THIS GAME OF GOLF

HENRY COTTON
CONTENTS

FOREWORD

INTRODUCTION

PART I
1 Starting my Career
2 First Visit to U.S.A.
3 In the Argentine
4 Trying to Win “The Open”

PART II
1 A Method
2 The Swing
3 The Grip
4 The Stance
5 Beginning the Back-Swing
6 Half-way Up
7 The Shoulder Pivot
8 The Top of the Swing
9 In the Hitting Area
10 After Impact
11 Maximum Impact-Speed
12 Can Impact-Speed be Increased?
13 The Finish of the Swing
14 Looking at the Ball
15 Backspin

PART III
1 The Shut Face
2 Distance from the Ball
3 Heel Up or Heel Down? (going up)
4 Heel Down (going through)
5 The Hanging Lie
6 The Steel Shaft
7 Forcing Strokes
8 The Part Played by the Wrists
9 More Wrist-Theory
10 Putting for a Living
11 Putting Styles

page 9
page 11

14
20
25
29
41
43
46
52
57
60
61
66
69
73
76
78
79
87
90
92
95
97
99
101
103
104
106
108
111
114
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PART IV</th>
<th>CONTENTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Luck</td>
<td>page 143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 How I Came to Wear a Left-Hand Glove</td>
<td>146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Caddies</td>
<td>147</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Sandwich in January</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 August Bank Holiday, 1941</td>
<td>151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Langley Park</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 “Hi-Gang”</td>
<td>page 153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 Drive and Putt</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 Rudyard Kipling</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 On Golf Grips</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Beating the Years</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Ashridge</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Calling the Bluff of the Rake and Shovel Champion</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14 In Germany in 1939</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 A P.G.A. Meeting</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 A Shot in a Million</td>
<td>163</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 An Amazing Golf Occurrence</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 The Best Course Ever</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 The Waterloo School</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 Bob Hope</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Michael and Pam</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22 Alternate Tees</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 On the Stage</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24 Scoring at Golf</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 Golf Wisdom</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 Cross Bunkers Again?</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Make the Punishment Fit the Crime</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 Correspondence</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 Post-War Golf</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 Holding On</td>
<td>189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 On Motoring</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 The Walker Cup, 1938</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 Golfing Tombstones</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 Changing the Lenses</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONTENTS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 Poker Face</td>
<td>page 195</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 Medical Gymnastics</td>
<td>196</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 The Latest in the Game</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 Monte Carlo</td>
<td>198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 On American Golf</td>
<td>201</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| PART V |
|----------------|----------------|
| 1 The Best Player Ever? | 214 |
| 2 Harry Vardon      | 217   |
| 3 J. H. Taylor       | 218   |
| 4 James Braid        | 219   |
| 5 Robert Tyre Jones  | 220   |
| 6 Walter Hagen       | 221   |
| 7 Abe Mitchell       | 225   |
| 8 Gene Sarazen       | 227   |
| 9 Lawson Little      | 228   |
| 10 Sam Snead         | 229   |
| 11 Ralph Guldhal     | 230   |
| 12 George Duncan     | page 231 |
| 13 Horton Smith      | 232   |
| 14 William Laidlaw   | 233   |
| 15 T. D. Armour      | 234   |
| 16 Joe Kirkwood      | 236   |
| 17 A. G. Havers      | 237   |
| 18 Richard Burton    | 238   |
| 19 A. H. Padgham     | 239   |
| 20 Ed. Dudley        | 240   |
| 21 Alexander Herd    | 240   |
| 22 R. A. Whitcombe   | 241   |
| 23 Fred Daly         | 241   |
| 24 Byron Nelson      | 242   |
| 25 Ben Hogan         | 245   |
| 26 James Demaret     | 245   |
| 27 Tom Webster       | 246   |
| 28 Bernard Darwin    | 246   |
| 29 George Greenwood  | 248   |
| 30 In Conclusion     | 248   |
21. Swing the Club-Head

ERNEST JONES, an Englishman settled in New York, has earned for himself, despite the loss of a leg in the Great War, 1914-18, the reputation of being one of the best golf teachers in the game. His slogan, “Swing the club-head,” is now an international one, and I am sure he will forgive me for suggesting that his war injury brought home to him more forcibly than ever the fact that the club-head must be used to hit the ball, and that this can be best accomplished by not “leaning” on the ball. From one leg, leaning on the ball when striking it is impossible.

