

# ICONOCLASTIC GOLF TRIUMPH

## How J. Sweetser Broke Precedents and Climbed to the Top— His Eccentric Style

By W. D. RICHARDSON.

NOT so many years ago a blue-coat, traveling his beat along the footpaths bordering the sheep meadow north of the reservoir in Central Park, espied a man in Scotch tweeds, carrying a club with a peculiarly-shaped knob on one end. The man bent down, placed a little white object upon a little mound of dirt, then applied the club to the object in such a way as to cause it to describe a parabola and drop into an unsuspecting field of daisies, a hundred yards or so distant.

"Aha!" ejaculated the policeman, his Sherlock Holmes instincts rising. "I'll keep an eye on this bird."

He did, and after a few repetitions of the act by the man arrested him on a charge of committing golf in Central Park.

During the recent national amateur golf championship at Brookline, Mass., some thirty or more minions of the law were detailed to preserve peace in that most recent addition to the category of American spectator—the golf gallery.

"Please do not walk on the greens! Out of the bunkers, there! Do not cross the fairways while the players are driving off! Please remain quiet while the players are sighting their putts! Back off the tees!"

True it happened in Boston, seat of culture, but here was something novel—policemen using perfect golf lingo. I even noticed several of them fairly devouring the current news of the tourney. "See where Jesse (meaning Guilford) got a 69 yesterday!" said one. "Yeh! Some shootin', eh?"

Out at Toledo during the progress of

informed as to the day-by-day, hole-by-hole happenings.

During the period the out-of-town writers filed for telegraphic dissemination exactly 1,157,244 words. Add to that quota The Associated Press file, a separate distributing agency, and the number of words written by the Boston newspaper correspondents, and the total would probably reach 2,000,000 words. Twenty hundred columns of type! Indeed, the old order has changed.

New Boy Champion.

No small portion of this space had to do with a mere lad who, on the 18th of April last, celebrated his twentieth birthday anniversary—Jesse William Sweetser of the Swanoy Country Club, Bronxville, a junior at Yale University. For it was this tall, athletic, boyish-looking, fair-haired youngster who was crowned king of American golfers after a series of events that made new golf history.

His deeds are now so well known as to make it unnecessary to go over them again. Long ere this appears they have been broadcast not only throughout the length and breadth of our own land, but that of every other land in the world where the warning "fore" has a meaning.

There are, however, some interesting recapitulations concerning Sweetser and his achievements that warrant chronicling. Next to Bob Gardner, who won his first title when a 19-year-old Yale sophomore, Sweetser is the youngest golfer ever to come into possession of the American amateur title. He won his championship against what was generally accepted as having been the greatest field ever to start in quest of



Jesse Sweetser at End of His Swing.

the recent public links championship, a man committed suicide by quaffing carbolic acid just off one of the fairways. The body was discovered by a boy. He informed a policeman who happened to be "following" an important match coming along at that point.

"Why couldn't he have waited or else picked out some other spot," said the policeman. "I wanted to see this match finished."

Duty, however, was duty, and he performed his part, but in the minimum of time. The players had not reached the next green before this same blue-coat, panting and puffing, caught up.

"Who won the last hole?" were his first words.

"What did you do with the body?" countered a spectator who had accompanied the policeman around the course.

"Oh, I called up the Coroner's office and told him to come out. I can watch a couple of more noles before he gets here. The other fellow (referring to the corpse) won't get away before then."

How the old order has changed! A few years ago, only a few, an able-bodied man carrying a bag of golf clubs down the main thoroughfare of a big city was the centre of all eyes.

"Wonder if his doctor gave him that prescription?" one onlooker would ask another. "Look at that great big man going out to hit a little bit of a ball."

Nowadays a man can wear trick clothes in addition to carrying a bag of golf clubs and yet attract no more than a casual glance, an envious one at that.

Not long ago the national amateur golf championship was a comparatively small event in the sporting world; at least so far as space in the newspapers went. Now it is a thing of tremendous importance with a column after column devoted to it. At Brookline there were sixty special correspondents, each of them serving one or more newspapers, representatives of three large news distributing agencies and at least twenty photographers and motion picture operators, detailed on an eight-day assignment for the sole purpose of keeping the devotees of the royal and ancient game

golf's golden fleece. He cleaved his way through four of the most formidable opponents any champion has been called upon to face—Hunter, British amateur champion in 1920; Guilford, American amateur champion in 1921; Bobby Jones, long regarded as the greatest shot-maker among the world's amateurs; and finally, Chick Evans, the dean of all golfers here and abroad so far as winning championships is concerned. He was called upon to play the fewest number of holes on record in gaining his title, only 153, the thirty-fourth green being the outpost beyond which he was never carried.

