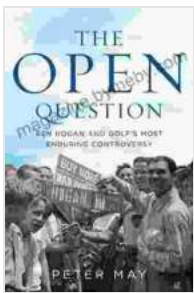


Ben Hogan and Golf's Most Enduring Controversy: Inside the 1951 U.S. Open Playoff

In the annals of golf, few controversies have been as enduring as the 1951 U.S. Open playoff between Ben Hogan and Clayton Heafner. The playoff, which was held at Merion Golf Club in Ardmore, Pennsylvania, was marred by a series of controversial rulings that ultimately led to Hogan's victory.



The Open Question: Ben Hogan and Golf's Most Enduring Controversy by Peter May

★★★★☆ 4.5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 3600 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 209 pages



The controversy began on the 18th hole of regulation play. Hogan hit his tee shot into a fairway bunker, and after taking a penalty stroke, he played his second shot into the rough. From there, he hit a miraculous hook shot that landed on the green, just feet from the hole. However, the USGA ruled that Hogan's ball had come to rest in a hazard, and he was assessed another penalty stroke.

Hogan was furious with the ruling, and he refused to sign his scorecard until the USGA agreed to review it. After a lengthy delay, the USGA upheld its original ruling, and Hogan was forced to play the 18th hole again. He made a par on the second attempt, but he was still one stroke behind Heafner, who had already finished his round.

The playoff began the next day, and Hogan quickly fell behind Heafner. However, he rallied to tie the match on the 17th hole. On the 18th hole, Hogan hit a superb drive and a brilliant approach shot that left him with a short putt for victory. However, he missed the putt, and the match went into sudden death.

On the first hole of sudden death, Hogan hit another great drive, but his approach shot landed in a bunker. He blasted out to the green, but his ball rolled past the hole and into the rough. From there, he chipped back onto the green and made a par. Heafner, meanwhile, hit a poor drive and a worse approach shot. He ended up making a bogey, and Hogan won the playoff and the U.S. Open championship.

The controversy over the 1951 U.S. Open playoff has never truly been resolved. Some people believe that the USGA's ruling against Hogan was unfair, while others believe that it was justified. Regardless of where one stands on the issue, there is no doubt that the playoff was one of the most dramatic and controversial moments in golf history.

The 1951 U.S. Open playoff had a profound impact on Hogan's legacy. He was already considered one of the greatest golfers of all time, but his victory in the playoff cemented his status as a legend. The playoff also had a lasting impact on the game of golf itself. The USGA's ruling against

Hogan led to a number of changes in the rules of golf, and it also helped to raise awareness of the importance of consistency in golf.

The 1951 U.S. Open playoff is a fascinating story of controversy, drama, and triumph. It is a story that has been told and retold for generations, and it is a story that will continue to be debated for many years to come.

Timeline of the 1951 U.S. Open Playoff

- **June 17, 1951:** Ben Hogan and Clayton Heafner finish regulation play tied at 287.
- **June 18, 1951:** The playoff begins. Hogan falls behind early, but he rallies to tie the match on the 17th hole.
- **June 18, 1951:** The match goes into sudden death. Hogan wins the playoff on the first hole of sudden death.

Impact of the 1951 U.S. Open Playoff

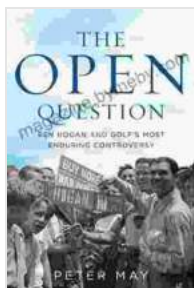
- The playoff cemented Hogan's status as one of the greatest golfers of all time.
- The playoff led to a number of changes in the rules of golf.
- The playoff helped to raise awareness of the importance of consistency in golf.

Controversy over the 1951 U.S. Open Playoff

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