

# THE LINKS

Eighteen episodes over two seasons taking us from early 1800s to approximately 1940.

## SEASON ONE

### NINE EPISODES

#### EPISODE 1 - THE FIRST

Returning from India, Hugh Lyon Playfair faces hostility, derision and apathy from the lower classes as he tries to resurrect the ruinous crumbling edifice that is St Andrews. Davie Robertson faces an uphill challenge setting up his new business and facing down the infamous Musselburgh braggart Tom Alexander. Davie's wife Ann endures the wrath of the lady's church society for her outrageous, free-thinking ways. William Dalglish helps create Scotsraig golf club as an exclusive club for invited gentlemen members only unlike St Andrews, on which anyone could play. Tensions flare when locals try to play Scotsraig. Threatening Davie's business, Playfair creates the first clubhouse in St Andrews for the Union Club. Due to the stress of it all, Davie loses his title to Tom Alexander and then dies. As one generation passes a new star of St Andrews is born - Allan, who must quickly save the business and avenge his father's defeat.

#### EPISODE 2 - THE SECOND

With the passing of his father, the weight of the family's survival falls on Allan, who marries Helen. Ann's attempts to modernise St Andrews ladies' society finds her feeling marginalized but unrepentant. When she says that ladies should have their own putting course, Helen agrees and one by one they all agree that Ann is right - much to the anger of the Chair Lady Violet. The Society of St Andrews Golfers approach the king about becoming a Royal club. The King initially refuses the request, but some less than subtle diplomacy convinces him that the club should be called The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews.

As the new Provost of St Andrews, Playfair, angry with locals' lethargy, takes matters into his own hands, knocking down buildings to create his vision - new St Andrews - much to the university principal's displeasure.

With a local child dying of starvation and hungry caddies loitering outside the shop, Allan takes on drifting aimless Tom Morris to work with him, saving him from a destructive path. The Musselburgh braggart turns up loudly at the Autumn meeting. Can Allan silence him once and for all? With the sudden death of Allan's young wife Helen, his mother Ann, Allan's behaviour becomes irrational. Whilst saying it was very sad about Ann and Helen's death, Lady Violet squashes Ann's proposal at the next meeting. Tom faced with an impossible choice, betrays Allan and puts their close friendship on the line.

#### EPISODE 3 - THE THIRD

Tom is invited by James Ogilvy Fairlie to move to Prestwick and set out a links there. Allan is quietly broken. *Why does everyone leave?*

Tom and Nancy arrive with baby Tommy in Prestwick and wonder if they've made the right choice.

Playfair's trials continue as he pushes to get clean water and lighting for the town. As he haggles and cajoles to create a new R&A building, and opens up tourism with a new trainline, Allan faces a surprising challenge from

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his closest friend - Tom. Allan refuses each and every challenge, including a young Willie Park, who is much in the same mould as Tom Alexander, challenging Allan in the press. Allan quietly marries Jane Kyles in Edinburgh. Playfair takes a journalist around St Andrews, showing all the work being done on every street and how he has 100% employment. As the town and course get busier, Allan spends his time tending to the links, adding two pins to greens. When Allan and Tom are brought together by their wives and win the Greatest Match Ever Played, against Musselburgh's finest, their friendship is re-born.

A re-vitalised Allan is winning medals and setting new records in St Andrews, but just as the press hail him the King of Clubs, he takes ill. Allan and Tom share some final words, before Allan dies of jaundice. The cortege is filled with people of all classes.

### EPISODE 4 - THE FOURTH

Prestwick have invested in Tom and a new links but Prestwick is an empty course. The Committee debate how to attract more people but are clueless. They call for Tom, who says they could create an event for the professionals. A few on the committee are outraged fearing drunken, uncouth professionals fighting. Tom is grieving for Allan and says the competition would settle who would get Allan's title ... who is the new Champion Golfer? That would get some press coverage. Amidst all committee noise, as Tom is about to leave feeling suitable admonished, Fairlie says he likes the idea. The gentlemen are stunned. Lord Eglinton agrees and seconds the motion. Twelve clubs are pointedly invited to send their most respectable golfers and The Open is born. Many members grumble about the ruffians coming to Prestwick and also the cost of making a Champions Belt.

With pressure of setting up the links, and thoughts of defending Allan's title, Tom is not himself. On the links he spills a full wheelbarrow of sand. The night before the tournament, Tom has never felt so alone. He always had Allan by his side.

Back in St Andrews, an ailing Playfair is asked to stay on as Provost. St Andrews has been re-born thanks to him. He initially agrees, but dies in his home at St Leonards.

