

# Palmer-Nicklaus Ready For World Cup Competition

MEXICO CITY (AP)—The defending champion U. S. team of Jack Nicklaus and Arnold Palmer is paired with Ireland's Ryder Cuppers, Hugh Boyle and Christy O'Connor, Thursday in the opening round of the 15th World Cup golf competition.

The millionaire Americans jetted to the scene Tuesday in their private planes and found themselves rated solid 2-1 favor-

ites against 39 other hand-picked teams from throughout the world.

Nicklaus took a quick exploratory swing around the 7,216-yard, par 72 Club de Golf Mexico, but Palmer delayed his first practice until Wednesday.

The length of the course, the longest over which this tournament ever has been played, and the fact that the ball flies farther in the 1½ mile-high Mexico City

altitude has made the two long-hitting Yanks almost prohibitive choices.

Both are expected to reach the par five holes easily in two shots and reduce many of the par fours to simple wedge approaches.

Chief threat to the Americans is the South African pair of Gary Player and Harold Henning, who swept both the team and individual titles in 1965.

Player was the individual winner, rated 6-1 in the informal and non-betting odds.

Also rated highly are Canada's George Knudson and Al Balding; Australia's Bruce Crampton and Allen Murray and all of the four teams from the British Isles—Wales, Ireland, Scotland and England.

The latter teams are made up of seasoned Ryder Cup players

who have just finished battling the U. S. top pros in the biennial international series at Houston, Texas. O'Connor and Boyle will be among the toughest.

Knudson, the Canadian, is defending champion in the individual competition, having beaten out Hideyo Sugimoto of Japan in a playoff in Tokyo last year.

Palmer has shared in five team championships, three with Nick-

laus, but never has taken the individual crown. Like the American PGA title, it is an honor he is eager to grab before his career ends.

Nicklaus, who has held every other major pro crown, has won two individual championships in the World Cup in addition to sharing in the three team titles.

The two golfers are looked on

as the best of the current professionals and both rank as all-time greats. They have both been involved this season on adding another record to their already mammoth list.

Nobody has ever won \$200,000 on the pro golf tour up to this year. Both Palmer and Nicklaus are expected to break that record mark before the year is out.

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