

Sweetser Smashes the Barrier

Young Star Rides Down Heavy Odds to Break the Twenty-Two-Year British Spell

By Grantland Rice

WITH the cheering finished and the tumult still, the victory of Jess Sweetser at Muirfield in the British Amateur Championship and his play on through the Walker

match Sweetser was 2 down at the tenth hole. And he reached the tenth green in 3 with Ouimet home in 2, apparently holding a three-hole lead. Facing this depressing situation Sweetser holed a long putt for a 4 and when the Bostonian needed three putts Sweetser was on his way, finally breaking through.

His second great test came against the hard-fighting Brownlow. Sweetser in this match was 2 up with 2 to play. He had the advantage at each of these holes when Brownlow dropped two great putts. In each instance Sweetser missed the cup by an eyelash, to see his lead cut away by par-beating golf.

This was quite enough to crack the spirit of almost anyone but a great match-play golfer. But in place of running into a panic or slipping back, the new champion stuck to his guns and went ahead to win on the twenty-first green. Even at that time he must have been upon the verge of a nervous and physical smash, but the iron grip he kept upon his mental,

able barrier against the concentrated will to win.

The story of the last two days' play is outlined by the brilliant pen of Bernard Darwin, THE AMERICAN GOLFER'S famous British correspondent.

By Bernard Darwin

TWENTY-TWO years after Walter Travis first won the British Amateur Golf Championship at Sandwich, Jess Sweetser has won it for America the second time, and in all the long list of champions, wherein are the names of John Ball, Harold Hilton and Freddy Tait, there is none which shines with brighter lustre.

Sweetser, in winning the title, defeated Alexander Simpson, his young Scottish rival, by 6 up and 5 to play. The American was 4 up at the end of the morning round. He had a card of 75. In the afternoon he had an average of fours for the thirteen holes played.

Right through the tournament Sweetser played well, sometimes by his will and always with splendid determination. He had some close calls, two matches finishing on the last green and one on the twenty-first, and never once has he shown the least sign of weakening at the crucial moment.

As I have said before, his great strength has been his ability to play iron shots up to the pin. When once he had his iron in his hand the ball was as good as on the green; and not on the edges of the green, but right bang in the middle of it, with a chance of holing it in one putt. Never by professional or amateur have I seen that long, high iron shot better played. I always thought that Muirfield, with its



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Cup stand out as one of the greatest competitive achievements in the span of sport. Sweetser had almost every odd to face, handicaps that were almost crushing, and his remarkable stand against these odds is something no golfer will ever forget.

First of all he had the memory of a poor showing under British golfing conditions three years ago to help shatter his confidence. He went across with little golf since last September and no winter play to get him started. In his first test at Sandwich he began with a 90, which could hardly be figured to bring back any winning mental state.

And that is only part of it. He was drawn in the toughest sector of the field with Francis Ouimet, Robert Scott and W. G. Brownlow, three great players, to beat. And when the championship started he was in poor physical condition with a touch of flu and an injured knee, where it was even doubtful that he could play.

To pile on the agony he suffered a sprained wrist in the semi-final test and yet all this was not enough to check his advance, his hardy match-play spirit rising above all obstacles to carry him through.

There were two high spots at least in Sweetser's winning charge. The first was up against Francis Ouimet; a golfer always hard to beat. In this



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In the thick of the fray at Muirfield. (Upper left) the Hon. W. G. Brownlow, young Irish player who proved one of the sensations of the tournament. He carried Sweetser to the twenty-first hole in the semi-final. (Above) Bobby Jones receiving the congratulations of Robert Harris, at the conclusion of their fifth round match; (right) Andrew Jamieson, Jr., young Scot, who put Bobby Jones out in the sixth round

nervous and physical system never weakened.

He saw the goal ahead after he had passed Ouimet and nothing could stop him. The burden was even greater when young Jamieson stopped Bobby Jones, but Sweetser carried it through, Considering the fact that so many American stars had failed through the greater part of twenty-two years, Sweetser's victory under the conditions named stands out as one of the great contributions to the game. It shows again how the right determination can even ride down fate and it proves that a heavy handicap is no impass-



comparatively soft, closely guarded greens, would suit this characteristically American shot, and I have proved to be a good prophet.

The story of the final match isn't worth telling in great detail; to be quite frank, it wasn't a match at all. From the very beginning it was seen that it could have only one end; and, personally, I was surprised that Sweetser didn't win by more. His opponent, Simpson, played up to the bitter end with great courage, good temper and coolness, but he was completely out-classed. He had done wonderfully well in reaching the final, but he was not really good enough to have so much greatness thrust on him.

