



GARY GALYEAN'S GOLF LETTER

THE INSIDE REPORT ON WORLD GOLF

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Dear Subscriber:

ROYAL LIVERPOOL IS AMONGST the world's four most important golf clubs due to its legacy of Amateur and Open champions and championships.

Since 1869, Hoylake, as it is also called because that is the name of the village closest to it, has continually extended and created the bedrock traditions of the game that we admire—propriety, integrity, humility, kindness, respect, and sportsmanship—whether or not we know from whence they came. These are the social conventions that the current professional tours like to take credit for maintaining—the coattails they ride—but have little to do with when they play for their millions, as *THE GOLF LETTER* pointed out last month.

Consider these Royal Liverpool contributions to important championships:

- In 1885, the Amateur Championship was first organized and played at Hoylake — won by a Royal & Ancient member, Allan Macfie. Altogether, Royal Liverpool has hosted 18 Amateur Championships.

- In 1921, Hoylake hosted the first international team match between Great Britain and the U.S.A. The following year the match was formalized as the International Challenge Trophy and played at The National Golf Links. The silver trophy for the match was then donated by George Herbert Walker, and the



press soon after dubbed the match the Walker Cup. The Walker Cup has been competed for at Hoylake two times (1983, 2019). There are some, however, who consider the first to have been the informal match in 1921.

Bobby Jones played on the 1921 team and became well acquainted with the course. This was valuable experience for it was at Hoylake in his Grand Slam year (1930) that Mr. Jones won the Open Championship for the third time.

- Thirteen Open Championships—producing winners from seven different countries—have been played at Hoylake. The first was hosted in 1897 and won by Hoylake member, Harold Hilton—his second Open victory. [NOTE: In 1890, Hoylake member John Ball was the first amateur to win the Open Championship, which was played that year at Prestwick.]

In 1911, Mr. Hilton became the first Englishman to win the U.S. Amateur when he defeated Fred Herreshoff at The Apawamis Club in Rye, New York.

- The list of Open champions who have won at Hoylake includes: Walter Hagen (1924); five-time Open winner Peter Thomson from Australia, who won his third consecutive

Open here (1956); Roberto De Vicenzo from Argentina (1967); Tiger Woods (2006); Rory McIlroy (2014); and now Brian Harman (2023).



TAG GALYEAN. *Royal Liverpool, The Alps*

151st

Arnaud Massy (1877-1950)

The Only Frenchman to Win the Open Championship



Gold Medal and thus become the Champion Golfer of the Year.

Arnaud George Watson Massy was born into a sheep tending family in Biarritz on July 6, 1877. He did not warm to sheep farming and instead worked on a fishing trawler when that work was available. When it was not, he caddied at the nearby Biarritz Golf Club.

Readers of THE GOLF LETTER may remember that Biarritz was where vacationing New York couples were first smitten with golf and urgently telegraphed ahead to Southampton to begin the formation of a golf club that shortly became Shinnecock Hills. The purchase of land and the formation of Shinnecock Hills took just a few weeks. After all, it was the Gay Nineties, before income tax, and with far fewer bureaucratic obstacles to which we have now become accustomed. There was also social competition during this era to become the first, or at least early, in forming and offering the latest games, art, architecture, etc.

During this same time, Mr. Massy, a teenager and sometimes caddie at Biarritz, was introduced to golf for the first time. He played with left-handed clubs. Mr. Massy's trail goes a little dark at this point, and it was not long after that Mr. Massy found himself on the shores of the Firth of Forth in North Berwick, East Lothian, Scotland. The golf club there was founded in 1832, and the game was in full swing (so to speak). Smitten, as were the Southampton visitors to Biarritz, Mr. Massy gravitated to the game, switched to right-handed clubs, moved to North Berwick, and developed his mastery of golf.

In 1902, he finished tenth in the Open Championship at Royal Liverpool; in 1905 at St. Andrews, he finished fifth; and sixth the following year at Muirfield - just up the road a piece from North Berwick.



A most striking story from Royal Liverpool's list of exceptional winners is that of the 47th Open Champion (1907), Arnaud Massy—the first overseas winner and still the only Frenchman to have won the

Also in 1906, he traveled to Versailles to play in the first French Open. It was hosted by the Racing Club de France La Boulie, and he won by 11 strokes. La Boulie's course was designed by Willie Park, Jr., also known for his work at Sunningdale, Monte Carlo, Maidstone, Formby, and Gullane 2 & 3.

At La Boulie again in 1907, Mr. Massy won the French Open for a second time; and then returned to Scotland for the playing of the 47th Open at Royal Liverpool.

It was the first year that all competitors were required to play a qualifying round before the Open proper began.

