

Changes at Colonial

BY REYNOLDS SMITH.

The dreams of Marvin Leonard for a championship golf course will be realized in a few months when workmen complete the changes in the Colonial Golf Club layout of Fort Worth as blueprinted by Perry Maxwell, perhaps the foremost golf course architect in America.

Upon the official notification by the United States Golf Association that the United States open championship of 1941 would be played over his course, June 5 to 7, Leonard brought in Maxwell for consultation. Terms were agreeable and the wily maker of pitfalls for

the golfer charted changes in the course over which the top professionals and amateurs of this country will seek the national crown.

The general opinion was, in the beginning, that the leading shot-makers would knife the course to bits and turn in such phenomenal scores that an all-time low would be established, breaking Ralph Guldahl's record of 281. The holes lacked length and the openness of the fairways would spell victory for long hitters of the Johnny Bulla, Sammy Snead and Jimmy Thomson type. Wagers were made on 275 as the winning score.

Recently the women's Texas open championship tournament was played at Colonial and most of the nation's outstanding women golfers competed. While they played from the front tees, the scores were exceedingly low, one player recording a 69 in a practice round. If the general run of scoring was in the 70s then it must hold true that the layout was lacking in hazards or length.

Both Bob Byrnes, Colonial's professional, and Leonard, owner of the course, have made it quite plain to visiting newshaws that it makes no difference whether Guldahl's world record of 281 is broken or not, that their object is to have a real championship tournament. When the golfers leave they will remember Colonial, Fort Worth and the great Southwest.

Perhaps Guldahl, the Norwegian, started the trend in another direction for, after he had fashioned out a two above par 72, he stated that Colonial would test the shotmaking of the best in this country. Then Byron Nelson and Ben Hogan, two former Fort Worth players, followed through with similar remarks.

Following a recent round over Colonial from the championship tees, with several Eastern pressmen, the writer falls in line and cannot see eagles and birdies flying from the clubs of the big name players. In fact, I don't think par of 280 for the seventy-two hole grind will be broken.

Perry Maxwell and his horde of workers are sprinkling traps liberally over the layout and several greens have been cut down to postage stamp size. The third green has been pulled back some fifty-odd yards. Recently Ben Hogan, certainly one of the game's longest hitters, required a very long drive and then a second shot with his No. 2 iron before he could get home. For the average player this means that he cannot reach the green in two shots. This is a championship par 4.

Ground is being broken for the new No. 4 hole which, when completed, will stretch better than 200 yards and even the best pro golfers will need a spoon or a very long iron to reach the carpet, well protected with traps. Here is a championship par 3.

Perhaps the finest hole on the course will be the fifth, a dangerous par 4. While the ground is just being broken, the experts are already agreeing that a hook or a slice from the tee can cost any golfer the championship. From tee to green the fairways measure exactly fifty yards in width and water filled ditches, together with bulky trees bound the fairway on both sides up to the green. Sixes and sevens will not be uncommon.

Many other greens have been pulled back and remodeled.

When June comes around Colonial will be stretched to 7,000 yards and the golfer who can average the par of 70 for his four rounds will accept the trophy, the \$1,000 check that goes to the champion, and will put on that grin for photographers.