

McCONNELL CHAMPION

EASY WIN IN WESTERN FINAL

(By Our Special Representative.)

The West of Ireland Golf Championship was decided at Rosses Point, yesterday, when W. G. McConnell (Dun Laoghaire and Portmarnock) defeated E. D. MacCormack (Grange) by 6 and 5 in the final. This is the first occasion on which McConnell has secured championship honours, though he has figured in no fewer than four finals. Though one may be inclined to sympathise with his youthful opponent, who battled it out bravely in the face of adversity, one cannot get away from the fact that the more polished golfer won.

It was MacCormack's first appearance in a championship final and his play in the morning round appeared to be affected by a certain amount of stage fright. McConnell had years of experience behind him and though his golf was by no means as good as one would have expected, he invariably managed to go one better than his opponent.

A considerable amount of interest was evinced in the last stage, and there was a big gallery when the finalists started off. The putting of both players at the first hole was weak, and a half in 5 resulted. MacCormack found a bunker to the left of the green with his drive to the second, and McConnell, being pin high in two, seemed assured of a win. The Grange man, however, sank a long putt to halve the hole in four. MacCormack pushed his tee shot into the rushes at the short 3rd, and McConnell, being at the pin in two, was not asked to putt, and became one up. A series of disasters befell the champion at the 4th, and he eventually gave up the hole to allow his opponent to square.

WEAK PUTTING.

McConnell threw the next hole away, and though MacCormack only managed to get on with his fourth, he obtained a half in five. MacCormack was only inches wide with a ten yards putt at the 6th for a half, but he squared at the next, where McConnell picked up after failing to get out of a bunker in two. The 8th was halved, but MacCormack sinking a seven yards putt to beat bogey by two at the 9th, turned for home one up.

Up to this point McConnell's putting, which was such a feature of his play on the previous day, was weak. McConnell squared at the 10th, and winning the next hole in five became one up. The champion, though bundered off his drive, should have won the 12th, but he made amends at the 13th, where MacCormack was in and out of the cup in four to become two down. From this on the tide flowed in favour of the champion, while disaster after disaster attended the efforts of his opponent. Both the 15th and 16th were won by McConnell, and following a half at the 17th the champion sank a difficult putt on the home green to finish the round five up.

THE SECOND ROUND.

With such a big deficit, many thought that MacCormack would fall away before half the final round had been completed. A surprise was, therefore, in store, when after dividing the first two holes he sank a three yarder at the 3rd to reduce the lead. The Grange man secured two good halves at the 4th and 5th, being stymied at the latter, and then McConnell, picking up at the 6th, he was only three down. MacCormack up to this stage had been playing par golf, and he appeared to have recovered from his nervousness of the morning. McConnell had a two-foot putt for a win at the 7th, but was off the line and the hole was halved. MacCormack was in trouble at the 8th, which he lost in 5 to 8, and, the next hole being halved, he turned four down. MacCormack's drive to the 10th was short and his pitch up over-running the green, he lost the hole to a par 3.

It was obvious at this stage that nothing short of a miracle could prolong the game more than another three holes. MacCormack invariably found trouble with his tee shots. He missed an easy putt at the 11th for a win, and McConnell's chip at the 12th being stiff, this hole was also halved. The end came at the 13th, the most difficult hole on the course. After a good drive MacCormack duffed his approach; while his opponent was also in trouble in the rushes guarding the green. McConnell, however, chipped back beautifully and, sinking a two-yards putt, won the hole in four, and the championship by 8 up and 5 to play.