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# Sir Walter and Mr. Jones: Walter Hagen, Bobby Jones, and the Rise of American Golf. Chapter 6: "The Greatest Ever" and a Return to Merion, 1924-1925

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## CHAPTER SIX

### *"The Greatest Ever" and a Return to Merion, 1924-1925*

#### 1

With his own runner-up year behind him, Walter Hagen headed for his winter base along the west coast of Florida. Accompanying him early in December 1923 were his wife and a chauffeur, who drove the Hagens' Cadillac southward from Philadelphia to St. Petersburg. It was Hagen's first automobile trip along the Atlantic coast, and he immensely enjoyed the scenery, especially in the Carolinas. He had traveled the same path many times by railroad but found that it "did not compare in any way, shape or form with the motor car" as a means of transportation.

After he arrived in St. Petersburg, Hagen struck one of the most fortuitous and lucrative financial arrangements of his life. Jack Taylor, a gulf coast real estate developer, approached Hagen with the idea of constructing another country club in the St. Petersburg-Tampa Bay area. Taylor owned some 350 acres surrounding Bear Creek and bordering the town of Pasadena. He planned to put a course on the land and sell small plots for homes to create a "splendid, aristocratic resort community." Taylor asked Hagen to help design the course, serve as the club's first president, and represent it in tournaments throughout the regular season. For his name and trouble, Hagen would receive \$30,000 annually. Hagen did not think long before accepting the offer and spent much of the winter of 1924 organizing the Bear Creek Golf and Country Club, later renamed Pasadena-on-the-Gulf. The plans called for thirty-six holes to be ready by the spring of 1925.

According to an advertisement in the Southern Golfer, Hagen sent personal invitations to

"a selected list of golfers whose reputations make them highly desirable [and who] will add great prestige to the club and will attract other members of equal standing socially and financially."

The club was to be "exclusive," not "semi-public." That winter Hagen characterized the project as the "dream of my life." "This being the first time that I have had a finger in the pie," he went on, "I hope to make the most of it." Pasadena-on-the-Gulf and the Spanish villa-style home that the Hagens occupied were indeed a long way from the old homestead in Corbett's Glen.<sup>i</sup>

The Bear Creek land deal came at a good time for Hagen. Although he had poured thousands of dollars into it, his golf equipment company in Longwood had struggled. At one point in the company's short life, his sister, Freda Hagen, even came to Longwood to help manage the business. But neither her efforts nor anyone else's could make the venture successful. Hagen later wrote that the company failed because of Florida's humid climate, which caused the clubs' hickory shafts to swell. When the products were shipped north, the shafts contracted, permitting the iron heads to slip free. That may have been a problem, but it is more likely that the enterprise simply suffered from poor organization and inexperienced leadership. Hagen had started the factory after leaving A. G. Spalding & Brothers, but by the spring of 1923 he had returned, endorsing the "Spalding 50" ball. And in the spring of 1924 Hagen again dabbled in the brokerage business. All of that suggests that Hagen's business discipline was not necessarily on par with his golf skills, so the \$30,000 salary was a welcomed, steady income.

Not surprisingly, Hagen had a relatively light competitive winter season. He did play in a handful of four-ball exhibitions. In tournament play he finished fourth in the St. Petersburg Open and second in the West Coast Open, which he had won the previous two years. Hagen got back into the winner's circle at the last event of the season, the North and South Open. He did it in

impressive style, shooting a pair of 68s the first day. He collected the paltry first-place prize of \$300 and then motored back to New York City for the country's first National Golf Show.<sup>ii</sup>

Bob Harlow, along with several wealthy golf boosters, organized the exposition, which was held May 5-7 at the Seventy-First Regiment's armory building. The show's objectives were to create greater interest in the sport and give some sixty equipment and clothing manufacturers an opportunity to exhibit their latest lines. Models strutted the most recent styles of golf-wear twice a day; trophies for the PGA, U.S. Open, U.S. Amateur, U.S. Women's Championship, and the Walker Cup were showcased. Beyond that, visitors were awed by the 240-foot miniature golf course, complete with bunkers, rough, and water hazards. Most of the holes, which ranged from thirty to forty-five feet, required only putts, but a few called for pitches. Some of the stars, Hagen among them, played matches over the little course to the delight of the galleries. Approximately 8,000 golf enthusiasts paid for tickets to the show, prompting the Southern Golfer to declare golf "the greatest American sport, a sport which in the last few years has surpassed interest in even automobiles, baseball, and football, while tennis has been left even farther behind."<sup>iii</sup>

It had taken a while, but golf finally had risen to new heights as a participatory and spectator sport. R. Hay Chapman, writing for Golf Illustrated, highlighted the sport's "miraculous growth" in California, where he claimed that there were over 25,000 club members, 5,000 municipal golfers, and another 10,000 visiting golfers annually. Outlook carried an article by golf editor J. Lewis Brown that counted nearly 2,500 golf clubs and 1,500,000 golfers in the United States. New York City alone possessed 250 courses; Chicago, 105. Brown believed that the "demand is greater than the supply" because "the baseball and football fan of today is the

golfer of tomorrow." "Baseball and tennis have long scoffed at the Royal and Ancient game," Brown concluded, but golf "is rapidly overhauling them [and] is destined to become the center of the limelight of popularity as America's National pastime and one in which Uncle Sam's players will reign supreme the world over." Sol Metzger picked up on Brown's conclusion when he wrote in Country Life about the "Rapid Rise of American Golf" vis a `vis the British game; indeed, American golfers had gained significant respect abroad.<sup>iv</sup>

The USGA's decision to hold its open early in June was another sign of American golf's strength. Until 1924 the USGA organized its events around what was considered the global championship, the British Open. Traditionally, the Royal and Ancient authorities staged their event in May or June, leaving July-September, the hottest, driest months, for the U.S. Open. In what amounted to yet another declaration of independence, the USGA decided to hold its 1924 open early in June, forcing the British to move theirs. Of course, the R & A could have left its open in early June as well, but that would have cost it the entry of American players, who by then would choose to play in the U.S. Open. The R & A did not like the schedule change, but in the end there was really nothing that it could do.

That year qualifying for the U.S. Open was finally done regionally. So the 287-man field was divided into an eastern and western section, with the top forty-two from each area advancing to the tournament proper. Hagen, who badly wanted to win his third title, qualified in the east region at the Worcester Country Club on May 28 with a mediocre 76-78. The USGA decided that Jones automatically qualified as the reigning champion.

While Hagen signed on with Pasadena-on-the-Gulf and entertained New Yorkers at the first National Golf Show, Jones put the finishing touches on his second academic degree and

eagerly awaited his marriage to Mary Malone. He began 1924 at the Hotel Astor in New York as the guest of honor for the USGA's annual organization dinner. A few weeks later he completed Harvard's requirements for a B.A. in English Literature. His course work had included French, German, and English history, as well as Roman history and Continental Europe, 1817-71. Jones also took classes in Comparative Literature, Composition, Dryden, Swift, and Shakespeare. That emphasis in the humanities nicely complemented his engineering degree from Georgia Tech and made him one of the most intellectually well-rounded athletes ever. A short time later, the Harvard Athletic Committee awarded Jones a crimson "H" for winning the U.S. Open as a student at the institution.

On February 8, during his trip back to Atlanta, Jones visited with reporters in New York. He told them that he had given little attention to golf over the last two months and that he did not plan to play in Europe that year. "Naturally," he said, "I'd like to go abroad, but since I am just starting out in business, I want to devote myself to that and to get launched on my career as soon as possible." The career that Jones referred to was real estate. When he returned to Atlanta that spring, Jones took a position in the Adair Realty and Trust Company. George Adair had started the profitable business; Perry Adair had worked in it for several years. Now Jones would join his friend and, reportedly, begin his career at the "bottom" like everyone else, taking "his place in the renting department."<sup>v</sup>

Jones kept his word and did not go abroad that spring, but he did play in several exhibitions and a regional open tournament. His well-publicized exhibition matches occurred in March and April. On Saturday, April 5, in what some called a world's championship match, British Open titleholder Arthur Havers beat Jones 2 and 1 in thirty-six holes at East Lake. In late

April Jones played another exhibition to benefit the American Fund for the 1924 Olympics. Then on May 21 he won the Alabama-Georgia Open, played at Druid Hills in Atlanta. Kenneth Sapp of the Atlanta Constitution wrote that Jones performed "like a machine" and was "easily the big attraction of the tournament," finishing fourteen strokes lower than the runner-up, David Spittall. A few days later he arrived at Detroit and took a room at the Oakland Hills Country Club, site of the U.S. Open.<sup>vi</sup>

Jones and Hagen got about a week's worth of practice at Detroit, and both were considered heavy favorites by golf dopesters. After taking a 74 in his first practice round, Jones told Buda Baker of the Detroit News that the layout was "tough," especially because of its "unusually" large and undulating greens. Jones shot six practice rounds, scoring between 73 and 77. The Atlanta Constitution noticed that during an informal four-ball competition on Monday, "Jones and Hagen indulged in a slugging match from the tees, taking turns leading the way." Still another observer recorded that Hagen was using "wooden pegs" instead of sand for his tees and that he still left them in the ground for souvenirs.

