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Trailing Our National Champion

BY E. ELLSWORTH GILES

THIS writer is one of a number who has seen our national champion, Miss Glenna Collett, of Providence, play in most of her big time tournaments since she made her National Championship debut at Hollywood in Jersey back in 1921.

Miss Collett, then in her seventeenth year, went forth and tied with Mrs. Latham Hall of England for the low qualifying medal, with a very excellent score of 85.

The champion closed the year 1925 with the greatest competitive record ever compiled by a woman in this country, if indeed in any country, over a period of twelve months.

Now she is standing on the threshold of another competitive season and giving evidence that she will equal her 1925 record provided she keeps fit and does not go stale with too much tournament play. She lost a couple of matches in the far south recently, but to players shooting at the very crest of their games. Miss Collett will lose other matches, or she is not human, but the player who takes her over twice will be in line for felicitations.

The North and South for women, for the amateurs, and the pros as well, is a curtain raiser for the big northern tournament season just around the corner, and what the big boys and girls do here is a precursor of what may be expected to follow.

So when Glenna goes out and burns up the No. 3 course here at Pinehurst, which has a playing length of 6209 yards, with a man's par of 71—with a medal card as follows, we see her silhouetted as the nation's supreme golfer.

Miss Collett:

Out	Yards								
No. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
	367	415	392	330	221	186	305	443	380—3039
Score	4	5	5	4	4	3	4	4	5—38
No. 10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
	365	419	446	340	138	371	213	523	355—3170
Score	4	4	6	4	4	4	3	5	5—39—77

And this 77, played in a strong wind, comes pretty close to being a record for big tournament play. Glenna took the qualifying medal over her own home course with a 79 in 1924 and she had an 81 at White Sulphur in 1922 to take the gold medal. So well did the champion play that she might easily have cut off two and perhaps three strokes on the merits of her game.

The single 6 on her card was the result of a bit of hard luck and not because of mechanical error. From a well placed tee shot, long as all of her tee shots were, Miss Collett's brassie second was played a bit to the left of the flag to catch the slope to the blind green. The line was perfect

and the ball well hit, but it failed to carry the intervening trap by inches, dropping into the sand. The shot out failed to get near enough for a single putt, with the resultant 6. A missed putt at the ninth hole after a corking tee shot accounted for the 5 there. Another missed putt on the No. 14 water hole cost a 4, and a mashie second played too slack on the home hole after a perfect drive made it necessary to hole a long putt for even a 5, telling the tale of sins of commission.

Now let us recount some of the high spots in this scintillating round of the champion of the United States whose play was so smooth, powerful and flawless as to make the very excellent game of her partner, Miss Bernice Wall, of Oshkosh, Wis., look rather ordinary by comparison.

A MARVELOUS SHOT

In twenty years of watching all of the pros and best amateurs in this country in open competition, I have never seen a greater and more heroic shot pulled off, all things considered, than the champion played after her tee shot on No. 10 hole.

This hole is one of many on the four courses of the semi-dog-leg variety, played from left to right. The carded distance is 365 yards with a water hazard all the way across the fairway not far in front of the green which lies at a higher level. The fairway where the ball should light from the tee is of the hog-back type, receding to the right, and toward a thick forest. Miss Collett's ball was well on the fairway, and on the crow flight line to the hole, but too far to the right to open the line to the green. The ball was so far to the right that had the trees been covered with mid-summer foliage she could not have seen a vestige of the putting green. Added to this natural stymie was the further handicap of a hanging lie, and a closely lying ball. Miss Collett was too close to the tall trees to make the direct line carry over. Her partner, Miss Wall, with a somewhat shorter drive and with the ball several yards nearer the center of the fairway, elected to play safe to the low land in front of the water, which she did with a mashie pitch.

When the champion came up to her ball, without a moment's hesitation she pulled out a spoon and addressed the ball, while the hundreds of golfers in the gallery held their collective breaths. The ball sailed forth with such a beautifully controlled slice that it not only reached the green but it actually came to rest on the far right hand corner of the sanded putting surface, one of the greatest shots ever played in stroke competition in this country, or in any other, as I believe. This courage without the requisite accompanying ability might have cost her several strokes.