

THE HOME GREEN, YALE GOLF COURSE

## What Yale Men Have Done for Golf

By GOULD B. MARTIN, '23

Managing Editor of *The Metropolitan Golfer*

GOLF is a comparatively recent sport in American life. Authenticated beginnings, regardless of several earlier claims which were both abortive and unsubstantiated, show that the game was first played in Yonkers, N. Y., in 1888 by the old "Apple Tree Gang" which later formed the St. Andrews Golf Club. The latter still exists at Mt. Hope, N. Y.

From the first the game was placed on a much higher tone than the general run of sports. It is reasonable to suppose that such a game, requiring skill, leisure, means, and some measure of tone to the social atmosphere, would attract Yale men from the very beginning. Such was the case. Yale men have been fundamentally concerned in the great game of golf, which has now assumed such gigantic proportions that its financial and investment aspects practically equal those of all other American sports put together. We find Yale men among the champions and competitors of golf from its earliest days to its latest, and the same is true of its distinguished officialdom and its equipment industries. Not only is the number of Yale men who have made names for themselves in the golf world greater than that contributed by our traditional rivals, Harvard and Princeton, but it is greater than that of any other college.

Of all Yale names in golf that of Jess William Sweetser, '23 S., stands at the top. His stirring victories in the American Amateur Championship at Brookline in 1922

and the British Amateur Championship at Muirfield in 1926 twice thrilled the entire golf world. In both of these events Sweetser displayed a brand of match-play ability and fighting courage that thoroughly dwarfed the vaunted mechanical skill of such noted golfers as Bobby Jones, Chick Evans, Francis Ouimet, Bob Gardner, George Von Elm, Tommy Armour, (amateur in 1922), Jesse Guilford, and the entire Walker Cup teams of both America and Britain, which played both times.

In 1922 Sweetser was an undergraduate and as such he was able to spend an appreciable part of his time in playing and practising golf. We are willing to stand as authority for the statement that given an equal amount of time for practice Sweetser can take the measure of any amateur golfer living at match play, including Bobby Jones, and will stand 1, 2, or 3 at medal play. After defeating Kenworthy, Hunter, and Guilford at Brookline Sweetser was figured to fall before the great Bobby. On the contrary Sweetser took Jones "as Grant took Richmond," beating him by 8 and 7 at 36 holes, the largest margin by which the popular Bobby has ever lost a golf match (Hagen's margin of 12 and 11 was at 72 holes). On the second hole Bobby was stone dead for a birdie three and due for the all-important initial lead, but Jess, absolutely unfazed, plunked his mashie pitch into the cup for an eagle two, winning the first of six successive holes which completely took the heart out of Jones' supporters.

Bobby courageously came back in 34 and took back only one hole. Against Evans in the final the next day it was almost the same thing, Sweetser's iron nerve dominated the situation from start to finish.

At Muirfield in the spring of 1926 Sweetser was soft from lack of practice, being unable to get the conditioning winter play in Florida or California which nearly all his team-mates had. His first round in the cold, damp English atmosphere was over 90. Later rounds began to improve in spite of a bad cold which became increasingly serious with the exposure and physical strain; and a wrenched knee which added to his discomfort. When the championship rounds came Sweetser was physically unable to drag himself out for the first round of play. In entering a default he was reluctant and his opponent beat him to it. That day of rest gave him additional strength and he started plowing his way through the dangerously short eighteen-hole rounds one after another, literally increasing his effectiveness as his fever increased. Down went his opponents—George Renwick, Francis Ouimet, Robert Scott, W. G. Brownlow, and last but not least, A. F. Simpson. After the battle outraged nature took its toll and the night before the Walker Cup Matches a hemorrhage gave the terrible warning which Sweetser gamely refused to reveal until he had played the next day and won the two matches which gave the United States victory. Bobby Jones won the British Open and marched in triumph up Broadway after that invasion—Sweetser came up Broadway in a lonely ambulance.

Completely recovered and now in the most robust health Sweetser may again decide to play championship golf. In 1923 at Flossmoor Jess again went to the final round of the American Amateur Championship, losing to Max Marston only after a thrilling thirty-eight-hole battle featured by five heart-breaking stymies. He has had a number of other victories, including the intercollegiate championship won when in college. Two failures in the Amateur Championship since his graduation are directly attributable to Sweetser's lack of practice. He follows the praiseworthy amateur spirit of business first and golf on week-ends, and in this age of border-line amateur standing his strict interpretation of amateurism is quite refreshing. Jess does not agree with many of his best amateur friends that selling golf writings or booming real-estate ventures on his golf reputation is strictly in the best interests of the sport.