Jones maintained his consistent form on June 5 when the event got underway. After the first two rounds, he and "Wild Bill" Mehlhorn were tied for the lead; Jones carded a 74-73. The gallery following him was large and cumbersome, and the Atlanta Constitution reported that Jones lost his patience while waiting for the crowd to be cleared from the tenth fairway. "Oh well, I'm going to drive anyway," he declared, hitting his ball and then adding, "that ought to nail one of them." It may have been because he hooked it into the rough and suffered a double-bogey. For the most part, though, Jones played with "new poise" and a "calm" demeanor. Hagen scored well that day too, posting a pair of 75s and landing in fourth place. Cyril Walker, a professional from

Englewood, New Jersey, was between Hagen and Jones at 148.

Similar to Bobby Cruickshank, Walker was slight in build, standing 5' 6" and weighing 120 pounds, but he possessed "wrists of steel" and could hit the ball a long way. On the final day, he played better than anyone else and captured the title. His 297 was three shots lower than Jones, who finished alone in second place. Jones praised Walker, declaring, "this guy is good. He can shoot a game of golf and won by shooting a damnsite better than anyone else in the show. Naturally I am disappointed at not retaining my title, but I have no excuse to offer and no complaints to make." One writer thought that Jones's comment in defeat "epitomizes the American ideal of sportsmanship." Kenneth Laub of the Detroit News dissected Jones's play and concluded that the large, difficult greens had caused his defeat; Jones had missed a half-dozen putts of less than ten feet, and on the fourth hole he three-putted from fifteen feet. As for Hagen, he "broke" in the final round after putting his ball in the water and taking a double-bogey on the infamous sixteenth. He finished where he had started, in fourth place at 303.

Post-tournament analysis focused on Walker's courageous, upset victory and the solid performance of Jones. Previously, Walker's best tournament finish had been runner-up to Hagen in the North and South Open. Although Jones had won the U.S. Open only once, the New York Times pointed out that in his five attempts he was seventeen shots lower than his nearest rival, Hagen. Jones was already building a record in the U.S. Open that suggested he was the country's finest medal player. The event was also a success for the USGA, which claimed that 10,000 had turned out for the final day, and that it had collected \$20,000 in gate receipts throughout the week. Jones may not have accepted the second-place prize check, but others certainly made a nice profit from his appearance.<sup>vii</sup>



Given what was on their minds, Hagen and Jones both performed well at Oakland Hills. Neither remained long in Detroit: Hagen rushed to New York to catch a ship bound for England, where he would make another run at the British Open; Jones had to hurry back to Atlanta, where he would finally marry after a five year courtship.

At 8:30 on Tuesday evening, June 17, Bob Jones and Mary Malone were wed in what the Atlanta Constitution described as "a social event of rare beauty." The ceremony was held on the lawn behind the spacious Malone home because Jones would not convert to Catholicism. Father James Horton of the Sacred Heart Church performed the ceremony, however, suggesting that, like Hagen, Jones had at least agreed to allow his children to be reared Catholic. Indeed, the event illustrated the tension and compromise inherent in their Protestant-Catholic union. It also proved that however traditional, intolerant, or inflexible R. T.'s religious outlook may have been, his grandson, like an increasing number in his generation, was more ambivalent about his own religious convictions.

The Malone house was decorated with palms, baskets of summer flowers, Madonna lilies, and an altar of lilies and tiny electric lights shaped into a four-leaf clover. The grounds were lined with pink flowers and illuminated by strings of lights. A "brilliant reception" followed, and guests ate pieces of a three-tiered cake. The Constitution carefully traced the couple's "prominent" family backgrounds, noting the Confederate officers in Mary's family tree and R. T. in Bob's. In sum, the evening was an attraction on Atlanta's high society calendar. The newlyweds left the reception early and traveled to Asheville, North Carolina, for their honeymoon. After that, they returned to live with Big Bob and Clara Jones, until Bob, Jr., could establish himself in the real estate business.<sup>viii</sup>

## 2

As Jones honeymooned in North Carolina, "Sir Walter" looked to make more history abroad. (By the spring of 1924 sportswriters occasionally called Hagen by that nickname, although his other one, "The Haig," had been used regularly for several years as well.) On June 10, just three days after the U.S. Open concluded, he and his wife sailed for England. They had hurried to New York City via Rochester, where on Sunday Hagen may have spent a few hours with his son. The Hagens were accompanied on the Mauretania by the Sarazens (who had been married the previous day) and professionals Johnny Farrell and Al Espinosa. They would all join Jim Barnes, who was already in England.

By the 21st the party was settled in Liverpool, and Hagen had shot 68 in a rain-soaked practice round at Hoylake. That score was quite impressive; his 83 in the first qualifying round two days later was not. Still, observed the New York Times, Hagen "walked away with his wife, seemingly not bothered and with an air of confidence that everything would turn out all right tomorrow." Hagen did respond in characteristically cool fashion the next day, showing up late for his tee time and then posting a 73 to make it into the tournament proper. The shot of the day was his sinking of a fifty-yard pitch for eagle on the seventh hole. Sarazen, who had failed to qualify the previous year, led the field.

Hagen teed off at 10:00 the next morning in his first rounds. He "cut a picturesque figure in lavender 'plus-fours' [knickers] and sweater and black and white shoes." Edna Hagen's appearance neatly complemented her husband's; she even wore heeled shoes with black and

white wing tips, matching those of Sir Walter. His game was not quite as consistent as his wardrobe, though, and one reporter described Hagen's play as "brilliantly erratic." With rounds of 77-73, Hagen finished the day three strokes behind the leader, British professional E. R. Whitcombe.

A strong breeze kicked up the next day, June 27. When it was over, that afternoon would stand out as one of the greatest in Hagen's career. Nattily attired in grey and white, he started hot, taking a 74 in the third round and catching Whitcombe in the lead. Both men then finished the tournament strong. Whitcombe came in first with a 78, so Hagen, who had a 41 on the front nine, knew that he needed a 36 to win.

He hit a solid drive to the tenth, a lengthy dog-leg with an elevated green. The wind gusted as he took his mashie-iron (four-iron) and set up over his approach shot. Hagen rifled his ball through the breeze and onto the green, but it just trickled off the slick surface and down a steep slope into the rough. When asked later if that break "jolted" him, Hagen replied: "No, it didn't. And for two reasons: In the first place, I knew in advance that the green was treacherous under the conditions and that even a good shot might not stay on. I had underwritten that possibility. And, in the second place, that was no spot for me to fret over any bad break. I needed all the concentration I had to get my next shot close and drop my putt for a par four." Hagen's chip left his ball eight feet from the cup. He focused on the line and then confidently dropped the putt for his par.

Despite his tee shot at the tenth, Hagen was not driving accurately, but he continued to scramble his way to the eighteenth hole, where a par four would give him the tournament. He finally split the fairway with his tee shot, but his approach was too long and over the green. His

chip was a little short, leaving his ball six feet from the hole. Again, Hagen needed a tough putt; the intensity of the moment was severe. He calmly surveyed the green and then hit the ball squarely into the back of the hole. The crowd roared; Hagen waved his putter in the air. Edna Hagen, heeled shoes and all, ran out on the eighteenth green and kissed the champion. Moments later, during the trophy presentation, Hagen received a deafening ovation; the crowd even sang "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow" to cornet music. George Greenwood wrote that "no more dramatic and no more thrilling finish to a championship has ever been witnessed on any links. The most thrilling scene ever depicted in the 'movies' pales into insignificance before it."<sup>ix</sup>

The victory brought, among other things, more legitimacy to his runner-up finish the previous year; Hagen had now won two of the past three British Opens and had come within one shot of winning all three. The man the British crowd carried on its shoulders from the green that day had wiped away any lingering doubts about his being the world's greatest competitive golfer. In the following two weeks, Hagen affirmed his status by winning the Belgian Open and finishing third in the French Open.

