have tied Johnny Goodman, the last Amateur to win the Open.

Guldahl's fortunes faded after that. In 1935 his prize money for the year was only \$280, and it was generally believed that he would never again be an Open contender despite his youth.

Guldahl, one of the game's longest hitters at 6'3" and 212 pounds, recovered gradually from his mishap in the Open to compile enviable tournament records during 1936 and 1937.

A Young Favorite

Despite the presence of Guldahl, the veteran Cruickshank, Goodman, Byron Nelson and a host of other players already tested under Championship conditions, the pre-tournament favorite was a youth competing in his first Open, Sam Snead.

Snead, his swing as flawless then as it is 24 years later, had captured the popular imagination. His victories prior to the

Open caused Bob Jones to write that Snead played under "a burden he should not have had to shoulder." Burden or not, Snead played exceedingly well. He finished second with 283. Guldahl and Snead were tied at 212 after 54 holes.

The leaders were not then grouped for the last day as they are today, so that when Snead finished his last round, Guldahl had 11 holes to play.

Two Under To Win

Guldahl learned of Snead's total as he was about to putt on the par-5 eighth hole, which he had reached in two. Snead's finish meant that Guldahl must play the balance in two under par to win. He holed that 35-foot putt on the eighth to erase Snead's margin and take the lead with one stroke.

He came right back with a birdie on the 9th. One over par 37 on the final nine holes would give him the Championship.

The same 10th hole that cost Jones so dearly in 1924 almost undid Guldahl. He barely managed a 5, one over par, and immediately lost another stroke to par on the 11th.

Guldahl, in a most convincing manner, immediately regained his lead on the 12th, a par 5. Jones pin-pointed his third shot on the 12th as "the greatest shot of the tournament and the one which made his great finish possible."

Guldahl's second shot had stopped 30 yards short of the green. The pin was set at the base of a downslope, a dozen feet from a crest and close to the short rough around the green's edge. A ball that topped the crest seemed likely to run by the hole and off the green.

An Exquisite Shot

According to Jones, Guldahl then hit "an exquisite knock-down pitch which bit twice, barely topped the slope and slid down a yard past the hole." He made the putt, followed with another birdie on 13, and finished with five pars.

Guldahl's winning total of 281 has since been bettered by only two Champions—Ben Hogan, who set the record with 276 at Riviera in 1948, and Arnold Palmer, who won with 280 at Cherry Hills last year.

Hogan In 1951

Ben Hogan's final round of 67 in 1951 is considered the masterpiece of his career. He often has referred to it as his best.

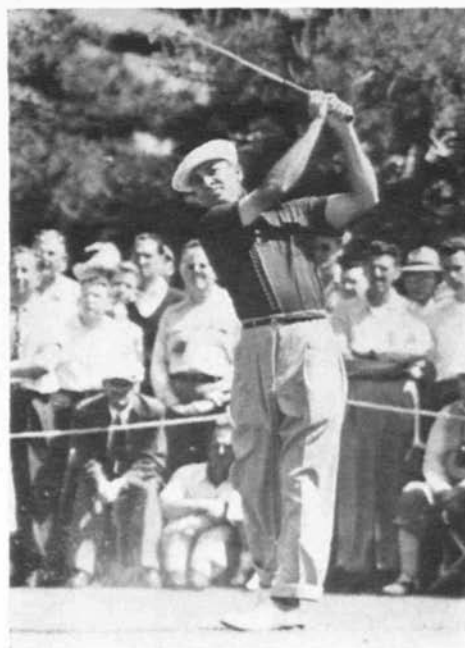
After the morning round of the final day Hogan stood at 200, tied for fifth place and two strokes behind the leaders, Jimmy Demaret and Bobby Locke.

A brilliant 32 going out had put him astride the leaders in the morning, but he needed 39 coming home. Somewhat aroused by the 39, Hogan said, "I'm going to burn it up this afternoon."

He made the statement without a show of swagger. It was a statement of the determination and faith which marked his life—the determination which kept him alive in 1949 when he was near death after an automobile accident.

He began the final round with a 35 on the first nine holes. Then he came in with 32. Along the last nine holes, he had four 3s and one 2. He played the last six holes in 20 strokes. He played each nine in 32 during that momentous day.

The late Clayton Heafner, who finished second with 289, two strokes behind



Ben Hogan

Hogan, had the only other round under 70 of the 430 played throughout the tournament. Heafner's 69 came in the final round.

For Hogan, it meant three Open Championships in succession. After his victory at Riviera in 1948, his injury kept him out of the 1949 Open. In 1950 at Merion he tied with Lloyd Mangrum and George Fazio and won the playoff with 69.

Hogan was to win again at Oakmont in 1953 to join Bob Jones and Willie Anderson as the only four-time Open winners.

Oakland Hills was a cause of considerable discussion in 1951. It had been tightened under a program mapped by Robert Trent Jones, the golf course architect.

The drive zones were particularly narrow. In some cases, they were much less than the general minimum widths—35 to 40 yards—called for in the USGA Championship Manual which guides clubs in preparing for USGA events.

It was a severe test, one that required Hogan to use practically every club in his bag during his two great rounds of the last day. Many players complained that the conditions were unfair. Gene Sarazen, however, wrote to the USGA that the course was a masterpiece. "It was challenge to the player. The best players finished on top."

Hogan said at the presentation ceremony, "I finally brought the monster to its knees."

DO YOU KNOW YOUR GOLF?

This competition is mainly designed to whet your appetite for the Open and the Women's Open Championships by testing your knowledge of their histories.

Along this 18-hole quiz course you'll come upon queries based on the Rules of Golf. Par is 72. Score 4 for every correct answer and 5 for every answer wrong.

The answers are on page 19.

THE OPEN CHAMPIONSHIP

1. Has any Open Champion been the leader after every round?
2. Name three of the five players who won the Open in consecutive years.
3. What player played through the most Opens—that is—played 72 holes?
4. Name the player who posted the lowest score by an amateur for 72 holes.
5. Name the last winner of the Open who was not a citizen of the United States.
6. What player has finished most often in the top ten in the Open?
7. Who scored the lowest round in Open history?
8. What Champion recorded the lowest 72-hole total?
9. Who was the last amateur to win the Open?

THE WOMEN'S OPEN

10. Has any player won the Women's Open in consecutive years?
11. What Women's Open Champion had the largest winning margin?
12. Who has finished most often in the top ten of the Women's Open?
13. Who has won the Women's Open most often?
14. What amateur posted the lowest 72-hole score in the Women's Open?

THE RULES OF GOLF

15. In four-ball stroke play, does the player furthest from the hole control lifting of the balls?
16. If a player decides to take relief from ground under repair through the green, where must he drop the ball?
17. In stroke play, is a penalty imposed on a player whose ball, struck from a spot in a hazard 35 feet from the hole, strikes a fellow-competitor's ball on the putting green?
18. In match play, is there a penalty for teeing off out of turn?