

More About Colonial

BY REYNOLDS SMITH.

It is hardly believable the transformation that has taken place in the Colonial Golf Club course in Fort Worth, scene of the United States Open championship, June 5-7, during the last five months.

Marvin Leonard, owner of the course and pioneer of bent grass greens in this section, along with Dean Woods, the fellow who places all those traps in such precarious positions, have said they do not care how low the big name professionals score during the Open championship. Nevertheless, they have toughened the Colonial layout by some five strokes during the transition.

Before Leonard obtained the Open championship, Colonial was

a rather open golf course which even the natives were doing in par figures. But the United States Golf Association signified its demands and even went so far as to send its executive secretary, Joe Dey Jr., to Texas to look over the course. To make matters worse, Ben Hogan, a former Fort Worth amateur who has since risen to the pinnacle of golfdom, went around in 65 for a new course record.

Perry Maxwell, who is regarded as one of the finest golf course architects in the country and who is the builder of the famed Pine Valley layout in Clementon, N.J., blue-printed some new hardships and sent Woods to Fort Worth to put them into effect.

Early guessers believed that nothing more than 276 for the seventy-two holes would win the Open championship. That was six shots under par but now, after the addition of two newly constructed holes and many new traps, the same experts are mentioning 282 and upward.

The former record in the Open championship is 281, established by Ralph Guldahl at the Cherry Hills Country Club course of Denver, Colo., in 1937 and many of the railbirds believe that this mark will stand up in the Open in June at Colonial. Certainly it would not be good for the prestige of golf in the Southwest if the professional stars would take Colonial apart in the Open championship. While 66's and 67's are a credit to the man who makes them, they are, nevertheless, a reflection on the golf course.

Before Maxwell offered his blue-prints one local pro said that 31's and 32's would not be uncommon on the first nine at Colonial. Now, after playing a wood shot into the revamped fourth hole—a long par 3 of 225 yards—and tackling the advertised fifth, the same professional star believes that the touring aces will not better 34 and 35 in golf's blue ribbon classic in June.

Out of a recent field of forty-five professionals and sports writers only two players got birdies on the fourth hole and only five of the field equaled par on the fifth, certainly the most difficult hole on the course. Rumor has it that Hogan, after visioning the fifth nightmare in company of Leonard, said that he would use an iron off the tee and hope that he would be on the green with his second shot. In other words, Hogan was going to gamble on his second shot and not with his drive. Should the player hook or slice off the tee he would be fortunate to make a bogey on the hole and 6's would not be uncommon.

The thing that has impressed the writer about Colonial is the rough, which is deep enough now to hide a golf ball but which previously was nothing more than an uncut fairway.

When Woods told the writer that he would let the rough grow to four inches as far as ten yards out and then would reach its best length, he spelled 281 in the National Open.

Colonial will not be too severe when June rolls around and the golfing bigwigs tee off but it will provide a suitable test and the world's scoring record will not be shattered. That is my prediction.