

RECOLLECTIONS OF PINEHURST AND BRAE BURN

By "Jim" Barnes

The first week of April each year finds the professionals of the country back in their northern berths starting out the new year of service to their club members "teaching the young idea how to shoot" and equipping them with "tools and sound advice." As a curtain raiser to those duties and pleasures comes the ever popular North and South Open Championship at Pinehurst, always well attended and looked forward to with eagerness by the "Pros." My good fortune to compete quite successfully in many tournaments during 1919 may have had its auspicious beginning from the success which came to me in this first Open of the Northern Season — The North and South.

Never before, I am told, have two courses been used for this event and that is such a good arrangement I hope it will be continued. The two courses are quite unlike, the No. 2 in my opinion being the best test of golf, and the No. 3 with its fine holes and variations leading an agreeable change and eliminating some of the monotony of similarity and repetition.

The ball lies close on the soft sandy soil at Pinehurst and requires greater accuracy in playing the strokes than on the Northern courses of thick, heavy grass. That adds to the interest and makes a better test. There is also a better chance for a long roll of the ball which is always appreciated.

On the No. 2 course, particularly, well placed drives are always rewarded by making the second shot easier. These second shots on good sand greens are always interesting and all the approaches have to be of the pitch and to these greens they are delightful and some very long puts can be holed, sometimes from off the green. When the ball is given a chance, it keeps the line beautifully right up to the cup.

I feel quite fortunate in winning the North and South Championship last year from a fine field. Bob MacDonald and Pat Doyle were leading at the end of the first round, but it is quite common in tournaments for Bob to lead at the first two rounds. It would please me very much to see him lead at the end of the tournament, as there is no finer golfer in the country. His failure to do so, I believe, may be attributed to his putter, the occasional failure of which seems to make him lose confidence. Some day I hope to see him get over that and then his name will often head the list.

Paddy Doyle's downfall after his early lead was possibly due to his misfortune of being taken sick the night before the tournament and so being unable to last out all four rounds.

The boys were really looking for Fred McLeod to win, for on a fast course he is most deadly with every shot. The rain the night before made the course slow and affected his chances.

Walter Hagen was not at his best, but came right back in his very next tournament, The National Open, at Brae Burn, and showed the stuff he is made of, by coming from behind and finally winning out. He is one of the few golfers who can win under such conditions, being a true fighter all the

way. Next year we shall read of his play in England at the British Open, in which he has already decided to be a competitor. We wish him the good luck to finish at the top, but he will be up against the best golfers of the world. His excellent ability, determination and fighting qualities will surely place him among the leaders.

Brae Burn, where the National Open Championship was held in June, is recognized as one of the finest courses in the East; length and accuracy are required all the time, although some of the sloping ground of the fairways introduces a tendency to occasionally bad fortune beyond the player's control. The greens are a fine, fair test of putting in general, but in some cases a little inclined toward trickiness. It is a most excellent course for a championship.

I wanted very much to win this tournament, for while I have finished first in most every other yearly open tournament, I have never yet succeeded in winning this one. I had been playing fine golf and felt quite confident, but some unfortunate incident occurred right at the start which robbed me of the proper keenness which is so necessary in these events. My chances of finishing up well in the prize list disappeared.

J. D. Edgar, who won the French Open Championship in 1914 from a fine field which included most of the leading British players, (Harry Vardon being in second place six strokes behind) was a competitor, having but a short time before arrived in this country. His being unacclimated to our weather and conditions evidently was the cause of his poor showing, for I am sure he had much confidence in being among the leaders. He is a fine golfer and will always be a contender. Late on in the season his victory in the Canadian Open at Hamilton demonstrated his ability.

At the end of the third round Brady's lead of five strokes over Hagen made him appear a sure winner, but the latter is never beaten until the last put is holed and I presume he started that last round with more confidence in being able to overcome that handicap than most any other player or spectator. Possibly Brady feared this confident spirit and fighting ability which he knew opposed him. Only Mike can explain the reason for permitting Walter to get back every one of those five strokes.

The gallery was well paid for following the contest when these two played another exciting round of elimination, owing to the tie for first place. It was an exciting contest with Hagen a victor when he calmly holed a fifteen foot put on the last green to win by a single stroke.

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