By July 21, the day that the Hagens returned to the U.S. aboard the Leviathan, Sir Walter had been trumpeted from both sides of the Atlantic. London's Daily Express declared Hagen's victory "marvelous," adding that "golf in Great Britain is much overshadowed." Bernard Darwin wrote in the Times that "other people may play more blameless and accurate golf and make fewer bad shots, but in pure fighting ability Hagen has no equal. We can only salute the conqueror as our unquestioned superior." The Daily Mail and Sporting Life simply concluded that Hagen "has become the world's best golfer."<sup>x</sup>

The U.S. analysis was much the same. The New York Times lauded Hagen, already "the

greatest competitive golfer of the present age," as "the greatest competitive golfer that ever lived-  
-bar none." John G. Anderson thought that "America's foremost golfer has no counterpart in golf  
history for determination, resourcefulness, courage and golfing brains." Hagen's finish was "the  
most superb and stout-hearted golf which it has been my lot to witness in twenty-eight years."

The victory, remarked Innis Brown of the American Golfer, entitled Hagen "to rank with the  
greatest that the game has ever produced here or elsewhere." Brown also pointed out that Hagen  
was the first man ever to repeat victories in both national opens. Finally, Hagen's hometown  
paper, the Rochester Times-Union, labeled him "the greatest competitive golfer of his time."

What did Hagen think of his accomplishment? "I just had a great big piece of luck. I had the  
breaks when I needed them most." Putting his previous year's experience behind him, he added  
that the gallery's demonstration on the final hole proved "that the British are as fine sportsmen as  
can be found in the entire world. It almost made me ashamed of what I had done."<sup>xi</sup>

Following a victory banquet at the Westchester-Biltmore and a few days of relaxation,  
Hagen set out to capitalize on his refurbished reputation. He made money that summer by  
endorsing such items as a five-album golf instructional series entitled "Golf Secrets By Walter  
Hagen." For \$10 a golfer who wanted to break 100 could purchase the long-playing records,  
supposedly containing ten years of Hagen's experience and \$10,000 worth of lessons. Winning  
golf was not "magic," according to Hagen, but the ability to "separate good practical golf from  
intricate and sometimes harmful theory." Hagen also put his signature to a solid sterling-silver  
putter, "an exact replica" of the club "which won four open championships here and abroad."  
Lambert Brothers Jewelers of New York crafted and sold the putter for \$35. But Hagen mostly  
profited by playing exhibitions with Kirkwood in Canada and the U.S. To accommodate his

schedule, Hagen withdrew from the Canadian Open and skipped the Western Open. The only significant tournament he entered in the second half of 1924 was the PGA Championship.<sup>xii</sup>

The PGA followed the USGA's lead and held regional qualifying events for its tournament. Late in August, Hagen played his preliminary rounds in the New York district, posting a 70-78 and surviving by only one stroke. A few weeks later, he traveled to French Lick, Indiana, for the tournament proper. Two additional qualifying rounds were played on site to slice the field in half for match play, and on September 15 Hagen shot 70-71, just one more than leader Johnny Farrell. When the match play started, Hagen cut his way through Tom Harman, Al Watrous, Johnny Farrell, and Ray Derr. In an astounding upset, defending champion Sarazen was eliminated in the second round by a youngster named Larry Nabholz.

So the anticipated rematch between Hagen and Sarazen did not materialize; rather, on September 20 Hagen faced his old rival Jim Barnes in the final. Hagen still had Barnes's number and beat the lanky Cornishman 2 up en route to his second PGA crown. As William Richardson described it, "Barnes failed in crises; Hagen generally rose to the occasion." Besides outplaying Barnes that day, Hagen also out-dressed him. W. Blaine Patton of the Indianapolis Star noted that Barnes's long, loose-fitting pants provided a "strange contrast to the immaculate Hagen," who wore his usual knickers and bow tie. The triumph underscored Hagen as the "outstanding golfer of the year."<sup>xiii</sup>

Following exhibitions in Indianapolis, Muncie, Richmond, and Terre Haute, Hagen played his way back to the northeast. Late in October he teamed with Sarazen to defeat Ouimet and Sweetser 1 up in an exciting thirty-six-hole struggle at the St. Albans Golf Club on Long Island. The event was a rematch of the professional-amateur duel in which Ouimet-Jones had

defeated Hagen-Sarazen. Staged again for the "benefit of the crippled children" of New York, the match raised nearly \$4,000. Sarazen carried the professionals to victory, while the Metropolitan Golfer thought that Hagen appeared a "trifle stale." That should have surprised no one, because it had been a busy period for Hagen since returning from Europe. He and Kirkwood had played many exhibitions that fall, and Hagen later estimated that they had played 220 matches since teaming up in 1922.<sup>xiv</sup>

Yet exhibitions provided guaranteed money, so a few days after the professional-amateur charity match, Hagen and Harlow announced the formation of the Professional Golfers League of Florida. Harlow said that the league would "afford the professionals the best opportunity for competition as well as a means of making money." He also promised that the matches would not conflict with the Texas Open and other southern big-money events. Teams representing some of the most prestigious clubs, including Hagen and Kirkwood from Pasadena-on-the-Gulf, would compete against each other in four-ball exhibitions. The league format was experimental; nothing like it had ever been attempted in golf. If successful, it would allow top players to essentially bypass the tournaments and make a more reliable income from exhibitions. Moreover, it represented an attempt to bring a coherent schedule to the winter's competition, which until then had been managed haphazardly by various tournament organizers.

The league, plus Hagen's barnstorming, once again raised criticism among traditionalists. British star veteran J. H. Taylor sounded the old alarms concerning the commercialization of the game. Taylor admitted that Hagen's barnstorming exhibitionism probably aided him in tournament play, inasmuch as it allowed constant, competitive practice. But Taylor also believed that "it is only by [club duties] that [the professional] justifies his existence and renders himself

worthy of being an essential part of the game." As for Hagen, he cared little to nothing about Taylor's opinions. In late November he started south, stopping at Norfolk, Virginia, where he captured the Princess Anne Country Club's Open. From there it was on to Bear Creek and the Professional Golfer's League.<sup>xv</sup>

### 3

With a beautiful new wife, Bob Jones, Jr., had been distracted from golf in the summer of 1924. Following his honeymoon, Jones refocused and began preparing for the Walker Cup and U.S. Amateur, which was returning to the Merion Cricket Club, site of his first national event back in 1916. He passed up an invitation to the Western Amateur, so his preparation came in the form of casual practice rounds and charity exhibitions. On July 17 he played a thirty-six-hole four-ball match at Druid Hills for the benefit of the "Women's Club building fund." The following week he traveled to Savannah with Perry Adair; there they defeated some local professional talent 1 up in eighteen holes. In another four-ball contest on August 8, Jones smashed the course record at the Newman Country Club. Three days later his 67 set another record, this time at the Ansley Park layout. Finally, on the 28th, Jones played in an exhibition for the Educational Society in Albany, Georgia. In sum, if Jones "launched" his career in real estate, he also spent much of the summer of 1924 launching golf balls and practicing for the fall's events.<sup>xvi</sup>

On September 12-13 the Walker Cup matches were played at the National Links on Long Island. Bob Gardner captained a U.S. team that included Jones, Evans, Ouimet, Guilford,



Marston, and Sweetser. The American side once again defeated their British counterparts, this time taking three of four Scottish foursomes and six of eight singles matches to retain the cup, 9-3. As usual, the home side was stronger because of the convenience of playing in the event, while the visitors were not as well represented. Most notably absent were Roger Wethered and E. W. Holderness. Still, the British team put up a gallant struggle, and most of the individual matches were in doubt until the final holes.<sup>xvii</sup>

By the following week, Jones, Keeler, and Luke Ross were in Philadelphia, gearing up for the Amateur, with Jones and Keeler sharing a room in the Greenhill Farms Hotel. The USGA scheduled the qualifying rounds at Merion for Saturday and Monday, September 20 and 22. Every player would shoot one round each day, and the top thirty-two would advance to Tuesday's match-play. Jones shot 72 on Saturday and on Monday to qualify easily. Although not the medalist, the Atlantan was in excellent form for match-play, and on Tuesday he ripped through his first opponent, Canadian Amateur Champion W. J. Thompson. That set up a second-round match against the red-hot D. Clarke "Ducky" Corkran, who had edged Jones for the qualifying medal. After a slow start, Jones clipped Ducky, 3 and 2. In the third round he beat Rudy Knepper to advance into the semifinals.