In Prestwick, the sour members reluctantly agree that the eight players for the first Open, can fit around their Autumn Meeting. None care to watch Tom hit the first ball of the first Open. The pressure is just too much and Tom loses first Open to a boastful youthful Willie Park. That night Tom is feeling at a low ebb and is putting in the dark. He notices that young shoots of grass have appeared where he dropped sand. A ghostly Allan appears and tells Tom to go for it, there is nothing to defend. 'Go silence that Willie Park.' With the burden lifted Tom wins the next Open.

A letter arrives from St Andrews inviting Tom to return and tend to the links there. Tom joyfully returns to live in St Andrews and is given a hero's welcome. Tom quickly has to face down the gentlemen golfers when he covers the greens in sand and faces opposition to his ideas to modify the links. Mrs Boothby comes into Tom's shop, and complains that the ladies are having to suffer the uncouth language of caddies on the putting green.

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Tom suggests that they should have their own putting green. Mrs Boothby is astonished and likes the idea. Tom quickly loses favour of some locals, including Lady Violet. The royal club is very reluctant to give up any of the links, so Tom suggests he makes a ladies' putting course where the whin is. They laughingly agree, thinking the idea absurd. Tom uses horses and ropes and pulls up the whin bushes, revealing a wonderful putting course. Lady Violet seeing the popularity of the idea, does the official opening of the course. Tom says a few words, thanking Ann Robertson for her vision. Lady Violet is not amused. The ladies decide that gentlemen can only play if invited. In a different world to quiet Prestwick, Tom gets on with his busy life, teeing it up for Queen Victoria's son Prince of Albany.

### EPISODE 5 - THE FIFTH

Tom fights to create a new closing green in St Andrews but must deal with local superstitions when they discover a cholera pit underneath the ground.

Prestwick are in a panic over the coming Open. Tommy Morris has won the Champions Belt outright, so they have no trophy to present the winner. It simply won't be ready in time. They decide to give a gold medal, which Tommy wins. At the party back in St Andrews in the Golf Inn, Tommy is drinking with Jamie and Davie. Tommy sees Meg but his pals warn him against her. A societal fallen woman, Meg, has a free spirit reputation and already had a failed pregnancy out of wedlock. Nonetheless, Tommy introduces himself. The couple instantly fall in love and spend every moment they can together. Tommy's mother Nancy is not impressed with his choice but defends Tommy in public. Tommy is not golfing and fails to win the next Open. Tommy and Meg get married.

A pregnant Meg insists on Tommy going to North Berwick to play a match with his dad Tom against the Park brothers Willie and Mungo. The Morrises win but a telegram arrives amidst all the applause telling Tommy to get home as Meg is seriously ill during labour. They arrange a boat, but as the boat leaves a second telegram comes to the green saying Meg is dead and his son, still born. They decide amongst themselves not to call Tommy back. Tommy and Tom do the long crossing in silence not knowing if Meg is alive or dead. They arrive in St Andrews harbour and Tommy jumps off the boat, races down North Street where Rev Boyd offers his condolences at Tommy's house. Tommy runs upstairs and finds Meg and his child dead. Tommy is inconsolable. They try to get him to play golf and he eventually plays Arthur Molesworth in the snow. A few weeks later on Christmas Eve, Tommy comes into the house and talks to Nancy. He explains that the pain is so hard. He misses Meg so much, he struggles to breathe. The next day, Christmas morning, Tom goes to get Tommy for church, but Tommy is dead. Tom hands the Champions Belt into the R&A.

Back on the links, Tom faces more obstacles, when he suggests keeping Playfair's work going and creating a new 1st green and front nine holes.

Davie and Jamie are distraught by Tommy's death. At the next Open the Club announces that no-one should play onto the 17th if someone is there. Davie is poorly, sweating, coughing blood into his hankie but nonetheless as the games near the end, it looks like Davie might win. Ignoring the rule in his irritable mood, he

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plays onto the green regardless, hitting a golfer on the leg. The golfers putting react angrily. Davie is tied in the end with Bob Martin, but Bob's pals complain about what Davie did on the 17th. The absurd committee come to the decision that they will play-off on Sunday and on Monday decide if a penalty should be applied. Davie refuses, and the next day Bob Martin walks to victory. The Union Club finally agree to amalgamate with the The Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St Andrews under the royal title.

Davie's doctor tells him he has TB and must leave for Australia. Jamie is devastated. It was hard losing Tommy, but to lose both was too much. Davie dies on the boat to Australia. Jamie turns to drink and is thrown out of bars. He returns to the same table in the Golf Inn but there are two empty chairs. Tom and Nancy get word of Jamie's being drunk and incapable in the Golf Inn and go for him. Jamie stays with them and they get him back on track. The show ends on a happy note with Jamie winning The Open in St Andrews and moving into a grand house next door to Tom.

