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Goodbye to Golf

The World's Champion Tells of His Career from 1927 to 1930, and Why He is Quitting the Tournament Game

By BOBBY JONES

As told to O. B. Keeler — an Atlanta newspaper man who is known in the world of golf as Bobby Jones' Boswell. He has followed Jones around for 120,000 miles, including three European excursions, been with him in twenty-seven national (or major) championships, and written about him for fifteen years.



PART ONE - A BLOW-UP AND A DOUBLE COMEBACK

The four years from 1927 through 1930 have concluded my competitive golfing career, which I carried through 1926 in a series of articles published in Liberty in 1927. This is a resumption, and a conclusion, of that series. I have retired definitely and forever from competitive golf. Before taking up the last four years, a brief recapitulation of the record from 1923, when I first broke through to win a major championship, through 1926, may be in order.

In 1923, I won the United States open championship in a play-off after a tie with Bobby Cruickshank at the Inwood Country Club, and was beaten by Max Marston in the second round of the national amateur at Flossmoor.

In 1924, I was runner-up to Cyril Walker in the United States open at Oakland Hills and won my first national amateur title at Merion. I played on the United States

Walker Cup team in the international match with the British at Garden City, winning my singles match with Major Heziet and, with W. C. Fownes, Jr., losing in the foursomes to the Hon. Michael Scott and Robert M. Scott. The American team won the match, 9 to 3.

In 1925, I was runner-up to Willie Macfarlane at Worcester in another play-off after a tie—the play-off was at eighteen holes in those days, and we still were tied after the first test. I won the national amateur championship at Oakmont.

In 1926, I was defeated by Andrew Jamieson in the sixth round of the British amateur at Muirfield, and again played on the American Walker Cup team, defeating Cyril Tolley in the singles and, with Wafts Gunn, winning from Tolley and Jamieson in the foursomes. Our team won the match, 6♦ to 5♦. I won the British open at Lytham and St. Anne's, and the American open at Scioto, and was beaten by George Von Elm in the final round of the United States amateur at Baltusrol.

This made five major championships in four years. I was twenty-four years old. And, rather naturally, I concluded that 1926, when I won both the British and the American open championships, must be the biggest year I could possibly hope for. But (I may confess it — now) I had a little private ambition which I never mentioned in that first series in Liberty. It appeared quite too improbable. But after I eked out the victory at Oakmont in 1925, I suddenly wanted to be national champion of the United States six years in succession, either open or amateur. I had managed it three years in a row.

But it is easily understood that I didn't do any talking about it. I didn't think about it a great deal, even. It was too much like the end of the rainbow. Still, it supplied a sort of objective. Competitive golf was bearing down more and more since I had won a few major titles. There seemed to be an unreasonable amount of responsibility. I was expected to win regularly, or, at the worst, to "make a showing." And I began to want very much to see an end to it; I wanted to look forward to a quitting place. And I thought to myself, if I could only hook together six national championships in a row, why, I could hang up the old clubs and let the boys shoot at that. Of course I did not object to a British championship now and then, if I were lucky enough to pick one off; but as I was only an intermittent contender over there, I did not regard these as essential.

Bobby Jones' Major Victories by Years Since He Started Winning Championships

1923-United States open champion.

1924-United States amateur champion.

1925-United States amateur champion.

1926-United States open champion; British open champion.

1927-United States amateur champion; British open champion.

1928-United States amateur champion. 1929-United States open champion.

1930-United States open champion; United States amateur champion; British open champion; British amateur champion.

(That's all there is—there isn't any more.)

In 1922, 1924, 1926, 1928, and 1930, Jones played on the American team in the Walker Cup match with the British, being captain of the American side in the last two competitions, now held biennially. He never has lost a match at singles against the British in this competition, and only one in the foursomes. Under his captaincy the American side won its two widest victories—1 1 points to 1, in 1928, at the Chicago Golf Club; and 1 0 to 2, in 1930, at the

Royal St. George's Club, Sandwich, England. The American team never has lost a match with the British in this event.

In connection with the trophies: Bobby's name is on the United States amateur cup five times; the United States open four times; the British open three times; and, the British amateur once. Of course there is no other record in golf remotely approaching this, especially the sweep of 1930.

Three times in the history of American and British golf has the same amateur competitor won two major championships the same year. This is excepting Bobby, who did it in 1926, again in 1927, and won all four in 1930. No other man has won as many as three, or is at all likely to.

Indeed, I am sure our generation will pass before anyone else ever captures more than half of the Grand Slam of Golf. As to the "Impregnable Quadrilateral" — it will never be captured again.—O. B. Keeler

So I got by in 1926, and that was the fourth national title in succession. And then came 1927 and the worst bust I ever made in the United States open, to start the year.

Well, no — that didn't start off the year, exactly. That was the first of three major competitions, but early in the spring we had a big open tournament at my home course, East Lake, in Atlanta, known as the Southern open championship; one of those winter affairs for a big purse — \$12,000, I believe — with most of the crack professionals entered.

Among them were Hagen and Farrell and Diegel and Cruickshank and Barnes and Espinosa and Macfarlane, and a lot of others; a really fine field.

I hadn't been playing in winter tournaments often, but this one was at my home course, so naturally I entered it, and I was shot with luck all the way.

The first round, I struggled in with a 72, a couple of strokes over the tournament par of the course, tied for second place with Larry Nabhoftz, Gene Sarazen, and, W. H. Livie.

Emmeft, French led the field with 71, and a lot of competitors were well bunched.

Then I got going in the second round, and everything broke just right, and I managed a card of 33-38-66, which put me five strokes ahead of the field at the halfway post. It was the best scoring round I, ever had in serious competition, always excepting that 66 at Sunningdale, in the first qualifying round for the British open of 1926; I made fewer mistakes over there, on a much harder course.

It wasn't so tough after that round.

Somebody told me that Bobby Cruickshank, out on the course when he heard I'd done a 66, said to his playing companion:

"The championship now being settled, we will start shooting for the jack!

This developed a great finish between John Golden and Johnny Farrell. With rounds of 71 and 72, I kept a considerable lead, ending eight strokes ahead of the field, with a score of 281, while Farrell and Golden tied for the top place among the money players. My last round was finished before theirs and I went out to watch the battle, for they were playing together, with Golden a stroke in the lead going to the seventeenth hole, the seventy-first of the tournament.

Farrell had been playing extraordinarily brilliant golf about the greens all through the competition-chipping stone dead, or holing long putts. And it was a big putt that saved him here.

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