With the single exception of the Guilford match, Sweetser was never "down" to any of his opponents. The Bostonian, by winning the tenth and eleventh holes in succession in the morning round, forged ahead of Sweetser, but the latter caught his rival at the sixteenth and was never headed thereafter. He is the first champion that the metropolitan district has been able to call its own in nine years, Jerry Travers, winner at Garden City in 1913, being the last.

Before the Brookline event Sweetser, although highly regarded as a golfer in the metropolitan area, was not seriously considered as a national champion by golf critics outside the pale of his own section. True, he had just won the metropolitan championship, he had smashed a number of course records, he had once been intercollegiate champion, and he had given a very good account of himself in the international team matches for the Walker Trophy at the National Links of America.

In spite of all this he was held as a rank outsider against Jones, Evans, Oulmet, Guilford, Gardner, Hunter and Tolley when the qualifying round was completed and the championship flight posted. They made a pool at Brookline (some of the enthusiastic followers, none of the United States Golf Association officials) and Jess sold for something like \$60, the low figure. Jones sold for \$185, the high-water mark, and the others in between. That indicated what the so-called wise ones thought of his chances. And even in spite of his record

Continued on Page 12.

# ICONOCLASTIC GOLF TRIUMPH

Continued from Page 4.

of Hunter, the master of the short run-up shot from just off the edge of the green; Guilford, the mightiest hitter in the game; and Jones, the artist with wood and iron. Sweetser's chances against Evans were considered almost negligible when they started off, and even at the beginning of the afternoon round when Sweetser was 2 up. But he beat Evans, just as he had previously beaten Hunter, Guilford and Jones, and just as decisively.

Another thing that made it extremely hard to dislodge the idea that it was impossible for him to win was his peculiarity in shot-making. For it may be said here and now that Sweetser's style or form, or whatever you may call it, is different from that of any other champion. Some say it isn't style at all. Whatever it is it gets there and it has got him to the championship.

## New Form of Play.

Those who have followed the game know that a few years ago the old St. Andrews style, particularly the upright swing, was the accepted style. Whoever happened to have it naturally was blessed; whoever did not have it, sought it and, failing, kept his peace as a duffer forever after. Sweetser's game is as different from the old St. Andrews school as night from day. It is the game of the modernist and therein should lay hope for that great army of players whose motto is: "Ninety or bust."

It is built upon the following doctrines: First of all a natural aptitude for the game, strength of forearms and wrists, keenness of eye, judgment of distance, control of nerves and muscles, determination to make a club act in the way the will commands, courage and tenacity. Sweetser possesses each and every one of these golfing virtues in an abundance. Secondly, a natural stance and grip of the club are required. Finally, a natural way of hitting the ball, keeping in mind of course those few cardinal principles of head down and eye on the ball, concentration.

When Sweetser first started to play in St. Louis as a youngster of nine, Innis Miller, his first tutor, saw that the boy had a peculiar and unorthodox method, but instead of tearing down the method he utilized all of its parts that could be utilized. The result was that, being born under the star of golf, Jess soon gave evidence of future greatness. He

was breaking course records before he was eleven.

In 1921 Sweetser, entering the intercollegiate practically without preliminary practice, went to the final round. There he met J. Simpson Dean of Princeton in one of those super-moods into which golfers occasionally wander and Sweetser was topped from his crown, 3 and 2.

## Came Ahead This Year.

This year, having been granted a six months' leave of absence from Yale as a result of being an honor student and of certain changes in the curriculum of the scientific course, which he is following, Sweetser was able to get an earlier start than before. Making his first bid for the metropolitan amateur championship at Lakewood in the early Summer, he won the event handily. In addition he led the field in the qualifying round and established a new course record.

Breaking records has become almost a penchant with him. Nine records, several of long standing, have fallen before him during the last two seasons. His most notable performance in this respect was his 60 at Brookline.

Once a man wins a title in golf, not only his past life, but his tool-kit and even his thoughts become public property. Glimpsing into Sweetser's golf bag one finds far fewer implements than the average man carries. They include a brassie, spoon, driving iron, midiron, mashie, niblick, mashie-niblick, spade and putter. His favorite clubs are the spade, which he uses for distances between 60 and 110 yards off the green, and his mashie-niblick. His favorite shot and his most effective, too, is the mashie-niblick pitch from approximately 140 yards—a shot he plays high in the air and with almost uncanny dexterity.

As for his methods, we will let Sweetser explain them himself. The wooden clubs first.

"I formerly used what is known as the open stance," he said, "but of late I have changed to the closed, with my left foot advanced an inch or so ahead of the right. I found that by so doing I was able to get more power and accuracy. I try to keep my hands low in addressing the ball, carry the club back slowly and easily, and with a comparatively short (somewhat less than three-quarters) back swing. In order to keep the arc of the swing on the inside instead of the outside of the ball I keep my left arm in close to the body."

There can be no doubt as to the soundness of his form for, in addition to his deeds of prowess as chronicled above, Sweetser has never been beaten twice by the same man, which is indeed something to ponder over.