

# LIVELY SESSION IN STORE FOR U. S. G. A.

## Ban on Ouimet and Others to be Put to Test at Annual Meeting on Friday.

### OTHER VITAL ISSUES UP

#### Attack Likely Against Conduct of Organization as Being Sec- tional and Prejudiced.

In its twenty-third annual meeting, which will be held at the Hotel Astor in this city on Friday night, the United States Golf Association faces the most important session of its existence. It is an odd happening that the greatest question in modern amateur sports is precisely "amateurism," and golf is the first game to adopt, hold and defend a sweeping, if radical, rule that bars from amateur competition some of the most famous exponents of the game in this country. Whether that rule will stand and whether the damage, or the benefit, it has brought about will become permanent is to be decided by the votes of the delegates to the meeting on Friday night.

This is not the whole of the matter, however, for in addition to the assault on the amateur rule adopted last year by the U. S. G. A. there is a joint movement of offense against that body, of a certain body politic which is alleged to be within the larger body. It is asserted by the attacking forces that the United States Golf Association as it is at present being conducted or conducting itself, is not working toward the best interests of golf in this country, that it is sectional in character, aristocratic in opinion, prejudiced in action, and swayed by a few interested individuals who direct its policies as their fancy may dictate. Such an indictment as this, if proved to be even faintly true, would be sufficient to shake the foundations of a much greater organization than a golf association.

#### Other Questions Up.

Still the tale of strife is not complete. It is expected that the matter of taking in associations of golf clubs, as well as the individual golf clubs as members of the national organization, will bob up serenely when the delegates are in session, and if the mutterings and flashes on this point that have already been heard from different parts of the country are any criterion the matter will be discussed in a general engagement that will compare very favorably with the great battle on the amateur question. Last, but still a matter of much interest to golfers in general, will be the awarding of the three national championship tournaments for 1917. This is the promising program that will be presented to the delegates when they assemble for the meeting. The decks have been cleared, the delegates are stripping for action, and, all in all, Friday night's event bids fair to be epoch-making in the history of golf, and probably all amateur sports in America.

The question of the "amateurism" of Ouimet, Tewksbury, Sullivan and Lockwood has been discussed up hill and down dale since ruling G on Section 7 of the bylaws was adopted at the U. S. G. A. meeting last January in Chicago and since these four players were formally notified that they could no longer play in the same back yard with little amateur boys. Without regard to the exact status of the players in question, however, the whole question of amateurism has been an issue from one end of the country to the other. Sectionally speaking, the West is insurgent, the East is conservative and New England is engaged in a family row over the matter.

In awarding the Western championship to Del Monte last season, the delegates of the Western Golf Association were relying on taking up the free train offer of the Coast Club to make the tournament a success. At the suggestion of the U. S. G. A. Executive Committee, the officials of the Western Golf Association decided not to accept free transportation for golfers in their trip to the Coast on the issue that it would affect the amateur standing of the players. As a consequence the tournament was confined almost exclusively to Pacific Coast players. The result of the matter is that the Western Golf Association members have decided either to make the U. S. G. A. change its attitude or else to locate their championship tournament where it can be reached on a bicycle from Chicago.

It is in staid and respectable New England, however, that the greatest tumult has raged. It is peculiar that the blow should have fallen almost exclusively on such a small area, and that it should strike three such prominent players as Ouimet, Tewksbury, and Sullivan in the one golf club. As a matter of golfing ability these three individuals might very well be a match for any three members of any one golf club in the country. The personal popularity of the debarred players, and the fact that the most prominent golfer affected, Ouimet, had been in the sporting goods business before he was of any importance as a tournament player, brought great support to the cause of the disqualified golfers on the part of their own and many other clubs. There was added an element of bitterness to the fight over the fact that it was G. Herbert Windeler, former President of the U. S. G. A. and Secretary of the Country Club at Brookline, who formulated the ruling and put the motion at the annual meeting which lost Ouimet and the others to the New England amateur ranks.

Consequently a cry has been raised against Windeler and also M. Lewis Crosby, member of the Executive Committee of the U. S. G. A., from the Brae Burn Club. It is felt as a double injustice that such action should have been taken against the home players at the instigation of men who should have rallied to the defense instead of the attack. Moreover, this matter has served to bring out the resentment of many of the New England clubs against what might be termed the superimportance of The Country Club in the golf circles of that section. It is openly hinted that such players as Fred Wright and Jesse Guilford had to fight their way to their places on the Lesley Cup team and that there are many fine amateur players in the New England section who are not invited to the exclusive tournaments of The Country Club. Naturally there has been a great sharpening of knives over such a situation, and some of these weapons are about ready to do some cutting at the meeting Friday night.