Robert A. Gardner, '12, has twice won the Amateur Championships of the United States. In addition he reached the final round twice more, at Merion Cricket in 1916 and St. Louis in 1921, and had the honor of twice captaining the Walker Cup Team. Gardner was a track captain in college and his intercollegiate mark of 13 feet in the pole vault was only recently broken by Sabin Carr. Like Sweetser, Gardner won the Amateur Championship as an undergraduate. A nineteen-year-old Freshman, he

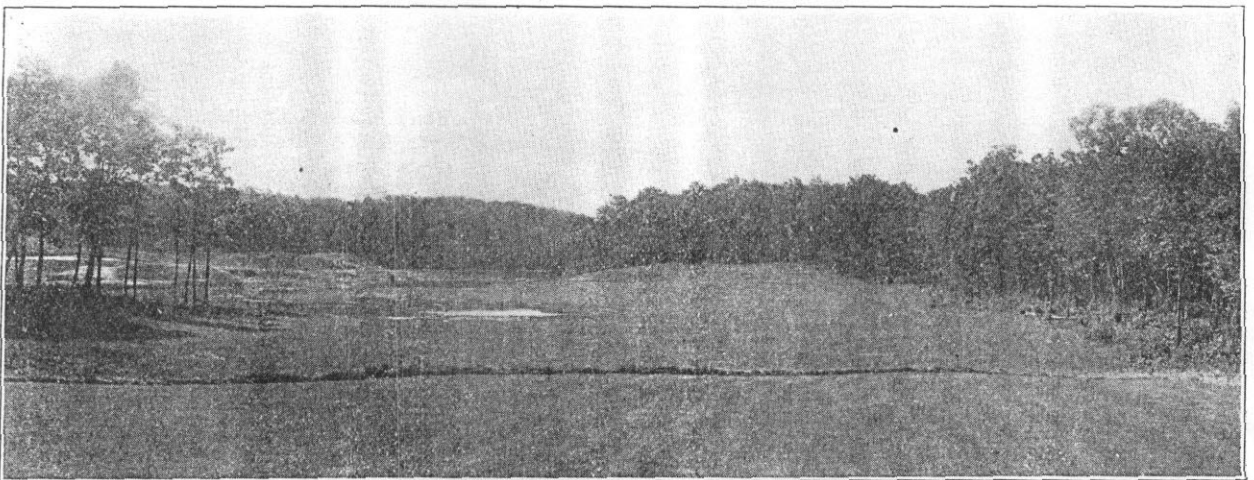
went through the field at Wheaton in 1909, defeating H. Chandler Egan of Harvard in the final. The following year misjudgment on the part of the committee caused Gardner to miss his round on qualifying day at Brookline and he was unable to qualify in the dew of the following dawn. His next chance came at Detroit in 1915 when he attained the final against John G. Anderson and was victorious. The following year he lost the final round to Chick Evans at Merion Cricket after giving Bobby Jones his first championship defeat. At St. Louis in 1921 Gardner fell in the final before the long-driving Jess Guilford.

Eben M. Byers, '01, of Pittsburgh, is the third Yale man who has been Amateur Champion. In the famous championship at Englewood in 1906 Byers defeated George S. Lyon of Montreal, the well-known Canadian star. Byers's experience in the final was his third after two disappointments. At Glen View in 1902 he faced Louis James without success, and the following year he met defeat at Nassau from Walter J. Travis. Byers's connection with golf has been long and distinguished. He has served on the Executive Committee of the United States Golf Association, of which his brother, J. Frederic Byers, '04, was president in 1922 and 1923 after many years of executive service.

In addition to the winners many Yale men have attained the final round of the Amateur Championship to meet the disappointment quite familiar to all athletes. W. Rossiter Betts, '98, was the first, meeting H. J. Whigham at Wheaton in 1897 the third time the event was staged—almost another undergraduate victory in this event! The following year William B. Smith, '03, met Findlay S. Douglas at Morris County. In 1907 Archibald Graham, '95 L., met the great Jerry Travers at Euclid in 1907, and the following year Travers defeated another Yale man in the final at Garden City, Max Behr, '05 S. Including winners, a Yale man has been finalist in the Amateur Championship in thirteen of the thirty-one times it has been played, and has four times been the victor.