There he met his friend and American golf hero, Francis Ouimet. The last time Jones had played Ouimet in the Amateur was in 1920, when, following the yellow jacket chase, he lost 6 and 5. Jones had overcome a lot since then, and his affection for Ouimet did not protect the living legend from an 11 and 10 thrashing. As William Richardson summed it up, "Brilliant Bobby" simply "humiliated" Ouimet. When it was over, the loser was characteristically gracious: "There's no disgrace in going down before such a golfer as Jones was today." George Von Elm

of southern California beat defending champion Max Marston in the other semifinal, earning the opportunity to play Jones in the championship round.

By now nearly every golf writer had made numerous allusions to 1916 and Jones's first visit to Merion. Sports editors around the country juxtaposed photographs from 1916 of the capped, gum-chewing, world-beating, sassy, hot-headed, husky fourteen-year-old Little Bob with recent pictures of the suited, modest, controlled, matured, educated, lean twenty-two-year-old Mr. Jones. It was easy to see that the all-American boy had grown admirably into a young gentleman. Von Elm, on the other hand, was the first golfer from west of the Mississippi to make it to the final of the U.S. Amateur, and Jones's experience made him the solid favorite. In fact, both men were playing well.

Philadelphia's weather had been beautiful all week, and it stayed that way for championship Saturday, September 27. Jones ate a light breakfast that morning, consisting of only fruit and cereal. Not surprisingly, there was a feeling of destiny in the air when the USGA's official starter introduced Jones and Von Elm to the anxious gallery of 10,000. Ross even carried two clubs--an old mid-iron (two-iron) and a mashie-iron (four-iron)--that Jones had used in 1916. Probably a bit nervous when the match began, Jones lost the first hole. He soon settled down, though, and went 4 up by the break. Then Jones came out sizzling in the afternoon, winning five and losing none of the first nine holes, extending his lead to 9 up. They halved the tenth, where Jones won the match 9 and 8 and his first U.S. Amateur crown. It was also the first time that the U.S. Amateur trophy had journeyed below the Mason-Dixon line, so two regional "firsts" were recorded.

The end had been almost uninteresting; nevertheless, it was an appropriate finish to a

week in which Jones simply destroyed the competition. His aggregate score versus his opponents was 35 up, for an average of 7 up. The difference that week was three-fold. First, Jones was putting exceptionally well with Calamity Jane. Second, he utilized the strategy for which he would become famous; that is, Jones made Old Man Par his adversary. Third, once in the lead Jones did not back off of his opponents in the afternoon but only increased the pressure. The last two factors are illustrated in the following statistic: Jones had forty pars, eleven birdies, and ten bogeys to play his sixty-one afternoon holes in one under par.

Perry Lewis of the Philadelphia Inquirer observed that "Jones never let up on Von Elm. Instead, he was out there shooting par all the time, regardless of what Von Elm was doing, for he knew that as he drew close to regulation figures the certainty of his triumph was assured." William Richardson also noticed Jones's "new plan" and commented that Jones was "machine-like when it comes to playing against par." Keeler later wrote that one night, just before the light was turned out in their room, Jones commented, "I've discovered something about golf . . . . If you keep on shooting par at them, they'll crack sooner or later." Keeler also suggested that Jones's new eating habits had helped. Forsaking large breakfasts and lunches topped with pie a la mode, Jones ate much less during competition and saved his big meal for the dinner hour.<sup>xviii</sup>

Lewis of the Inquirer hit upon another theme common to the post-tournament analysis: Jones's extraordinary sportsmanship and amateurism. "It is not the golden glow of commerce coveted by the money-changers which Bobby clutches to his bosom this morning," Lewis commented. "It is gold unalloyed with selfish greed--gold of accomplishment in its virgin state--gold of an ambition realized--a long-denied honor gained at last after a series of sickening discouragements." Indeed, the fact that it took eight years to win the event now played to the

advantage of Jones's image. According to commentators, he had won by overcoming obstacles through discipline and hard work. The Inquirer included the following biographical piece in its Sunday edition:

### Bobby Jones, New Golf King Is Fine Sportsman

#### Who Is Jones?

Bobby Jones, of Atlanta, Georgia, is a democratic champion. Born in Atlanta, he went through the public schools of his home town. Then he matriculated at Georgia Tech Prep, and after graduating went through Georgia Tech.

He then took a B.A. at Harvard.

Out of Harvard, he was at work two weeks later for an Atlanta concern, pressing the asphalt as he collected rents. His advancement in the business world has been remarkably rapid since he made his start from the foot of the ladder.

Jones was a splendid student, he is a progressive young American business man. He is destined to be one of the most popular champions America ever had, for he is the finest type of sportsman.

Golf fans were left to themselves to reconcile Jones's "democratic" nature with his Georgia Tech degree in engineering and Harvard degree in Dryden, Swift, and Shakespeare. In truth, if Jones "made his start from the foot of the ladder," then his was a ladder that most Americans never even touched.

As for the new champion, he remembered thinking during the trophy presentation: "Now I've won the blamed thing. And I didn't do anything, either." Jones believed that he had played no better than in earlier events; the difference in 1924, he maintained, was simply that no one got hot or "went crazy" against him with an especially low round. To be fair, Jones was the one who had played extremely hot golf that week. Additionally, he was a more emotionally disciplined,

consistent competitor than in any previous match-play event. Not surprisingly, the victory at Merion reinforced in Jones a growing faith in fate or destiny; his career was assuming a neat, circular, even storybook quality.<sup>xix</sup>

Although it was raining when Jones and Keeler returned to Atlanta, they were greeted by nearly 4,000 admirers at the Brookwood Station. The fans, including the Georgia Tech football team, surrounded Jones's wife and parents, and an estimated one thousand automobiles lined both sides of Peachtree Street. Once the star emerged from the train, cameras began flashing and the crowd cheered. According to the Atlanta Georgian, it was a larger reception than the one given in 1923, after Jones had won the U.S. Open. When it was finished, Jones quickly retired to his parents' house for some rest, while Atlantans spent a "half-hour trying to get out of the worst traffic jam in the annals of our narrow streets."<sup>xx</sup>

Early in November Jones again set aside his responsibilities at Adair Realty to play in the annual foursome match for the benefit of the "crippled children's fund." A month later he and Ouimet lost to the British professionals Abe Mitchell and George Duncan in an exhibition at Asheville, North Carolina. That ended a busy and productive golf season for Jones. He had not entered many tournaments in 1924 but had played in numerous exhibitions and, for the second straight year, had won a national tournament. H. B. Martin of the Southern Golfer ranked him number one among amateurs, adding, "there is no question as to his supremacy."<sup>xxi</sup> Joe Horgan, writing for the same publication, put Walter Hagen first among the professionals, as "everyone would agree who was not deaf and blind." Golf Illustrated's James Harnett concurred, adding that Hagen was not only the best among the professionals but the "golfer of the year." Sarazen had been little more than a "flash in the pan," according to Harnett, while Hagen's

performances in the last three British Opens had made the "world his [golfing] kingdom." At thirty-one years, Hagen had won no less than twenty-five tournaments, including two British Opens, two U.S. Opens, two Western Opens, three Metropolitan Opens, and two PGA Championships.<sup>xxii</sup>

At twenty-two, Jones had a U.S. Open and U.S. Amateur, along with a number of regional titles; he had also compiled an astonishing scoring average in the U.S. Open and had just discovered how to win major tournaments. At the close of 1924, Sir Walter was the emperor of golf. Mr. Jones, though, was about to challenge him for that crown. Moreover, that struggle fueled another major change: the U.S.'s consolidation of its golfing superiority over the British.

