

Slammer Old, But Still Tops

By OSCAR FRALEY
United Press Sports Writer

NEW YORK (UP) — Samuel Jackson Snead will be 44 in May but the sweet-swinging golfer from Virginia Hills still is playing like a gangbuster.

"The Slammer" proved that as he came back from one of his repeated vacations to win his sixth Miami Open golf championship in a playoff with Tommy Bolt. And he shot a six under par 29 on the final nine for a 64 which put him in the playoff.

Which prompted former PGA champion Vic Ghezzi to remark that the vanishing "old guard" isn't quite dead, just yet.

"Old Sam can still play with the boys," Ghezzi grinned. "He's a cinch to be one of the favorites in any tournament you can name next year — unless it's the U.S. Open."

Ghezzi has his reasons, all the way around. "Match Sam with anybody, in any department, and he's got everything," he Vic explains. "Take the last driver and Sam is with him. Take the best iron player, still Sam. And take the best putter and you've got Sam right there again."

OLD GUARD
Snead is the last fairly active player among the "old guard" which consisted of the now-retired Ben Hogan, Lloyd Mangrum, former PGA champion Chandler Harper and others of their "forty-ish" ilk. And, while the youngsters really started to take over in the past year, Sam did his share.

The kids are coming, and you can't deny it if you peruse the records. Last year they took 18 tournaments with 25-year-old Gene Littler coping four, Mike Souchak taking three and others going to such as Dick Mayer, Shirley Mayfield, Billy Maxwell, Arnold Palmer and Dow Finsterwald.

Next in line came the "middle-guard," led by such "thirty-ish" ball-maulers as masters champion Cary Middlecoff, PGA king Doug Ford, Tommy Bolt and Ted Kroll. Look down the list of winners and for the first time in more than a decade you missed such names as Hogan and Mangrum. The veteran campaigners won five tournaments — and Slammer Sam accounted for three of them.

SNEAD JINXED
"It just proves that when Snead steps up on that tee you can expect him to be a poison," Ghezzi asserts, "except in the Open."

Sam's trouble there is mental. In his first start in the Open, in 1937, he fired a record total and then saw Ralph Guldahl come in to beat him. Two years later he blew it with that aching "eight." Three other times he has come home second, once beaten in a play off by Lew Worsham and finishing runnerup to Middlecoff and Hogan.

"If he had won that first one, he might have won it a half dozen times," Ghezzi said.

With such a burden, nobody expects Sam to be able to do it as he heads down the hill. Not even Sam. But as he winds up 20 years of tournament competition you can't blame him for harboring a nagging hope.

"One of these days I'll quit trying to win it," he says. "Maybe then I'll walk off with it."

The way he's playing, it still could be, too!

Hill Climb Changed
COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. — The annual Pike's Peak hill climb, an auto speed and endurance test up the famous 14,110-foot peak, will be held July 4 instead of Labor Day, starting next year.

City Council approved the date change Monday night. Lloyd Fadde, president and general manager of the Pike's Peak Hill Climb Assn., said the earlier date would be more convenient for tourists.

Sports World Shorts

NEW YORK (UP) — Willard Marshall, a member of the New York Giants' "21 Club" which set a new national league record of 221 homers in one season in 1947, has been re-hired by the club as a scout for the New Jersey and New England areas. Besides the Giants, Marshall played for the Braves, Redlegs and Chicago White Sox.

NEW YORK (UP) — Babe Didrikson Zaharias, famed woman golfer and Brooklyn Dodgers Manager Walter Alston have been named to receive the Graham McNamee Memorial Award at the Sports Broadcasters annual dinner, Feb. 2. SBA President Don Dunphy disclosed it is the first time two McNamee awards had been voted in one year and also that it marks the first time the radio and television broadcasters had honored a woman.

LOS ANGELES (UP) — Jon Arnett, All-America halfback from the University of Southern California, has been selected to receive the W. J. Voit Memorial Trophy as the outstanding college football player on the Pacific Coast. Arnett, who led the Pacific Coast Conference in scoring with 108 points, is the first junior to win the trophy.

