

PROGRESSIVE SPIRIT STALKS AT ANNUAL U. S. G. A. MEETING

Action of Delegates in Denying New York Open Event a Surprise; Three Champion- ships Nicely Divided; Regret That Philadelphia Did Not Bid

BY PERRY LEWIS

THE twenty-seventh annual meeting of the United States Golf Association, held in New York on Friday night, was as peaceful as such conclaves usually are, and at the same time it will go down in history as one of the most revolutionary in the history of the controlling golf body. To a large extent it was in the nature of a "ratification meeting," but at the same time there was a progressive spirit abroad from the moment that the gavel fell until an adjournment was taken.

It is evident that the ultra-conservative policy long adhered to by the U. S. G. A. is abandoned, and in its place is a programme of progress which is destined to smother the dissatisfaction centralized in the West—a dissatisfaction which undoubtedly gave the new spirit birth. The manifestations of this progressiveness may be listed as follows:

(1) The new scheme of membership, making only one class with all members voting.

(2) Making all golfers in the United States eligible to compete for the National Amateur Championship provided they have a sufficiently low handicap.

(3) The amendment to the constitution increasing the Executive Committee from nine to thirteen members.

(4) The amendment providing for a better geographical representation on the executive staff.

(5) Modification of the "lost ball penalty," making it adjustable to local rules.

(6) Readjustment of the stymie rule by substituting a new wording which is the same in effect as the one used last season, despite the fact that the Ancient and Honorable will still play the stymie.

(7) The awarding of the Amateur Championship to a club west of the Mississippi.

(8) The creation of an international competition similar to that provided in tennis by the Davis Cup. George H. Walker, former president, is donating the trophy, which will be competed for first next September on the National Links.

THE deliberations bristled with surprises, culminating with the shock provided by the delegates of denying the Open Championship to the Metropolitan District. No less than six clubs made bids for this event, and five of them are in the vicinity of New York. The sixth was the Columbia County Club, of Chevy-Chase, Maryland, and the latter won over Siwanoy by the narrow margin of 49 votes to 43.

Make no mistake about the fact that New York wanted that tournament, and columns of propaganda were spilled by the Metropolitan critics in an effort to win the plum. Previous to the meeting, "the underground" had it that Siwanoy would surely be successful, but this was reckoning without the broad spirit of live and let live rampant at the meeting.

It was the vote of the Philadelphia clubs which swung the tournament away from New York and to Columbia. Robert W. Lesley and Francis R. Warner, president and secretary-treasurer, respectively, of the Philadelphia Golf Association, held most of the proxies for the district clubs, and one after another they turned them in for Columbia. Had it not been for this almost solid vote New York would have entertained the 1921 Open as well as the Women's.

NO fairer arrangement of the national programme than this could have been effected and everybody is happy—with the possible exception of New York. The West is well taken care of with the amateur, the most luscious plum of all; the South, long neglected, will entertain the open, while the Metropolis may console itself with the women's classic.

It is to be regretted that there was no Philadelphia club to make a bid for any one of the three championships. This district was due for such distinction, but no local organization saw its way clear to bring one of the big shows here. However, a note of optimism was injected when Howard Perrin, for Pine Valley, announced that next year that super-course would be ready to entertain and would be in the field.

The recently reorganized Lakewood Country Club with its magnificent new course made a bid for all three of the tournaments, but did not press a campaign. As a matter of fact, the New Jersey club could have had no expectation of success, and its sweeping entry was simply in the nature of a notice that Lakewood would henceforth be in the field for the big classics.

ONE of the most interesting features of the evening was the silver-tongued oratory spilled by B. F. Kinelly, of the Flossmore Club, Chicago, and Judge J. R. Huff, of the St. Louis Country Club, in urging their respective organizations for the Amateur. From the first it was a battle between these two, for it was understood that the West would surely get this title tilt and these were the only two bidding.

Both men are trained speakers and they cut loose with everything they had. Kinelly had the floor first, and his speech was a hammer. So artfully did he work on the imagination of the delegates that things looked very dark for St. Louis.

Then it was that Judge Huff rose to his feet and proceeded to rip asunder the claims of Chicago. After keeping the delegates in roars of laughter by the subtle but good natured ridicule he heaped upon the rival city, he suddenly sobered, and in rather an ominous tone announced that never in the history of golf has the Amateur championship been held west of the Mississippi River. With this parting shot he took his seat—and a moment later a landslide of votes awarded the Amateur to his organization.

AN INSIGHT into the international situation was furnished by George H. Walker, who, as president of the U. S. G. A., headed the special committee on rules which met with the Ancient and Honorable Rules Committee in Britain last year.

Mr. Walker told the delegates that the rules body on the other side of the water was a powerful golf institution. He explained that it had been in existence for twenty-two years, and is composed of twenty-one men who have given years of their life to the study of the links game. Urging changes in the code with such a conservative body, he pointed out, was no small task, and that when the question of the stymie arose "serious difficulty" developed.

It was his thought that as much had been accomplished at this time as was possible, but held out much hope for the future. Mr. Walker declared that his committee were met by the British body as comparative "newcomers" to the game, and that while they were given every consideration and opportunity to urge their views, there was no disposition on the part of the Britishers to relax their hold on the game. He said that this was particularly true of the Scotch faction.