In addition to Sweetser and Gardner, a third Yale man has had the honor of playing a Walker Cup Team for the matches with Great Britain. He is George V. Rotan, '07 S. Rotan won his only singles match, while Gardner won three and lost one, and Sweetser won one, lost two and drew one.

The list of Yale winners of sectional and minor golf events, however great their importance, is far too lengthy for extended comment. Some of the best golfers the country has produced, who, however, have not had the fortune to reach the last few rounds of the Amateur Championship, are Yale men. Among them are such names as Dexter Cummings, '25; John Reid, Jr., '99; Bob Abbott, '08; Buckingham P. Merriman, '10; A. W. Yates, *ex*'18; Ellsworth H. Augustus, *ex*'19; De Witt Balch, '18; E. L. Scofield, '09; Larry Lloyd, '16; H. G. Legg, '11 S.; Robert E. Hunter, '11 S.; Paul Haviland, '27; J. G. McMahon, *ex*'



AT THE FOURTH HOLE OF THE YALE GOLF COURSE



'23 S.; Eddie Van Vleck, '09; J. Frederick Byers, '04; Frank Wattles, '26; Chester B. Bowles, '24 S.; Archie Reid, '05; Karl Mosser, '11; W. E. Clow, Jr., '07; Ellis Knowles, '08; George C. Stanley, '13; Nat Wheeler, '14; Francis R. Blossom, '17; Silas M. Newton, '09; C. V. Benton, '07 S.; John B. Ryerson, ex-'21, and a host of others.

Some idea of Yale's supremacy at golf over other colleges may be seen from the intercollegiate championship, which in its history of thirty meets has been won by Yale sixteen times, or more than half, by Princeton seven times, by Harvard six times and by Dartmouth once. The individual title has been taken by a Yale man twelve times out of thirty-one, by a Harvard man seven times, by a Princeton man six times, by Columbia and Tulane twice, and by Dartmouth and Georgia Tech once.

The late John Reid, Jr., '99, whose father is regarded as the "Father of American Golf", had much to do with the establishment of the game's tradition and color in this country. Older graduates will recall his great popularity with Yale men and with golfers, as well as his singing of the old Scotch ballads learned by his father at Old St. Andrews in Scotland.

The work done by the various officials in the United States Golf Association and the sectional associations is greatly responsible for the swift growth of the game in America. Among the Yale men who have served long and faithfully as legislators, executives, and officials are: J. Frederic Byers, '04; George V. Rotan, '08 S.; James A. Stillman, '95; Robert A. Gardner, '12; Mortimer N. Buckner, '95; Frank L. Woodward, '88; Eben M. Byers, '01, and many others. Woodward and J. F. Byers were presidents of the U. S. G. A.

In the work of golf-course architecture Charles H. Banks, '06, associate of the late Seth Raynor, is now one of the most prominent. Raynor and Banks built the Yale Golf Course. H. F. Andrews, '06 S., and Max H. Behr, '05 S., have also been prominent in this field.

In the golf industrial field A. G. Spalding & Bros. has always been famous as a Yale firm. Its president is Julian W. Curtiss, '79, and it has always had a large number of Yale employes. Another is the Horton Manufacturing Co., makers of the steel shaft, whose president is Charles T. Treadway, '00.

## Undergraduate Golf at Yale

By BEN THOMSON

*Professional at the Yale Golf Course*

OUT on the picturesque Greist estate is a golf course planned and built by Mr. C. B. McDonald, himself a champion many years ago. Mr. McDonald is the builder of several of the finest golf courses in America, including the National Links at Southampton, Lido, Fisher's Island and Mid-ocean at Bermuda, but undoubtedly his masterpiece is the Yale golf course. In fact, it ranks among the finest in the United States, perhaps in the world; for nowhere, excepting Gleneagles in Perthshire, Scotland, does any golf course excel it. It is a course for the poor player as well as the good, for at each hole the tees are planned to suit everybody's game, the long course for the good player and the short for the beginner.

What better surrounding for golf could be found than at the Yale Course! Here the students come to play in an atmosphere which is entirely golf. Just as soon as the player passes the entrance gates and drives up the beautiful roadway to the simple log-cabin club-house set upon a hill overlooking the third and fourth holes, there is a feeling of quiet and an atmosphere of golf; there are no city noises to disturb one. One realizes that golf can be the only topic in such a wonderful setting.

