

J. S. F. Morrison on Golf

Half the English Championship

Two hundred and nine golfers entered for the English Championship, which was played this year on the Old Course of the Saunton Golf Club near Barnstaple.

As the course is rather inaccessible, especially for those who reside in the north of England, the entry was quite satisfactory, and included the holder, Harry Bentley, and ex-champions in T. A. Bourn, Leonard Crawley, Willie Sutton and Stanley Lunt; also Cyril Tolley, who has yet to win the English Championship and the President's Putter.

Other interesting entrants were Sir John Heathcoat-Amory, who was making his debut in this championship, and who was reported to have been practising extensively under the eye of his wife, than whom it is difficult to imagine a better coach; Flying-Officer J. H. Neal, the flying doctor who won the R.A.F. Championship at three-quarters throttle the day before he arrived at Saunton; many champions of other places, including the Argentine, South Indian, West of England and Ireland; and also George Harrison, who was undefeated in the Halford Hewitt Cup at Deal and whose father looks after the "quads."

THE County Championship, as usual, took place on the Saturday before the Championship in perfect weather. Many of the competitors played in shirt-sleeves, and it was difficult to realise that, one week earlier at Deal, many of the spectators found it necessary to wear two overcoats.

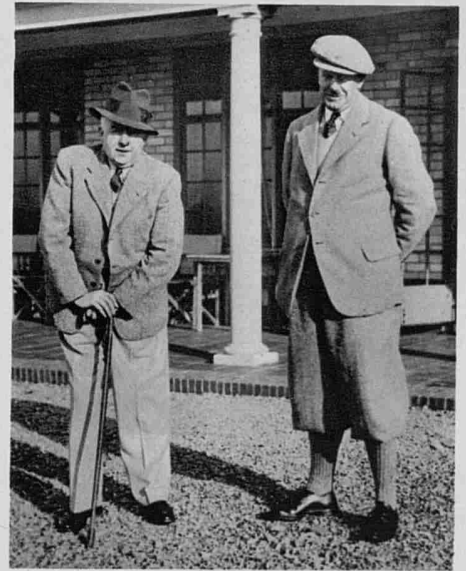
Harry Bentley, the holder, who has just got himself engaged to a lady from Germany, led Lancashire to victory by four strokes from Yorkshire, Devon and Surrey, who tied for second place.

The golf in the County Championship was not of a very high standard; that very much lower scores should have been returned is obvious from the fact that Charles Stowe, once always referred to as the "miner golfer," returned 71 with two penalty strokes—he drove "out of bounds" from the eighteenth tee—and T. A. Bourn, returned 73, also with two penalty strokes, as he lost a ball.

It must, however, be noted that the players were playing on a course which they had never seen before, due to the fact that the teeing grounds used were closed during practice. The Championship tees were not only very much further back, but also at many holes supplied shots at completely different angles. The playing off entirely different tees in practice rounds makes these rounds of little value to men who do not know the course.

I know full well that all clubs desire their tees to be in, and remain in, first-class order during the whole play in a championship, and consequently are tempted greatly to rest them as much as possible. If players, nevertheless, were allowed to use the front two yards of the championship tees in practice rounds and the discs put back a few inches each day, a large portion of the teeing area need not be used until the championship play actually starts, and the players would get an idea in practice of what shots will be required at the various holes.

IN the County Championship, which is decided by stroke play over thirty-six holes by teams of four players, the experiment of starting the competitors



The English Amateur Championship

April provided one or two perfect days at Saunton, North Devon, for the big entry in the English Amateur Championship last week. Major A. Whitley Lavarack, M.C., the secretary of the E.G.U. is with the local secretary, Mr. D. F. Meredith

in lots of three was tried, and to avoid delay the E.G.U. requested—not ordered—the player whose ball was nearest the hole on the putting green to hole out first; consequently in the possible but improbable event of the player nearest the hole being able to obtain, by watching an opponent putt, information concerning the pace of the green, he was entitled to do so.

The first trio took three minutes less than three hours to complete the course, but as the day wore on approximately 3½ hours was taken by many trios. The playing in threes did not give complete satisfaction. It is an extremely difficult matter to accommodate such a large field as started in the County Championship to the satisfaction of all.



Prelude to the English Championship: the County Championship

Gerald Quinn played for Hertfordshire, E. B. Tipping for Sussex, and H. G. Bentley, who was soon to defend his 1936 English amateur title, for Lancashire; the last won the county title, with 622, from the triple tie for second place



J. S. L. Lyon was one of the Yorkshire four who tied with Surrey and Devon for second place with 626 (Yorkshire had won in '31 and '33, Surrey in '27, '32 and '36). With him are W. Sutton (Cheshire) and Gordon Jones (Staffordshire)

As I write, there are still thirty-one players to be beaten before the champion is found. Bar myself and one or two others, all those still left in have a distinct chance of final victory. If Willie Sutton, Frank Pennink, or Harry Bentley had a golf course built specially to suit their types of play, I do not think they could have a course constructed which would suit them better than the old course at Saunton. These three players do not hit the ball the excessive distances of the long hitters of the present day, but what they lose on the swings they more than make up for on the roundabouts.

Willie Sutton had a decider with Cyril Tolley; it was the third time they had met in championships. Sutton took an early lead and was always ahead, to win reasonably comfortably by 3 and 1. Sutton beat Tolley in the English Championship at Gosforth Park in 1929, and was beaten by him in the last Amateur Championship at Royal St. George's.