#### 4

It would take another two years, however, for those changes to become apparent. There were actually few competitive surprises in the 1925 season, probably the least eventful of those between 1919 and 1930.

For the first time, Jones began the year with some Florida golf. The Florida real estate boom was at its zenith, and the state could now boast of 120 golf courses. Adair Realty and Trust was actively involved in the market. So Jones spent much of February and March ostensibly promoting his company's sizeable land holdings; along the way, he kept his game in shape. Jones and Perry Adair made their headquarters in Sarasota, where early in February they played several well-attended exhibitions.

A couple of months later, Grantland Rice, writing for Collier's magazine, perpetuated an increasingly popular perception that, since entering the real estate business, Jones was "playing

less golf than he had ever played before." Fans were told that with "little practice" Jones "tore through the field" at Merion. Rice's article ironically appeared in April 1925, just after Jones finished his first Florida swing, hardly a sign of decreasing play. Jones may have been playing less golf than during his college days; he was certainly not playing as often as Hagen and other professionals. Nevertheless, Jones was playing plenty, much more than admirers who were determined to highlight his amateurism wanted to admit.<sup>xxiii</sup>

On February 27 Jones entered his first West Coast Open, joining the professionals, including Hagen, at Pasadena. The event, which had been moved from Bellair that year, was played at Hagen's course for the first time. Jones, displaying "ragged golf," neither started nor finished well. Hagen was not in top form either, and when the tournament concluded on March 2, he was in seventh-place and Jones in fifteenth. Soon after, Jones returned to Atlanta, where he continued in real estate and prepared for the U.S. Open, which was scheduled for late May.<sup>xxiv</sup>

Hagen's poor finish in the West Coast Open punctuated an especially hectic season. On January 10, he had joined Kirkwood to play in a match that officially opened the Pasadena-on-the-Gulf Golf and Country Club. The occasion brought out Pasadena's and St. Petersburg's mayors, as well as the Pasadena band. The home team lost 1 up to Cyril Walker and Jim Barnes in eighteen holes. Still, Hagen shot the lowest round of the day, and aside from the loss, the match provided a successful start for the club.<sup>xxv</sup>

A week later Hagen and thirteen other leading professionals began competition in the Florida Winter Golf League. By then the league consisted of seven teams located in Tampa, Miami, and Orlando: Hagen-Kirkwood, Barnes-McLeod, Sarazen-Diegel, Farrell-Cruickshank, Walker-Eddie Loos, Mehlhorn-Armour, and Kerrigan-Dow L. George. The inaugural match was

played between Hagen-Kirkwood and Sarazen-Diegel at Pasadena, with the home team losing 5 and 4. Over the next month and between open tournaments, the teams competed in home-and-home, round-robin competition. The winners took sixty percent of the gate, the losers forty percent, and tickets to each match sold for \$2. Hagen-Kirkwood began slowly and finished in the middle of the standings, while Sarazen-Diegel went on to win the league championship. Yet despite the significant promotional efforts of Harlow, Hagen, and H. B. Martin, the new league did not draw satisfactorily. One problem was the sheer number of matches--seventy-two in all. Harlow still declared the project a success, adding that he was "certain that there would be a league next year worked out along different lines."<sup>xxvi</sup>

When not competing in league matches, Hagen entered several open events. He failed to win any and his best finish was runner-up in the North and South. Part of the explanation for his inconsistency may have been that Hagen had lost his mashie-iron (four-iron) the previous December. It was a club that Hagen relied on both for chipping around the greens and for approaches of about 190 yards; he had used it to win all four of his national opens. The Southern Golfer announced the loss, stating that "Walter is willing to pay a liberal return for its return."<sup>xxvii</sup>

With or without his mashie-iron, Hagen had to face Cyril Walker early in February for the so-called World's Championship. Had it not been for that event, the 1925 winter season would have been dismal for Hagen. But on Sunday, February 1, and Wednesday, February 4, the reigning British Open and U.S. Open champions clashed for the world's title; Hagen demolished Walker 17 and 15. One commentator described it as "an exhibition of class against mediocrity." The match was not official, yet golf writers agreed that Hagen's margin of victory had to represent some sort of record. The triumph answered all questions concerning Hagen and his



recent lackluster performances and made the winter competitively successful for him.

Hagen's time off the course was spent in his Pasadena office, where he filled the role of club president. He remembered that the suite came complete with a "beautiful blonde secretary," who sat on her desk, playing the ukulele and always leaving the visitors smiling. Hagen also recalled being there infrequently, and that his duties "consisted chiefly of lining up the afternoon golf and perhaps a few telephone calls to plan some doings for the evening." In late April the New York Times reported that Hagen had signed a two-year contract extension with Pasadena to serve as its club president and representative through 1925 and 1926. The terms paid him another \$30,000 each year.<sup>xxviii</sup>

That news coincided with Hagen's sale of his struggling equipment manufacturing company. He claimed to have lost \$100,000; in any case, he was glad to be out from under it. Al Wallace had connected Hagen with L. A. Young, a businessman in Detroit, who owned a steel and wire company that produced automobile parts. Young agreed to purchase the golf manufactory and paid Hagen \$75,000 for his name and equipment line. It "was just like the bonus paid [to] outstanding young baseball players," Hagen wrote. The Young agreement also guaranteed Hagen royalties on the sale of any equipment carrying his name. Moreover, Hagen was made a "director of engineering" and was to be involved in club-design. His greatest value, however, was as a winning golfer. Young soon moved the company to Detroit, emphasizing the fact that the purchase was one of a name and not so much a business. Given the Pasadena club presidency, the increasing number of syndicated articles appearing beneath his name, and his endorsement of everything from equipment to long-playing records to sweaters and socks for knickers, the stories that Hagen made as much as \$75,000 per year in the 1920s seem credible.<sup>xxix</sup>

By April Hagen was fielding inquiries every day about plans to defend his British Open title. Throughout the winter he had hinted that he would go to Scotland, and then he said that he would make up his mind after the U.S. Open. Finally, on May 15 he announced that he would not travel abroad in 1925 but promised that he would go in 1926. Jim Barnes, who had also made the trip every year since 1920, was the only notable American, beside MacDonald Smith, who went abroad late in June. "Long Jim" was finally rewarded, capturing his first and only British Open.

For Hagen, Jones, and most leading American golfers, the U.S. Open was the national medal event of the year. The 1925 tournament was staged early in June at Boston's Worcester Country Club. The USGA had almost 450 entries, by far the largest number ever, and qualifying was again done regionally. Recognizing another new financial opportunity, the USGA charged \$1.10 per ticket for the preliminary competition. That was not the only development of the 1925 Open; Golf Illustrated reported some interesting equipment trends as well. First, nearly all of the players had adopted wooden tees. Second, and more significant, approximately twenty percent of the players had steel, instead of hickory, shafts on their clubs.<sup>xxx</sup>

Although the midwestern and southern region qualified at the Onwentsia Golf Club in Lake Forest, Illinois, Jones played his preliminary rounds in the east region at the Lido Country Club in Long Beach, New York, possibly so that he could combine a business trip with golf. If Jones had wanted to take the easiest path to Worcester, he would have traveled to Illinois; his presence at Lido made a strong field, including Hagen, even stronger. In a downpour on May 29, the "distinguished Atlanta realtor" and "sometime golfer" qualified with a 72. That, added to his 71 from the day before, put Jones in second place, a stroke behind Mac Smith. Hagen's 75-72

was plenty good enough to qualify, if not as sensational as Jones's score. Both men were considered favorites to win the tournament proper, but Jones's habit of low-scoring in the event made him the heavier pick. At any rate, the gallery would be treated to a Hagen-Jones pairing for Wednesday, June 3, the first day of the Worcester competition.