Any day during the Spring and Fall the students are out in great numbers practising and playing golf, for here is a course for the good player to polish his game and for the poor player to improve his. All kinds of shots can be practised, long irons, difficult mashie shots, short run-ups and long approaches, water carries, and putting on the finest grass greens that can be found anywhere.

During the last few years college golf has gone forward by leaps and bounds. Last year at Garden City during the Intercollegiate championship there were over one hundred and fifty players representing the different colleges in the East. Among them were such players as Watts Gunn, representing Georgia Tech.; Roland McKenzie, Brown (both players having represented the United States against Great Britain in the Walker cup matches); Paul Haviland, Yale; Ed Stimpson, Harvard; Charles Grace, Princeton; and "Chuck" Hunter, all the way from California. These are only a few of the stars who last year played in college golf and who all did well in the Amateur championship.

Last year the Yale Team, captained by Paul Haviland, and represented by L. Parker, W. Lanman (*Capt.* 1928), A. Knapp, W. Child and J. Sherman, played six matches against Brown, Holy Cross, Dartmouth, University of

Pennsylvania, Princeton and Harvard, winning all six, but lost to Princeton in the team medal-championship during the Intercollegiate Meet at Garden City. In the individual championship Yale had two men who reached the semi-final, Haviland and Parker. Haviland was defeated by McKenzie and Parker by Watts Gunn, both by narrow margins. Gunn finally won by decisively defeating McKenzie. Gunn during his morning round against McKenzie broke the long standing record at Garden City by scoring a phenomenal round of 68. This looks as though it were our college golfers to-day who are going to be our champions in later years.

I am amazed at the amount of real good golfers among the students who play at the Yale golf course. During the 1927 Spring tournament, which is open to all students who are members of the course and which carries the University championship, there were over one hundred entries, and in that number there were twenty scores under 84, four under 80, and three under 76. W. Lanman (*Capt.*) was the winner; he defeated J. Sherman in the final.

The University Golf Team of six players is chosen from the twelve who return the lowest scores in the Spring tournament. They play an extra eighteen holes and the lowest eight are chosen to comprise the squad. The last two have the right to challenge for the fifth and sixth places on the team. In this way the interest is kept up among the players, which means that the whole squad are constantly practising to perfect their game and keep their places on the team. The Freshman team of four players is chosen the same way. I must say that golf of a very high standard is played.

The prospects for the 1928 Varsity Team are very bright. Lanman, Parker, and Knapp are all strong players from the 1927 team, backed up by Ashforth, Guerny, Lamphier (*1927 Freshman Capt.*), Fisher, Forrest and Ryan. The Freshman will have two strong players in Aycock and Wilson.

What impresses me most of all is the good comradeship shown among all classes of student players. In my two years' experience at Yale, I have heard no complaints made of a player being too slow or of his driving into the players ahead. Everybody plays right on, and just as soon as a match is held up to look for a ball, the following players are immediately requested to come through.

The starter at the first tee regulates the play, allowing four-ball matches to start on the tenth tee. I have seen

as many as one hundred and fifty players start off during an afternoon and cause no confusion or congestion on the course.

This summer a combination team of Oxford and Cambridge players is planning to come over to play matches against Yale, Harvard, Princeton and Cornell. If this visit can be arranged it will give a great stimulus to

American college golf; and at the same time help the strong friendship between colleges in this country and Great Britain. Too much cannot be said regarding the intended visit of the Oxford-Cambridge team and the good effects it should produce. I'm sure that when they play the Yale team on the Yale course, they will find that college golf over here is on a par with that in Britain.

## The Alumni Use of the Yale Golf Course

By R. SELDEN ROSE, '09

*Member of the Board of Control, Y. U. A. A.*

THE moving spirits in the construction of the Yale Golf Course were George Ade, '95, Mortimer Buckner, '95, and Dean Mendell, '04. Their aim was to build a great course for the use of the alumni and the University alike. They had ready to hand ideal terrain in the Ray Tompkins Memorial tract in Westville. Charles E. MacDonald laid out the course and the late Seth Raynor built it. This able group collaborated to build a masterpiece of golf architecture.

The third season has just opened as this article is written, with such a rush of undergraduate play that the Course seems to have established itself already as a University institution. Play promises to be even heavier than last year's daily average of ninety-two for the Spring and Fall terms. Before the Yale Course was built probably forty undergraduates played under special arrangement at Race Brook (out Derby Avenue) and at the New Haven Country Club (out Whitney Avenue); now there are between 350 and 400 golfers in the University who play regularly on their own course.