Ernest Jones, in his writing around the photograph (of himself showing some friends in the “400 Restaurant” in New York how he demonstrates with his handkerchief and penknife tied to it, the swinging of the club-head) comments on my own wording “make the club-head do the work”.

My wording, which he has seen and which I use frequently in teaching, implies the same thing as Ernest Jones’s “Swing the club-head,” but I somehow feel that the word “swing” refers only to part of the game and to me means no hit at all, whereas I teach “hitting with the right hand past the left, making the club-head do the work”.

I like this part of a letter from Ernest Jones to a friend of mine, written from his successful golf school in New York City: “Our golfing lawyer, Mr. S—, was in today to start his winter session. Of course he will never understand what ‘Swing-
ing the club-head' really means; being a lawyer
is a very great handicap! As I have told him
many times he may know there is such a thing as
truth, but he knows so many ways of getting
around it, that he completely overlooks it. As
I keep pointing out to him, he cannot do that

with golf; he must, if he expects to learn to play,
understand it in its simplicity. Its elusiveness
does not, or I should say, ought not, to make it
complicated.”

What I have not grasped is his interpretation
of how to swing the club-head.

22. How Many Knuckles?
23. Piccolo Grip

This is an expression I have used for a long time now to indicate that a player is letting go with his hands at the top of the swing.

There is no actual harm in this if the club can be re-gripped exactly to arrive at impact as it was at the address, and if the wrists can still be used properly, which is very rare. In this swing it can be seen that my right wrist has not cocked at all, for, instead of holding on and making my wrist work at the joint, I have allowed the club-shaft to slip into my finger tips by “letting go.”

This mistake is a common one and can cause as many missed shots as any other single error.

I stress the importance of holding on with the left hand, the whole of it, because it leads to control and makes the left wrist work. To let go is to cheat really, and does not do any good at all as the muscles in the left arm are never exercised, as they would be if the club was held firmly with the last two fingers.

When the club-shaft is thrown about in the fingers, as occurs with a “piccolo grip,” a false flexibility is experienced; a freedom in the movement which is a looseness without value or prospects.

Even if the back-swing looks short it is better to stop short of the horizontal than to try to get an orthodox pose which has no practical value.

One of the results of having a “piccolo grip” at the top of the swing is to find the club-face coming on to the ball at all sorts of odd angles, which will send the ball in various directions due to the fact that, in re-gripping the club, it turns in the hands. The check on this is to ground the club after a shot has been played, and then to notice if any adjustment of the grip is necessary before a second shot is attempted. As I have already said, it should be possible to hit several balls in succession without “shuffling” the fingers.

I prefer always to see a three-quarter swing and a hold-on, than a full swing with a let-go. I think too, that with perseverance increased, flexibility in the wrist joint can be got from “holding on drill” for which effort a big dividend is paid.

24. Down the Grip

Down the grip! There are often occasions when it is best to get down to the shot, in order to force the club-head “through” from a heavy lie, or to obtain the maximum control possible for the delicate little shots around the green.

With standard length grips on most clubs today! this might often mean that the right hand or part of it will go on to the “iron.”

Many golfers think this is wrong because the metal shaft is so thin, compared with the old hickory shaft, when “down the grip” on a niblick did not mean much of a difference in thickness for the right hand.

I play many of those little tricky shots with some fingers on the “iron,” and use all sorts of clubs according to the flight on the ball I require.

There is no particular method for these original shots; they can be flicked, pushed, or
squeezed, but I always feel they are "in the bag" of every class golfer. I like to see golfers use all the grip of every club; those who can only hit the ball when they are on the flat "reminder" piece with the left hand are not complete golfers in my opinion, because some shots cannot be played unless the shaft is gripped well down.

It is surprising how the ball can be "scooped up" from a down-the-grip position; in fact, some of the shots have such curious flights that they look as if the ball has been thrown by hand.

Finding out what the various clubs can do is rather getting away from the matched club idea, one swing for each club, but the "big shot" golfers are never afraid of being original when necessary.

25. Give your Strong Right Hand a Chance

I don't do any golfer, whatever his class, any harm to analyse his game from time to time, as the secret of being consistent at golf is to keep the proportions right. When you have played for a while it is simple to correct faults as they creep in, but it is difficult to correct them on the spur of the moment and not go to another extreme. For example, having missed the green on the right twice in succession, it is not easy to hit the middle next time; any attempt at correction usually means missing it on the left first. Extremes are easy to obtain, but they need only be used to strike means.