He is a very curious



young player from the West of Scotland. Furthermore this happened after Mr. Jones had in the previous round defeated our champion, Mr. Robert Harris by 8 and 6. That wonders will never cease is a truism.

It should be said that Mr. Jones woke up with a stiff neck. It made him hook his first shot or two, and, though he doubtless felt better as he grew warmer, yet it did to some extent disorganize his game. He never wholly recovered from the loss of the first two holes, and, as compared with his game of other days, his play was rather limp and spiritless. He looked as if he were for the first time feeling the strain, as no doubt he was.

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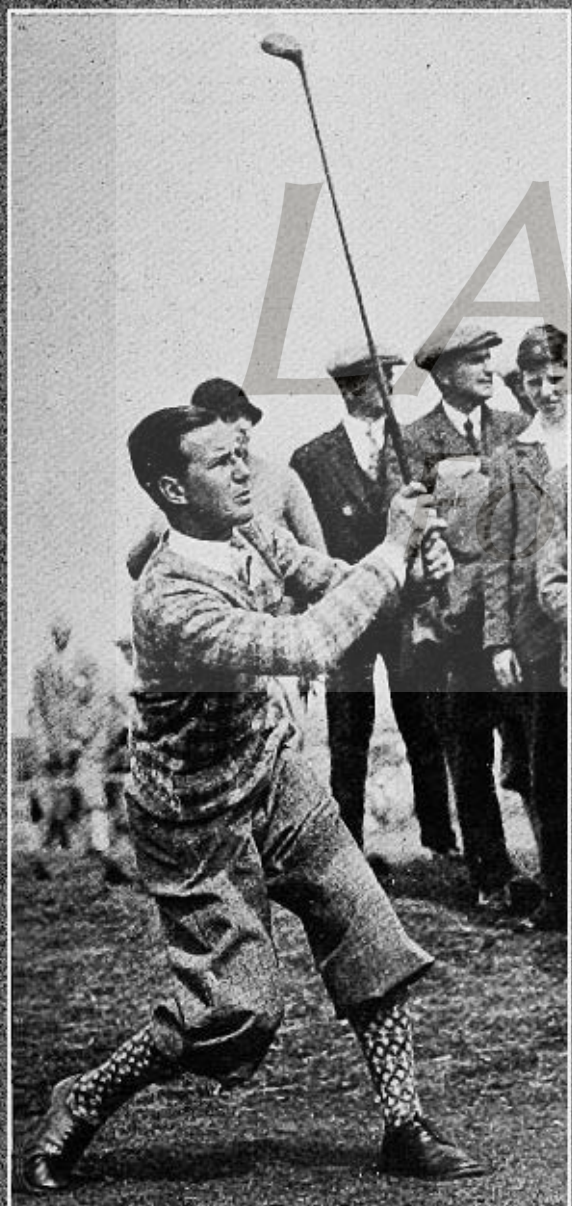
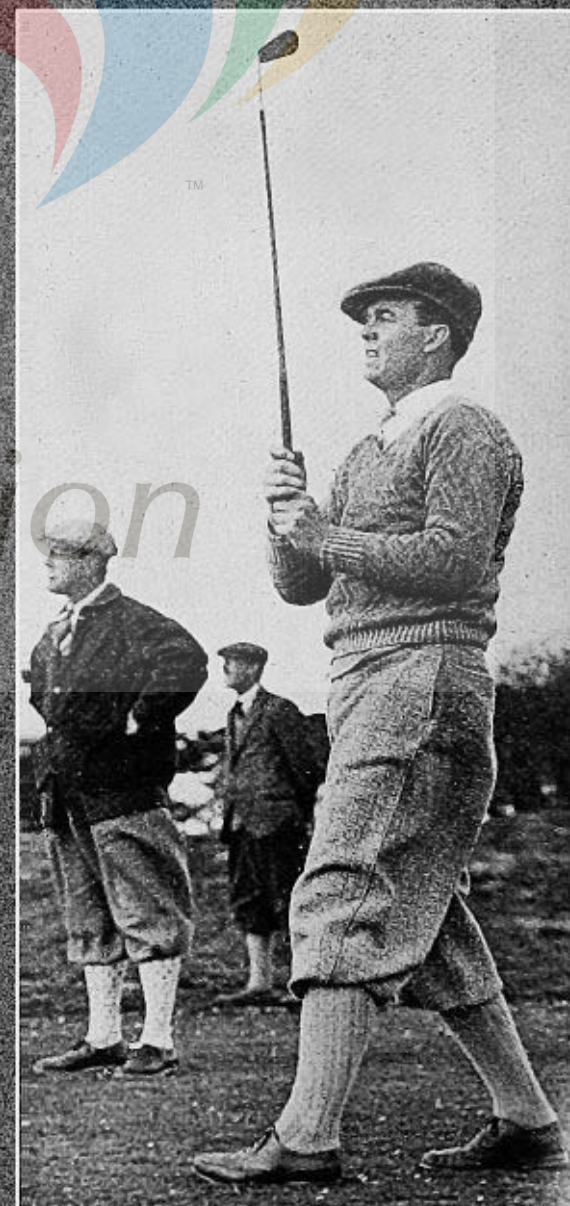


