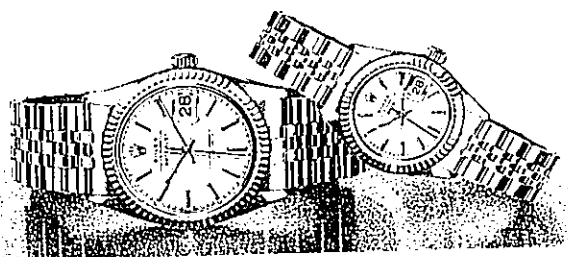




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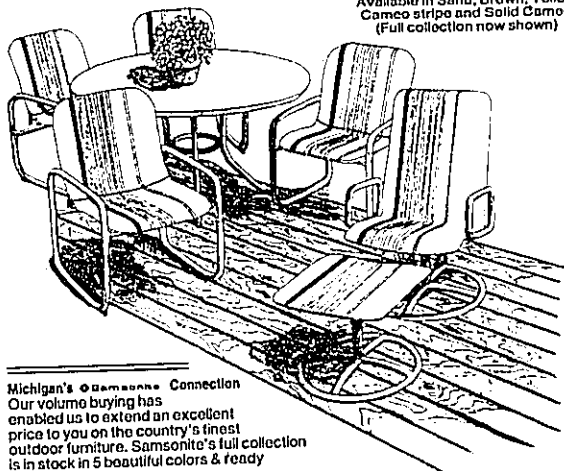
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Oakland Hills' tourney history

By C.J. Risak
staff writer

The U.S. Open will be the seventh major tournament Oakland Hills Country Club has hosted and the fifth Open. The Birmingham club had Opens in 1924, 1937, 1951 and 1961, and the PGA in 1972 and 1979.

In addition, Oakland Hills has been the site for the Carling World Open in 1964 and the U.S. Senior Open in 1981.

Some of pro golf's greatest legends have left their mark on the Robert Trent Jones-designed course, and each of the last three major tournaments have featured battles down to the final hole.

If tournament tradition holds, Oakland Hills will not be tamed easily, and victory will not come easily. It won't be a runaway.

Here's a capsule history of past major tournament at Oakland Hills.

1924 U.S. OPEN

Bobby Jones won his first U.S. Open in 1923 at Inwood on Long Island, N.Y., and came into the first major tournament at Oakland Hills as the heavy favorite.

The 22-year-old king of amateur golf fared well through the first 36 holes, carding rounds of 74 and 73 to tie for the lead at 147. But he collapsed on the final 36 holes, shooting 75/78-153.

The title went to Cyril Walker, who remained steady through all four rounds. Walker trailed Jones by a stroke after two rounds, shooting a pair of 74s. But unlike Jones, Walker, an Englishman, carried his consistent play through the final rounds by shooting 74/75-149, edging Jones by three strokes.

It was Walker's only U.S. Open title.

1937 U.S. OPEN

Maybe this Open will best be remembered for what didn't happen instead of what did.

Sam Snead was playing in his first Open, and he fired a 283, just missing the tournament record of 282 set by Tony Manero the previous year at Baltusrol.

That score would have been good

enough for most any other Open, and indeed Snead thought he had won. But Ralph Guldahl played the final round in 69 and shattered Manero's record with a 281, one stroke over Oakland Hills' par.

It was the first of two consecutive Open titles for Guldahl. He repeated in 1938 at Cherry Hills in Denver with a 284. His Open record of 281 stood until Ben Hogan broke it in 1948 with a 276 at Riviera in Los Angeles.

Snead finished second, a great showing in his first Open, but second was as close as he would ever come to the most prestigious of American titles.

1951 U.S. OPEN

This single tournament, more than any of the others, secured for Oakland Hills its place in golf history. It was here that Ben Hogan muttered that now-famous description, calling the course "the Monster."

Between the 1937 and this Open, Oakland Hills had been redesigned by Robert Trent Jones, who toughened it so considerably that only two pros managed to record rounds that bettered par-70. One was Hogan.

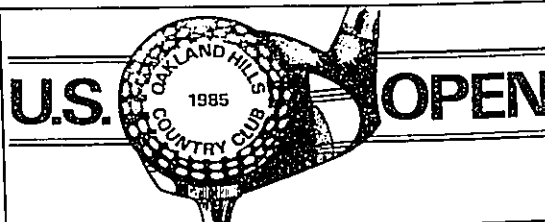
Hogan had completed his comeback from a near-fatal car accident in 1949 and had won the Open in 1950 at Merion. That win didn't come easily — he had to beat Lloyd Mangrum and George Fazio in a playoff. His Open win at Oakland Hills was just as difficult, except it was the course that Hogan had to tame.

Through three rounds, just who would win the battle — Hogan or "the Monster" — was anybody's guess. Hogan started the tournament poorly, shooting a 76. He followed that with a 73, leaving him five strokes behind leader Bobby Locke.

He opened brilliantly in the third round and was three under after 13 holes, but disaster struck with bogeys on 14 and 17 and a double bogey at 15, leaving him one over for the round at 71. Still, he had crept to within two shots of the lead.

Hogan's final round was a masterpiece, one that he would later call his greatest single round of golf ever. He shot 35 over the front nine, then birdied 10, 13, 15 and

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This special section on the 1985 U.S. Open at Oakland Hills was published by the Observer & Eccentric newspaper staff.

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