#### May Include Other Golfers.

It has been reported that in case the Woodland Golf Club and its allies do not succeed in revoking the rule under which Ouimet was barred, there will be produced evidence supplied by them that certain metropolitan golfers should be included in the number under the ban. If this is true, the charges will at least make interesting reading, and if they can prove anything about any of the local golfers they will undoubtedly receive the support of the U. S. G. A. Executive Committee in the action for their debarment.

The attack on the U. S. G. A. as a ruling body will come mainly from the West. The preponderance of Eastern clubs in the association, the supposed discrimination against the Western clubs in awarding the championship tournaments, and quite distinct ideas possessed by the two regions on the amateur question are more than sufficient grounds for a fair-sized argument. It is felt that with golf and golf courses spreading so rapidly in all parts of the country, the U. S. G. A. should be more of a real national body than it is. It is declared that the majority of its officers are from the East, that its policies are directed by clubs that are all within a stone's throw of the Atlantic seaboard, and that the Executive Committee considers a tournament lost to civilization if it is held anywhere outside one of the original Thirteen Colonies.

Also, it will be some Lochinvar from the vicinity of the Mississippi or points further West who will lead the assault on President Woodward's proposed association membership. There seems to be some misunderstanding on this point, which, if it is cleared up, may spoil a good fight. According to Howard F. Whitney the scheme is the entirely laudable one of getting clubs in some

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way, however slightly, in touch with the U. S. G. A., which clubs would otherwise have no connection whatever with organized golf. The intentions were of enlisting each and every golf club in this country for the betterment of the game through co-operation and organization. An unfortunate interpretation of President Woodward's letter led to the belief that it was partly a scheme to get a great many clubs under the sway of the U. S. G. A. without giving them any share in the direction of the policies and activities of the organization. President Woodward did not intend to dictate any method of action to be taken in this matter, but merely offered a tentative plan that might at least open the discussion on the subject.

Last on the program comes the awarding of the championship tournaments for 1917. For some reason, which is still a mystery, there is a settled feeling that the national amateur championship will be awarded to the Oakmont Country Club, just outside of Pittsburgh. According to John G. Anderson and other such golfers it is in every respect a championship course and worthy of the event. It was reconstructed and brought up to the modern standard several years ago, and this year it held the Eastern intercollegiate championship tournament with unqualified success. There seems little doubt but that the women's championship will be awarded to Shawnee in accordance with the advice received by the U. S. G. A. from the women's committee appointed to select three courses for their own title event. Shawnee was the unanimous first choice, and will in all probability entertain the women in early October.

The open championship is therefore the only event whose location is more than a matter of reasonable doubt. The U. S.

G. A. requested the Professional Golfers' Association to select three courses for that event, such courses to be submitted to the delegates at the annual meeting of the U. S. G. A. The pros were united in asking for Whitemarsh Valley as the scene of the 1917 open championship, and only named Brae Burn and Shawnee to make up the necessary number of at least three clubs. But in view of the fact that the women later selected Shawnee as their choice, and that Oakmont seems sure of the amateur championship, it is highly improbable that all three national championships will be held within the confines of Pennsylvania, so that the open tournament is due to move somewhere else.

Brae Burn would be the logical place, since New England has not held this event since Francis Ouimet defeated Vardon and Ray in the famous play-off at Brookline in 1913. Shawnee is out of the question because of its selection by the women. An element of uncertainty has been added, however, by the fact that in submitting the list of clubs offered by the Professional Golfers' Association for consideration at the annual meeting of the U. S. G. A. the Executive Committee of this last body added the names of two clubs to the list, bringing the total up to five. The additions were Fox Hills and Shenecossett. Brae Burn is a wonderful course and a favorite with the professionals themselves, but unless Fox Hills or Shenecossett is to get the open championship why were their names added at all? Shennecossett is another favorite course among the professionals, but there is an undercurrent of opinion that since the metropolitan district was without a national championship in 1916 it should have one this coming season. Following out this line of reasoning would give the professional event to the Fox Hills Golf Club. The professionals themselves have declared officially that they will be satisfied with any course provided it has at least nineteen holes and some good putting greens.

All this is matter on the schedule for discussion. What other causes for action may arise when the delegates get together is still an open question, but at least there is enough here to keep them busy from their 9 P. M. start until closing time.

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