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(Above) Watts Gunn in his match with John Wilson, former British Walker Cup representative, whom he beat in the third round; (left) Robert Peattie, 1925 British Boys' champion, who surprised by eliminating Sir Ernest Holderness, 1924 champion, in the second round; (right) Sweetser following the ball in its course after a long iron shot

golfer indeed. Among those whom one terms good I have never seen one quite like him. He can begin and end a hole as well as anybody, for he is a long, straight driver and a very good putter, but his game has no middle. No doubt he can generally play his long iron shots better than he did. He had a bad off-day with cleek and iron and could get neither length nor direction. Moreover, though he carries three wooden clubs he cannot, or at least won't, trust himself to use wooden clubs through the green. This was virtually suicide against a player of Sweetser's class on a long, heavy course. He simply couldn't reach the long holes in two and had to confide far too much to running up and putting.

It was, however, the day preceding that of the playing of the final in which things happened, chief among these being the defeat of Mr. Bobby Jones by 4 and 3 at the hands of Mr. Andrew Jamieson, a hitherto all but unknown



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But it was Mr. Jamieson who contributed, and contributed very largely, to this feeling, and nothing can rob the victor of one little bit of credit for his magnificent achievement. He is quite a young man, and, though he has been very successful in Glasgow competitions and had fought his way through this meeting to the last eight against worthy adversaries, yet yesterday's match was in a larger sense his baptism of fire. He came through it with great coolness and courage.

If he felt anxious he never looked it, and he holed his short putts as if he were playing an intimate friend for half a crown. His tee shots, without being in any way remarkable, were yet thoroughly sound and of sufficient length, and near the hole his play could hardly have been excelled. Time and again he laid the ball within a few feet of the hole with a run up, and down went the putt every time.

His one partial weakness seemed to be in the matter of brassie shots. It was not that he missed them, but there was a certain lack of crispness, and he did not always get the ball as high into the air as he intended. He gave one the impression that he would be all the better for a little more play on big courses where long wooden club shots up to the green were essential. This weakness, such as it was, however, was neutralized by his capacity for boiling down three shots into two in the neighborhood of the green. When it is said that Mr. Jones did not play his game, it must be remembered that a man plays as well as his enemy allows him, and Mr. Jamieson's score for fifteen holes was an average of 4's.

The start of the match was dramatic. Mr. Jamieson was bunkered close to the green, and Mr. Jones hit a big hook into the rough. He got his 5 easily enough, but Mr. Jamieson recovered splendidly from his bunker, and holed a good putt to get his 4.

Mr. Jones's stiff neck had probably some say at the second hole, where he again hooked badly, and took 5 to the hole, which was very unlike his normal self. Thus early Mr. Jamieson was two up, and he went on playing as if it were no more than he had expected. Mr. Jones got a hole back at the fourth, which has hitherto been an enemy of his. This time he very nearly hooked again into the bunker, but the ball broke kindly and he holed a lovely putt for a 2.

Pessimists naturally thought that this was the beginning of the end, and that Mr. Jones would soon catch his man. Mr. Jamieson, however, was an optimist, and counter-attacked with a glorious 4 at the long fifth, two straight shots, a run-up, and a putt perfectly hit. Two halves followed, and then Mr. Jones's length stood him in good stead at the eighth; he got his 4 and again was only one down. He drove too far at the ninth and was bunkered, but recovered grandly, and got his half in 5.

That was one down at the turn, but Mr. Jamieson made it two again by his better putting at the tenth, and from that moment he looked a winner. Indeed, he never gave Mr. Jones the ghost of a chance of getting a hole back,

for he stuck religiously to the perfect figure hole after hole.