Mr. Massy's score of 312 (76, 81, 78, 77) prevented James Braid from winning the Open for a third consecutive time. His opening 76 tied Mr. Massy for the lead. Foul weather and strong winds battered the Dee Estuary and raised scores. Mr. Massy's second round 81 was still good enough to stay one stroke ahead of Mr. Taylor and Tom Ball. Mr. Taylor played into the lead with 76 and 78 over the second and third rounds.

In the fourth round, Mr. Massy leveled things with a three at the 2nd. At the following hole, Mr. Taylor sliced his second into long grass, which resulted in a seven. He went out in 41, three more than Mr. Massey. Both competitors took 39 strokes to finish. Thus, Mr. Massey won by two with a total of 312. His prize was £30.

He was the first overseas winner of the Open Championship. [NOTE: The second European won 72 years later: It was Seve Ballesteros at Royal Lytham & St. Annes in 1979.]

Earlier that week, Mr. Massy's Scottish-born wife delivered their first child, a daughter, at their home in North Berwick. In honor of what had just taken place at Royal Liverpool, the baby girl was christened Margot *Hoylake* Massy. 🍷

Nationalities of all 151 Open Championship Winners and the 13 (in red) at Royal Liverpool

- 41 Scotland 1902
- 22 England 1897, 1913, '36
- 7 Jersey
- 46 U.S.A. 1924, '30, 2006, '23
- 10 Australia 1956
- 10 South Africa
- 3 Ireland
- 3 N. Ireland 1947, 2014
- 3 Spain
- 1 Argentina 1967
- 1 France 1907
- 1 Italy
- 1 New Zealand
- 1 Sweden
- 1 Zimbabwe

The 151st Open Royal Liverpool

HOW CAN BRIAN HARMAN'S staid display of precision, dominance, and self control at Hoylake be seen as anything but welcome relief from the flashy, loud, money grubbing, and shouting that we have, not always but frequently come to accept as the new normal over the past few years on the professional tours? The auspicious stateliness of the Open and of the Royal Liverpool Golf Club deserve credit for greater player respect and demeanor during this championship where so much of golf's valued past has been achieved.

There are, however, comments that the Open was sluggish or less exciting or perfunctory in its outcome. This is a distraction of style and celebrity by those simply unwilling to give Mr. Harman his due for reasons that do not hold up under scrutiny.

Bunker Correction After Round One

Confident leadership is never afraid to publicly correct itself when a mistake has been made; perspicacious leadership is unafraid to do so publicly in midstream without fear of blame or expense.

At Hoylake, The R&A Championship Committee was unafraid, before the second round, to improve a bunker condition that existed during the first round.

The floors of the bunkers were raked flat before the beginning of the championship. This was intentional for Open week but proved to sometimes produce lies with little chance of recovery when balls settled up against the riveted bunker faces.

The decision was announced early Friday that all of Hoylake's more than 80 bunkers had been re-raked so that the floors would be concave, thus allowing for the settling of balls more toward the center of the bunkers. The sand on the sides was raised one revet, which is the way the bunkers are prepared for member play.



Bulletin No. 8

Friday, 21 July 2023

COURSE SET-UP UPDATE

We would like to advise you of an adjustment we have made to the way the bunkers are raked overnight. Yesterday afternoon the bunkers dried out more than we have seen in recent weeks and that led to more balls running straight up against the face than we would normally expect. We have therefore raked all of the bunkers slightly differently to take the sand up one revet on the face of the bunkers. We routinely rake bunkers flat at most Open venues but decided this adjustment was appropriate in light of the drier conditions which arose yesterday. We will continue to monitor this closely for the remainder of the Championship.

If the argument is that the competition was not exciting enough, how is Jon Rahm's 63—a Hoylake course record—accounted for; or five 66s, two 65s, fourteen 67s (three in the final round)?

We have been told that following Mr. Harman's 65 in the second round, the outcome became dull and predictable. Were those who make such comments bored when Tiger Woods won the Masters by 12 strokes in 1997, or the U.S. Open by 15 strokes at Pebble Beach in 2000? Mr. Woods won the Claret Jug at St. Andrews by eight strokes in 2000, and by five strokes again at St. Andrews in 2005. The following year at Royal Liverpool he led all four rounds to win his third Open. Being the exalted tactician that he is, Mr. Woods must admire the methodical and nearly flawless way Mr. Harman went about dominating those who were expected to dominate him.

Mr. Harman is just the third American in the past 40 years to win a major championship by six shots. He gained 18.64 strokes over the field for the championship; 11.57 of those came from his extraordinary putting. He was first in putting—holing 45 of 45 putts from 5 ft. or closer; 14 of 15 putts from between 5 and 10 ft. He never three putted.