The players got in practice rounds over the Worcester layout on Monday. At dusk, it did not look good for the professionals; Jones shot a 66, tying the course-record. Playing with Jones and carding a 72, Hagen made news that day as well when he scored his first career hole-in-one at the 180-yard sixth hole, using a driving-iron (one-iron). In an informal poll conducted at Worcester, Hagen was also voted the best-dressed player. Hagen's achievements notwithstanding, dopesters were even more convinced that the horde of "money-changing" professionals could not defeat the Atlanta amateur. William Richardson of the New York Times wrote that the professionals were counting on Hagen and Smith to "deliver them from the Joneses. In this commercial day and age, possession of the open championship is a business. To Jones it means nothing but a bit more honor to his already princely fortune; to professionals the title means not only fame but money--lots of it." The conventional wisdom by 1925 was that a professional wearing a U.S. Open crown could make at least \$25,000 on exhibitions.

Hagen shot a 68 in Tuesday's practice, while Jones took the day off. On Wednesday they shook hands at the tee box of the first hole and together began the 1925 U.S. Open. After exchanging pleasantries, they probably commented on the sultry conditions. The weather was a factor that week; the eastern U.S. was in the midst of a heat wave that would be blamed for the deaths of 225 people. The temperature on Wednesday reached ninety-four degrees, and the sun was scorching hot.

Hagen outplayed Jones in the morning, but in the afternoon it was the other way around. Actually, neither man performed very well. Hagen sweated his way into twelfth place with 72-76; Jones labored in the morning to a 77, but followed it up with a 70 to end in a tie for tenth. Despite their performances, the pair attracted most of the 5,000-person gallery that day. Commentators agreed that if anyone could come back from a poor start, Hagen or Jones could.

Both men tried on Thursday, but only Jones succeeded. In fact, it was more a matter of the leaders slipping than anything else. First-day leader Willie MacFarlane shot a final round 78 to finish at 291. Hagen posted consistent rounds of 71-74, tying him with Sarazen for fifth place, only two shots behind the leaders. Jones began the day with another 70 but ended with a 74. His final nine holes were riddled with errors, including missed short putts on the eleventh and fourteenth holes. After the mistake on the fourteenth, Jones manifested some of the old fire when he "indicated his disgust by flinging his putter down on the green." Nonetheless, in spite of the mistakes, his 74 was still good enough to put him tie with the ailing MacFarlane.

MacFarlane was like so many other American professionals in that period: he had been born in Scotland and had learned his game there. He was also what later would be termed a "journeyman." That is, the thirty-six-year-old MacFarlane did not have an especially impressive style or tournament record, but he played consistently enough to compete with his more talented colleagues. He did not enter as many events as the leading professionals and essentially fulfilled the traditional role of golf professional at his club, Oak Ridge in Tuckahoe, New York. Grantland Rice reported that MacFarlane had played only about ten rounds since the previous October. His last U.S. Open had been at Toledo in 1920, when he came in eighth place behind "Big Ted" Ray and, coincidentally, in a tie with Jones; since then he had only finished runner-up

in the Shawnee and Metropolitan Opens. The near-wins established MacFarlane as a weak finisher who never quite completed an event. He was tall but thin and wore glasses, adding to his benign persona. Sportswriters were fond of referring to him as the "bespectacled Scot" or the "pedagogical-looking Scotsman." The consensus was that he looked more like a schoolmaster than a professional golfer, and that Friday's eighteen-hole playoff against Jones would be the biggest moment of his career.

With his wife and ten-year-old daughter looking on, MacFarlane took a few deep breaths and then rose to the occasion. At 11:00 he met Jones and some 5,000 spectators on the first tee to begin the deciding round. The sun was hotter than in previous days; the mercury climbed to ninety-five in the shade. Both men played well, and MacFarlane's 37 on the first nine was one stroke lower than Jones's mark. The battle shifted to and fro throughout the back nine. When that side was finished, the competitors had simply reversed their front nine scores, so that after eighteen extra holes, they were still tied with 75s! Surprised USGA officials declared that another eighteen holes would have to be played following a break. The playoff, which was the first of thirty-six holes in either the U.S. or British Open, had now assumed epic proportions.

Playing like a "perfect machine," Jones jumped out to a four-stroke lead by the turn of the afternoon round. Both men were exhausted, and it seemed that MacFarlane had finally succumbed to Jones's superiority. Yet the "studious-looking" Scot dug a bit deeper. He birdied the tenth and the thirteenth holes to pick up three shots on Jones. After Jones gave up another stroke on the fifteenth, they remained tied until the eighteenth hole, where MacFarlane made another par for a final round of 72. Jones missed a ten-footer for his par and had to settle for a 73. It was finally over. The scores through 108 holes: MacFarlane, 438; Jones, 439. Apparently,

MacFarlane's reputation as a weak finisher had been greatly exaggerated.

For days, commentators discussed the courage of both players, but the most common topic was MacFarlane's so-called overachievement. For that he garnered respect, even if many felt he did not exactly deserve the title. MacFarlane also received substantial praise for what he said after the playoff: He had been "lucky" to win, and "defeating Bobby Jones is a greater honor than winning two or three open championships." When a reporter asked MacFarlane if he planned to "make a tour [and] give the almighty dollar a chase," MacFarlane responded, "I don't know what I am going to do. This much I do know, however. I am scheduled to do some teaching at the club tomorrow and I've got to get back to Tuckahoe!" "Imagine" that, exclaimed Richardson, adding that MacFarlane's "strong feeling of devotion to duty" would make him a beloved champion. As for Jones, the loss did nothing to hurt his standing. In fact, Richardson declared Jones "the greatest golfer that ever appeared in the United States. The professional who beats him one year is far down the list the next, but Jones is always either first or second." Therefore, "popular opinion will award the greater glory to Jones."

Although his amateur image needed no boosting, it got some anyway at Worcester when Jones called a penalty stroke on himself in the first round of the tournament. The episode occurred at the eleventh, a par three. Jones put his tee shot in the rough to the left of the green. While addressing the ball for his chip shot, it moved, or so Jones said. No one else, certainly not his partner Hagen, witnessed any infraction. Jones, however, insisted that his ball had moved and that he deserved the one-stroke penalty provided for in the rules. The officials reluctantly assessed the stroke. The episode made the tie with MacFarlane all the more interesting. Keeler wrote that when observers lauded Jones for his integrity, the Atlantan replied, "You'd as well

praise me for not breaking into banks. There is only one way to play this game." To Jones, it seemed honesty and sportsmanship mattered more than money or glory. Six hours after the conclusion of the MacFarlane playoff, Jones and Keeler boarded a Pullman sleeper car and headed back for Atlanta. If exhausted and disappointed, Jones was a loser in only the strictest definition of the word.<sup>xxxii</sup>

A few months later, early in September, Jones solidified his challenge to Hagen as the country's number-one golfer by winning his second consecutive U.S. Amateur. Mighty Oakmont, where in 1919 Jones had battled chubby Davie Herron and a megaphone, was the venue for the 1925 event. The USGA experimented with a new format that year; the number of qualifiers for match-play was reduced from thirty-two to sixteen, and all of the matches would go thirty-six holes. Jones thought the new plan a good idea inasmuch as "no unheralded 'dark horses' may in one inspired burst eliminate the best men in the field." The top players still disliked eighteen-hole matches and believed them to be poor tests of golf. The problem with the new format, though, was that it made it more likely that a top player would not even survive into match-play; 128 men would compete for only sixteen slots.

Although he was the defending champion, Jones had to qualify like everyone else. He did that on the first two days of September, finishing in a tie for second place with Jesse Guilford and again displaying his top form. The previous Saturday his practice round 67 had tied the course record. On Sunday he had attended church before spending "the rest of the day reading and lounging." While that routine paid off for him, other notables suffered. Five former champions--Ouimet, Evans, Herron, Marston, and Gardner--failed to make it into match-play. As Richardson's hyperbole put it, "The wreck of Hesperus, the fall of Troy, and the burning of

Rome were mere trifles compared to what happened at Oakmont today." Whatever Jones or anyone else thought of the new format before the tournament started, everyone now agreed that it was not such a good idea after all.

On Wednesday Jones started his march through the field, easily eliminating William Reekie, Clarence Wolff, and, for the second straight year, George Von Elm. It had been an easy road for Jones, probably his easiest ever. But he was not the only star that week; the other was his young friend and fellow Atlantan, Watts Gunn.