One bit of luck he had at the short thirteenth, a hole which several other winners have had cause to bless and losers to curse during this week. He pulled his tee shot, and the ball stuck on the bank above the bunkers; it stuck, moreover, in the right place, giving him a narrow pathway to safety down which to play. Still, it was a delicate shot, which had to be played to perfection or not at all, and the obvious temptation was to play it too hard. Mr. Jamieson was as gentle as he was brave, and laid the ball stone dead. He was now three up. He had the better of the putting yet again at the fourteenth, when Mr. Jones's short game was almost feeble, and finished the matter without turning a hair on the fifteenth green.

Just as the clapping and cheering broke out proclaiming the fall of the great American, Mr. Sweetser was about to play a most critical putt on the sixteenth green against Mr. Robert Scott. Mr. Sweetser seemed to have an intuition that the cheer was coming, waited for the storm, and then laid his putt dead and got his half.

This was an extremely exciting match. Indeed, apart from the blank surprise of Mr. Jones's fall, it was the more exciting of the two. At one moment it seemed that Mr. Scott had the game in hand, and that the last two Americans were going down together with one stupendous and reverberating crash. It was not to be, however, and Mr. Sweetser pulled himself out of a very nasty hole with characteristic grit.

He began badly, being in the rough and in a bunker at the first hole, and again in the rough at the third. Mr. Scott, going straight down the middle, won two of the first three holes, and had added another to his lead at the end of the seventh. Then came a crisis. Mr. Sweetser hit a long low drive straight down the course, and apparently straight into the jaws of a bunker, but the ball just climbed through. Mr. Sweetser got his half, and the difference between three down and four down in an 18-hole match is enormous.

Mr. Sweetser won both the ninth and the tenth in 4's, Mr. Scott suffering from a slight lapse, and then, at the eleventh, Mr. Sweetser holed a fine putt for a 3, and squared the match. Everyone knew that Mr. Scott had a great heart, but every one now thought that Mr. Sweetser would win. Then followed a series of four halves, but two of these holes were thrown away by the American.

At the fourteenth he had two for the hole and knocked Mr. Jones's ball in; and at the fifteenth he took three putts. The fates forgave him, for Mr. Scott had a cruel piece of bad luck at the seventeenth. In addressing his ball for the second shot he did not touch the ball, but the ball moved and fell back on to his club. That gave Mr. Sweetser an easy win, and he played the last hole to perfection. Mr. Scott, in fact, took three putts; but whether he took three or two was of no account; it was all over now.



The two other matches must be quickly dismissed, though Mr. Brownlow's golf against Mr. Murray does not deserve such cavalier treatment. For the third successive round he was under an average of 4's, and he played with a stately brilliance that could not be withstood.

He began with a 6 and lost the hole, but promptly holed a run-up for a 2 at the second, and after that there was no holding him. Mr. Murray, cool and steady golfer though he is, could not help pressing a little, and Mr. Brownlow went away without an effort. He was out in 34, continued quite remorselessly on the way home, and finished the match on the fourteenth green by laying a spoon shot within a few feet of the hole.

Mr. Killey and Mr. Simpson were naturally cast a little in the shade. They had a good hard match and Mr. Simpson won by two holes. This appeared the right result, for the winner looked the stronger man, and had certainly the better and stronger style.

Once again Mr. Simpson must be treated scurvily as regards his second round, so horribly thrilling was the other match. He played well and pluckily, and beat one whom I must rate as a better golfer than himself by two and one, and that after being three down. Mr. Jamieson has, in a sense, himself to thank. He should not have lost after being three up, and he should not have missed quite short putts on the way home as he did, but he had had his splendid hour, had done his bit, and some reaction was inevitable.

The other match was really terrific; fine, close, steady golf, culminating in a display of desperate fireworks on Mr. Brownlow's part. Mr. Sweetser won at the twenty-first hole, and he deserved to. For that matter either would have deserved to win, but Mr. Sweetser struck one all the while as a little the stronger and surer, and especially as a master of iron shots, high or low alike, up to the pin. But Mr. Brownlow did play most nobly, and with a courageous composure beyond praise, and the two final putts that he holed one after the other, that saved his neck at the last two holes, made up as fine a finish as ever was seen in a Championship.