I wonder if many players are as keen as the golfer I am going to tell you about, but even if not, there is quite a lesson in this story. I suppose in every job, where a considerable muscular effort is required, there must be a variation in the movement according to the condition of the muscles, but in very few games is it shown up as much as it is in golf; that is why golf will never be mechanical. I played a round some time ago with one who is generally known as a "crazy golfer". He devours all the golf books he can find, studies all the articles and analyses all the slow-motion photographs. He follows this up with
about two hours’ practice daily, and a round every afternoon, often with the professional, so you can see he has the “golf bug”.

What did I find, you will be wondering. Well, it was this: a golfer with a good-looking swing, but only fairly effective, because it brought rather erratic results—long shots, but uncontrolled. I questioned him gently, but surely, while we were on our way round, and found that, although he had played for only three years, he had arrived at his handicap of six and now was stuck. But what he did explain to me was that he had been reared (shall I call it?) on “the left-arm theory”.

Now and again the newspapers run a small questionnaire, in which leading players are asked a few questions of interest, including this one: “Is golf a right or left-handed game?” and then we get various opinions. Right, left, double-handed, etc. This player had read so much about the left hand being the master hand that he had really trained his hand and arm, as I have frequently advised, by swinging a heavy club with his left hand, by hitting balls one-handed, etc., until during every swing he made his left side dominate the whole movement. In fact, I noticed his right hand, although correctly placed, was just lying on the club; the shaft even slid about. When tackled on this point, he explained that he thought golf was a left-handed game, as he had read—and he recited names of authors he had read on the subject.

This was my way of putting the proportions of his game right again. I explained that, when I advised a pupil to strengthen his left side, it was not only with the idea of making the arm and side control the swing better, but to enable it to resist better the blow given by the right arm and to establish a balance in the power of the respective sides of the body, as the right side is generally much stronger than the left.

I have found that all players who recommend, in their teaching and writing, that golf is a left-handed game and is to be played with the left side dominating, do so because in their own cases they find they play best when they think of the left side doing the work. But that is an admission that the right hand is so strong that it comes in anyhow. They cannot prevent it. Once I told this player that he could use his right hand for all he was worth, he had an idea he would be cheating himself, so strong was his belief in his creed of the left hand.

He had his right forefinger well down the shaft, but this was the first time he had used it to guide the club-head and help to hit the ball. I should say that ever since this player began to ignore his right hand his progress stopped. My cure, then, for this state was naturally in the form of an extreme one, on the grounds of “two extremes to make a mean”, so for some days he was put on a short back-swing and a short follow-through, with as much right-hand punch as he could give.

Once a balance was re-established he was a better player and knew more about his game and the game itself. I am afraid there must be many hundreds of golfers in a similar situation. If you have been losing length lately and have not been playing as well as you are able, examine as well as you can the parts the right and left hands are playing in the shot, and give your strong hand—the right—a chance to hit the ball; it wants to, if you will allow it.
Left: Norman Von Nida, a strong little player, holding on with all his fingers
Right: A "let go." Here is Arnold Bentley, English amateur champion of 1939, caught by the camera after his club has slipped round in his fingers. As he is usually a sound steady golfer, this is a rare occurrence—one cannot be a steady player and "let go." This brassie shot would probably be "a thin one off the neck" and the ball would fly low and right.

31. On Motoring

I love motor cars, all sorts of cars, and if I am able to spend some hours with a box of tools, "messing-about" with a car, I am never happier.

My favourite car in my younger days was a (36-220 h.p.) cabriolet two-seater 1929 Mercedes-Benz, painted red, which I had when it had done only 3,000 miles. I ran it for over 100,000 miles, and it was nothing like worn out when I sold it for a very small sum after 13 years' proud ownership. I reckoned it was good for several more hundred thousand miles—it was very fast, but as I grew older, I felt it was sprung too hard for me, and driving it became hard work, whereas it had always been fun before.

I never missed the Motor Show, and I read all the motor books I can get hold of. Like most mechanically-minded schoolboys, I knew at one time the name of every car and lorry on the road, almost from miles off. I pity the boys of today guessing the names of the latest American cars, for they all look the same.

The price on the windscreen of the Austin Six in the photo—£260—brings back the old days, pre-everything, including purchase tax. The late Lord Austin, to whom I got chatting, is resting his hand affectionately on the headlamp, while posing for a photograph with me, on the Austin stand at Olympia one year before the war.