On Thursday—61 degrees, sunny, wind 11 mph from the NW, visibility 16 miles—Mr. Harman's 67 put him one stroke behind Tommy Fleetwood (England), Emiliano Grillo (Argentina), and Christo Lamprecht, the remarkable South African amateur; and tied with Antoine Rozner (France) and Adrian Otaegui (Spain). The one stroke that separated Mr. Harman from the leaders can be attributed to his only bogey that came at the 10th where he took three to finish from 26 yards. The betting favorites, Rory McIlroy and Scottie Scheffler posted rounds of even par and 1-under respectively. Three hundred fifty-one competitors finished over par — the most in a decade. Overnight the R&A re-raked the bunkers.

On Friday, under similar weather conditions but with the wind gusting at times to 20 mph, Mr. Harmon played the par 3s in even par, the 4s 3-under, and the 5s 3-under. He birdied four of the first five and eagled at the last. In this round alone he gained 8.49 strokes on the field. The first round leaders fell away. Mr. Fleetwood was mundane at 71, Mr. Grillo unfocused at 74, and Mr. Lamprecht showed his age, 22, taking 79 strokes.

Mr. Harman's 5-stroke lead made him the bookies' new favorite and put into the final game on **Saturday** with Mr. Fleetwood at 3:30. Five minutes before, Mr. Rahm posted his third round score of 33+30=63 for a new record at Royal Liverpool and his personal best links course score.

The green speed was just over 10 ft. The afternoon weather changed sporadically. It rained at the 18th but not the 8th. The wind shifted and the course became tougher in the afternoon than it had been through the morning. Scoring was still possible. Jason Day made the turn with just 32 strokes—5 birdies and 1 bogey—but took 37 coming home that left him still six back of Mr. Harman, who chugged along to 69 after bogeying two of the first four. As he said later, sleeping on a five stroke lead in the Open two nights in row is no fun.

Mr. Rahm's 63 raised him 36 places (he made the 3-over cut by only one stroke) to third place (-6) but still six strokes behind Mr. Harman. Cameron Young, who played so well at St. Andrews last year, was solo second (-7) after making up three strokes on Mr. Harman with a third round 66. Bookies measured Mr. Harman's steadiness and indicated he was the favorite to win on **Sunday**. And for those who maintain that it was over before the fourth round was played, they must be reminded of John Van de Velde, Roberto De Vicenzo, Jordan Spieth, Greg Norman ...



It is understandable that the Liverpool spectators preferred Mr. Fleetwood, but inexcusable that there was some booing when Mr. Harman was

called to the tee to begin the final round. And the drizzle began to fall.

The par-5 5th—the easiest hole on the course—was a turning point. Mr. Rahm pulled his drive into the gorse but the ball finished fortuitously between two bushes. He



For R.L.G.C.:

*"Nothing is lacking except the warmth of the sun
and the movement caused by the gentle breeze."*

Unknown

A contemporary 17th century reference
to Dutch landscape painting.

was able to play to the front of the green and two-putt for his first birdie of the day, moving him to 8-under.

Behind Mr. Rahm, Mr. Harman pulled his drive into the gorse and was forced to take an unplayable lie that resulted in a bogey that moved him to 10-under; and Mr. Young, playing with Mr. Harman, took two to extract himself from the left greenside bunker also resulting in a bogey and moving him to 5-under.

However, Mr. Harman followed with birdies at the 6th and 7th, and he was out in 35. Mr. Rahm followed with two pars and then a bogey at the 9th—also out in 35. Mr. Young bogeyed the 9th and was out in 37. Never to challenge again this Sunday.

Mr. Rahm was 1-under coming home which equaled Mr. Haman's 70 and that was that. Sepp Straka and Jason Day could barely improve with their 69s, and that too was that. Tom Kim's 277 also totaled six more than Mr. Harman's 271 for the championship.

To the end, not one of the extraordinary contenders was ever able to seriously challenge the lead that was created by Mr. Harman's 65 on Friday; and Mr. Harman was not about to destroy it himself.

Royal Liverpool and Brian Harman is a story of skillful tenacity, unhurried execution, and precision. Ours is the game with a playing field larger than any—other than perhaps steeple chasing—that begins with a yards-wide target and finishes with one 4¼ inches wide. Navigating that field filled with more than 80 bunkers, Mr. Harman led all players in fairways hit, made 59 of 60 putts within 10 feet, made just one bogey in the first 36 holes, found only two bunkers through the entire championship, and followed two of his three bogeys on Sunday with two, consecutive birdies.

Mr. Woods may be more thrilling to watch because of his talent. panache, and folklore, however for the 151st Open at Royal Liverpool Mr. Harman's golf was just as dominant as Mr. Woods' was at his best.

Yours vy truly,

Gary A. Galyean
Editor & Publisher

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