Going out it was a matter of sound good golf with little give and take on both sides. Twice Mr. Sweetser got one up, and twice was pegged back. Then he won the eighth and ninth running in two 4's, and one began to think he would go right away. But Mr. Brownlow came at him again and won the tenth. Then began a long fierce sequence of halves, and Mr. Sweetser was still one up with three to go. He played the sixteenth perfectly in 3, whereas Mr. Brownlow was short. That made it dormie two, and at the seventeenth, where Mr. Sweetser was ten feet from the hole in 3, and Mr. Brownlow six yards away, very carefully, and yet very placidly, Mr. Brownlow walked up to his ball and hit it straight in. Mr. Sweetser made a good try, but the ball slipped past.

Mr. Sweetser hit a tremendous tee shot at the last hole, being a full thirty yards ahead. Mr. Brownlow hit a glorious high spoon shot to within six yards of the hole, and Mr. Sweetser, who has this shot to perfection, was just inside him with an iron. Again a complete and deathly silence. Again Mr. Brownlow holed, and again Mr. Sweetser's ball edged its way round the hole and would not drop in. So both

were round in 74, and out they went again.

At the nineteenth came Mr. Brownlow's chance, and he just failed to take it. He was on the edge of the green in 2, and Mr. Sweetser was bunkered. Mr. Sweetser got his 5, but Mr. Brownlow was just a little too conscientious in being up. He overran by three yards, and the hole was halved. So was the next, both holing valiant putts, and then at last the end came. Mr. Sweetser got his par 4. Mr. Brownlow's pitch, played rather too low, caught the hill top and finished very short. His run up was short too. He could not get his 4, and all was over.

In point of numbers the group of American players who went over to take part in the championship at Muirfield was by far the strongest that ever challenged for the British crown. No less than twenty-two started in the big field. Here is how they fared.

Jess Sweetser won over J. L. Humphreys by default; defeated George Renwick 6 and 4; Francis Ouimet 1 up; Dr. J. D. McCormack 4 and 3; Allan D. Cave 3 and 1; Robert Scott, Jr. 2 up; Hon. W. G. Brownlow 1 up (21 holes); Alex Simpson 6 and 5 (36 holes).

Bobby Jones defeated C. B. Ormerod, 3 and 2; Colin C. Aylmer, 5 and 4; H. M. Dickson, 4 and 3; J. Birnie Jr., 7 and 6; Robert Harris, 8 and 6; lost to A. Jamieson, Jr., 4 and 3.

Watts Gunn defeated F. S. Stone, 2 up; John Wilson, 4 and 3; G. S. Noon, 5 and 3; lost to W. G. Brownlow, 3 and 2.

Jesse Guilford defeated Jay Birnie, 7 and 6; Angus Hambro, 2 up; P. Mackenzie Ross, 3 and 2; lost to O. C. Bristowe, 2 up.

Francis Ouimet defeated Frank Williamson, 7 and 6; George Von Elm, 3 and 2; lost to Sweetser, 1 up.

Grant Peacock defeated James Brock, 6 and 4; Lawrence M. Lloyd, 4 and 3; lost to Brownlow, 2 up.

James D. Standish defeated H. Shaw, 1 up; lost to H. D. Gillies, 4 and 3.

Donald Woodward defeated Stanley Lunt, 2 and 1; lost to O. C. Bristowe, 3 and 2.

Lawrence M. Lloyd defeated W. MacCallum, 1 up; lost to Grant Peacock, 4 and 3.

Roland Mackenzie defeated W. J. Guild, 3 and 2; lost to D. H. Kyle, 1 up.

George Von Elm defeated Russell Boyack, 4 and 3; lost to Francis Ouimet, 3 and 2.

H. Brower defeated A. Morrison 2 and 1; S. Turner 2 and 1; lost to H. McMasters 2 up.

C. G. Waldo, Jr. won from S. O. Shepherd by default; lost to E. Noel Layton 1 up (19 holes).

Chick Evans was beaten by J. Beck 3 and 1 in the second round, after drawing a bye in the first.

R. M. Ryle was beaten by J. B. Beddard 6 and 5.

Robert A. Gardner lost to H. M. Dickson, 3 and 2.

W. W. Rixey lost to W. Shankland, 6 and 5.

E. Hoover Bankard lost to R. G. Henderson, 4 and 3.

Everett Brooks lost to Sam Robinson, 7 and 6.

Alfred C. Ulmer lost to Roger Wethered, 1 up.

Albert R. Mackenzie lost to R. H. Hobson, 6 and 5.

W. C. Fownes lost to James Cowan, 4 and 3.