I was brought up to believe that driving a car was bad for golf—the staring for long periods through the windscreen, and the vibration on the hands and wrists from the steering wheel, I was told, would upset my judgment and touch.
This might be true for some people, but I soon found that I could drive a car even long distances, and not be in the least affected. I think a powerful car is best, as the suspension of a small car and the buzzing of the engine do tire one on a long trip.

I have tried myself out on many occasions just to see what I could do, and one of my best efforts in one day was to drive from my home at Ashridge to Huddersfield, some 170 miles away, arriving there by 10.30 a.m., play 36 holes in the day in an exhibition match, doing a 70 and 67, I think the scores were; but in any case I played very well, and then drove home after the game that evening.

I do not recommend this as a procedure to follow, but like many other parts of the golf game, the mental side counts tremendously. If you have confidence in yourself, then outside influences can be ignored, and a few exercises to loosen up the cramped back- and leg-muscles put me right in a few minutes.

I once stupidly drove 555 miles in 11 hours from Evreux to Biarritz. I was alone, and except to buy a few biscuits and some fruit, and to fill up with petrol, I did not stop all day. I thought this was a good run, even for my supercharged Mercédès, so when some friends of mine, who were crossing over to France on the night boat with their 3½-litre Bentley via Dieppe, not long before the war, said they would be dressed and

in their dinner suits in the Casino at Biarritz, before seven o’clock the same night, I thought I had better have a bet on that, for they had 600 odd miles to do.

This night boat got in around 4 a.m., I gathered, so allowing for customs, etc., I did not think they could get away much before five o’clock. That would leave them 13 hours’ driving to allow time for bathing and changing. I felt I was on a good thing, so I backed my opinion for £10. Where I did slip up was in forgetting that there were three drivers in the car, and although they had to travel a considerably further distance and with a somewhat slower car, this relief of drivers made all the difference.

I really was quite astonished when I got the telegram from them, with the time stamped “17.45 Biarritz”, which easily won the money. I paid out to Richard Costain, one of the Walton Heath scratch players who was one of the drivers, and whose car it was. I forget who his friends were, but I had learned another lesson, for their average was about 60 miles per hour all day, which I had not thought possible.

My effort, I remember, completely exhausted me and I was very tired for several days after, whereas with three drivers nothing like the same strain was involved.

In recent years I have had less and less time to spend practising for matches and tourna-
ments, and often it means arriving on the 1st tee in time to tee up, without seeing the “place”. It can mean that one drops a few strokes through lack of local knowledge, but it is fun just to see what one can do when asked to try hard.

My advice on having to drive a car to play golf is—do not be afraid to do it; it is a mental disturbance rather than a physical one, but the bigger and smoother the car the better.

One thing I have sternly refused to do all my life is to crank up strange cars. I once was called all kinds of unchivalrous things by a woman golfer, whose battery had failed, because I would not touch her car’s starting handle. Still, I made my rule and kept to it, and after all, golf is my living, and a broken or jarred wrist can have all sorts of consequences—immediate and permanent. It is not worth it!
WAS very pleased to see that the Royal Lytham and St. Anne's Golf Club have adopted my suggestion, and marked the spot from which the great Bobby Jones played the shot that actually won him the Open in 1926—a bronze plaque, suitably inscribed, can be found hidden away on the downslope of the back of the bunker from which hallowed ground golf history was made.

It will be remembered that he was at the time neck and neck with Al Watrous, and they were paired together as well, which added to the excitement. Bobby was two strokes behind and five holes to play; he got one back at each of the next two holes, all square with three to play. A half in four at the drive-and-pitch 16th, and then came the dramatic 17th. This hole, a little over 400 yards, bends to the left, and in order to get a sight of the pin, the tee shot must be kept to the right. Not only is this the best line, but a safe one, because of the wilderness of sandy, scrubby country on the left, dotted with bunkers of all sorts.

Bobby pulled his tee shot well to the left, obviously in trouble. Watrous played up the centre and, being on the "long" line, played the odd and "greened it" on the huge green—not a certain four, but perhaps good enough, with his partner and opponent in the "bad stuff".

Bobby, it turned out, was in a shallow sand bunker. There has always been some doubt about the exact location of this bunker, and of the actual lie of the ball, which, of course, plays a tremendous part in the rest of this story, for Bobby took a mashie iron, a hickory-shafted club it was (and now a treasure of the club), and taking the ball cleanly, hit a shot of 170 yards which, swinging in with the wind from the right, came to rest "inside" the other ball.