Gunn was yet another golf prodigy to come out of East Lake and one of the South's finest young players. A few weeks before the trip to Pittsburgh, Jones had intervened between Gunn and his father, a Macon judge, convincing Judge Gunn to permit his son to enter his first U.S. Amateur. Watts Gunn had performed much better at Oakmont than anyone had anticipated; in fact, the final that year became an all-Atlanta one when he played his way into the championship match. Stories of how Gunn came to Oakmont and his relationship to Jones were printed over and over in sports pages around the country and brought some interest to an otherwise predictable event. Southerners, Atlantans specifically, were nearly beside themselves with excitement on championship Saturday.

Gunn had sustained an extraordinarily high level of play in getting to Jones, who was fond of Gunn and like everyone else was impressed by his grit. Nevertheless, as Westbrook Pegler reported in the Atlanta Constitution, Jones planned to go after his friend aggressively the next day. "Yes, I'm going to bear down on him in tomorrow's match, I'd be a fool if I didn't," Jones said. "I am more proud of Watts and what he has done than I ever was of anything I did, but I'll beat him if I can." As he had done with Ouimet the previous year, Jones showed no



mercy. Before teeing off, Gunn asked Jones if he was to receive the usual two strokes, as when they competed in friendly practice rounds at East Lake. Jones good-naturedly but seriously replied, "I'm going to lick you today." And he did. Gunn fought hard but fell 4 down by the lunch break. When play resumed, Gunn's timing appeared off, and the pressure began to tell. Jones closed the match 8 and 7. He immediately shook Gunn's hand and put his arm around him; then the pair walked back to the clubhouse.<sup>xxxii</sup>

On the following Monday, a band played "Dixie" when the train carrying Jones, Keeler, and Gunn arrived in Atlanta. Several thousand greeted the party at about 4:00 that afternoon. The Constitution thought that it was the largest such gathering yet, and the players were paraded down Mitchell, Whitehall, Peachtree, and Ivy Streets before escaping to their homes. Jones was particularly glad that day to get back to his family because it now included his first child. Mary had given birth the previous April 18 to a daughter named Clara Malone, who, like her namesakes, had dark hair and eyes.

Jones was not in Atlanta long, however, before he announced that he would again spend the winter season golfing and promoting real estate in Florida. In fact, he and Mary were already in Sarasota by late November, when the clubhouse at East Lake was destroyed by fire. It was the second time in eleven years that the clubhouse had burned to the ground, but on this occasion the USGA's Havemeyer Trophy went with it. If disturbed by the disaster, Jones tried to put it out of his mind; he was entering his busiest winter ever, the one that would include his Battle of the Century with Walter Hagen.<sup>xxxiii</sup>

Following the U.S. Open, Hagen and Harlow had launched a six-week exhibition tour that took them from Boston northwest through Canada and into Minnesota, where, at Pequot's

Breezy Point Lodge, Hagen competed in a unique event. The exhibition combined golf and trapshooting. His team won the golf match but, despite Hagen's hitting eighteen of twenty-five targets, lost the shooting portion of the competition. From Minnesota Hagen and Harlow journeyed into western Canada, playing exhibitions in Winnipeg, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Edmonton. In late July they surfaced in Toronto for the Canadian Open, where Hagen finished in third place.<sup>xxxiv</sup>

By the end of the summer, Hagen's golf standing had slipped. He had not won an event all year, except for his pummeling of Cyril Walker in the Unofficial World's Championship. It was easy for golf writers to begin referring to Jones as the "golfer of the year," and the "greatest golfer in the land." Hagen had just one more chance to prove that he still belonged on top: He could equal Jones's match-play performance by retaining his PGA crown. Such an accomplishment, coupled with the fact that he finished only two strokes behind Jones in the U.S. Open, would provide his supporters an argument that he still deserved the number one ranking.

As the defending champion, Hagen was exempt from the regional qualifying for the PGA Championship. Yet he still had to qualify on site with sixty-three other professionals at Chicago's Olympia Fields. On September 21 Hagen shot an unimpressive 75-76 to finish eleven strokes behind the leader, Al Watrous. Though not scoring so well, Hagen was nonetheless confident at Olympia Fields. It was at the start of that event that Sir Walter supposedly strode into the locker room and asked Watrous and Leo Diegel which of them planned to finish second.

On Tuesday Watrous did; Hagen beat him 1 up on the thirty-ninth green. Watrous had held a slim lead for most of the match, but Hagen eventually squared things at the thirty-second hole and took a temporary lead at the thirty-fourth, only to lose it again at the home hole and

force a sudden-death playoff. Nonetheless, Hagen's win at the thirty-fourth became legendary: he purposefully hit an easy mashie (five-iron) to the hole in an effort to confuse Watrous, who had been carefully observing Hagen's club selection. Watrous then followed with a full mashie of his own and put his ball behind the green. The come-from-behind performance was the story of the day. "Hagen was the Hagen of old," proclaimed one report.

The next day Hagen eliminated Mike Brady. That victory led to a third-round clash with Diegel. Nearly 3,000 turned out to watch the match, which proved to be the most exciting in the event's short history. Hagen again started slowly, falling to 5 down at the break. But when they reached the thirty-third tee, Hagen had closed the deficit to three. He continued to claw his way back into the match, courageously winning three of the last four holes and squaring the match with a long putt on the thirty-sixth. By then, Diegel was on the verge of imploding. Somehow, they halved three more holes. Finally, on the fortieth green Diegel missed a ten-foot putt that would have extended the duel. Hagen had pulled off one of his finest victories in a match that, at lunchtime, was shaping up to be one of his worst defeats.<sup>xxxv</sup>

Everything following the Diegel slugfest was anticlimactic. In the semifinal round Hagen defeated young "Light Horse" Harry Cooper, and in the final he easily knocked out "Wild Bill" Mehlhorn. Hagen's defense of his PGA title was stunning. Commentators revived the old Hagen themes. Richardson of the New York Times declared that the victory would "outlive everything else" that Hagen had done. "For all things that combine to make a really great golfer--skill, power, endurance, nerve, will-to-win, sportsmanship in defeat or victory--the golf world has never produced a man like Walter Hagen. He is in a class by himself--Hagen, Coeur de Lion." The American Golfer's Innis Brown believed that Hagen, "however the debate may range along

other lines of supremacy in golf, is the world's champion over-time golfer." And A. T. Packard, writing for Golfers Magazine, decided that "there is no place to put Walter Hagen except at the top of the professionals." But, Packard added, "no man can say that he is better than Bobby Jones. His scores indicate that he is as good, but Hagen never makes a really impressive showing unless he must. With Bobby, the impression grows while watching his play, that no man in the world can beat him. He wins impressively. As between Bobby and Walter, it would take an extended series of matches to pick the superior player." As if in reply, the 1926 season provided just such a series. It started with the Battle of the Century.

### Notes--Chapter Six

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  - ii. J. Lewis Brown, "Thrills from the 'Sandhill' Championships," Golf Illustrated, 21 (May 1924), 38.
  - iii. Robert Harlow, "The Inside of the Golf Show," Metropolitan Golfer, 2 (June 1924), 8; "America's First Golf Show," Southern Golfer, 5 (1 March 1924), 13.
  - iv. R. Hay Chapman, "The Miraculous Growth of California Golf," Golf Illustrated, 20 (January 24), 23; J. Lewis Brown, "The Growth of American Golf," Outlook, 136 (23

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v. Clifford Roberts, The Story of the Augusta National Golf Club (N.Y.: Doubleday and Company, 1976), 237; New York Times, February 9, 1924, 11; February 15, 1924, 11; Atlanta Constitution, March 9, 1924.

vi. Atlanta Constitution, May 21-2, 1924.

vii. Detroit News, May 30, June 4-7, 1924; Atlanta Constitution, June 3-7, 1924; New York Times, June 7, 1924, 8; June 10, 1924, 19; June 15, 1924, 25; J. Lewis Brown, "In the Wake of Walker's Triumph," Golf Illustrated, 21 (July 1924), 16.

viii. Atlanta Constitution, June 18, 1924.