### EPISODE 6 - THE SIXTH

Tom faces opposition from the R&A committee for the time he is away from the links creating new courses. A new green keeper, Hugh Hamilton with dubious motives, fuels the fire complaining about the links. He claims that his scientific methods are what St Andrews needs, not the old ways.

Things have also now reached boiling point, in the men's opposition to women's golf. New ideas are constantly being thwarted. To change things around for the women's game, indomitable Issette Pearson takes charge. Issette suggests that the ladies form their own golf union and have their own amateur championship, but the gentleman laugh at the idea. Horace Hutchinson calls it ridiculous and says that they will only argue amongst themselves. Issette heads to London and meets members of ten clubs. Together they form the Ladies Golf Union and plan for their first amateur championship at Lytham & St Annes Golf Club.

Lady Margaret Scott is facing her own struggles. She wants to enter the competition, but her father Lord Eldon is set against it. He informs Lady Margaret's governess Miss Agnes Payne to try to convince her. Governess Payne tells Lady Margaret that it is unladylike to hold ambitions to play in a public competition. She shows her a book where it repeats the line that a lady who swings the club above her shoulder is a woman off ill repute. It is beneath her and beneath the dignity of women from this family. Lady Margaret is determined nonetheless and goes against her father's wishes, escaping early one morning to play. Lord Eldon is lurching and tells Governess Payne that he wants Lady Margaret to join him. Payne finds Lady Margaret's room empty and her clubs missing. After chatting to Payne, Eldon angrily shouts for his chauffeur and they head to Lytham. Lady Margaret is playing Pearson in the final. As Lord Eldon, furious with Lady Margaret arrives and storms onto the links, gentlemen are congratulating him on Lady Margaret's play. His mood changes. He watches, hidden amongst the huge crowds and is enamoured by her play and how people are reacting. She isn't a pariah; she is a hero. As Lady Margaret holes a putt, the crowds roar. He sees people walking away and he asks them where they going? They tell him, she's won 7 and 5. Lady Margaret is the first amateur champion. Lord Eldon greets Lady Margaret and admits he was wrong. At the prize giving, the Committee suggests Lord Eldon speaks on Lady Margaret's behalf. He tells people that he was wrong, women should play golf and that he is proud of

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his daughter. She does not need a man to speak for her. He invites Lady Margaret forward. Lady Margaret thanks Issette and what she has done for ladies golf.

### **EPISODE 7 - THE SEVENTH**

Issette Pearson in a moment of brilliance invents the first form of standardised handicaps, challenging the rules for the men's game. In a heated debate with the St Andrews gentlemen, she silences the boorish men by simple logic, where even the most average of golfers could beat the best. Ladies could beat the men. They men laugh but she perseveres. She calls it the LGU Handicap System where a handicap is given based on the average of three submitted scorecards. It immediately works better than the men's system and they are forced to copy it.

Freddie Tait, a St Andrews hero, creates a row when he refuses one of the seasoned caddies and takes on young Dave Cuthbert. Tom takes Freddie under his wing, and they form a father and son bond. He is the best player since Tommy. Freddie's dog Nails gets Freddie into trouble, as his stellar career is cut short as he heads off to the Boer War. With growing discontent fuelled by Hugh, Tom resigns but finds contentment in his retirement. He is visited by C.B. Macdonald, who aspires to bring golf and the St Andrews Spirit of golf for all, to America. At the unveiling of a portrait of Tom in the R&A, the Club announces that they are giving Tom an annuity for the rest of his life. News comes to Tom and St Andrews that Freddie has been killed.

On Sunday Tom is having tea in the New Club and decides to use the bathroom. As he opens the door, a man from behind asks him what he is drinking. Tom shouts 'tea on a Sunday son' but he has taken the wrong door, and falls down the steep cellar steps. He doesn't regain consciousness and dies. It is the end of an era.

### **EPISODE 8 - THE EIGHTH**

CB Macdonald is now back in America and is frustrated at the lack of professionalism in their competitions. Two separate clubs declare the winner of their competitions the national champion. He is determined to create a legitimate governing body to standardize rules and competitions. He convinces gets five clubs to sit down and together they agree to form the USGA, the first National Amateur Championship (which he wins) and the US Open.