This shot is now an historic one, and although Watrous took three putts and Bobby two putts at this hole, and then Watrous took five to four at the home hole and so lost by two strokes—293 to 291—it can be claimed that that "miraculous shot" won the Open.

The club got various stewards and spectators of this round together, and the exact spot has been marked, so that posterity can stand reverently by and try to picture the scene of that day in June, 1926, and if they are so minded, try to
play one “as good as Bobby Jones”, and win a dream Open for themselves.

I am sure this idea will be copied. I do not suggest making hundreds of little tombstones to mark the spots from which all great shots have been made all over our great courses, for generations the scenes of history-making golf, but some shots should be “fixed” for everyone to see. I know I am not alone in admitting that it would give me a thrill to stand on some of the “exact” spots.

The club with which this famous shot was played hangs on the main pillar in the entrance hall of this fine, hospitable old Club, for its many visitors to see and fondle, and with the spot now marked the story is complete, except for a visit to the life-like portrait of that great player, by J. A. A. Berrie, which looks down on those who use the main club lounge.

In 1937 I toured the Continent with Jack Heminway, an American friend of mine, and John de Bendern, formerly John de Forest, and we played in Germany, in Czechoslovakia at the beautiful Karlsbad course, in Vienna and in Budapest.

I won the various National Open Championships and John de Bendern was successful in the Amateur events. This was one of those happy trips which can never be repeated: history has seen to that.

In Budapest, on the pretty little forest course situated on the heights behind the town, I found that white stones had been placed in the ground on the fairways to mark exactly the spots where every shot played by the one and only Bobby Jones finished, during his round in the previous summer. This I consider a great compliment to a great master.
18. Richard Burton

Richard Burton won the Open Championship in 1939, and he thoroughly deserved to win. It is quite a number of years since Dick, as he is known to everyone, began to compete in big golf, and, although he built up a reputation as a long driver, and played some wonderful rounds, he was rather erratic.

I think he revelled in being called a long driver, and in order not to let down his public, he tried to make every tee shot an enormous one, and so made scoring difficult for himself.

His first triumphs in big golf were in 1935 and 1936, and, although he has always taken his golf seriously and aimed high, few people thought he was steady enough to win a championship.

His “long” game is shorter today, but more sure; in fact, when he plays his best game he is no longer the colossal hitter. His drives are just of a good, first-class length, which is long enough for anybody, by the way.

He is a tall fellow, well over six feet, employs an upright swing, and has achieved the necessary narrowing of his down-swing by doing an exaggerated flailing action. This looks dangerous to many people, but it is necessary to bring the club-head on to the ball and not into the ground behind, which is the ever-present danger to tall people with long arms.

This flailing action, or accentuated dropping of the wrists, is carried right through his game, even to his little pitch shots. As he has to wait for the hit, all these shots appear to be played slackly, whereas the impact is really very firm.

Dick plays billiards and snooker well and has developed into a good lecturer. His talks to members of his home club, are a regular feature of the winter programme.

He has played many great golf shots in his life, but most of these have something to do with length.

The shot thousands of golfers saw him play, and which they will never forget, was his pitch to the last hole at St. Andrews, when he wanted a four to win the Open Championship in 1939. He hit an enormous drive to half-way between the road which crosses the fairway and the green, and we saw the ball finish on a hanging lie on one of the bumps which make this fairway tricky.

We saw the tall, lean figure hurrying up the fairway (I consider I walk fast when playing, but Dick is yards faster than I am), and when he arrived at his ball, he did not hesitate a moment. He took out his wide-soled blaster-type of niblick, did one of those apparently loose-wristed flicks, and, to our relief, sent the ball in a beautiful flight to just beyond the pin.

Then, with scarcely more than a glance at the line, he rolled in the putt. He threw his putter to his caddie when the ball was only half-way there, so confident was he that he had holed it!

When we discussed this hole later, and I questioned the advisability of taking such a risk, especially at such a moment, Dick explained that the lie was so good that he could not possibly have missed the shot. “It was as good as being on a peg,” he added.

Richard Burton on the 1st tee of the West Course at Moor Park in the Silver King Tournament, 1946
In any series of "famous golfers", Alfred Harry Padgham, born in 1906, takes a prominent position. Alfred made his name as a professional golfer while still acting as an assistant to John Rowe at the Royal Ashdown Forest Golf Club.

