

RESEARCH QUARTERLY

the writer has not combined the data for amateur, for open, and for professional golf champions. There is a valid reason for not doing this. In the first place, the National Amateur Championship is probably the easiest to win. The basis for this assertion is the well known fact that when the National Open Golf tournaments are held, only a very few amateurs are to be found among the leading contestants. This seems to afford sufficient reason for treating the amateur championships separately. Secondly, correspondence with an eminent golfer elicited the following statement regarding the Open and the Professional Championships:

It is generally conceded that the annual championship of the P.G.A. is the hardest to win. This is because the winner must maintain a top form for six days. Thirty-six holes a day for six days is more of a physical grind than three days at 18-18-36, as is the case in the Open. From the psychological standpoint the Open undoubtedly is harder on the nerves for the reason that there is more of a publicity build-up, the pace is always fast, and every player knows that one or two missed shots may end in disaster—more so than in the match play P.G.A. even.

Whether or not the foregoing analysis is wholly valid, since the Open and the Professional tournaments are not the same kind of contest, no mistake will be made if the data for them are treated separately. Such separate treatment reveals clearly that the ten-year interval of greatest golf proficiency is that from ages 25 to 34 inclusive.

FURTHER REMARKS

Most of the athletes for whom data have been assembled herein are, or were, professionals. Since professional athletics are profitable financially to successful participants, it seems likely that the various age groups continue to participate in professional athletics as long as they are able to profit thereby. And they are able to profit so long as they retain unusual skill. Amateur athletics, on the other hand, are likely to be an expensive luxury to the ordinary individual. It is probable that many individuals forsake amateur endeavor not because of their waning proficiency but because they find amateur athletics very costly in terms of time, energy, and money. Certainly, the average American youth cannot afford to devote a major share of his time to activity which yields no financial return. Therefore, it should perhaps be concluded

* This hypothesis may explain in part why the amateur golf champions are younger than the professional golf champions. The present writer has found also that amateur boxers and amateur baseball players (Olympic entrants) are younger than are professionals who participate in the same types of activities. The foregoing hypothesis also provides an explanation for the curious shape of Figure 4 which sets forth data for amateur tennis championships. Professional tennis is of such recent origin that data for the construction of an age curve are not yet available. Nevertheless, it seems safe to predict that, when sufficient data can be assembled to permit the construction of a curve showing the ages at which a large number of professional tennis championships have been won, the latter curve will exhibit a gradual annual rise and an equally gradual decline. It is probable that the age curve for professional tennis championships will bear a closer resemblance to Figure 1 (see page 5) than to Figure 4 (see page 8).