ix. London Times, June 18-July 12, 1924; London Observer, June 22-29, 1924; New York Times, June 22-July 12, 1924; Grantland Rice, "Hagen of the Iron Nerve," Collier's, 75 (17 January 1925), 14; Walter Hagen, "British Cup Returns to America," 2, (July 1924), 5; Bernard Darwin, "A Triumph in Courage," American Golfer, 27, (26 July 1924), 5; George Greenwood, "Hagen's Melodrama in the British Open," Golf Illustrated, 21, (August 1924), 14; "Praise of Walter Hagen," Professional Golfer of America, 5 (September 1924), 30. Geoffrey Cousins and Tom Scott, A Century of Opens (London: Frederick Muller, 1971), 89.

x. Robert Harlow, "London Papers Praise Hagen," Metropolitan Golfer, 2 (August 1924), 9; "Praise of Walter Hagen," Professional Golfer of America, 30.

xi. New York Times, June 30, 1924, 13; John Anderson, "With the Americans at Hoylake," Golf Illustrated, 21, (August 1924), 16; Innis Brown, "Hats off to Hagen!" American Golfer, 27, (12 July 1924), 11; Rochester Times-Union, June 28, 1924; William D. Richardson, "'I Was Lucky,' Says Hagen," American Golfer, 27 (9 August 1924), 9; New York Times, July 22, 1924, 11.

xii. See advertisement in Golf Illustrated, 21, (July 1924), 47 and in Metropolitan Golfer, 6 (December 1924), 37.

xiii. Indianapolis Star, September 14-22, 1924; New York Times, September 21, 1924, IX, 1; William D. Richardson, "Reviving an Old Act," American Golfer, 27 (18 October 1924), 17; H. B. McMeal, "Hagen Wins P.G.A.," Golfers Magazine, 44 (October 1924), 22.

xiv. "Hagen and Sarazen Defeat Amateurs," Metropolitan Golfer, 2 (November 1924), 30; "Ask Walter Hagen," *ibid.*, 16.

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- xv. Robert Harlow, "New Florida Golf League Will Help," Metropolitan Golfer, 2 (November 1924), 10; "Florida Golf League Will Be Popular," Southern Golfer, 6 (December 1924), 32; New York Times, December 21, 1924, IX, 5.
- xvi. Atlanta Constitution, July 17, July 27, August 8, August 11, August 24, 1924.
- xvii. Jones lost his foursome match on the last hole but won his singles match over Major Charles O. Hezlet, 4 and 3. New York Times, September 13, 1924, 19; September 14, 1924, X, 1; September 15, 1924, 25; Gould B. Martin, "America Again Defends the Walker Cup," Metropolitan Golfer, 2 (September 1924), 16; Innis Brown, "Battling for the Walker Cup," American Golfer, 27 (6 September 1924), 3.
- xviii. Philadelphia Inquirer, September 28, 1924; New York Times, September 27, 1924, 12; September 28, 1924, IX, 1; September 29, 1924, 13; Luke Ross, "I Caddied For Jones When He Threw Clubs," article in Bobby Jones File, Special Collections, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia (hereafter "BJF"); O. B. Keeler, "Checking Back Over A Championship," American Golfer, 27 (1 November 1924), 3.
- xix. Jones, Down the Fairway, 144; Grantland Rice, "How Bobby Jones Broke Through," American Golfer, 27 (18 October 1924), 3.
- xx. Albert Horning, "Bobby Jones S.A.E. and Golf Champion," Record, 44 (December 1924), 355.
- xxi. New York Times, November 3, 1924, 23; December 4, 1924, 17; H. B. Martin and Joe Horgan, "How the Golfers are Rated for the Year," Southern Golfer, (December 1924), 40.
- xxii. Ibid.; James D. Harnett, "Walter Hagen, The Golfer of the Year," Golf Illustrated (October 1924), 16.
- xxiii. Joe Kelly, "Golf in the Promised Land of Ponce De Leon," Golf Illustrated, 22 (January 1925), 14; "Jones and Adair," Southern Golfer, 6 (15 February 1925), 40; "About Jones and His Golf" and "Palmetto Dedicated," *ibid.*, (1 March 1925), 12; Grantland Rice, "There's Only One Bobby Jones," Collier's, 75 (4 April 1925), 20.
- xxiv. New York Times, February 28, 1925, 10; March 3, 1925, 17.
- xxv. "Boca Ceiga Course Ready," Southern Golfer, 6 (1 January 1925), 34; Robert Harlow, "Pasadena-on-the-Gulf," *ibid.*, (15 January 1925), 24; Hagen and Heck, Walter Hagen Story, 125.
- xxvi. Robert Harlow, "The Success of the Florida Winter Golf League," Metropolitan Golfer, 3 (February 1925), 12; "Florida Winter Golf League Opens," Southern Golfer, 6 (1 February 1925), 9; "Florida Winter Golf League," *ibid.*, (15 February 1925), 19;

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"Winter Golf League Champions," *ibid.*, 12.

xxvii. William Richardson, "Summary of Results of Recent Tournaments," *Golf Illustrated*, 23 (June 1925), 27; "Lost Strayed, or Stolen," *Southern Golfer*, 6 (2 February 1925), 40.

xxviii. New York *Times*, February 2, 1925, 11; February 5, 1925, 15; Sanford (Florida) *Herald*, February 6, 1925; "Hagen World's Champion," *Southern Golfer*, 6 (15 February 1925), 36; Hagen and Heck, *Walter Hagen Story*, 124.

xxix. Canadian *Golfer*, 11 (August 1925), 343; New York *Times*, April 21, 1925, 17; Hagen and Heck, *Walter Hagen Story*, 142-3.

xxx. Burt Hoxie, "Some Interesting Statistics Compiled at the Open," *Golf Illustrated*, 23 (July 1925), 26; the USGA legalized steel shafted clubs in the spring of 1924.

xxxi. For coverage of the 1925 U.S. Open, I relied upon the following: Boston *Globe*, June 2-6, 1925; New York *Times*, April 12, 1925, X, 5; May 2, 1925, 11; May 11, 1925, 12; June 3-7, 1925; Grantland Rice, "The Miracle of MacFarlane," *American Golfer*, 28 (27 June 1925), 3; William Richardson, "Willie MacFarlane from Aberdeen--and Tuckahoe," *Golf Illustrated*, 23 (July 1925), 27; P. C. Pulver, "The Long Battle for the Open Championship," *Golf Illustrated*, 23 (July 1925), 24; "Ask Walter Hagen," *Metropolitan Golfer*, 3 (July 1925), 24; O. B. Keeler, *The Boys' Life of Bobby Jones* (N.Y.: Harper and Brothers, 1931), 204.

xxxii. Gunn qualified at 154; then he cut his way through V. L. Bradford, 12 and 10 (a come-from-behind victory in which Gunn won an astounding fifteen holes in a row), Jess Sweetser, 10 and 9, and Richard Jones of New York, 5 and 3. For coverage of 1925 U.S. Amateur, see Atlanta *Constitution*, September 5-8, 1925; "Bobby Jones Likes New Plan," *Metropolitan Golfer*, 3 (May 1925), 10; New York *Times*, August 30, 1925, IX, 7; September 3, 1925, 29; Henry Litchfield West, "The Business of Qualifying," *American Golfer*, 29 (November 1925), 6; O. B. Keeler, "The Inside Story of a Golfing Miracle," *American Golfer*, 29 (October 1925), 3; Letter to Ross Goodner, February 19, 1964, roll 2, Robert T. Jones Collection, United States Golf Association's Golf House Library, Far Hills, New Jersey (hereafter "RTJ"). Richard Miller, *Triumphant Journey* (N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1981), 156 and Sidney Matthew, *Life and Times of Bobby Jones* (Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 1995), 77-8, offer slightly different versions of the Jones-Gunn exchange on the first tee.

xxxiii. Atlanta *Constitution*, November 23, 1925.

xxxiv. Brainard (Minnesota) *Daily Dispatch*, July 13-15, 1925; Toronto *Star*, August 1, 1925; *Canadian Golfer*, 11 (August 1925), 350.

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xxxv. For coverage and commentary on the 1925 PGA Championship, see Chicago Tribune, September 23, 1925; New York Times, September 23, 1925, 19; September 28, 1925, 17; "As They Remember Him," Professional Golfer, 50 (November 1969), 8; Innis Brown, "Hagen Extends His Count," American Golfer, 29 (November 1925), 14; A. T. Packard, "Walter Hagen Retains P.G.A. Championship," Golfers Magazine 46 (November 1925), 13-5.