John Rowe, by the way, has been a professional to this famous Sussex club since 1892, which must be in the nature of a world’s record, and has been a strong pillar for many years of the Professional Golfers’ Association.

Alfred began to forge his way to the front about 1930, and it was not a great surprise when this tall, wiry, athletic fellow won the News of the World Tournament in 1931.

Blessed with a wonderfully placid temperament, a fine physique, a controlled, upright, three-quarter swing, and an enormous pair of hands—they are so big that when he shakes hands, my hand, which is considered large, just disappears within his—the popular Alfred has carved a name for himself in golf.

Like us all, Alfred has his putting troubles, and here again it would appear that his apparent lack of care was causing his downfall. Despite his outward appearance, he can, and does concentrate as well as anyone when the moment comes. He cultivated a theory that a putt was a drive in miniature, and the same mental picture had to be painted each time—a comfortable stance, light on the feet, slow back-swing and a good follow-through.

With a putting streak, which was remarkable because it stayed with him all the season, Alfred won in 1936 all the major professional events, including the Open Championship.

The rest of his game was not up to his normal first-class standard, but he putted like a man in a dream. It was not that he was just successful in sinking the putts one ought to hole, but he holed dozens of enormous ones which Mr. Bernard Darwin, aptly described as “indecent”.

Since 1931 Alfred has won most of the major events at one time or another, and when he is in the running for the first prize, he rarely trips up, for he has a good nerve and sound judgment.

I have played dozens of rounds with Alfred, and the points which have always impressed me have been his exceedingly light grip of the club, and his uncanny judgment of distance. The latter might not seem much of a point to the average man in assessing a golfer’s right to be called first-class.

Alfred has one weak point in his game apart from a tendency to get at times too far from the ball at the address. It is to let his head swing through with the club-head—he does not hit past his chin in the accepted sense. He knows this well, but does not worry about it; his casual smooth swing is his own.

His long years of war service in the War Reserve Police took the edge off his golf for a time, but in the first big tournament of 1946, the Daily Mail on the Royal Lytham and St. Anne’s course, he played grandly to win when the greens were just like ice and putting was a heartbreaking business.

Alfred Padgham in a typical finish to a No. 6 shot. The light grip of the club can almost be "felt" by looking at the photo, as can the relaxed position of the follow-through.
25. Ben Hogan

Ben Hogan, a phenomenally strong, little man—not so little really except in weight, for he is not far short of six feet in height—stormed into the top rank just before the war.

Hogan is a serious, likeable person with an intense capacity for concentration, and an appetite for practising which exceeded all previous standards by its ardour and duration. Spells of up to six hours a day, daily, have brought their reward, for this “mighty atom” of some 140 lb. in weight set a terrific low-scoring pace on the links. Hogan set out to beat the game, and today he is playing machine-like golf, but is finding the tournament “racket” exhausting. I should not be surprised to find him limiting his tournament appearances in the next year or two as Snead has done.

Hogan studies the game, and when I talked to him recently, he told me he was developing the “fade” as a standard shot for all his play. This is a curious swing-over from the days when his shut face caused him to drive with a brassie, and, to me, is all the more interesting, because in 1928-29 I landed in America with a “fade” as my stock-in-trade shot, and spent a year learning to hit from inside-to-out; just the opposite. A fade was “on”, a controlled fade as used by Abe Mitchell in his later and best playing years with hickory (Abe never kept it under control with steel, I do not know why), but I am certain that Hogan will never satisfy himself that he has a steel-shaft fade under complete control. He hits a very puzzling flight now and then. His present back-swing, very flat and with the left wrist in the shut-face position at the top, is not a normal outside-in swing position. Still, if practice can perfect this, Hogan will get it.

He is a fine competitor, grim and determined, and his great tournament reputation, though the Open title has so far escaped him, justifies the fear he inspires in any field of players. He puts well—they all do, but his long tee shots build up his power to score low—his best shots I consider are from 80 yards down.

When they say Hogan is a “killer”—they really mean it, for he is as tough a golfer as ever trod a links.

26. James Demaret

In this select band of the cream of the top-rankers comes James Demaret, who in the year or so just prior to the war, when I first heard of him and saw his photograph, as a slim, young athlete, has developed into quite a heavyweight as his skill has increased.

Jimmy is one of the most charming people one can ever hope to meet. He loves golf, but no more than a good time; a day at the races or out fishing appeals equally to him, while to croon at...