

# GOLF THAT LASTS ALL DAY AND GOES CROSS COUNTRY

By  
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SLAPPEY

The Irish have a legendary hero named Cuchulain (pronounced something like Choo Choo Train) who, it is said, could hit a ball into the air with a hurley stick, run after it and snare the ball before it hit the ground.

With just a little Pictish or Gaelic imagination, you can see how Cuchulain also could, quite easily, drive a golf ball, run after it and catch the ball before it came to earth.

With such exploits of old Cuchulain in mind, several Irishmen in 1953 thought up "The Golden Ball Competition." Despite its diabolical overtones, the annual competition today is quite popular in Central Ireland and it has become father to many smaller, highly unusual and amusing ways of using a golf club, a ball,

a love of self-punishment and a mania for hiking.

"The Golden Ball Competition" calls for players to strike a ball for five and a half miles, starting from the first tee of the Kildare Golf Club and ending at the 18th green of the Curragh Golf Club.

The ball is played as it lies—no matter where or how it lies. Only about six shots are actually played on golf courses—the first three at Kildare and the last three at Curragh.

Between those peaceful playing grounds, the golfer in quest of The Golden Ball must strike his way across the Curragh Gallops where thousands of race-horses and steeplechasers are trained, he must play through tank traps where the Irish Army works out, through or over a rock



English golf professional Charles A. Macey playing a shot from a railway track during a cross-country golf stunt which covered 37.1 miles. Macey and four others claim to have set a distance record. The five used 896 shots and lost 65 balls in their 16-hour, 15-minute golf match.

quarry, among furze bushes which litter the place, a huge graveyard sitting squarely in the middle of the "course," down the Dublin-Cork railway for a short distance and over gully washes and hilly terrain.

Half of normal handicaps are granted to even things up as much as possible.

The record for the run was a 47 by Dublin's Joe Carr, the happy warrior who has formed much of the muscle for recent British Walker Cup teams.

Such golf, if indeed it be golf, operates under several names—cross-country golf, obstacle course golf, marathon golf, steeplechase golf.

But whatever the name, August 25, 1959, was a notable day for the golfing off-beats.

The historic day began at 5:30 A.M. at the De La Warr Crowborough Beacon Golf Club, Sussex, England. Lt. Col. Charles Owen Hezlet, thrice a British Walker Cup player, teed up and sent a 220-yard drive precisely to the center of the first fairway.

Five other golfers then took up the task of pounding the ball from that point on. They kept at it until 9:45 that night, at which time they reached the Eastbourne Golf Course, 37.1 miles away. Major Cyril Tolley, one of Britain's best-known players of the 1920s, was waiting at Eastbourne and he holed out the final putt.

#### Over The River Cuckmore

During the 16-hour, 15-minute day, 896 teed shots were hit; 65 balls were lost; 47 major fields, two railway lines and 14 roads were crossed; the River Cuckmore was played over; the South Downs (a range of junior grade mountains) were climbed.

The five who made the crossing and who now claim the record for having played the longest golf hole of all time were: Charles A. Macey, Crowborough professional; K. Meaney, assistant; J. Donald; F. Crittal, and J. Bailey. They played alternate strokes. David Wilde went along as scorekeeper and to help push the surveyor's wheel which measured the golf hole.

As the five marched up the 18th fairway in the dusk at Eastbourne, automobile headlights were switched on to give them light.

The surveyor's wheel was used because

the Englishmen were dead set on breaking the marathon record claimed by American brothers since 1929. The distance must be officially measured.

Clyde and Harold McWhirter played against each other between Spartanburg, and Union, S. C., a distance of 36¾ miles, on June 5, 1929. They set forth at 5:18 A.M. and played for 13 hours, 4 minutes.

#### Lost: Four Caddies

Clyde took 780 shots and Harold 825—all teed. They lost 22 balls and almost four caddies. The caddies had to take turns about riding in an accompanying car so they could get some rest.

There was a 35-mile cross-country match in England in 1913 which lasted for three days.

But a grand example of constantly playing from uphill lies was in 1848 at Edinburgh, Scotland. Two Scots played from Bruntsfield Links to the top of Arthur's Seat—a chair-shaped mountain overlooking the city from a height of 822 feet.

In the minutes of the Royal Burgess Golfing Society there also is the following notation; again it is about the queer-looking Scottish mountain:

"Bruntsfield Links, 13th May 1805, Mr. Scott betted one guinea with Mr. Dowell that he would drive a ball from the Golf House over Arthur Seat, at 45 strokes. Mr. Scott lost. Mr. Brown betted with Mr. Spalding one gallon of whiskey that he would drive a ball over Arthur Seat on the terms and at the same number of strokes as the above bet. Mr. Spalding lost as Mr. Brown drove his ball in 44 strokes."

#### "Fore" in Piccadilly

Two cross-country affairs have been played through the heart of London. One began at Piccadilly Circus and the other at Tower Bridge over the River Thames in the East End. Few full drives were hit for fear of maiming or killing onlooking Englishmen.

One of the first instances of steeplechase golf was in 1830, quite appropriately, at St. Andrews, Scotland.

A leading member of the Royal and Ancient bet 10 pounds (then worth about \$50.) on himself to drive from the first hole of The Old Course to the tollbar at Cupar, a distance of nine miles, in 200 teed shots.

He won easily.