Its advantages were obvious at once. The first tee is only fifteen minutes from Yale Station, out Whalley Avenue to Westville and through the woods of the Tompkins Memorial property. There is no congestion even on days when play is heaviest. The Course itself from the short tees is ideal for beginners, the regular course from the middle tees is a good, fair test for the average game, from the back tees it is a severe test of championship golf. There are problems for all sorts and conditions of golfers. A word of advice—do not try the back tees unless other people, as well as you yourself, consider you a first-flight player. They are not the place for the merely ambitious with no record of achievement.

Clubhouse facilities are simple, almost primitive, but they are adequate. The log cabin, seventy-five by thirty feet, contains a large dressing room with showers, a generous shop for Ben Thomson and his assistant Frank Peebles, and a relatively small lounge. Great stone fireplaces are the only heating apparatus. The "restaurant" is a cabin in the woods a few yards away. It provides sandwiches, hot-dogs, milk and coffee. The Golf Committee is agreed that it is to the best interests of all to furnish only a magnificent course, a bath, a towel and very solid food. In addition to Thomson and Peebles the club house staff consists of a starter-clerk-caddymaster and a night watchman who closes the gates of the property at sundown.

The Athletic Association is fully aware of the necessity of maintaining a really great course as near perfection as possible. It has been liberal with funds, and William E. Perkins, '17 S., the superintendent, with the aid of my fellow-committeemen E. S. Bronson, '00 S., and C. A. Lohmann, '10, spends them wisely. He grew up with the Course, helped build it, in fact, and has developed into one of the best men in New England in coping with the many problems of construction, maintenance and development. His greens are superb, the fairways are excellent for their age, and he is completing an ambitious program of tee expansion which was made imperative by unexpectedly heavy play.

### SUMMER PLAY

The most serious problem confronting the Golf Committee is to bring revenue up to maintenance costs. We think

it can be done. Under the Athletic Association's program of athletics for all, fees for University members must be kept within the reach of all and sundry. The result is that maintenance charges cannot be met with our maximum membership of 450. The Committee, however, is convinced that as maintenance costs decrease with further maturity of the Course, the revenue from summer play will increase greatly, even to the point of meeting all expenses not covered by income from the University body. The Yale Course is slowly winning recognition as one of the few great natural courses of the United States. Evidence of this is the fact that the New England Golf Association has just asked for and been granted the use of the Course for the Connecticut-Massachusetts-Rhode Island Interstate Matches scheduled for next September.

During the University year the undergraduates are already using the Course almost to the limit of its capacity. The nature of the Course and the teaching of Ben Thomson have combined to raise the standard of play to a very high level. Even from the back tees the undergraduates make the Course look easy.

The alumni on the other hand, except for a group of devoted regulars, have shown a surprising lack of interest. Many of them do not know that there is a Yale Golf Course; and others, I think, were frightened by badly-taken photographs of its water hazards. They gave us unfortunate publicity. The Course, however, has lived down an undeserved reputation for long carries and undue severity. Recognition from the alumni body is coming slowly. The same foursomes turn up unflinching on Saturday mornings through the Spring and Fall. They finish their round about noon and lunch in the rough. The habitues have learned to bring their own things. They carry them off to their pet places in the sun or in the woods, and make themselves comfortable there until it is time to go in to the Bowl or Yale Field. The Course, by the way, is only ten minutes by motor from the parking space at the Bowl. Now these groups are beginning to come to New Haven in time for a round on Friday afternoon and then stay over Sunday. The more recent graduates who knew the Course as undergraduates are coming back for entire week-ends in New Haven. There are no restrictions and a great variety of memberships to choose from.

The Athletic Association hopes that the alumni will use the Course more and more every year. It goes without saying that they are welcome, because it is really their own course.

The sudden appearance on Monday, in Professor Phelps's care, of Gene Tunney, world-champion in the Ring and also in the Book world, as a lecturer on Shakespeare in Harkness Hall, produced a stampede of the students and a rousing Campus reception. Mr. Tunney spoke interestingly on his own pleasure in Shakespeare and urged his audience to do their own reading and thinking about him, rather than let an instructor do it for them. He lunched and played golf with Professor Phelps and Registrar A. K. Merritt, '93, and then returned to New York, escorted to the train by a large part of New Haven's population, to go into training. He was probably the highest paid lecturer who has yet spoken on a Yale platform.