CLEVELAND (UP) — Relief pitcher Ray Narleski, who made 40 appearances during the 1955 season, has signed his 1956 contract with the Cleveland Indians calling "for a very substantial increase." Narleski wound up the season with a 9-1 won-lost record.

LOS ANGELES (UP) — The final track and field trials for the 1956 U.S. Olympic Games squad will be held in Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum next June 29-30. The Olympic Games are to be held in Melbourne, Australia, Nov. 22-Dec. 8.

William Nicholson, manager of the Coliseum, announced the tryouts date Tuesday. Los Angeles was selected as the site two weeks ago at the AAU meeting in Louisville.

LEWISTON, Idaho (UP) — The Board of Directors of the Lewiston Broncos of the Northwest Baseball League Tuesday night elected R. K. McIntosh president succeeding Paul Wise.

The board named Jack Lee first vice president and W. C. (Tom) Marchant second vice president.

Bobo Suspended
CHICAGO (UP) — Bobo Olson, who lost his middleweight boxing title to Sugar Ray Robinson last Friday, Tuesday was suspended for 30 days by the Illinois Athletic Commission.

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Harlon Hill Receives Jim Thorpe Pro Prize

By MURRAY OLDERMAN
NEA Staff Correspondent

Harlon Hill will be awarded the first annual Jim Thorpe Trophy as the outstanding professional football player of 1955.

In a poll conducted by NEA Service and Herald and News among the players of the National Football League, the great pass-receiving end of the Chicago Bears was a decisive choice in competition with such outstanding challengers as Otto Graham of the Cleveland Browns and Tobin Rote of the Green Bay Packers.

Hill will receive the trophy from Harry Grayson, sports editor of NEA Service, in a nationally-televised halftime ceremony from the Pro Bowl Game at the Los Angeles Coliseum, Jan. 15. The trophy is donated by A. G. Spalding and Sons, Inc.

The award is named in honor of the immortal Sac and Fox Indian who was a pioneer in the professional game after capturing the nation's imagination as an under-graduate at Carlisle.

The presentation brings to a lustrous peak the two-year-old career of a lad who was passed up for 173 other players in the draft of college talent.

TIP GIVEN
Hill was acquired by George Halas on a tip given Clark Shaughnessy by Hal Self at the 1953 Blue-Gray All-Star Game in Montgomery, Ala. Because the game committee was interested only in high school players, Hill wasn't selected. But Self, Alabama quarterback of 1944-45, coached him at Little Fort, Ala.

Hill, who has the grim jaw and high cheekbones of an Indian, at once became the worst scourge to pass defenses since the incomparable Don Hutson roamed the secondary for the Packers. For this, those who play with and against him contend the young man rates professional football's inaugural equivalent of the colleges' Heisman Trophy.

Deployed as a split left end on virtually every play, Hill demands coverage by two men because of his tremendous speed. Furthermore, at 6-3 and 198 pounds, he's no pushover for size.

"A good boy," concedes Bert Rechichar of the Baltimore Colts, one of the NFL's premier defensive backs. "He's young and still makes mistakes, but when he turns it on, look out, or he's lost you."

ALL RECEIVERS
Hill skipped by defenders on the

receiving end of 12 touchdown passes last year to lead the NFL in his freshman season. He has topped all receivers again in touchdowns as a sophomore.

Some may catch more passes, but none gets farther than Harlon the Heilion once the ball is grasped in his sensitive fingers. His average gain last year was 25 yards, and for clutch performance you only have to look at his game against the Detroit Lions as recently as Dec. 4 of this year. This was a must for the Bears if they were to stay in the Western Division race.

Hill caught but one pass, but it nipped the Lions for the payoff touchdown in a 21-20 victory pulled out in the fading minutes. As a decoy, he sets up the brutal Bear running game by keeping defenses loose. He is no fragile flower who only lopes with the ball. He'll slant in to throw an honest block.

Resurgence of the Bears as a power coincides with Hill's entry into the league. He's 23 and just beginning to kick up his heels.

Oldster Graham gave him his closest tussle in the running for the Jim Thorpe award by emerging from short retirement to lead the Browns to their umpteenth divisional title covering two leagues.

Harlon Hill, the first Jim Thorpe Trophy tucked securely under his arm, will be back for more.

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