

Golf

NEW NORTHERN CHAMPIONS

By a Special Correspondent

The Northern Counties golf championship changed hands at Mere on Saturday when Northumberland won it with a total of 925. Much more important is that they qualified for the finals of the English championship, which was won last year by Staffordshire. Yorkshire, who have been more successful in the North during the previous two seasons, finished a long way behind among the six counties who competed.

There were eight strokes between Northumberland and the runners-up, Cumberland and Westmorland at the end of the two rounds. Mid-way Northumberland were three shots behind Cumberland and Westmorland, the then leaders, with both Cheshire and Lancashire still in the hunt as well. However, only Northumberland were able to take advantage of the fairer weather in the afternoon and they showed an improvement of thirteen shots. The main architects of the side's victory were A Thirlwell, J K. Tate, and J Hayes. Thirlwell's 72 was by far the best of the morning rounds and he confirmed his supremacy later with a 71. Only D Rawlinson (Lancashire) and G. R Dixon (Durham) both of whom had a 72 after lunch made any effort to challenge him successfully.

It must have been of some encouragement to the three England selectors, who were there, to see Thirlwell hitting the ball so admirably. Apart from isolated cases they could not have been impressed by the day's golf. D. M. Marsh (Lancashire) who got his place in the England team last year had two reasonably steady rounds of 76 and 75 and was only one stroke behind Rawlinson at the end. Yet like a good many he found Mere's powerful finish a strain on his attempts to achieve greater economy.

Cheshire on their own soil were also disappointing. J. T. Lambie was the only one of the side who scored consistently. M. J. Pearson in an effort to make amends for his 80 in the morning had an unhappy and unfortunate fourth hole later. His ball was so deeply embedded in the sand that he could not play it. The horror of a nine was the result and it says much for his stability that he got round in 7.

925—Northumberland (A Thirlwell, 72, 71; J. K. Tate, 77, 75; G. J. Clark, 83, 81; D. M. Modat, 78, 77; J. Hayes, 76, 74; R. Downie, 83, 78)

933—Cumberland and Westmorland (A. Griese, 78, 81; W. D. Longcake, 75, 78; W. R. Sharp, 78, 77; W. Anderson, 78, 76; R. R. Farmer, 76, 76; R. M. Robertson, 81, 79)

939—Lancashire (D. Henderson, 81, 77; D. Rawlinson, 79, 72; D. Marsh, 76, 75; J. Taylor, 80, 79; F. M. Whitaker, 82, 82; G. Whitehead, 76, 81)

944—Cheshire

955—Yorkshire

966—Durham