Lady Margaret Scott has won the first two Amateur Championships, and is entering the third. She faces a hard choice between her golfing career or her love for Hon. Frederick Gustavus Hamilton-Russell. It would be unseemly for Hamilton-Russell's wife to be a golfer. Lady Margaret doesn't want to make the decision.

Freddie Tait's caddie Dave Cuthbert was working for Tom Morris and now both Tom and Freddie have passed. He took a job as a professional in England but after hearing of Tom's death, his debts, behaviour and drinking are getting out of control. He turns up drunk for a golf lesson with a lady and is instantly sacked. In a chat with his friend, who is worried for him, his pal tells him the Huntingdon Valley Club in Philadelphia is looking for a professional. Dave doesn't wait to apply; he packs up and takes the long boat to America. Professionals typically have letters of recommendation and Dave has an old tattered one from Tom that he kept in his pocked

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to be close to Tom. It is his lifeline to a new life in America, but a gust of wind blows it out of his hand into the sea. Desperate, Dave turns up at the Club letterless and says he has come to apply for a job and says he was Freddie's caddie and worked for Tom Morris. The Secretary demands a letter, but Davie explains it blew off in his hand. The Secretary does not believe him. Everyone claims they worked for Tom. Dave says that Tom Morris was the finest gentleman that ever lived. Dave had kept the letter this as it was the last thing Tom gave him. He tells the Secretary that Tom taught him how to make a golf ball, fix clubs, run a golf shop and how to keep a course in good condition. The Secretary reluctantly agrees a trial.

American golf is born in a quiet war between families—old money elites, immigrant Scots, and ambitious outsiders all fighting to control the game. As C.B. Macdonald builds the sport, he's caught between the patrons who demand exclusivity and the professionals they refuse to accept, while across the Atlantic, St Andrews families close ranks against players like Jock Hutchison, whose loyalties threaten tradition. When Francis Ouimet's working-class victory humiliates Boston's ruling class, the conflict turns personal—spilling into homes, marriages, and reputations. Rising stars like Beatrix Hoyt and Bobby Jones are shaped—and nearly broken—by family pressure, while the arrival of Bobby Locke forces every faction to unite against a man who refuses to belong, exposing a world where legacy matters more than the game itself.

Lady Margaret wins the 3rd amateur championship in a row and is golf's superstar. In her prize giving speech she shocks the crowds when she announces her immediate retirement. She happily marries and becomes Lady Margaret Hamilton-Russell.

### **EPISODE 8 - THE NINTH – No Place Like Home**

Miss Issette Pearson wants to produce a book setting out the story of ladies golf and receives a lot of doors closed in her face. Things start to gather momentum when she receives support from an expected source - her most strident opponent, Horace Hutchinson.

Dave finds out the hard way that the Clubs in the USA are elitist, and professionals must only enter the Club through the tradesman entrance.

Rod Wanaker is a member of Dave's Club. He is a businessman and owns a store called Wanamakers in NY. Tom McNamara of Brookline tells him that it is time to bring all the professionals together to create the PGA of America. Dave tells Wanamaker that consolidating all the professionals may also improve their social standing, and stop them being treated by club members as second-class citizens. Dogs getting treated better; they are allowed in the clubhouse. They would also have a stronger influence when negotiating en-masse with about selling golf balls for Spalding. Rod gathers sixty professionals in the restaurant of his store and forms the PGA. Furthermore, he agrees to donate a huge sum for a golf competition, which is the PGA Championship. Dave also becomes one of the first members of the PGA thinking it will help change things.

Hutchinson admits he was wrong and wants to do what he can to create this historic and important book. Issette and Hutchinson form a bond and together are an indomitable force. Our Lady of The Links is finally published and well received.

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## SEASON TWO

### THE STORY OF AMERICA

#### NINE EPISODE SYNOPSIS

American golf is born in a quiet war between families—old money elites, immigrant Scots, and ambitious outsiders all fighting to control the game. As C.B. Macdonald builds the sport, he's caught between the patrons who demand exclusivity and the professionals they refuse to accept, while across the Atlantic, St Andrews families close ranks against players like Jock Hutchison, whose loyalties threaten tradition.

When Francis Ouimet's working-class victory humiliates Boston's ruling class, the conflict turns personal—spilling into homes, marriages, and reputations. In the women's game, Babe Zaharias battles prejudice while dominating on her own terms, as Althea Gibson breaks barriers as the first Black LPGA player—only to face exclusion off the course, exposing a system designed to keep outsiders in their place. Rising stars like Beatrix Hoyt and Bobby Jones are shaped—and nearly broken—by family pressure, while Bobby Locke's defiance forces every faction to unite against him, proving legacy matters more than the game itself.